

Pakistan: Hundreds Killed by U.S. Air Attacks

U.S./NATO Imperialists Out of Afghanistan!



Reuters



AP

On the evening of May 4 in western Afghanistan, after Taliban forces had attacked local police in the village of Granai and then largely withdrawn from the town, U.S. bombers inflicted ruthless collective punishment on the helpless villagers. As many as 147 people—including approximately 95 children—perished in the airstrikes. It was the deadliest massacre of civilians by U.S./NATO forces in a long succession of indiscriminate bombings and military assaults since the imperialist occupation of Afghanistan began in 2001. One resident of Granai interviewed by the *New York Times* (7 May) described body parts littering the landscape. “It would scare a man if he saw it in a dream,” he declared.

This latest slaughter of civilians by U.S. forces, which will surely stiffen the growing opposition among the Afghan population to the U.S./NATO occupation forces, comes as President Barack Obama is escalating the U.S. intervention by sending 21,000 more troops to Afghanistan. One consequence can be predicted with certainty: ever greater butchery of the Afghan population by U.S. military forces. The United Nations estimated that last year alone more than 2,000 Afghans were killed.

A single U.S. airstrike last August on the village of Azizabad in western Afghanistan killed at least 90 civilians. Following that massacre, the conservative London *Economist* (30 August 2008) wrote: “If America fails in Afghanistan, as it might, it will be remembered there for killing children.” Naturally, the haughty mouthpiece of British finance capital did *not* add: “...as the British imperialists are remembered by their victims from Northern Ireland to Kenya and the Indian subcontinent.”

What the U.S. rulers and their media mouthpieces genteelly term “counter-



AP

Top left: Barack Obama, flanked by Afghan president Hamid Karzai (left) and Pakistani president Asif Ali Zardari (right) on May 6, days after U.S. bombing in Bala Buluk district of Farah Province, Afghanistan. Top right: Young victim of that murderous assault. Above: Protest at Kabul University condemns May 4 U.S. air strike in which nearly 150 civilians were slaughtered.

insurgency” consists of an endless succession of terror bombings, death squad assassinations and unrelenting slaughter of entire populations. This is inherent in the nature of imperialism, the stage of capitalism in which a handful of advanced capitalist powers compete globally for control of markets, raw materials and access to cheap labor. Today, after eight years of the demented regime of George Bush, which reveled in its barbarity, Obama is well suited to help refurbish U.S. imperialism’s tarnished image around the world. Yet whether the Commander-in-Chief is a Democrat or Republican, war crimes and atrocities against civilians are always integral to U.S. imperialism’s wars of conquest and

occupation, from the Philippines at the dawn of the 20th century to Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan today.

In Pakistan, Obama has stepped up missile attacks by unmanned drone airplanes—with the tacit approval of Islamabad—in Pakistan’s northwestern tribal

areas. Citing Pakistani press reports, *Los Angeles Times* columnist Doyle McManus reported (3 May) that these missile strikes have killed about 160 people since Obama’s inauguration. According to the Karachi daily *The Nation* (14 April), U.S. drone attacks in Pakistan between 16 January 2006 and 8 April 2009 killed a total of 701 people. Of these attacks, “only 10 were able to hit their actual targets, killing 14 wanted Al-Qaeda leaders, besides perishing 687 innocent Pakistani civilians.”

The drone missile attacks have contributed to the growing instability of nuclear-armed Pakistan. The *New York Times* (14 April) reported: “As American drone attacks disrupt strongholds of the Taliban and Al Qaeda in the tribal areas, the insurgents are striking deeper into Pakistan—both in retaliation and in search of new havens.” A former “counterinsurgency” adviser to the U.S. command in Iraq warned Congress that the “highly unpopular” drone strikes are “leading us to loss of Pakistani government control over its own population” (*Los Angeles Times*, 3 May). Besides, he said, “there are other ways to do it.” This was a veiled reference to the widespread use in Iraq and Afghanistan of “counterinsurgency” commando teams acting as covert death squads to assassinate suspected insurgents.

The U.S. imperialists are intervening militarily in Pakistan to support their client regime against fundamentalists seeking its removal and to head off cross-border attacks on U.S./NATO forces in Afghanistan. The client itself—faced

continued on page 11

French Caribbean Colonies Shaken by General Strikes

Page 4



On “Community Control” of Police

Los Angeles
7 May 2009

With the lead article of WV No. 935 (24 April) “Racist Police Terror U.S.A.,” I wanted to raise a question. Under the subhead “Community Control of the Police”—A Liberal Hoax,” it strikes me as odd to introduce the statement: “Even if it could be accomplished, black ‘control’ of the inner cities would not put an end to endemic poverty, joblessness, crime, gutted housing and broken-down schools.” Given the political climate with the Obama presidency, might not a WV

reader looking for “Hope” consider this a “theoretical” possibility, concluding that under Obama black “control” is possible, and would be better than nothing? In which case, what does black “control” of the inner cities mean, or look like, “Even if it could be accomplished”?

The entirety of the article is abundantly clear about “the suicidal illusions in the possibility of reforming the system....” The decades-long experience of “black faces in high places” produced nothing less than the current results at hand. The Black Panther Party’s history

epitomized this in their efforts at “community control,” first, being hunted down by the FBI/police, and then politically adapting “community control” to running in elections as “Democrats,” à la Bobby Seale. Initially, “community control” in the 1960s/70s was presented by the “Black Power” movement, the “Chicano Movement,” and the East Coast Puerto Rican militants, The Young Lords, as a call “For Self-Determination.” This was a popularized bastardization used by the militants and the New Left that was taken from the Communist Party USA that in turn bastardized (via its Stalinism) the Leninist stance of Self-Determination, in the CPUSA’s attempted application of this in the American South during the concentration of the black population there up until WWII.

Fact is, the radical democratic demands of the time to address capitalist racism and oppression were in varying degrees instituted as part of the Civil Rights Movement (seen as struggling to “self-determine” one’s destiny, and not of working-class struggle for a socialist revolution). These included access to higher education; for Black Studies and Chicano/Latino Studies; for minority representation on local school boards; for minority representation, e.g., in City Hall of black or brown mayors; also, for black and Chicano cops in the ghettos and barrios! And, “the struggle,” into the twenty-

first century, for Civilian Police Review Boards. In Los Angeles the well-known black activist, the late Michael Zinzun, would regularly organize rallies when “community” cops had gunned someone down. He would give a fiery speech to the effect that “if the community does not get their demand met for a Civilian Police Review Board...then, we will hit the streets until we do!” As the WV article makes clear...this is A Liberal Hoax! Countering the “suicidal illusions” WV argues the case of our programmatic call for “Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!” encapsulated in our fight for *revolutionary integrationism*!

I was glad the article noted both the history of Oakland mayor Ron Dellums; and how he was made to “sit” by the powers that be at the memorial for the dead cops. In the early 1970s, leftists and black militant youth in Oakland soon noticed how Dellums would talk out of both sides of his mouth. Regarding the memorial for the dead cops, the Bay Area news media repeatedly announced that “a wife” of one of the dead cops demanded that Dellums not be allowed to speak, and this without explanation. The black and white populace of Oakland had to have seen this (whether in agreement or not) as an extended middle-finger to blacks, and the black mayor! Publicly, this was to be accepted solely as “empathy” for “the wife.”

B. Montoya



TROTSKY

Women of the East: Proletarian Revolution or Slavery

In the predominantly Muslim countries of the East, the fight for women’s liberation is literally a life-and-death struggle and a great motor force for proletarian revolution. In extending the 1917 workers revolution in Russia, the Bolsheviks found a key point of support among Muslim women in Central Asia in the 1920s. Subjugated, secluded and enslaved by Islamic law, the women of Central Asia had the most to gain from the October Revolution. The Bolsheviks under-

stood that these women could be the link to break the prefeudal and tribal chains in the region. This was expressed by Najiye, a representative of the Communist women, in a speech at the First Congress of the Peoples of the East, held in September 1920 in Baku, capital of Soviet Azerbaijan.

The women’s movement beginning in the East must be looked at not from the standpoint of those frivolous feminists who are content to see woman’s place in social life as that of a delicate plant or an elegant doll. This movement must be seen as a vital and necessary consequence of the revolutionary movement taking place throughout the world. The women of the East are not fighting merely for the right to walk in the street without wearing the chador, as many people suppose. For the women of the East, with their high moral ideals, the question of the chador, it can be said, comes last in priority. If the women, who form half of every community, are set up against the men and do not enjoy the same rights, obviously it is impossible for society to progress; the backwardness of Eastern societies is irrefutable proof of this....

In order to deliver us from all calamities, the Communists consider it necessary to create a classless society, and to this end they declare relentless war against all the bourgeois and privileged layers. The women Communists of the East have an even harder battle to wage because, in addition, they have to fight against the despotism of their menfolk. If you, men of the East, continue now as in the past to be indifferent to the fate of women, you can be sure that our countries will perish, and you and we together with them. The alternative is for us, together with all the oppressed, to begin a bloody life-and-death struggle to win our rights by force.

I will briefly set forth the women’s demands. If you want to bring about your own emancipation, listen to our demands and render us real help and cooperation.

1. Complete equality of rights.
2. Ensuring to women unconditional access to educational and vocational institutions established for men.
3. Equality of rights of both parties to marriage. Unconditional abolition of polygamy.
4. Unconditional admission of women to employment in legislative and administrative institutions.
5. Establishment of committees for the rights and protection of women everywhere, in cities, towns, and villages.

There is no doubt that we are entitled to raise these demands. In recognizing that we have equal rights, the Communists have reached out their hand to us, and we women will prove their most loyal comrades. True, we may stumble in pathless darkness, we may stand on the brink of yawning chasms, but we are not afraid, because we know that in order to see the dawn one has to pass through the dark night.

—“Report by Najiye” (1920), printed in *To See the Dawn* (Pathfinder, 1993)



LENIN

On USSR, Korean War and Nukes

Tokyo
2 May 2009

Dear Comrades,

The article on “Defend North Korea!” in WV No. 934 is good. But I think there is a missing point in the article. The U.S. imperialists wanted to use nuclear bombs during the Korean War. Their war drive was critically stopped by the successful nuclear testing of the

Soviet Union. The possession of nuclear weapons by the Soviet Union was important at that time. The founder of the Japanese Kakumaru group, Kanichi Kuroda, began to think of the “third camp” theory of “Anti-imperialism, Anti-Stalinism” against the successful nuclear testing of the Soviet Union.

Comradely,
H. T.

On the IG and the EFCA

Toronto
12 May 2009

Dear *Workers Vanguard*,

Our polemic, “The IG and National Association of Manufacturers Oppose the EFCA” (WV No. 935, 24 April), repeats a factual error by the Internationalist Group concerning the legality of card checks for union organizing in Canada. The bosses have long opposed card-check systems like that in the proposed Employee Free Choice Act—which allow certification of newly organized unions when a majority of workers sign union cards, as opposed to mandatory elections after a waiting period—precisely because they make it easier to organize unions. The IG blithely dismisses all this and claims, “Canada has a card check law and only 17 percent of the private sector workforce is unionized (as opposed to 7.5 percent in the U.S.).” We rightly note, “It takes some chutzpah to sneer at ‘only’ more than doubling union membership!” But the truth is even more damning to the IG.

Under Canadian labour law, which is largely provincially regulated, half the provinces including three of the four most

populous do *not* have card-check laws. Those that do have them generally have higher—sometimes much higher—rates of unionization. The clearest contrast is between Ontario and Quebec, the two largest and most industrialized provinces. Ontario’s former card-check law was eliminated by a right-wing government in the mid 1990s; since then its unionization rate has declined to 28 percent (about 17 percent in the private sector). In Quebec, where there is still a card-check law, the equivalent rates are 40 percent overall and 27 percent in the private sector.

Of course, the existence of card checks is hardly the only factor here—as WV correctly notes, “The success or failure of any unionization campaign will ultimately be determined by *class struggle*.” But the reality is that Quebec has a rate of unionization nearly *four times* that of the United States. Not unrelatedly, it is the only place in either Canada or the U.S. where there has been a successful campaign to organize the notoriously anti-labour Wal-Mart.

Comradely,
John Masters

WORKERS VANGUARD

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

DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Bonnie Brodie

EDITOR: Alan Wilde

EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Elizabeth Johnson

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

EDITORIAL BOARD: Steve Henderson (managing editor), François Donau (production manager), Blandine Hauser (letters editor), Bruce André, Ray Bishop, Jon Brule, Helen Cantor, Ed Clarkson, Paul Cone, Michael Davison, George Foster, Liz Gordon, Linda Jarreau, Walter Jennings, James Robertson, Joseph Seymour

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

Workers Vanguard (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and skipping the last issue in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116. E-mail address: vanguard@tiac.net. Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/22 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.

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

The closing date for news in this issue is May 19.

No. 937

22 May 2009

Letters Policy

Workers Vanguard welcomes letters from our readers. Opinions expressed in letters do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the WV Editorial Board. We reserve the right to respond to letters either at the time of publication or at a later point. We verify the authenticity of letters published in *Workers Vanguard*;

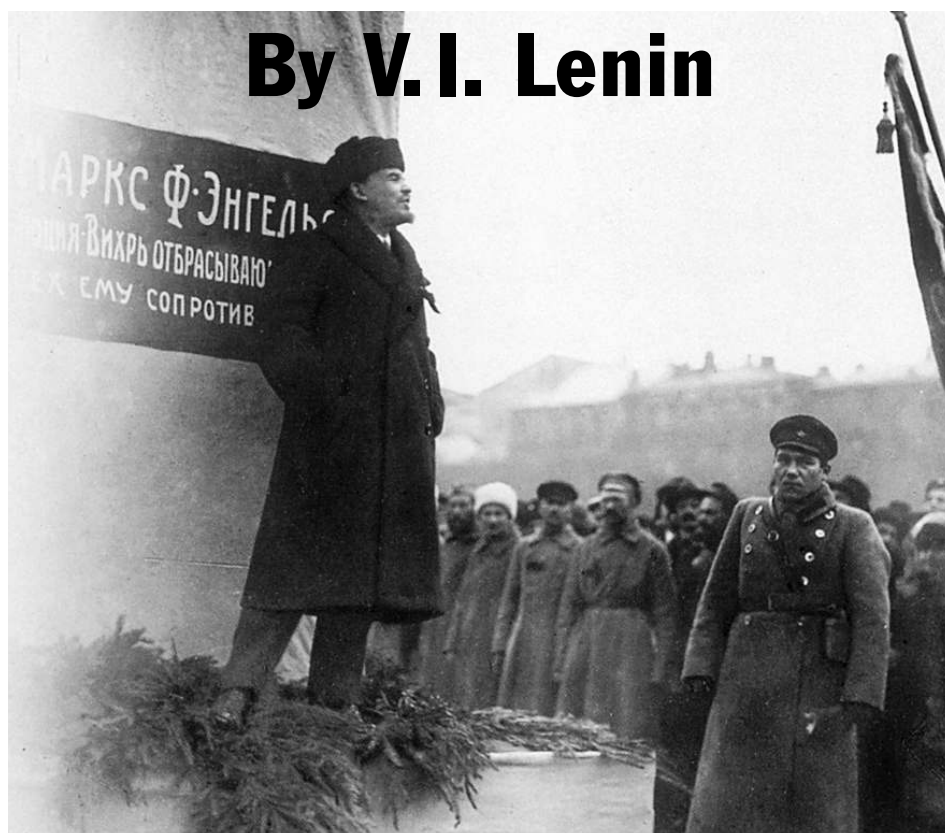
only letters received with contact information will be considered for publication. Letters can be published anonymously if the author so desires. In order to facilitate the printing of letters, which we do not edit, please keep them to 500 words or less. Letters can be sent to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116 or e-mailed to vanguard@tiac.net.

“THE THREE SOURCES AND THREE COMPONENT PARTS OF MARXISM”

V. I. Lenin’s “*The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism*,” which we reprint below, was first published in March 1913 in the Bolshevik journal *Prosveshcheniye* to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the death of Karl Marx, who, along with Friedrich Engels, founded scientific socialism. The following translation is taken from Volume 19 of the *Collected Works of Lenin* (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow 1963).

Throughout the civilised world the teachings of Marx evoke the utmost hostility and hatred of all bourgeois science (both official and liberal), which regards Marxism as a kind of “pernicious sect.” And no other attitude is to be expected, for there can be no “impartial” social science in a society based on class struggle. In one way or another, *all* official and liberal science *defends* wage-slavery, whereas Marxism has declared relentless war on that slavery. To expect science to be impartial in a wage-slave society is as foolishly naïve as to expect impartiality from manufacturers on the question of whether workers’ wages ought not to be increased by decreasing the profits of capital.

But this is not all. The history of philosophy and the history of social science show with perfect clarity that there is nothing resembling “sectarianism” in Marxism, in the sense of its being a hide-bound, petrified doctrine, a doctrine which arose *away from* the high road of the



Lenin speaking at the unveiling of a memorial to Marx and Engels in Moscow in 1918, on first anniversary of Russian Revolution.

development of world civilisation. On the contrary, the genius of Marx consists precisely in his having furnished answers to questions already raised by the foremost minds of mankind. His doctrine emerged

as the direct and immediate *continuation* of the teachings of the greatest representatives of philosophy, political economy and socialism.

The Marxist doctrine is omnipotent

because it is true. It is comprehensive and harmonious, and provides men with an integral world outlook irreconcilable with any form of superstition, reaction, or defence of bourgeois oppression. It is the legitimate successor to the best that man produced in the nineteenth century, as represented by German philosophy, English political economy and French socialism.

It is these three sources of Marxism, which are also its component parts, that we shall outline in brief.

I

The philosophy of Marxism is *materialism*. Throughout the modern history of Europe, and especially at the end of the eighteenth century in France, where a resolute struggle was conducted against every kind of medieval rubbish, against serfdom in institutions and ideas, materialism has proved to be the only philosophy that is consistent, true to all the teachings of natural science and hostile to superstition, cant and so forth. The enemies of democracy have, therefore, always exerted all their efforts to “refute,” undermine and defame materialism, and have advocated various forms of philosophical idealism, which always, in one way or another, amounts to the defence or support of religion.

Marx and Engels defended philosophical materialism in the most determined manner and repeatedly explained how

continued on page 8

New Spartacist Pamphlet

Economic Crisis: Karl Marx Was Right

We reprint below the introduction to the just-released Spartacist pamphlet, *Capitalist Anarchy and the Immiseration of the Working Class*.

The anarchy and brutality of the capitalist system has been revealed again in a global economic crisis, which threatens to reach the proportions of the Great Depression. As millions are thrown out of work, as massive numbers of foreclosures throw people out of their homes, as hunger stalks the poor, black people and other minorities, the sick and vulnerable, the U.S. has seen a bitter winter of deprivation. The impact of this crisis extends far beyond the U.S., threatening the lives and livelihoods of the working class and oppressed internationally. It is left to revolutionary Marxists both to explain the roots of the current crisis and to provide the program necessary to put an end to this barbaric, irrational system through the emancipation of the proletariat and establishment of its class rule, thus laying the basis for the construction of a socialist planned economy as a transition to a classless, egalitarian and harmonious society on a global scale. That is the purpose of this pamphlet, composed of articles previously published in *Workers Vanguard*.

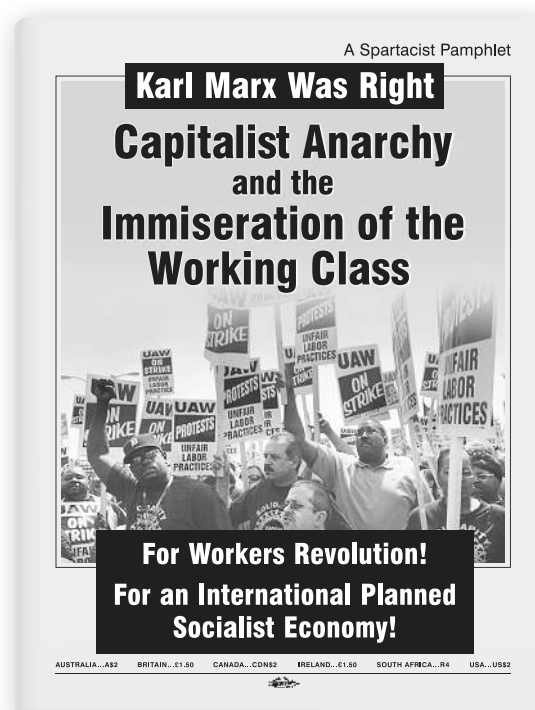
Leon Trotsky’s *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International* (also known as the Transitional Program), adopted as the basic programmatic document of the founding conference of the Fourth International in September 1938, is particularly relevant and urgent today. The political situation of the late 1930s and that of the post-Soviet world in which we live today are quite different, to be sure. But Trotsky’s declaration that “under the conditions of disintegrating capitalism, the masses continue to live the impoverished life of the oppressed, threatened now more than at any other time with the danger of being cast into the pit of pauperism” could have been written about conditions in Detroit and elsewhere today. The same is the case with the call in the Transitional Program that: “The Fourth International declares uncompromising war on the politics of the capi-

talists, which to a considerable degree, like the politics of their agents, the reformists, aims to place the whole burden of militarism, the crises, the disorganization of the monetary system, and all other scourges stemming from capitalism’s death agony upon the backs of the toilers. The Fourth International demands *employment* and *decent living conditions* for all” (emphasis in original). Such transitional demands, as Trotsky wrote, stemmed “from today’s conditions and from today’s consciousness of wide layers of the working class” and unalterably led “to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat.”

Against the tried and failed stratagems pushed by liberals and fake socialists—from the Keynesian project of “benevolent” intervention by the capitalist state to the British Labour Party’s bourgeois nationalizations in the post-World War II period—we Marxists understand that no amount of tinkering with the existing system can wrench it into serving the needs of the proletariat and the oppressed. The 1997-98 *Workers Vanguard* series “Wall Street and the War Against Labor,” reprinted here, takes this up in the U.S. context. It also deals with the labor movement in the U.S. and the roots of its historic economic militancy and political backwardness—a backwardness due not least to the continuing oppression of black people as a race-color caste, integrated into the industrial proletariat but at the same time forcibly segregated at the bottom of society.

The more recent articles reprinted in this pamphlet put forward our revolutionary program against those who purvey illusions in the Democratic Party and its current Obama administration as well as for class-struggle opposition to the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy. Part and parcel of such a struggle is a fight against nationalist, chauvinist protectionism, anti-immigrant racism and the anti-Communist poison spread by the union tops against those states where capitalism has been overthrown, centrally China but also the other deformed

workers states of North Korea, Cuba, Vietnam. Our program is that of *unconditional military defense* of those states against imperialist attack and internal counter-revolution and for *proletarian political revolution* to replace the nationalist bureaucratic regimes that undermine their defense. Our model remains that of the victorious October Revolution of 1917 led by Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolshevik Party. For class against class! For new October Revolutions!■



\$2 (56 pages)

Order from: Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

French Caribbean Colonies Shaken by General Strikes



Corbis



AFP

Left: Farm union strikers block access to “La Lézarde” industrial area, Martinique, February 13. Right: February 14 demonstration in Le Moule, Guadeloupe, in memory of four people killed by colonial police at strikers’ roadblock in 1952.

The following article is translated from *Le Bolchévik* No. 187 (March 2009), newspaper of the Ligue Trotskyste de France, section of the International Communist League. The article was originally published at the close of the general strikes that shook the Caribbean islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique for 44 and 38 days respectively. Ever since, the French colonial overlords and the local capitalists have

For the Right of Independence! Down With French Imperialism!

LE BOLCHEVIK

been striving to overturn the key gains won by the workers in the “Bino Agreement” (named after the trade unionist killed during the strike), notably a 200 euro wage increase for the lowest-paid workers and price cuts for basic necessities. In response, the working masses of Guadeloupe and Martinique have been carrying out localized strike action to defend the 200 euro agreement, including on plantations where owners, heavily subsidized by European Union and French government grants, are pleading poverty. The workers are also waging a fight to re-open negotiations on the price of water and bread and to oppose the hundreds of layoffs.

At the time of the strike settlement on March 4, only 17,000 of the 80,000 workers set to gain the wage increase had obtained their bosses’ formal agreement to maintain the raise once the state ceases to subsidize most of the increase in 2012.

Further class struggle and workplace occupations in the wake of the general strike have extended that agreement to 50,000 workers. To what extent the agreement will be honored in 2012 depends on the relationship of forces between the working class and the capitalists. In early April, the French government reneged on its promise to make it mandatory for the bosses of the major capitalist enterprises in particular to pay up once the state subsidies end. The Sarkozy government in France obscenely argued hard times for their billionaire cronies. But the French government’s main reason for scrapping the agreement is to undermine the strikes’ popularity in France. These strikes showed that sharp class battles are crucial to fight back against the capitalist onslaught as well as against state repression meted out to an increasingly embittered and angry proletariat in France, as well as in the colonies.

The other key demand won in the strike settlement was an agreement by the government’s colonial representative to lower the grossly inflated prices of basic necessities. But many of these reduced-price items have simply disappeared from the supermarket shelves and have been replaced by similar products whose prices have actually been

marked up. The agreement to freeze rents in state-subsidized housing is not being fulfilled either.

Just days after the strike agreement was reached, the attorney general in Guadeloupe brought charges against strike leader Elie Domota. He was charged with “provocation to extort the signing of an agreement by force concerning the so-called Jacques Bino agreement” and, grotesquely, “incitement to racial discrimination, hatred and violence against categories of people based on their ethnic origin...notably and specifically people known as *békés* [the descendants of the original slave owners] and the companies led by them.” This alludes to an interview Domota gave on March 5 in which he said of the bosses unwilling to sign the agreement: “Either they implement the agreement, or they will have to leave Guadeloupe.... We are very firm about this. We will not allow a bunch of *békés* to restore slavery.” *The charges against Domota must be dropped immediately. The workers movement, particularly in France, must defend him. An injury to one is an injury to all!*

These attacks by the French imperialists and the local capitalists so soon after the strikes and protests in Guadeloupe and Martinique as well as in the other French colonies underline that the bourgeoisie will always seek to reverse the gains wrenched from it in class battles. While the gains of the strikes must be defended down the line, the perspective has to be the fight for socialist revolution, as our comrades of the LTF lay out in the article below. To this end, especially given the small size of the proletariat in Guadeloupe and Martinique, the mobilization of the French workers to defend their class brothers’ fight to lift the yoke of colonialism and the legacy of slavery is key. In so doing, the French proletariat will also be fighting to defend its own historic interests—that is, the overthrow of this rotten, racist capitalist system.

* * *

MARCH 5—The Ligue Trotskyste de France stands in full solidarity with the

general strikes in Guadeloupe, Martinique and Réunion against the economic and racial discrimination suffered by the populations at the hands of the French imperialist colonial masters. The struggle began on January 20 in Guadeloupe, which

was paralyzed for 44 days. Last night an agreement was finally signed between the coalition leading the strike, Liyannaj Kont Pwofitasyon [Alliance Against Profiteering—LKP], and the [French] government’s local representative; the LKP then called for an end to the strike. The strike was a victory, but it remains to be seen just how far the prices of basic necessities will really fall and how widely one of the key concessions to the strikers—a 200 euro increase for low-wage earners and welfare recipients—will be implemented. The 200 euros consists of a state subsidy of 100 to 150 euros a month for a three-year period. The local MEDEF, the main organization of the bosses, refused to sign the agreement [to pay the remaining 50 to 100 euros], merely recommending that its members, depending on the relationship of forces at each workplace, pay a bonus of 50 to 100 euros, rather than a wage increase. They will do everything possible to avoid paying it or will renege on it as soon as possible.

The strikes were initially met with silence and racist contempt by the Sarkozy government, paralleling the French rulers’ contempt for the working class, the poor, and, especially, minorities and immigrants in mainland France. But in the context of the world economic crisis, the ruling class became increasingly concerned that the struggle would spread to mainland France. The government responded to the strikes as every colonial administration has always done when facing major resistance movements in the colonies: by wielding the iron fist of state repression (remember the atrocities of 1952 and 1967). [In 1952 the French riot police killed four people in Guadeloupe during a strike. In 1967, following a strike in Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, French cops killed at least 87 people, as acknowledged by the Minister of Colonies in 1985.]

In the early hours of February 18, trade unionist Jacques Bino was shot and killed in Pointe-à-Pitre. His murderer has so far not been identified. The government’s version of events—that he was, in the words of French prime minister Fillon, killed by “petty criminals”—has in no

WV Map



way been proven. What we do know is that responsibility for Jacques Bino's tragic death lies with the French capitalist class and its racist state apparatus, whose attacks and provocations produced this social explosion of historic proportions. We also condemn the savage racist cop attack against LKP strike leader and trade unionist Alex Lollia on February 16, causing him head injuries and heart problems. Four squads of riot cops were sent from France to Guadeloupe during the strike, as well as internal security police and an elite RAID ["anti-terrorist"] unit; two squads of riot police were dispatched to Martinique, joining the thousands of cops and soldiers already there on a mission to "restore order." We demand that all protesters detained in Guadeloupe and Martinique since the beginning of the strike—activists, trade unionists and the dozens of young demonstrators predictably labeled "hooligans" and "delinquents" by Sarkozy (*Le Monde*, 20 February)—be immediately freed and that the charges against them be dropped. *All French troops and riot cops out of Guadeloupe, Martinique, Réunion and French Guiana!*

While fighting for a proletarian leadership, we support struggles against colonial rule even when led by petty-bourgeois and bourgeois-nationalist forces. It is necessary to build internationalist Leninist Trotskyist parties in Guadeloupe, Martinique, Réunion [east of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean] and French Guiana to fight imperialism on a proletarian program and in sharp political combat against the dead-end politics of petty-bourgeois and bourgeois nationalism. Colonialism has bequeathed a proletariat that is very small—except in construction and key services like transport, sanitation, etc.—as well as a thin layer of agricultural workers on the plantations. The proletariat from Guadeloupe and Martinique is mainly based in France, where it represents a living link for socialist revolution in both France and the West Indies. This makes it all the more important to turn to the French working class, directly posing the need for political struggle against the workers' social-democratic leadership, which does everything possible to prevent the struggle from spreading to the French mainland.

Look at the role played at the height of the strike in Guadeloupe by the Socialist Party (SP), tailed by the rest of the left. In a recent interview in *Le Parisien* (13 February) SP leader Martine Aubry declared: "I am indeed afraid of the discontent felt by people of Guadeloupe and Martinique spreading here.... We must do everything we can to prevent this from happening." The struggle against these traitors and those who tail them raises the need for a revolutionary party based on proletarian internationalism. This is what the LTF fights for.

Background to the Strike

The social upheaval in Guadeloupe was initiated by protests in Réunion and French Guiana last November-December where roadblocks and other demonstrations succeeded in winning a price cut for oil and diesel fuel. Less than a week after the price cuts were enacted in French Guiana, roadblocks went up in Guadeloupe; three days later the government agreed to a similar price cut. As poverty and desperation have worsened with the economic crisis, this modest success triggered wider protests against the high cost of living, followed shortly afterwards by a call for a general strike on January 20. The strike was called by the Liyannaj Kont Pwofitasyon, a broad coalition of trade unions, left groups and petty-bourgeois nationalist parties and organizations.

The upheaval had been brewing for some time. Some 25 percent of Guadeloupe's population of working age is unemployed according to official (and thus underestimated) figures, with 22 percent unemployed in Martinique, compared to a figure of 8 percent for mainland France. Youth unemployment (among 15- to 24-year-olds) is at 56 percent and 48 percent for the two islands respectively (*Le Figaro*, 18 February). While the aver-

age income in Guadeloupe is about half that of France, prices are on average 50 percent higher than those on the mainland. These high prices are in part due to the fact that most basic goods—including fruit and vegetables—are imported from France. This prevents any kind of self-sufficiency, making it possible for the *béké* capitalists, the descendants of the original slave owners, to continue making enormous profits by retaining a quasi-

blacks moving to France from the West Indies—held up as “assimilated” French—against minorities originating from North and West Africa who to this day are excoriated by the government for supposedly “refusing to assimilate.”

The standard of living in Guadeloupe and Martinique under French domination is undeniably higher than in most other Caribbean islands—life in general is miserable in the region. But Cuba today boasts

more colonialist than the old one. Little by little it exuded its privileged people: those who live off it, the state functionaries, the large businesses, the West Indies 'lobby' which puts pressure on the rulers."

—quoted in *Le Monde*,
20 February

For the Right to Independence!

It is an elementary duty for revolutionary internationalists to defend the right of self-determination for the French colonies and, as forthright opponents of French colonialism, the LTF would be in favor of independence. However we are against forcing annexation, federation, or even independence on anyone, and we do not currently advocate independence for Guadeloupe and Martinique, largely because the vast majority of the population is not in favor of it at this time. A recent poll (*Le Figaro Magazine*, 28 February) states that 80 percent of Guadeloupeans are opposed to independence. Self-determination is a democratic right; to “unconditionally” impose a separate state on a people is not self-determination. The wishes of the population are an important factor for Marxists in determining how to get the national question off the agenda and clear the road for revolutionary internationalist class struggle.

While Guadeloupeans may now wish for greater autonomy from the French state—after having overwhelmingly rejected such a move in a 2003 referendum—most people in Guadeloupe as well as those in the three other “DOMs” presently do not support independence from France, which would deprive them of the legal right to live, study and work in France without Sarkozy’s immigration cops storming into their homes and workplaces to arrest and deport them. Independence would also deprive them of some of the remaining social gains they retain as an overseas *département*, gains won largely by the powerful French working class in sharp class struggles with the bourgeoisie. In the framework of capitalism, “independence” for Guadeloupe would offer up the prospect of the same desperate impoverishment as most other Caribbean states, which remain under the thumb of U.S. or British imperialism.

French Republic = Racist Colonial Oppression

In Guadeloupe and Martinique, the exploitation of the population of African and Indian origin is the legacy of slavery and colonial domination. The *békés*, who according to most sources make up between 1 and 2.5 percent of the population, maintain their stranglehold on the economy, particularly in Martinique. The racist contempt of *békés* for the non-white majority on the islands was recently exposed in a French television documentary, "The Last Masters of Martinique." It showed one Alain Huyghes-Despointes, made a knight of the Legion of Honor by Chirac in 2005, bemoaning that "Historians will only speak of the negative

continued on page 6



Reuters



Above: Police repression against protesters in Guadeloupe, as month-old general strike heated up. Left: Relatives carrying the coffin of Jacques Bino, trade unionist killed during strike, at memorial ceremony on February 21.

monopoly on imports and distribution. In addition, in recent years thousands of jobs were lost directly and indirectly in agriculture and specifically in banana production following a sharp trade dispute between the European Union (EU) and the U.S., which removed the islands' protected trade with EU states. As a result, material conditions on the islands have gone from bad to worse, only further increasing their economic dependency on French imperialism.

In 1946 Martinique and Guadeloupe, together with Réunion and Guiana, became the so-called “Overseas *Départements* of France” (DOMs—*Départements d’outre-mer*) under the “tripartite” (Gaullist-Communist-Socialist) popular-front government. This status has allowed their inhabitants to work in metropolitan France where they initially served, especially in the 1950s-’70s, as a source of cheap labor for the building industry; they then filled major labor shortages in the public sector—notably in the postal service, public transport and health care. *Département* status has also given the population access to the French national health care system, retirement and other social benefits and a vote in French national (and EU) elections. The French state’s vaunted “generosity” toward its “citizens” in the West Indies and the other colonies (who experience racist discrimination when they come to France) has supposedly been proof that under the Republic all men are “equal” irrespective of the color of their skin.

The existence of the DOMs, together with the recruitment of numerous black people from Martinique and Guadeloupe into the French police on the mainland during this period, was also used to conceal the brutal reality of racist oppression for France's minorities and immigrants. Not only did successive French bourgeois governments seek to pit white French workers against immigrants and minorities to further their capitalist divide-and-rule policy, but they also sought to pit

the highest literacy rate and the lowest infant mortality rate in Latin America, with life expectancy equal to that of U.S. citizens (and higher than for the U.S. black population). The enormous gains for the Cuban working masses, especially women and blacks, are due to the fact that Cuba is a workers state, even though bureaucratically deformed, originating in the expropriation of the U.S. imperialists and their local lackeys in 1960.

Thanks to critical Soviet military and economic aid, the resources of Cuban society were invested in a centralized, planned economy, guaranteeing everyone a job, decent housing, food and education. We unconditionally defend the Cuban deformed workers state against attempts to roll back these gains through the restoration of capitalism led by U.S. imperialism and internal counterrevolutionary forces, while we fight for a proletarian political revolution against the Castroite Stalinist bureaucracy (see “Defend the Cuban Revolution!” *Workers Vanguard* No. 915, 23 May 2008).

But if Guadeloupe is compared with Haiti, for example, which remains one of the world's poorest countries, with a 60-year life expectancy compared to 78 years in Guadeloupe, it is clear that the French West Indies' poverty is relative. Endemic unemployment in Guadeloupe and Martinique and the fact that official personal income is half that in metropolitan France despite the inflated prices only underlines that there can never be "equality" for "French" West Indians under imperialism. Twenty-five years after the adoption of the 1946 law turning the French West Indian islands into French *départements*, Martinique's historic leader and poet, the late Aimé Césaire, who in the 1940s was a member of the reformist French Communist Party and a staunch proponent of the colonial legislation, said bitterly:

"In 1946, we dreamed of a generous France.... For us, becoming a département was to mean equal rights. But it didn't. The new system became even



**Publication of the
Ligue Trotskyste de France**
Subscribe! **\$5 for 4 issues**
Includes *Spartacist* (French edition)
Order from/make checks payable to:
Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Caribbean...

(continued from page 5)

sides of slavery and that's a shame," while remarking on his distaste for mixed-race children: "We [the *békés*] wanted to preserve the race," he commented (*l'Humanité*, 13 February).

But the French bourgeoisie, which likes to market itself as a global defender of "human rights," is the colonial master. It upholds the system whereby the *békés* maintain their privileges and racist discrimination permeates the island in ways reminiscent of the United States or South Africa. This is most notably seen in hiring, with middle- and senior-level posts overwhelmingly going to *békés* or to white French people from the mainland who generally arrive for three-year stints and live in unofficially whites-only beach resorts. But it is also seen throughout all other aspects of life—working conditions, health care, housing, transport, etc.

The *békés* have longstanding and many-sided connections with the bourgeoisie and politicians in mainland France. It is telling that the representative of the French government [*préfet*] in Martinique, Ange Mancini, was living in a home "rented" from Huyghes-Despointes—until he was forced to move out when a scandal blew up after the documentary was shown on TV in the midst of the general strike. The *békés* also have franchises with or act as sole distributors for French monopolies like Carrefour and Renault and share the colonial superprofits with them. This inextricably links the struggle against racial and colonial oppression with the fight to overthrow the capitalist system.

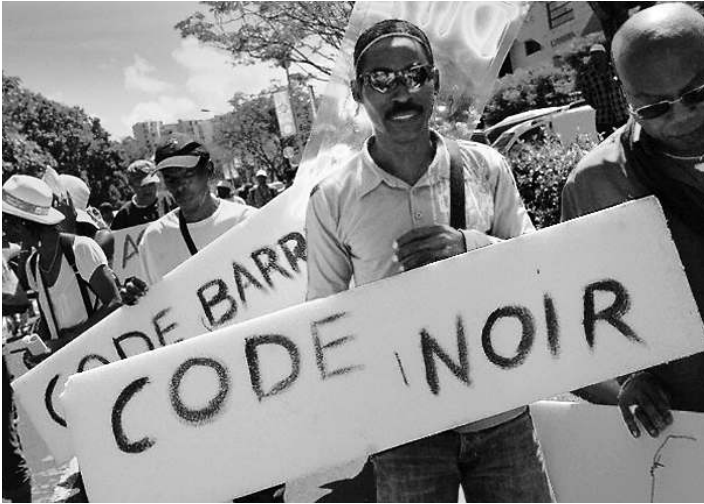
Since the general strike began in Guadeloupe, numerous protesters have denounced colonial rule and its racist disdain for the lives of non-white islanders. A tragic illustration of this mentality is the chlordecone pesticide scandal. Chlordecone is a product which was banned in the U.S. in 1976; it has been banned in metropolitan France since 1990, but was banned in the French West Indies only in 1993. Even after 1993 it went on being used clandestinely in Martinique and Guadeloupe until 2002, imported into the islands by mainly *béké* businessmen who produced it in Brazil under a different name, Curlone. Leading scientists from the West Indies and from France have described its use as "downright poisoning" of the population and a "major health crisis" (see interview with Paris-based cancer specialist Professor Belpomme in *Le Parisien*, 17 September 2007). It remains in the ground and in the waters for a century after use. Today Guadeloupe ranks second highest in the world for prostate cancer, which some leading scientists believe to be related to the prolonged use of chlordecone. Its presence is also linked to other cancers, reduced fertility and birth deformities.

Reports from ecologists and scientists warned for years against the dangers of

the pesticide and the huge amounts being used in Guadeloupe and Martinique. French state officials ignored them, later claiming to lack sufficient information. Today the French government again claims that there is insufficient proof to link the high cancer rates to chlordecone and they have even refused to open an investigation. The LKP's strike demands included the need to define "health measures to protect the populations of contaminated zones" and for "compensation for the professional and civilian victims."

French Workers—Powerful Potential Allies of Guadeloupean Workers

In the struggle against racist colonial oppression and capitalist exploitation in France and in the colonies, we fight for the revolutionary unity of the working masses across the Atlantic. We call upon all workers, especially those in the belly of the French imperialist beast, to support the strikes in the French West Indies and Réunion, and to oppose the French government's repression of strikers and youth. In the imperialist mainland this also means fighting to break the working class from the pro-imperialist chauvinism pushed by the trade-union bureaucrats and social-democratic parties who with the economic crisis are increasingly peddling divisive protectionist poison in the name of "national unity" behind the French bosses against their foreign rivals. And where workers of West Indian origin make up a large part of the workforce,



Martinique, February 13: Protesters against high cost of living in front of House of Trade Unions. Signs read "Bar Code" and "Black Code," linking high prices to colonial status and legacy of slavery.

such as in the post office or health care, the union bureaucrats often actively discourage solidarity among workers, for example calling only on workers from the DOMs (and excluding other workers) to take strike and other actions for special vacation rights for workers from the French colonies [for example, the right to accumulate vacation time over several years to go back home]. On February 21 the trade unions did finally mobilize for protests across France in solidarity with the strikes in Guadeloupe and Martinique, but, significantly, the vast majority of those marching under the CGT banner in Paris were of West Indian origin, and



Demonstration in Paris in solidarity with strikes in French West Indies, February 21.

very few white French workers were mobilized by the CGT and the other trade unions.

Olivier Besancenot's New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA) and Lutte Ouvrière (LO), which both have sister organizations in the French West Indies, see the combative and courageous strikes "as an example to follow in the mainland." They pass over, among other fundamental differences from the situation in France, the fact that, as a result of colonial rule, the economy is so dependent that there is barely a proletariat in the two islands. Besancenot

some extent were also granted to France's colonies. The counterrevolution in the USSR, a historic defeat for the world proletariat, was fully supported by the NPA's forerunner, the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR). In his autobiography *You'll Grow Out of It*, historic LCR leader Alain Krivine states: "Its end [the USSR's] could only have us rejoicing. And without the least hesitation, we did indeed rejoice."

For an Independent Workers Mobilization—Down With Class Collaboration!

For Marxists, a general strike that paralyzes the country would pose the question of workers power in a revolutionary situation. For the NPA on the other hand (or for LO with its calls for an "unlimited general strike"), it means nothing more than winning a 300 euro raise for the lowest-paid workers. Behind their "combative" rhetoric, the NPA and LO are busy trying to put a new "left" government back in office. In the fight against exploitation and for socialist revolution, it is necessary to break workers' illusions that a "left" capitalist government can do anything other than protect the interests of the French bourgeoisie. In France, since 1936, "left" governments have taken the form of popular fronts—that is, governmental blocs between capitalist parties such as the Left Radicals, Chevènement's Citizens' Movement, etc. and reformist workers parties such as the Socialist Party (SP) and the CP. From the French West Indies to Algeria to Rwanda, these "left" governments, on behalf of French imperialism, have left a bloody legacy.

Moreover, in Guadeloupe the colonial state administration is run (to the extent that powers are devolved) by the local SP. Victorin Lurel, SP president of the regional council of Guadeloupe, declared on February 14, in his name and that of Jacques Gillot, president of the General Council, who is also linked to the SP in Guadeloupe: "We demand a relaxation of the general strike so that the country can run more normally" and so that children "can go to school and everybody in Guadeloupe can move around and to allow those businesses that wish to work to do so" (*L'Express*, 14 February). Apparently they, like Sarkozy himself, want a general strike that nobody notices!

Aubry, CP leader Buffet and Mélenchon of the newly formed Left Party, who seek to lead a new popular front in 2012, have already shown their zeal in administering oppression during their years as ministers under Jospin's ["Plural Left" popular-front] government. That government, which demoralized and demobilized the working class, privatized more state companies than any right-wing administration before it; in the wake of the September 11 terror attacks in the U.S., the Jospin government whipped up its own racist "war on terror." Measures such as "Vigipirate," increased surveillance powers and other repressive laws were introduced, initially targeting racial minorities. We warned then that their ultimate aim was the whole working class, as we are starting to see today.

said in *Le Parisien* of February 19 that the strikes can put pressure on the government to "impose another distribution of wealth, a 300 euro wage increase" in France. It is typical of reformists to limit their demands to a slightly different redistribution of wealth. Since a handful of capitalists own the means of production and exploit the majority of the working population, "another distribution of wealth" would mean they would throw out a few more crumbs—which they will then seek to grab back by other means.

Reforms won in hard class struggle, which must be defended to the hilt, are constantly being snatched away by the bourgeoisie if the workers don't fight back with determination. But such attacks often get willing collaboration from the union bureaucrats—whose material privileges shape their role as "social partners" of the bourgeoisie—to defend French capitalist interests against rival capitalist powers. This was the case with the general strikes of June 1936 and May 1968. These general strikes led to prerevolutionary situations, but the social democrats, and above all the reformist CP and union bureaucrats, betrayed the working class (and all those under French imperialist rule abroad) by accepting a few crumbs at the negotiating table in exchange for calling off the strike. After 1936 and 1968, the capitalists sought, especially through inflation, to take back the concessions they had been forced to make.

In the wake of capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union in 1991-1992, the bourgeoisie has renewed its attacks on the workers and poor of the world as imperialist rivalries have intensified. Claiming that "communism is dead," they have been attacking gains such as pensions, health care, etc., known in West Europe as the "welfare state," which to

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

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

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

Chicago Box 6441, Main PO, Chicago, IL 60680, (312) 563-0441
chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: Sat. 2-5 p.m., 222 S. Morgan (Buzzer 23)

Los Angeles Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta., Los Angeles, CA 90029, (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: Sat. 2-5 p.m., 3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215

New York Box 3381, Church St. Sta., New York, NY 10008, (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net
Public Office: 1st and 3rd Sat. of every month, 1-4 p.m., and by appointment, 299 Broadway, Suite 318

Oakland Box 29497, Oakland, CA 94604, (510) 839-0851
slbayarea@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: Sat. 1-5 p.m., 1634 Telegraph, 3rd Floor

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA

Toronto Box 7198, Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X8, (416) 593-4138
spartacan@on.aibn.com

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

Since the “Plural Left’s” crushing defeat in 2002, the SP, in its bid to get re-elected, has flirted with the center-right [capitalist] UDF/Modem party, keeping the reformist “far left” at arm’s length. However in the face of the economic crisis, the SP opportunists have opted for the moment to dust off their pink flags and reactivate their members: they came out for the January 29 demonstrations where they were supposed to rediscover, as Aubry put it, the “French [who] suffer.” But there is no contending popular-front coalition yet; hence the task for the “left” today is to restore its own credibility to the bourgeoisie as a viable governmental option. To do that they need to try to convince the working masses that they would really be a lesser evil to Sarkozy & Co. so that once in power they can take off from the last government and do the dirty work of administering capitalism.

To this end, on February 4 Lutte Ouvrière and the NPA/ex-LCR signed a joint declaration for “unity in struggle” with the SP, the CP, the Chevènementists and various petty-bourgeois ecologist and feminist organizations. They thus contributed to substantiating the SP’s claims to “support the social movement” including, in the words of their statement, their “support to the imposing social movement which has been mobilizing for several weeks in Guadeloupe.” The NPA and LO thus play a crucial role in restoring the SP’s credibility in the eyes of the working class. Despite the NPA’s cynical and oft-repeated claims of “independence” from the SP, their signature on such popular-frontist declarations in the name of “unity” works precisely to pave the way for a new “left” capitalist government. They also provide the SP with a platform and a wider hearing in the class struggle—all the better to sell it out.

The NPA implicitly acknowledges the SP’s strikebreaking role in their February 16 leaflet “Guadeloupe, Martinique: Let’s Do Like Them!” where they describe how the SP representatives in Guadeloupe wanted to “‘soften up’ the strike in return for crumbs.” But the very next day after writing this the NPA went ahead and signed a second “unity in struggle” declaration with the SP and the petty-bourgeois groups stating that in Guadeloupe “extending the mobilization is more necessary than ever” and calling to “mobilize further and make March 19th a resounding success.” Such cynicism is the hallmark of social democracy.

Petty-Bourgeois Nationalism Can Offer Only Misery

While in France the task of a revolutionary party is to rally the working class to the side of the West Indians in struggle, in Guadeloupe and Martinique the key task is to break the hold of nationalist false consciousness. Under imperialism, nations are not equal and while we defend the right to an independent Guadeloupe under capitalism, independence could only drive the standard of living of the poor further down. This is why the fight must be part of a wider struggle for socialist revolution in France, Latin America and North America where there is a strong working class. Then the masses of Guadeloupe and Martinique will have

a real choice about how to exercise their right to national self-determination.

In Guadeloupe, Lutte Ouvrière’s sister organization, Combat Ouvrier, is part of the LKP coalition, together with a few dozen other organizations which include trade unions (with the pro-independence UGTG in the fore), the Guadeloupean Communist Party and many petty-bourgeois nationalist and cultural organizations. The LKP is in fact a combative popular-frontist coalition, which includes the workers movement but at bottom represents the program of bourgeois nationalism. Many of the LKP’s 149 demands are supportable including the 200 euro raise for all those on low wages and on welfare, as well as demands to introduce a vast program of public housing construction and a real public transport service. However, many of their other demands highlight the bourgeois-nationalist nature of the bloc, addressing: “People of Guadeloupe, workers, peasants, tradesmen, pensioners, unemployed, *entrepreneurs* and youth” (our emphasis).

Thus they demand that priority be given to local capitalists over others: “Priority and easier access to the market as well as public aid for Guadeloupean businesses.” Fundamentally this is a nationalist demand for black Guadeloupeans to exploit other Guadeloupeans. Some lead-



no credit
Monument in Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe, in memory of Colonel Louis Delgrès, hero of struggle against French troops sent by Napoleon to restore slavery in 1802.

ing nationalists in both Guadeloupe and Martinique often express their desire for the transfer of much of the state administration to a locally run body which could slash social benefits. According to the nationalists, these benefits make their agriculture and tourism uncompetitive against other Caribbean islands. But right now the nationalists are not emphasizing the struggle for independence—their program is rather to grab for themselves the profits from colonial exploitation which for centuries have been pocketed by the *békés*.

The demands also included: “Guadeloupeans must be the first hired” and “Mandatory hiring of Guadeloupeans in all businesses which benefit from public subsidies.” Since the French from the mainland and the *békés* make up the overwhelming majority in public service and private industry management in Guadeloupe, the demands on hiring are partly directed against colonialism. Equal pay and working conditions for all! To remedy racial discrimination we would defend measures that favor hiring black Guadeloupeans.

But demanding, for instance, that state-funded jobs must go to Guadeloupeans only is also directed against other oppressed nationalities of the region, particularly Haitians, who reportedly make up as much as 10 percent of the island’s population. Marxists oppose demands which result in pitting oppressed black Guadeloupeans against Haitians. Since 2002, under Sarkozy, first as minister of police and then as president, deportations and brutal treatment of Haitians have worsened. A special police unit with deportation quotas was set up in Guadeloupe in 2006 specifically to track Haitian immigrants. Raids on immigrants’ homes and the plantations where they work, as well as immigrants being arrested at



Avant-garde jeunesse
19 February 1968: Demonstration in Paris to demand freedom for independence activists in French West Indies and Guiana. A year earlier, during a strike in Guadeloupe, nearly 90 people were shot by colonial police.

police headquarters when they seek to regularize their papers, form a familiar picture to the thousands of undocumented workers in France. Officially, between 1,500 and 2,000 people, mainly Haitians, are deported every year from Guadeloupe; proportionately, that would amount to between 200,000 and 300,000 people deported from mainland France, which is ten times the number of deportations currently taking place!

Faced with this deportation machine, the LKP’s hollow demand to “Stop abominations against foreign workers” comes across as a refusal to frontally oppose the deportations. We counterpose to this the demands: *Full citizenship rights for all immigrants, in France and in its colonies! Down with deportations! Abolish Article 5 of the Public Sector code which reserves civil service jobs solely for French and EU citizens!* In a situation of widespread poverty such as in Guadeloupe, the state’s xenophobic attempts to scapegoat Haitians can often fall on fertile ground. Reports that *béké* plantation owners in Guadeloupe have called on Haitian agricultural workers to break the strikes of Guadeloupeans serve only to further underline the importance of Guadeloupeans defending Haitian immigrants and fighting for their equal pay and conditions to undercut the bosses’ attempts at divide and rule.

The direct participation in the LKP of Combat Ouvrier and the NPA’s uncritical praises of the LKP pander to petty-bourgeois nationalism and expose the politics of LO and the NPA as petty-bourgeois liberal reformism. The NPA insists that French workers must build a broad front as in Guadeloupe. But instead of subordinating themselves to petty-bourgeois nationalism as they do in Guadeloupe, in France they would subordinate themselves to the imperialist French chauvinist Chevènement and the SP social democrats who have their own sordid colonial history. [LKP spokesman] Elie Domota and his comrades are courageous militants who put their lives on the line, as exemplified by the cop attack on Alex Lollia. However, the fact that strike leader Domota holds the management position of Assistant Director of the ANPE (National Employment Agency) in Guadeloupe reflects his program of bourgeois nationalism. In France the Assistant Director of the ANPE is the former head of

human resources for Renault Engineering!

Since Combat Ouvrier is part of the LKP, Lutte Ouvrière does not criticize petty-bourgeois nationalism at all in this strike. Thus LO refrained from criticizing the blockades manned by youth from the destitute suburbs of Pointe-à-Pitre, in contrast to what they did during the *banlieue* revolt in France three years ago, when they despicably supported “restoring order,” capitulating to the SP and CP social democrats. However, these economists insist that the most important demand in the Guadeloupe general strike is the call for a wage increase and a halt to price hikes because these are demands “which concern all the workers” including in France (see Arlette Laguiller’s editorial in *Lutte Ouvrière*, 20 February).

In insisting on the 200 euro wage raise, which for LO is the only demand which can unite the working class, LO betrays its orientation towards the privileged layers of the white proletariat in France while minority youth from the city housing projects, for example, see the situation in Guadeloupe and Martinique as a reflection of the racial and ethnic discrimination they themselves suffer at work and at school.

LO thus minimizes the legacy of slavery and racial and colonial oppression, in contrast to Marxists who, as Lenin taught, take up every instance of oppression to draw a general, more complete picture of oppression under capitalism and to mobilize broad layers of the oppressed behind the working class and its revolutionary party.

Our program for Martinique and Guadeloupe, to end colonial oppression and exploitation once and for all, is premised on our proletarian internationalism, including centrally the fight for socialist revolution in the U.S., France and the other advanced capitalist countries. Only socialist revolution, laying the foundations for an international socialist planned economy throughout the region, in alliance with the French proletariat (including but by no means limited to the proletariat originating from the West Indies) can open the road to genuine economic development and an end to the struggle for survival in countries which are under the imperialist jackboot. *Victory now to the general strikes in Martinique and Réunion! Forward to the reforging of the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution!* ■

Spartacus Youth Club
Class Series

LOS ANGELES

Wednesday, May 27, 6 p.m.
20th Anniversary of Tiananmen:
Defend, Extend the Gains
of the 1949 Revolution!
For Proletarian Political Revolution!

Bunche Hall, Room 1221A
UCLA
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

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

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

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

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

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

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

☐ New ☐ Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Apt. # _____

Phone (_____) _____ E-mail _____

937
Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Archives of Marxism...
(continued from page 3)

profoundly erroneous is every deviation from this basis. Their views are most clearly and fully expounded in the works of Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach and Anti-Dühring, which, like the Communist Manifesto, are handbooks for every class-conscious worker.

But Marx did not stop at eighteenth-century materialism: he developed philosophy to a higher level. He enriched it with the achievements of German classical philosophy, especially of Hegel's system, which in its turn had led to the materialism of Feuerbach. The main achievement was dialectics, i.e., the doctrine of development in its fullest, deepest and most comprehensive form, the doctrine of the relativity of the human knowledge that provides us with a reflection of eternally developing matter. The latest discoveries of natural science—radium, electrons, the transmutation of elements—have been a remarkable confirmation of Marx's dialectical materialism despite the teachings of the bourgeois philosophers with their "new" reversions to old and decadent idealism.

Marx deepened and developed philosophical materialism to the full, and extended the cognition of nature to include the cognition of human society. His historical materialism was a great achievement in scientific thinking. The chaos and arbitrariness that had previously reigned in views on history and politics were replaced by a strikingly integral and harmonious scientific theory, which shows how, in consequence of the growth of productive forces, out of one system of social



G.W.F. Hegel

life another and higher system develops—how capitalism, for instance, grows out of feudalism.

Just as man's knowledge reflects nature (i.e., developing matter), which exists independently of him, so man's social knowledge (i.e., his various views and doctrines—philosophical, religious, political and so forth) reflects the economic system of society. Political institutions are a superstructure on the economic foundation. We see, for example, that the various political forms of the modern European states serve to strengthen the domination of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat.

Marx's philosophy is a consummate philosophical materialism which has provided mankind, and especially the working class, with powerful instruments of knowledge.

II

Having recognised that the economic system is the foundation on which the political superstructure is erected, Marx devoted his greatest attention to the study of this economic system. Marx's principal work, Capital, is devoted to a study of the economic system of modern, i.e., capitalist, society.

Classical political economy, before



Karl Marx

Marx, evolved in England, the most developed of the capitalist countries. Adam Smith and David Ricardo, by their investigations of the economic system, laid the foundations of the labour theory of value. Marx continued their work; he provided a proof of the theory and developed it consistently. He showed that the value of every commodity is determined by the quantity of socially necessary labour time spent on its production.

Where the bourgeois economists saw a relation between things (the exchange of one commodity for another) Marx revealed a relation between people. The exchange of commodities expresses the connection between individual producers through the market. Money signifies that the connection is becoming closer and closer, inseparably uniting the entire economic life of the individual producers into one whole. Capital signifies a further development of this connection: man's labour-power becomes a commodity. The wage-worker sells his labour-power to the owner of land, factories and instruments of labour. The worker spends one part of the day covering the cost of maintaining himself and his family (wages), while the other part of the day he works without remuneration, creating for the capitalist surplus-value, the source of profit, the source of the wealth of the capitalist class.

The doctrine of surplus-value is the corner-stone of Marx's economic theory.

Capital, created by the labour of the worker, crushes the worker, ruining small proprietors and creating an army of unemployed. In industry, the victory of large-scale production is immediately apparent, but the same phenomenon is also to be observed in agriculture, where the superiority of large-scale capitalist agriculture is enhanced, the use of machinery increases and the peasant economy, trapped by money-capital, declines and falls into ruin under the burden of its backward technique. The decline of small-scale production assumes different forms in agriculture, but the decline itself is an indisputable fact.

By destroying small-scale production, capital leads to an increase in productiv-



Friedrich Engels

ity of labour and to the creation of a monopoly position for the associations of big capitalists. Production itself becomes more and more social—hundreds of thousands and millions of workers become bound together in a regular economic organism—but the product of this collective labour is appropriated by a handful of capitalists. Anarchy of production, crises, the furious chase after markets and the insecurity of existence of the mass of the population are intensified.

By increasing the dependence of the workers on capital, the capitalist system creates the great power of united labour.

Marx traced the development of capitalism from embryonic commodity economy, from simple exchange, to its highest forms, to large-scale production.

And the experience of all capitalist countries, old and new, year by year demonstrates clearly the truth of this Marxian doctrine to increasing numbers of workers.

Capitalism has triumphed all over the world, but this triumph is only the prelude to the triumph of labour over capital.

III

When feudalism was overthrown and "free" capitalist society appeared in the world, it at once became apparent that this freedom meant a new system of oppression and exploitation of the working people. Various socialist doctrines immediately emerged as a reflection of and protest against this oppression. Early socialism, however, was utopian socialism. It criticised capitalist society, it condemned and damned it, it dreamed of its destruction, it had visions of a better order and endeavoured to convince the rich of the immorality of exploitation.

But utopian socialism could not indicate the real solution. It could not explain the real nature of wage-slavery under capitalism, it could not reveal the laws of capitalist development, or show what social force is capable of becoming the creator of a new society.

Meanwhile, the stormy revolutions which everywhere in Europe, and especially in France, accompanied the fall of feudalism, of serfdom, more and more

clearly revealed the struggle of classes as the basis and the driving force of all development.

Not a single victory of political freedom over the feudal class was won except against desperate resistance. Not a single capitalist country evolved on a more or less free and democratic basis except by a life-and-death struggle between the various classes of capitalist society.

The genius of Marx lies in his having been the first to deduce from this the lesson world history teaches and to apply that lesson consistently. The deduction he made is the doctrine of the class struggle.

People always have been the foolish victims of deception and self-deception in politics, and they always will be until they have learnt to seek out the interests of some class or other behind all moral, religious, political and social phrases, declarations and promises. Champions of reforms and improvements will always be fooled by the defenders of the old order until they realise that every old institution, however barbarous and rotten it may appear to be, is kept going by the forces of certain ruling classes. And there is only one way of smashing the resistance of those classes, and that



Adam Smith

is to find, in the very society which surrounds us, the forces which can—and, owing to their social position, must—constitute the power capable of sweeping away the old and creating the new, and to enlighten and organise those forces for the struggle.

Marx's philosophical materialism alone has shown the proletariat the way out of the spiritual slavery in which all oppressed classes have hitherto languished. Marx's economic theory alone has explained the true position of the proletariat in the general system of capitalism.

Independent organisations of the proletariat are multiplying all over the world, from America to Japan and from Sweden to South Africa. The proletariat is becoming enlightened and educated by waging its class struggle; it is ridding itself of the prejudices of bourgeois society; it is rallying its ranks ever more closely and is learning to gauge the measure of its successes; it is steeling its forces and is growing irresistibly. ■

This pamphlet reprints presentations given by SL Central Committee member Joseph Seymour on the origins of Marxism in the French Enlightenment and in left Hegelianism. Also included are "150 Years of the Communist Manifesto" and "Marxism and Religion."

In the retrograde climate of post-Soviet reaction, the struggle to reassert the validity of the program and purpose of revolutionary Marxism is crucial for our fight for new October Revolutions.

\$2 (48 pages)

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

Enlightenment Rationalism AND THE Origins of Marxism

150 Years of the Communist Manifesto..... 35

Marxism and Religion 48

150 Years of the Communist Manifesto

150 Years of the Communist Manifesto

Britain...

(continued from page 12)

When German car manufacturer BMW summarily fired 850 workers in Cowley in February, Unite co-leader Tony Woodley declared his loyalty to British capitalism saying: “I not only speak for my members but I think for Britain, when I ask for a meeting with your company” (unitetheunion.com).

Until such time as workers revolution rips it from their hands, British industry belongs to the bloodsucking capitalists. The working class has no country! Nationalist protectionism doesn’t save a single job, as former Rover workers sold down the river by Woodley can tell you. When BMW announced in 2000 it was pulling out of Rover in Birmingham, Woodley led a chauvinist anti-German demonstration with signs such as: “We won two world wars—let’s win the third.”

Socialist Party Wallows in Social Chauvinism

It is not surprising that Taafe’s Socialist Party—which is notorious for adapting to backward consciousness—has assumed the pre-eminent role as spokesman for the reactionary protests, peddling the lying claim that these strikes are *not* anti-immigrant. Socialist Party member Keith Gibson, who was part of the strike committee of the Lindsey strikes, claimed at a 13 February London public meeting that: “We turned this dispute from where the media wanted to go—looking at a racist agenda—to what we put forward, through discussions with other Socialist Party members, a clear class agenda” (Socialist, 19-25 February). Taafe claims that the slogan “British jobs for British workers” was “a minor feature of the strike” (Socialism Today, March 2009) while a report on the Lindsey strike in the Socialist (5-11 February) says the BNP “have been bounced off from this strike.” This is hardly the point. *Why did the BNP support the strike?* The Socialist Party bears its share of responsibility for leading a chauvinist campaign that has the enthusiastic support of the fascist BNP!

The Socialist Party’s unique contribution to the Lindsey strike was to *replace* the demand “British jobs for British workers” with the demand for: “Union controlled registering of unemployed and locally skilled union members, with nominating rights as work becomes available.” “Local union members” in this instance means “British workers.” As our article on the strike noted, other Labourite left groups such as Workers Power and the [British] Socialist Workers Party (SWP) managed to take a correct position of opposition to the reactionary strikes. But for the SWP this was short-lived. Having correctly stated at the beginning that “these strikes are based around the wrong slogans and target the wrong people” (Socialist Worker, 31 January) the SWP has been circulating a petition which is as disingenuous as it is opportunist. On the



Workers Hammer Ford Dagenham TGWU banner carried by black and Asian workers marching in support of 1984-85 miners strike. Mobilizing social power of multiethnic working class is counterposed to protectionism.

one hand it declares: “The slogan ‘British jobs for British workers’ that has come to prominence around the dispute can only lead to deep divisions inside working class communities. The slogan, coined by Gordon Brown in his 2007 speech to Labour’s conference, is being taken up by the right wing press and the Nazi BNP. These are forces that have always been bitterly hostile to the trade union movement.”

However it goes on to say: “We support the demands of the Lindsey Oil Refinery strike committee” (“Unite to Fight for Jobs Petition” at petitiononline.com).

This petition is a grovelling capitulation to the Socialist Party and to the trade-union bureaucracy. The real, anti-foreigner meaning of the demands of the Lindsey strikers for preferential hiring of “local” union members is unmistakeable in the Unite newsletter’s coverage of the strikes. The Spring 2009 issue approvingly quotes Steven Bright, an unemployed erector from Newark, who “believes foreign workers will send money home rather than spending it in the local community” and demands that the government must “stop foreign labour coming in to do work that we are qualified and available to do.” The same article quotes Simpson saying “it will be a disgrace if UK workers are shut out from building their own power stations.”

We insist that the concern of the trade-union movement must not be *whom* the building contractors hire, but *at what rate of pay and under what conditions they work*. A genuine strike would undercut attempts by the bosses to “level down” the wages and working conditions of all workers by playing off one nationality against the other by demanding: *Full union pay for all work at the prevailing rate, no matter who does the job! Equal pay for equal work!*

A strike for jobs for all in construction—i.e., including immigrant labour—

would of necessity be *counterposed* to the current campaign, whose true face was shown at a Staythorpe protest in Newark, Nottinghamshire, on 24 February in which at least one demonstrator was wearing a Union Jack and a section of the demonstrators chanted “foreigners out.” When a video of the demonstration appeared on YouTube the wretched Socialist Party was forced to admit the presence of racist elements, saying: “Disturbingly, a small minority of workers at the front of the march had chanted ‘Foreigners out!’” (socialistparty.org.uk, 4 March). The Socialist Party does not claim that their members who were present uttered a peep of protest, much less tried to kick these thugs off the demonstration. It is notable that the petition being promoted by the SWP has been signed by prominent Labour “lefts” and trade-union bureaucrats such as John McDonnell, Tony Woodley and Mark Serwotka, but not by Keith Gibson or any other prominent figure in the Socialist Party. This is presumably because of the petition’s (mealy-mouthed) opposition to “British jobs for British workers.”

Consistent opposition to these reactionary strikes requires a revolutionary internationalist programme and a perspective of mobilising the multiethnic working class in Britain in a struggle for the revolutionary overthrow of the racist capitalist system. This is counterposed to the programme of the Socialist Party (and the SWP) whose “socialism” is merely old Labour’s social-democratic programme based on a commitment to nationalised industry under capitalism while leaving the capitalist state intact. Labourite reformism is inherently protectionist, as can be seen starkly in today’s cries for nationalisations to bail out “British” jobs and to minimise British capitalism’s losses.

The working people in this country need a party that fights for their class interests, a workers party committed to sweeping away the bankrupt capitalist system through socialist revolution to overthrow the capitalist order worldwide. We fight for a multiethnic revolutionary workers party, part of a Leninist-Trotskyist international. Socialist revolution will establish a workers state, ruled not through parliament but by soviets (or workers councils) and will lay the basis for rationally planned economies based on production for need, not for profit. This in turn will allow for development of the productive forces so that poverty, scarcity and want will be eliminated, thus laying the basis for the creation of an egalitarian socialist society.

For a Socialist United States of Europe!

The worldwide economic crisis has opened up deep divisions within the European Union (EU). This was evident at the 1 March emergency summit at which Czech prime minister Mirek Topolaneck, who currently holds the rotating EU presidency, was said to be fuming over French president Nicholas Sarkozy’s pro-

posal that in return for a government bailout, French car makers should shut down plants in Eastern Europe and produce in France. An article in the [London] Times the day after the EU summit headlined, “New ‘Iron Curtain’ Will Split EU’s Rich and Poor,” claimed that “Twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Western leaders were told yesterday that five million jobs could be lost in the ‘new’ European Union countries of the East unless radical action were taken to bail them out” (Times, 2 March).

As proletarian internationalists we oppose the EU, an imperialist consortium designed to improve the competitiveness of the European imperialists against their American and Japanese rivals, while grinding the working classes in Europe, including by intensifying racism against its minority component. We also opposed the eastward expansion of the EU into the former deformed workers states of Eastern Europe, which provided the European bourgeoisies with a vast supply of very cheap labour. At the same time we oppose work restrictions by Western European governments on workers from “new” EU member states.

The eastward expansion of the EU resulted from the capitalist counterrevolutions that swept Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union between 1989 and 1992 creating massive unemployment and social immiseration within these countries and across the world as a whole. We Trotskyists of the International Communist League fought to mobilise the working class in defence of the gains that those states embodied. This historic defeat for the workers and oppressed was supported by the SWP and the Socialist Party. The Taafeites were on Yeltsin’s barricades: the front-page headlines of their newspaper Rabochaya Demokratiya (October 1991) trumpeted: “Where We Were,” “On the Barricades in Moscow” “And in Leningrad” (see WV No. 828, 11 June 2004).

The Taafeites’ sordid role in the “British jobs” campaign has prompted Workers Power to quit the Taafeite “Campaign for a New Workers Party” (CNWP). This is truly a “day late and a dollar short.” Workers Power walked out on 1 March when the majority voted for a Socialist Party motion hailing the Lindsey strike as a “victory for the working class.” Only then did it dawn on the hapless Workers Power that the CNWP “has become little more than a front for the SP and a conduit for its politics” (Workers Power online bulletin, 10 March).

The current “British jobs” campaign gives an accurate picture of what kind of “new workers party” the Taafeites seek to build. But this is hardly news. The Taafeites’ politics—including support for counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union and loyalty to “democratic” British imperialism and its police and prison guards, as well as social-chauvinism—are integral to Labour reformism. This is a programme which Workers Power shares. Like the Taafeites, Workers Power was present on Yeltsin’s barricades of counterrevolution in Moscow in 1991.

continued on page 10



Militant tendency’s newspaper in Russia, Rabochaya Demokratiya, boasted support for counterrevolutionary Yeltsinite rabble: “On the Barricades in Moscow...” “...And in Leningrad.” Sipa



WORKERS HAMMER
Down with occupations of Afghanistan, Iran!
Imperialist troops out of Pakistan, Central Asia!

Obama, Brown escalate war in Afghanistan

Marxist newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain

£3/1 year—Britain, Ireland (Europe outside Britain and Ireland: £5; Other: £7)
US\$10/1 year

Order from/make checks payable to:
Spartacist Publications
PO Box 42886, London N19 5WY, Britain
Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

From Vietnam to Afghanistan

ISO: “Third Camp” Apologists for U.S. Imperialism

While President Barack Obama has been largely effective in his attempts to refurbish U.S. imperialism’s image, sections of the U.S. ruling class are beginning to fret that he may have bitten off more than he can chew in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The *New York Times* (12 May) reported: “Already some prominent members of Congress—including from Obama’s own party—are questioning whether Afghanistan is a lost cause.” Over 50 Democrats in the House of Representatives defected on the final vote of the president’s war funding bill. The Democratic chairman of the House Appropriations Committee repeatedly likened Obama’s stance on Afghanistan to President Richard Nixon’s Vietnam policy in the late 1960s.

Echoing such sentiment, the International Socialist Organization (ISO) ran on its Web site an article by Eamonn McCann, a prominent supporter of the Socialist Workers Party in Ireland, under the headline “Will Afghanistan be Obama’s Vietnam?” McCann opined that Vietnam “may provide the precedent and parallel” to the Afghanistan war, from “the initial declaration of an idealistic motive” (!) to the “gathering anger and disillusionment at home.”

The U.S. ruling class carried out the Vietnam War under the banner of “rolling back world Communism”—i.e., smashing the Vietnamese social revolution. That aim was indeed an “idealistic motive” to the ISO’s predecessors in the mid 1960s, as it is to the viscerally anti-Communist ISO today.

We Spartacists were for the victory of the Vietnamese Revolution and raised the call, “All Indochina Must Go Communist!” Today we stand for the military defense of the deformed workers states of Vietnam, China, North Korea and Cuba against imperialism and internal counter-revolution. At the same time, we fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy and establish a government based on elected workers and peasants councils.

The initial position of the ISO’s predecessors, then organized in the International Socialist Clubs (ISC), on the Vietnam War was fully consistent with their position of the “third camp”—supposedly neither with the imperialists nor with the Vietnamese Stalinists and their Soviet allies, but in reality always with the imperialists. The ISC, while calling for U.S. withdrawal, advocated a “democratic foreign policy for the U.S.” and “independent democratic movements” in Vietnam against the National Liberation Front (NLF) (*Independent Socialist*, January-February 1967). This was a reactionary “plague on both your houses” position based on the Cold War myth of “Soviet imperialism.”

However, by the late 1960s, there was growing support among youth for the

NLF’s victory in the Vietnam War, as part of a broader radicalization in the U.S., which resulted from the Cuban Revolution and the civil rights movement. The ISO’s predecessors found themselves increasingly unpopular as young leftists sought in various ways to solidarize with the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese workers and peasants, from identifying politically with Third World Stalinism and the writings of the Third World nationalist Frantz Fanon to embracing genuine Marxism (i.e., Trotskyism). In response, the ISO’s predecessors “redefined” the Vietnam War as a struggle for national self-determination. This allowed them to call for military victory for the NLF, which was in utter contradiction with their underlying “third camp” politics. In fact, during the 1950-53 Korean War, carried out at the height of the Cold War, the forerunners of the ISC in Max Shachtman’s International Socialist League refused to defend the Stalinist-led forces, claiming that their victory “would mean nothing but the extension of the slave power of Stalinism over the whole

ers state. Following their break with Trotskyism, the Shachtmanites pursued an uneven 18-year-long course to full-blown social democracy. Shachtman’s WP maintained some pretenses to Marxism while the Soviet Union was relatively popular in its wartime alliance with U.S. imperialism against Nazi Germany in the Second World War. But as the Cold War intensified in the late 1940s, Shachtman’s group—which became the International Socialist League in 1949—moved to the right in response to the prevailing pressures. This culminated in their liquidation into Norman Thomas’ SP in 1958.

In 1961, Shachtman ended up an apologist for U.S. imperialism’s Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. In the early 1960s, a section of Shachtman’s supporters centered on Hal Draper—who opposed Shachtman’s support for the Bay of Pigs invasion—formed the ISC as an educational appendage to the SP. But Draper stayed in the SP despite its support for U.S. machinations against Cuba and the U.S. invasion of the Dominican

denies that the victory of the workers and peasants of Vietnam against U.S. imperialism resulted in a *social revolution*—that is, the overturn of capitalist property relations. An article by ISO leader Joel Geier bragged, “We knew the NLF would set up a state capitalist regime that would deny all democratic rights and powers to workers and peasants in order to better exploit them” (*International Socialist Review*, Summer 1999).

In fact, along with the army of the North Vietnamese deformed workers state, the workers and peasants of the South made monumental sacrifices because they were fighting not only for “national liberation,” but to overthrow the rule of the landlords and capitalists. And they inflicted a major defeat on U.S. imperialism—i.e., a victory for the international proletariat.

For the ISO today to draw a parallel between the heroic workers and peasants of Vietnam and the fundamentalist-led forces in Afghanistan is simply grotesque. As proletarian-internationalist opponents of U.S. imperialism, we recognize that when the insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan aim their blows against the U.S. occupiers and their lackeys, such acts coincide with the interests of the international proletariat. But we do not imbue the forces presently organizing guerrilla attacks on U.S. forces with “anti-imperialist” credentials. We have repeatedly warned that in the absence of working-class struggle in Iraq and internationally against the occupation, the victory of one or another of the reactionary clerical forces is likely to come about through an alliance with U.S. imperialism.

In the name of “democracy,” the ISO has always stood on the side of capitalist counterrevolution. They denounced the progressive Soviet intervention into Afghanistan (see article, page 1), tailing the cutthroat *mujahedin* reactionaries. The ISO has often had an affinity for Islamic fundamentalism, for example, supporting the reactionary 1979 “Islamic Revolution” in Iran.

When the Kremlin Stalinists criminally announced that they would pull out the Red Army’s troops from Afghanistan, the ISO drew a grotesque parallel between the USSR, which was fighting on the side of social progress, and the U.S. imperialists’ counterrevolutionary war to smash the Vietnamese social revolution, writing in *Socialist Worker* (May 1988): “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.” This was a call by the ISO, in lockstep with the imperialists, for the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and East Europe. ■



WV Photo

SL banner at antiwar protest in Washington, D.C., January 1973. Spartacists fought for victory of Vietnamese workers and peasants.

territory of Korea” (*New Internationalist*, July-August 1950).

To understand the roots of the ISO’s anti-Communism, it is useful to look back at its history. The ISC grew out of the Socialist Party (SP), splitting away in 1964, following the SP’s dissolution of its youth group for refusing electoral support to Democrat Lyndon Johnson.

In a sense, the ISC represented the political continuity of the old Workers Party (WP) of Max Shachtman. The most important expression of this continuity was the theory of bureaucratic collectivism, which saw the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy as a new type of ruling class. Shachtman had broken from the then-Trotskyist U.S. Socialist Workers Party in 1940 over his rejection of the Trotskyist position of unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated work-

Republic and Vietnam. As the student protest movement grew more radical, the ISC gradually grew more “independent,” renaming itself the International Socialists (I.S.).

The ISC/I.S. differed from the SP chiefly in that it used formal Marxist rhetoric about revolution, which the SP had long abandoned. While reviving Shachtman’s theory of bureaucratic collectivism, the ISC/I.S. maintained a loose association with Tony Cliff’s group in Britain, which advocated the equally pro-imperialist line that the USSR was “state capitalist” (see “The Bankruptcy of ‘New Class’ Theories,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 55, Autumn 1999). When, after a series of debilitating splits in the 1970s, the I.S. was reborn as the ISO, it was firmly in Cliff’s orbit.

Driven by anti-Communism, the ISO

Britain...

(continued from page 9)

Prior to the 2006 split with most of its founding cadre who formed Permanent Revolution (which today shamelessly supports the “British jobs” strikes) Workers Power perennially supported Labour in elections, a tradition upheld by both wings after the split. Old Labour in government sent British troops into Northern Ireland in 1969 to reinforce the viciously anti-Catholic RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary] and in the 1970s Labour introduced vile anti-immigrant measures in Britain. Upholding this tradition, the Socialist Party has for decades refused to call for British troops out of Northern Ireland.

In Britain, a revolutionary party can only be built through opposition to Labourite reformism, which has served to tie the working class to the capitalist exploiters for over a century. [Former Prime Minister] Tony Blair began the process of remoulding the Labour Party from what Lenin termed a “bourgeois workers party.” Labour today has gone some way towards becoming an openly bourgeois party and is moribund as a reformist party. Describing Blair’s transformation of Labour, Peter Taaffe claims that “leaders like Tony Blair in Britain and their social-democratic cousins in Europe and elsewhere” went over “lock, stock and barrel to the side of the bourgeoisie in the aftermath of the collapse of Stalinism” (*Socialism Today*, March 2009).

Contrary to Taaffe, the *leaders* of the

social-democratic parties went over “lock, stock and barrel” to the bourgeoisie at the outbreak of WWI in August 1914. The leaders of the social-democratic parties became what Lenin termed social-chauvinist for lining up the working class behind their “own” bourgeoisie. This is a fitting description of the Taaffeites today. Lenin fought intransigently to win the working-class base of these parties through a political *split* from the social-chauvinist camp in the workers movement, the camp of Labourism. He wrote: “*Opportunism and social-chauvinism have the same political content*, namely, class collaboration, repudiation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, repudiation of revolutionary action, unconditional acceptance of bourgeois legality, confidence in the bourgeoisie and lack of confidence in

the proletariat. *Social-chauvinism is the direct continuation and consummation of British liberal-labour politics*” (“Opportunism, and the Collapse of the Second International,” 1915).

The ICL is dedicated to the task of reforging Trotsky’s Fourth International, the necessary instrument to fight for new October Revolutions, through intransigent struggle against social democracy. As the world today is again riven by an economic crisis, rivalries among competing imperialist powers are heating up. We insist that the proletariat must be imbued with the programme of international solidarity and struggle that Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels inscribed on the banner of the communist movement more than 160 years ago: “Workers of the World, Unite!” ■

Afghanistan...

(continued from page 1)

with a situation that threatens to spiral out of its control—alternates between repression and conciliation in dealing with the forces to whose destruction the American government is so committed. Meanwhile, the bulk of the Pakistani army remains in the eastern part of the country, arrayed against Pakistan’s perennial main enemy (and fellow nuclear-armed state) India, locked together in intractable conflict over Kashmir.

Islamabad agreed early this year to grant fundamentalist militants free rein to impose *sharia* (Islamic law) in the Swat Valley, a lush (former) tourist site northwest of Islamabad. The truce broke down last month as fundamentalist forces moved out of Swat, routing government officials in the neighboring Buner district and coming to within 60 miles of the capital. Under intense pressure from the Obama administration, the Pakistani government announced on May 7 a military counter-offensive. Reportedly consisting largely of aerial bombardment from attack helicopters and fighter jets, the offensive has driven more than one million people from their homes, adding to the half million others who were displaced earlier by Pakistani “counterinsurgency” operations in the northwestern tribal areas.

Our standpoint is one of proletarian class opposition to the U.S. capitalist rulers and to the imperialist system as a whole. Thus, we forthrightly called for the military defense of Afghanistan and Iraq against imperialist attack in the 2001 and 2003 invasions, without giving any political support to the reactionary, woman-hating Taliban cutthroats or the bloody capitalist dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. We underlined that every victory for the imperialists in their military adventures encourages more predatory wars; every setback serves to assist the struggles of working people and the oppressed the world over. We call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops and bases from Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia!

Obama: Refurbishing U.S. Imperialism’s Image

In an article posted (22 April) on the Web site of the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO), Eamonn McCann, a prominent supporter of the Socialist Workers Party in Ireland, snidely remarked that the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan is “what many Americans, naively perhaps, trusted would happen when they swarmed to give Obama their votes” (see article, page 10). Of course, the ISO was among those that “swarmed” (not at all naively) to support Obama. The day after Obama’s inauguration, the ISO published an editorial titled, “Looking Forward to Change,” and declared that Obama’s election showed that “some of the cruel sins of America’s past were finally being overcome” (*Socialist Worker* online, 21 January).

Obama has merely sought to clean up some of the most blatant excesses of Bush-Cheney’s “war on terror”—for example, by promising to close the U.S. prison in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, within a year. At the same time, he is continuing the Bush regime’s underlying policies. Most significant is Obama’s endorsement of indefinite detention, a hallmark of police-state dictatorships and the centerpiece of Bush’s war on democratic rights. While moving to greatly expand the prison at the Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan, the Obama

administration has argued in U.S. court the Bush line that prisoners at Bagram have no legal right to challenge their detention.

Many of the Guantánamo detainees will in fact not be released—they will be transferred to detention centers in Bagram and elsewhere. Last week, Obama announced that some of those held in detention centers would be tried in kangaroo-court military commissions based on those set up by the Bush administration. While Obama promised during the electoral campaign to “reject” these tribunals, he is now arguing that they are “the best way to protect our country” (*New York Times*, 16 May). Military defense lawyer Major David Frakt, in an interview with Rachel Maddow

tal, a “counterinsurgency” specialist, to head U.S. forces there (*New York Times*, 15 May). From 2003 to 2008, McChrystal led the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), which heads the military’s “special missions” units. A United Nations report in February specifically pointed to clandestine operations by commando units in accounting for the growing number of civilian deaths in Afghanistan, either directly by carrying out commando raids or by calling in airstrikes in support of those raids.

McChrystal’s JSOC oversaw a squad of U.S. special forces in Iraq that ran a torture center named Camp Nama near the Baghdad airport. Witnesses have



Refugees from Pakistani army offensive against Taliban in Swat Valley line up for food in Swabi, northwest Pakistan, May 14.

(MSNBC, 15 May), declared that Obama was proposing only “minor tweaks” to the military commissions and that hearsay and “coerced evidence” would still be “broadly admissible.”

A staunch supporter of the “war on terror,” Obama voted as a Senator for an earlier version of the military commissions law, as well as for warrantless wiretapping and the renewal of the USA Patriot Act. Last week, he moved to block the release of photos documenting abuse of prisoners in Afghanistan and Iraq. He also sought to have the British High Court suppress evidence of the hideous tortures inflicted on Binyam Mohamed, who was imprisoned in Pakistan, Morocco, Afghanistan and Guantánamo, before being released earlier this year. Renewing a threat made previously by the Bush administration, Obama warned that if details of Mohamed’s treatment were revealed, Washington would curb the exchange of intelligence information with Britain. Earlier, the Obama administration unsuccessfully tried to get a U.S. federal appeals court to throw out a civil suit brought by Mohamed and four other men against a Boeing subsidiary for flying them to secret prisons where they could be tortured, as part of the CIA’s policy of “extraordinary rendition.” We say: Immediate freedom for all detainees! U.S. out of Guantánamo!

Obama Intensifies Afghan Occupation

The U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan in 2001 was embraced by liberals and Democrats as a “just” response to the September 11 terror attacks. In reality, the invasion of Afghanistan represented the launching of U.S. imperialism’s “war on terror,” an all-purpose pretext for imperialist war and plunder internationally and a war on immigrants, black people and labor at home. Contrary to what the ISO and other reformists claimed in promoting Obama’s “antiwar” credentials in Iraq, the purpose of reducing U.S. occupation troops in that country—as Obama himself has repeatedly made clear—is to intensify the occupation of Afghanistan.

Thus, to reportedly provide a “fresh approach” in Afghanistan, Obama last week named Lt. Gen. Stanley McChry-

described beatings of detainees there frequently resulting in broken bones, as well as burn marks on prisoners and electric shocks with stun guns. (An investigation into Camp Nama stalled after a “computer malfunction” destroyed 70 percent of its records.)

As head of JSOC, McChrystal was a key advocate of a plan, approved by President Bush last summer, to use American commandos to strike at fundamentalist forces inside Pakistan. That resulted in a raid by JSOC forces last September in Pakistan’s South Waziristan tribal area, which, unlike several previous cross-border commando raids carried out during the rule of former Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf, provoked a furious response from Islamabad. One U.S. government official, calling it a “strategic miscalculation,” declared (armytimes.com, 29 September 2008):

“Once the Pakistanis started talking about closing down our supply routes, and actually demonstrated they could do it, once they started talking about shooting American helicopters, we obviously had to take seriously that maybe this [approach] was not going to be good enough.”

JSOC under McChrystal was also responsible for covert operations against Iran carried out by U.S. commandos operating from Iraq. According to investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, these included “seizing members of Al Quds, the commando arm of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, and taking them to Iraq for interrogation, and the pursuit of ‘high-value targets’ in the President’s war on terror, who may be captured or killed” (*New Yorker*, 7 July 2008). In summary, as the *New York Times* (13 May) noted, McChrystal “is ideally suited to carry out a White House strategy that regards Afghanistan and Pakistan as part of a single, urgent problem.”

ISO Opposed Social Progress in Afghanistan

Largely the creation of the Pakistani military and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) as well as the American CIA, the Taliban and Al Qaeda are Frankenstein’s monsters turned on their former masters. The U.S., Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, among others, armed, funded and trained reactionary *mujahedin* (holy warriors) to kill Soviet soldiers following the entry of

the Red Army into Afghanistan in 1979 at the request of the modernizing nationalist PDPA regime. The Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan was one of the few genuinely progressive acts carried out by the Stalinist bureaucracy, opening the vista of social liberation to the downtrodden Afghan peoples.

Despite its degeneration under a Stalinist bureaucratic caste, the Soviet Union remained a workers state embodying historic gains of the October Revolution of 1917, centrally the planned economy and collectivized property. These represented enormous gains, not least for women and the historically Muslim peoples of Soviet Central Asia, where conditions before the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution had been as backward and benighted as in Afghanistan. As Trotskyists, we stood for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialist attack and capitalist counter-revolution. A key expression of our defense was our call for workers political revolution to oust the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy and replace it with a regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

In dreadfully backward Afghanistan, lacking even a working class, the Red Army represented the only real basis for social progress. A Red Army victory and a prolonged Soviet presence in the country posed the extension of the social gains of the October Revolution to Afghanistan, transforming it along the lines of Soviet Central Asia. The international Spartacist tendency, now the International Communist League, said: “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!” and called to extend the gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples.

The U.S. imperialists seized on the Red Army intervention to intensify their revived anti-Soviet crusade (“Cold War II”). As the CIA undertook its biggest covert operation ever in support of the “holy warrior” *mujahedin* (including one Osama bin Laden), Afghanistan became the front line of the imperialists’ drive to destroy the Soviet Union. Like the bulk of the left internationally, the anti-Communist ISO and its then-parent group in Britain, Tony Cliff’s Socialist Workers Party (SWP), criminally stood foursquare with the imperialists. The 12 January 1980 issue of the SWP’s *Socialist Worker* blared against the Red Army: “Troops Out of Afghanistan!”

By the mid 1980s, the Red Army—which had the support of sections of the population, especially in the cities—had the reactionary *mujahedin* militarily on the run. When then-Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, in a vain attempt to appease the imperialists, withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, we denounced this crime against the Afghan and Soviet peoples. The betrayal by the Kremlin bureaucracy opened the road to *mujahedin* rule in Afghanistan and prepared the ground for the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state itself in 1991-92. This was celebrated by the ISO and its international cothinkers, who crowed, “Communism has collapsed.... It is a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing” (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 31 August 1991).

As Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky taught, you can’t win new gains without defending those already won. The capitalist counterrevolution welcomed by the imperialists and their social-democratic lackeys like the ISO was a world-historic defeat for the international proletariat, creating a “one superpower” world and paving the way for the brutal wars against Iraq and Afghanistan. We seek to win the multiracial U.S. working class to the understanding that its interests are counterposed to those of its “own” ruling class and its state and political parties. Thus we fight to break the proletariat’s allegiance to the Democratic Party, which has long been promoted by the pro-capitalist trade-union tops and the reformist left. This is key to our purpose: the forging of a revolutionary workers party that fights for the defeat of U.S. imperialism through socialist revolution. ■

Moving?

To receive *Workers Vanguard* without interruption please let us know at least three weeks before you move. Send your new **and** old address to:

Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO
New York, NY 10116

Down With Protectionist Poison!

Britain: Labourites Whitewash Chauvinist Strikes

The following article is reprinted from *Workers Hammer* No. 206 (Spring 2009), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). It centrally deals with the support given by pro-Labour Party reformist “socialists” to a series of reactionary strikes earlier this year directed against foreign-born work-

WORKERS HAMMER

ers. In virtually all major capitalist countries, the union tops have responded to mass layoffs and unemployment with chauvinism and calls for increasing protectionism. Just as in Britain, the struggle against such poison is vital to working people in the U.S. and throughout the world. As our comrades of the SL/B wrote in “Down With Reactionary Strikes Against Foreign Workers!” (WV No. 930, 13 February):

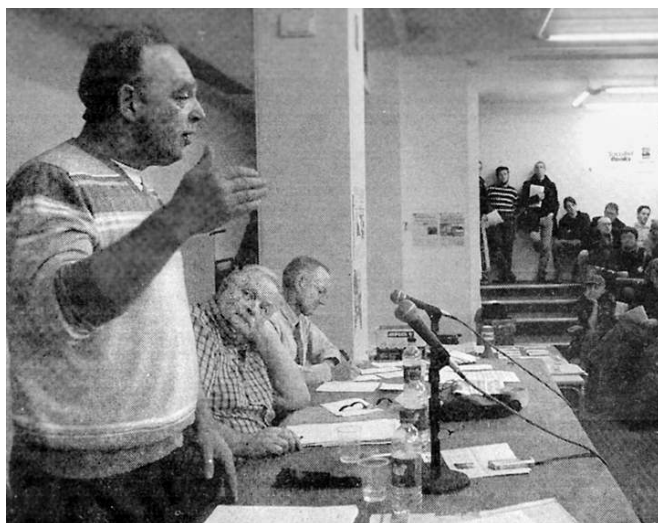
“For the bourgeoisie, ‘free trade’ and protectionism are options they can debate, but for the proletariat, protectionism is poison. It is a classic means of channeling discontent over job losses into hostility towards foreign workers and immigrants while building illusions in the benevolence of our ‘own’ capitalists....

“There is no answer to the boom-and-bust cycles of capitalism short of proletarian socialist revolution that takes power out of the hands of the irrational capitalist ruling class and replaces it with a planned, socialised economy. Only the achievement of a world socialist order can eliminate the age-old problem of poverty, scarcity and want.”

* * *

With the workers of the world confronting the most severe world economic crisis since the Great Depression, a wave of virulently chauvinist strikes against foreign workers has swept building sites at Britain’s oil refineries and power stations. Demanding “British jobs for British workers,” a slogan long associated with the fascists, these protests are playing the bosses’ game—lining workers up with [Prime Minister] Gordon Brown and the British capitalist rulers against immigrant workers.

Socialism Today



Paul Mattsson

Above: Protectionist rally against foreign workers at Lindsey oil refinery, January 30. Left: Socialist Party’s Keith Gibson, member of strike committee, was instrumental in building reactionary strikes.

The reactionary character of the protests is blindingly obvious from the settlement reached at Lindsey oil refinery in Lincolnshire in February. Brokered by the arbitration service ACAS, the deal included a pledge by management that 102 jobs that were previously expected to go to Italian workers will now be offered to British workers. This shameful deal is hailed by Peter Taaffe’s Socialist Party [affiliated with Socialist Alternative in the U.S.] as a victory and held up as a model for the Staythorpe power station in Nottinghamshire, where protests against

Spanish and Polish workers are ongoing. Meanwhile protests against Polish workers have taken place at the Isle of Grain in Kent. The outcome of the Lindsey strikes confirms our statement that: “The strikes were not intended to secure more jobs or indeed any gains for the working class as a whole, nor to defend existing jobs. They were about redividing the existing pool of jobs according to the nationality of the workers” (see WV No. 930, 13 February).

This “British jobs” crusade is so alien to the interests of the multiethnic working class that it has been supported by the xenophobic, anti-working-class gutter press. Thus the 16 February London *Evening Standard* whipped up a storm against foreign-born workers who are registered as “local” and working on building sites for the 2012 Olympics, fulminating that: “The *Evening Standard* found people from various eastern European backgrounds employed [at] the Stratford site, as well as workers of Indian, Pakistani and Nepalese origin.” During the Lindsey strike, Italian workers living in fear of their lives were told to go back to their own country by racist strikers. Meanwhile the government plans to augment their racist immigration laws, imposing even more restrictions on the rights of immigrants.

This month marks the 25th anniversary of the start of the miners strike of 1984-85, and the contrast between today’s construction strikes and the miners heroic battle couldn’t be clearer. The striking miners came up against the full force of

the capitalist state and are still being vilified by the capitalist press to this day. At the same time the embattled miners became a tribune of the oppressed layers in society: women of the coalfields, Britain’s oppressed black and Asian minorities as well as gay and lesbian organisations backed the strike against the hated Thatcher government. In contrast to the vile nationalism prevalent at Lindsey and Staythorpe, the miners strike inspired magnificent displays of proletarian internationalism from workers across national lines: French trade unions as well as workers in Ireland, elsewhere in Europe, South Africa and the Soviet Union sent material aid to the miners and their families.

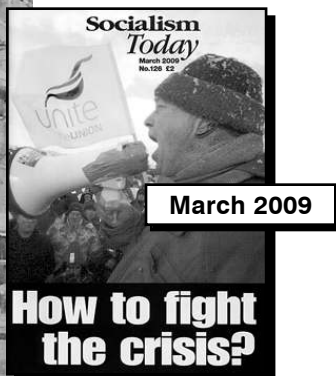
In the face of today’s worldwide assault on jobs, the urgent need is to mobilise the strength of the trade unions in a class-struggle fight *against* the capitalist bosses, Brown’s Labour government and *in opposition* to the trade-union bureaucracy. A genuine struggle to defend the interests of the multiethnic working class would demand a shorter working week with no loss in pay and a sliding scale of wages and hours. This would be counterposed to the current campaign pitting British workers against foreign workers and fuelling anti-immigrant racism. Scandalously Derek Simpson, co-leader of the Unite union, has backed this campaign, spewing poisonous rhetoric while posing beside the Union Jack, the racist emblem of the Empire in colonial times, symbol of the subjugation of Catholics in Northern Ireland today and of the bloody occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. As we said in our last issue:

“It is vitally necessary for the unions to fight against racism. Labour’s vaunted ‘flexible economy’ is heavily dependent on immigrant workers, who work for pitiful wages and face a climate of racist hostility. The government’s ‘war on terror’ has led to increased racism against Muslims, who are concentrated among the poorest section of the working class. Particularly in the context of recession, attacks on immigrant workers are increasing. The union Unite recently protested at the decision of subcontractors working at Staythorpe power station near Newark to employ only overseas workers on the job while refusing to hire any local workers. A demonstration outside the power station evoked Gordon Brown’s call at the GMB union conference in 2007 for ‘British workers for British jobs’—a slogan associated with the fascists. We vehemently oppose such divide-and-rule ploys, pitting workers of different countries against each other. We say the trade unions must fight for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants!*”

—*Workers Hammer* No. 205, Winter 2008-2009

Far from organising a defence of jobs, about the *only* thing the trade-union bureaucracy is offering the working class is an endless stream of chauvinist rhetoric about British jobs, but *no* class-struggle fight against the capitalist order that plunged the world into this dire economic state. With the world’s largest car makers announcing tens of thousands of redundancies [layoffs] around the world, the Unite bureaucracy in Britain called on the government “to support UK manufacturing and the UK car sector” (tgwu.org.uk).

continued on page 9



Taaffeite journal *Socialism Today* disappears anti-immigrant racism in strike by using photo showing only blank side of placard.