

Defend Gains of Cuban Revolution!

Cuba: Economic Crisis and “Market Reforms”



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Getty

In early August, Cuba's National Assembly endorsed a five-year program of market-oriented economic reforms that had been adopted by the Sixth Congress of the Cuban Communist Party in the spring. The projected measures include the elimination of over a million state jobs (20 percent of the workforce), major cuts to state subsidies, a greatly expanded small-business sector and enhanced incentives to attract foreign investment.

From the time they were first announced, in August 2010, the centerpiece of the “market reforms” has been the call to eliminate a million state jobs. The bureaucracy of the state-controlled Cuban Workers Federation (CTC) has been prominent in promoting these cuts, shamelessly claiming they are essential to “continue perfecting socialism.” At this year's May Day demonstration in Havana, the CTC marched under a call for “unity, productivity and efficiency.”

Originally, half the job cuts were supposed to take effect by March, but this deadline came and went. The Communist Party congress the following month was then supposed to set them in motion, but it decided to again postpone their implementation in the face of reported widespread discontent. As early as last October, Reuters news agency reported that party officials had to be brought to the Habana Libre Hotel to “calm workers down” when they learned of the planned job losses. Laid-off workers will only briefly get severance payments of up to 60 percent of last monthly wages.

The stated aim of the “reforms” is to revive Cuba's stagnant economy, which has never fully recovered from the severe



Marcelino Vázquez Hernández

Top left: Cubans receiving bread ration at subsidized bakery in Havana, 2006. Top right: Raúl Castro (at left) at December 2010 Parliament session where he pushed market-oriented reforms. Above: 2011 May Day demonstration, Plaza de la Revolución, Havana.

crisis that followed the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union some two decades ago. Despite the rule of a Stalinist bureaucracy, the Soviet workers state provided a crucial economic lifeline for this small, impoverished island struggling to survive under the shadow of the American imperialist behemoth. The Soviet Union also represented a military obstacle to Washington's revanchist counterrevolutionary ambitions.

The severe economic problems of the post-Soviet period were heightened in 2008 when Cuba was hit hard by the global capitalist financial crisis. The price of nickel, Cuba's main export commodity, fell by as much as 80 percent, while remittances from Cubans living in the U.S. declined substantially. In the same year, hurricanes destroyed \$10 billion of infrastructure. Facing a trade deficit of nearly \$12 billion, Cuba had to default on pay-

ments to foreign creditors. The fact that Cuban doctors and other professionals working abroad account for about 60 percent of the country's hard-currency earnings, with the tourist industry second, speaks to the dire state of the Cuban economy.

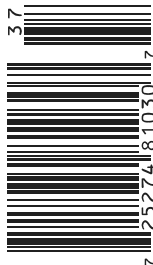
Bourgeois and leftist commentators alike have seized on the regime's recent announcements to make wildly varying predictions. These range from fatuous optimism about isolated Cuba's prospects for advancing toward socialism to claims that capitalism is being, or has been, restored on the island. To understand why such views are fallacious requires a Marxist understanding of the class nature of the Cuban state and its ruling Stalinist bureaucracy.

We Trotskyists do not take a side in the debate between advocates of market reforms/decentralization and those who would return to a more rigidly centralized economy. Our starting point is the understanding that Cuba is a *bureaucratically deformed workers state*, a society where capitalism has been overthrown but political power is monopolized by a parasitic ruling caste whose privileges derive from administering the collectivized economy. As the example of China shows, there is an inherent tendency for such regimes to abandon bureaucratized central planning in favor of market mechanisms. Intrinsically hostile to workers democracy, they resort to the discipline of the market (and the unemployment line) as a whip to raise labor productivity.

Despite the distortions of bureaucratic rule, first under Fidel Castro and now

continued on page 7

For Workers Political Revolution!
For Socialist Revolution Throughout the Americas!



Execution Set for September 21

Stop Legal Lynching of Troy Davis!

Time is running out for Troy Davis, a 41-year-old black man facing execution despite substantial evidence of his innocence. On September 6, a Georgia Superior Court judge signed an execution warrant, and a date has been set for September 21. Davis, who faced three prior death warrants, has now exhausted all his appeals. In March, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to even consider the evidence exonerating Davis of the 1989 killing of a white off-duty police officer. Davis has a hearing before the Georgia Board of Pardons and Parole two days before the scheduled execution. Davis's supporters have called for a global day of solidarity on September 16, including a march in Atlanta. What's needed is a mass outpouring of protest. Opponents of the racist death penalty, defenders of civil liberties, trade-union militants and fighters for black rights must demand: **Stop the execution! Free Troy Davis!**

The impending execution is nothing short of a racist legal lynching. In 1991, Davis was sentenced to death after a frame-up conviction based on questionable "eyewitness" identifications, dubious accounts that he confessed and testimony coerced by the cops, without a

shred of physical evidence linking him to the killing. Seven of the prosecution's nine witnesses have since recanted. The only holdouts are one man who may be the actual killer and another who initially denied being able to identify the shooter, only to pin the killing on Davis at trial two years later.

At a federal court hearing last year, some of the witnesses were finally able to tell how they were forced by the cops to falsely implicate Davis. But in upholding the conviction and death sentence, the judge sneered that this testimony was "smoke and mirrors" and declared the accounts of police/prosecution coercion—a regular feature of the capitalist justice system—were not credible...because the cops said it didn't happen that way! (See "Troy Davis Appeal Turned Down," WV No. 965, 24 September 2010.)

The impending legal lynching of Troy Davis exemplifies that for America's capitalist rulers the life of a black man on the bottom is worth nothing. In this decaying profit system, which was founded on black chattel slavery, the bourgeois rulers' impulse to genocide is seen in the death penalty, mass black incarceration, the elimination of welfare and rampant cop



Georgia Department of Corrections

terror in the ghettos. Troy Davis is a victim of a bourgeois "justice" system premised on protecting capitalist rule and profits through organized terror against the working class, the black masses and other minorities.

We oppose the death penalty on principle—for the guilty as well as the innocent. We do not accord the state the right to decide who shall live and who shall die. Capital punishment is a barbaric legacy of medieval torture, a system of legal murder that reinforces the brutalization

of society in all respects. And in racist America, black people are overwhelmingly the victims of state terror, whether this system is administered by the Republican or Democratic parties of capital. Davis was tried in a courtroom flying the Georgia state flag, which at the time included the battle flag of the slaveholding Confederacy. The lynching of black men—by racist mobs and by the august courts—is deeply embedded in this country's history, particularly but by no means exclusively in Southern states like Troy Davis's Georgia. Over 40 percent of those on death row in this country are black. **Abolish the racist death penalty!**

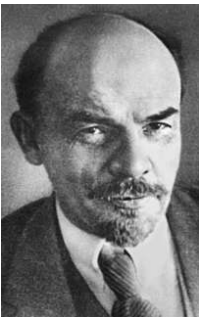
Through petitions and public statements, hundreds of thousands have opposed Davis's execution, including former president Jimmy Carter, former FBI director William Sessions, South Africa's Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Pope. While this may have given Georgia's rulers some pause, it was only so they could gather additional judicial sanction to kill Davis. To put a final halt to the grisly workings of the U.S. rulers' machinery of death requires sweeping away the racist capitalist system through proletarian revolution. ■



TROTSKY

The Revolutionary Newspaper

In one of his earliest writings, V. I. Lenin explained the crucial importance of the Marxist press in building a revolutionary workers party. The article was written for the fourth issue of Iskra, newspaper of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party's revolutionary Marxist tendency, which would later develop into the Bolshevik Party.



LENIN

The immediate task of our Party is not to summon all available forces for the attack right now, but to call for the formation of a revolutionary organisation capable of uniting all forces and guiding the movement in actual practice and not in name alone, that is, an organisation ready at any time to support every protest and every outbreak and use it to build up and consolidate the fighting forces suitable for the decisive struggle....

A newspaper is what we most of all need; without it we cannot conduct that systematic, all-round propaganda and agitation, consistent in principle, which is the chief and permanent task of Social-Democracy in general and, in particular, the pressing task of the moment, when interest in politics and in questions of socialism has been aroused among the broadest strata of the population....

The role of a newspaper, however, is not limited solely to the dissemination of ideas, to political education, and to the enlistment of political allies. A newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, it is also a collective organiser. In this last respect it may be likened to the scaffolding round a building under construction, which marks the contours of the structure and facilitates communication between the builders, enabling them to distribute the work and to view the common results achieved by their organised labour. With the aid of the newspaper, and through it, a permanent organisation will naturally take shape that will engage, not only in local activities, but in regular general work, and will train its members to follow political events carefully, appraise their significance and their effect on the various strata of the population, and develop effective means for the revolutionary party to influence those events.

—V. I. Lenin, "Where to Begin?" May 1901, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5

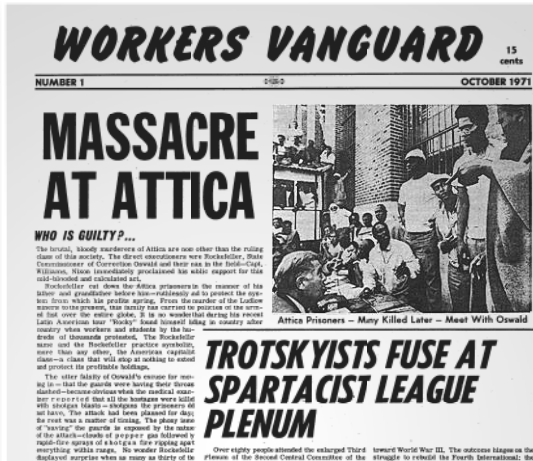
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TROTSKYISTS FUSE AT SPARTACIST LEAGUE PLENUM

Over eighty people attended the enlarged Third Plenum of the Spartacist League, held in New York City over the Labor Day weekend. Participants and observers from all parts of the country were present, as well as a Spartacist representative recently returned from Europe and Central America. The Spartacist League is the U.S. section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), the principal organization of the Communist Working Committee of Los Angeles with the U.S. Workers' Party of America. The Spartacist League is the U.S. section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), the principal organization of the Communist Working Committee of Los Angeles with the U.S. Workers' Party of America. The Spartacist League is the U.S. section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), the principal organization of the Communist Working Committee of Los Angeles with the U.S. Workers' Party of America.

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Anti-Abortion Onslaught Targets Blacks, Poor For Free, Safe Abortion on Demand!

Last month, Dr. LeRoy Carhart was the target of protest once again by the fanatical anti-abortionists of Operation Rescue outside his new Maryland clinic near Washington, D.C. Carhart was an associate of Dr. George Tiller, a late-term abortion provider who fought decades of harassment and violence that culminated in his assassination two years ago in Kansas. Braving an intensely hostile social climate, Dr. Carhart, one of the very few remaining practitioners of abortions late into pregnancy, continues to put his life on the line for women's rights.

The drive against late-term abortion providers is a major part of a wholesale assault on abortion rights, from violent attacks on clinics to a wave of restrictive court rulings and state laws. This summer, a Planned Parenthood clinic in Texas and a women's center in Detroit were attacked with Molotov cocktails, and last year a clinic in Madera, California, was hit with a firebomb. While the Supreme Court has not overturned the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision striking down anti-abortion laws, federal and state governments under both the Democratic and Republican parties have used "salami tactics" to reverse abortion rights piecemeal. As a result, the capitalist rulers have made abortion virtually inaccessible to millions of women nationwide.

Today, nearly 90 percent of U.S. counties provide no abortion services. Thirty-nine states prohibit abortions after a specified point in pregnancy, and 36 states have "parental consent laws" requiring one or both parents of women under 18 to be notified and/or approve of the abortion. Meanwhile, billboards across the U.S. extol phony "crisis pregnancy centers." Far outnumbering abortion clinics, the "crisis centers" have been set up by "right-to-life" outfits to coerce women to carry their fetuses to term.

Behind the war on abortion rights is the oppression of women, which is rooted in the family and reinforced by religious backwardness. The institution of the family originated in early class society as a means to guarantee the inheritance of property, requiring women's monogamy. Under capitalism, the family is necessary both to rear the next generation of workers and to inculcate social conservatism, from puritanical sexual norms to subservience to authority. The increasing restrictions on abortion—a basic medical procedure safer than childbirth—pressure countless women into bearing children against their will. As revolutionary communists, we defend abortion rights along with every other gain for women, the working class, blacks and immigrants, no matter how partial. We fight for free contraception and free, safe abortion on demand as part of the struggle for free, quality health care for all.

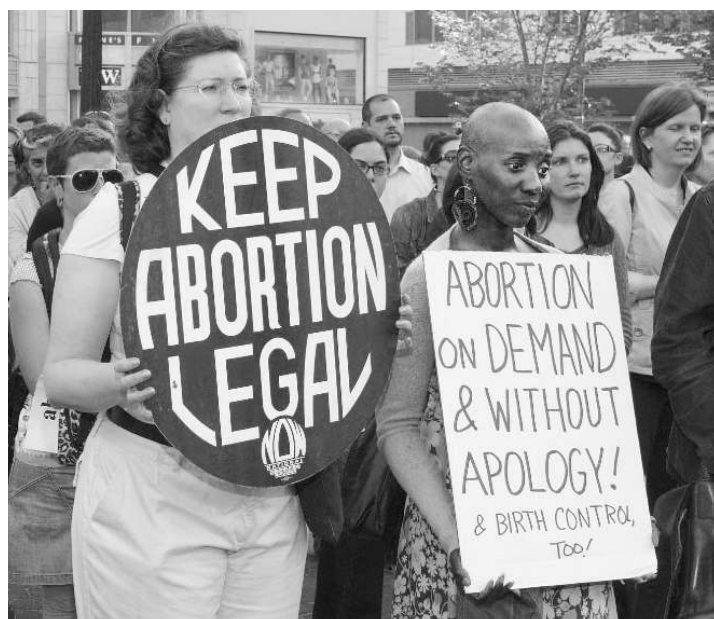
In the first half of this year, states have enacted 80 new laws restricting abortion, a record number. A South Dakota law mandates that women seeking abortions undergo a cruel 72-hour waiting period and visit a "crisis pregnancy center," where they will be counseled on concocted "risk factors," like the lie that abortion causes breast cancer. A law going through the Ohio state legislature would ban abortion once a fetal heartbeat can be detected, which can be as early as six weeks. This would virtually eliminate

abortion as an option, since many women don't even find out they are pregnant until that time. Fourteen states have restrictions on insurance coverage of abortion, and many more are threatening to do the same.

With fewer and fewer doctors performing abortions and no money to pay for them, many poor and working-class women resort to desperate measures, including dangerous back-alley abortions and even suicide. In this lengthy period of social reaction, fetuses are granted more rights

spewed anti-immigrant rants in calling to amend or repeal the Fourteenth Amendment, which grants citizenship to those born in the U.S., staunchly uphold the Fourteenth Amendment as applying to "unborn children"!

The in-your-face anti-woman bigotry of the Republicans allows the Democrats to sell themselves as the "pro-choice" party. But it was the Democrats' health care "reform" that made good on Obama's promise that no federal dollars would be used to fund abortion, continuing the tra-



Koizumi/NLN

**June 2009
NYC vigil for
murdered
abortion doctor
George Tiller.**

than pregnant women. Bogus "feticide" laws, which exist at both the federal level and in at least 38 states, have been used to arrest women whose pregnancies have been terminated, whether intentionally or by accident.

In 2010, a woman in Iowa was arrested for falling down the stairs and losing her fetus; she was released when cops found out she was only in her second trimester, not the third, when criminal charges would have applied. In Utah the year before, a 17-year-old girl seven months into pregnancy, who was living in a house with no electricity or running water and with no access to transportation, paid a man \$150 to beat her up in an attempt to cause a miscarriage. Initially the teenager was charged with "criminal solicitation of murder." Although the case was later dismissed, a state bill was proposed that would impose criminal penalties if a woman's "reckless" behavior caused a miscarriage. Earlier this year in Indianapolis, Bei Bei Shuai, a distraught pregnant woman who tried to kill herself, was thrown in jail when she survived the suicide attempt but the fetus did not. Accused of murder, she has recently been denied bail. We demand that all charges against Bei Bei Shuai be dropped and that she be released immediately!

Among those leading the anti-woman onslaught are the bible-thumping Republican right wingers, who write Christian "morality" into practically every aspect of their political platform, including preaching "abstinence only" education and the nonsense that an "unborn child" has a fundamental "individual right to life." Tea Party types who months ago

dition of the Hyde Amendment enacted under Democrat Jimmy Carter in 1977 that eliminated Medicaid funding for abortions. Obama has declared his support for prohibitions on late-term abortions and upholds federal "conscience laws" allowing medical professionals to refuse to perform abortions because of their religious beliefs. This year, Congressional Democrats agreed to defund the Title Ten program, effectively cutting \$17 million in federal money from reproductive health organizations, particularly affecting Planned Parenthood.

As Dr. Carhart noted in a 2010 interview with National Public Radio, "these same people that protest abortions are also against all of the things that would help reduce the frequency of abortion, including early education about sex, early education about the use of birth control, availability of birth control, availability of school education about intercourse and about sex." Lack of affordable contraception is especially the case for poor and minority women, who have the majority of unplanned pregnancies and correspondingly undergo the majority of abortions. Forty-two percent of women obtaining abortions have incomes below the federal poverty level, and black women are almost five times more likely to have an abortion than white women.

The attacks on abortion rights have fallen especially hard on black women, who are already ground down by the entrenched racial oppression and anti-woman bigotry of American capitalist society. In a climate of sharply increased religiosity, those attacks are aided by "right-to-life" black preachers and petty-

bourgeois religious "empowerment" types, who recycle the decades-old smear that black women's abortions amount to "genocide" and promote the garbage that abortion is the "number one killer in the black community." As part of an anti-abortion billboard campaign in major U.S. cities, an outfit called the Radiance Foundation, based in Georgia, has plastered pictures of a black baby under the heading, "Endangered Species." The group Life Always, founded by a black Texas pastor, has posted a sign reading, "The Most Dangerous Place for African Americans Is in the Womb."

This lie is not only sick and grotesque; it whitewashes the reality that the "most dangerous place" for black people is this capitalist society. Youth in ghetto wastelands daily risk being shot by trigger-happy cops or rounded up in the racist "war on drugs" and sent to prison hellholes. Their "life" is one of poverty, unemployment, jail-like schools, crumbling houses and disappearing social services. Taking a page from the racist ruling class, which has vituperated against ghetto women as "unfit mothers" and "welfare queens," these reactionary demagogues blame black women for their own oppression.

The anti-abortion offensive is part of a generalized assault on the rights and living conditions of working people, from union-busting and mass layoffs to skyrocketing medical costs and the chipping away of even the most minimal social safety net. What is urgently needed is a *class-struggle fight* to defend and extend women's rights, including abortion, linked to a fight for quality medical care and jobs for all. It is the working class that has the potential, under the leadership of a revolutionary party, to carry out a socialist revolution that will sweep away the racist capitalist order and forge a new collective society run in the interests of the working people. This is the only road to the liberation of women and the emancipation of black people.

After the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky led the proletarian overthrow of the capitalist order in Russia in 1917, the Soviet government issued a decree overturning criminal penalties for abortion—the first government in the world to do so. Despite the country's deep poverty and social backwardness, the revolutionary regime took initial steps to replace the institution of the family with socialized laundries and dining halls, along with free childcare, aiming to liberate women from the drudgery and isolation of housekeeping and child rearing.

A summary report of a speech by Bolshevik leader Inessa Armand to the First International Conference of Communist Women, printed in 1921, powerfully expressed the communist perspective for women's emancipation: "The struggle for the liberation of women is an inseparable part of the general struggle for the dictatorship of the working class and must give to the final fight millions of reserves from the most backward, most forgotten and oppressed, most humiliated layers of the working class and the toiling poor from the women's army of labor" (quoted in "Communist International Theses on Work Among Women," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 62, Spring 2011). ■



Barbaric Mutilation of Bangladeshi Woman

The following article is reprinted from Spartacist Canada No. 170 (Fall 2011), newspaper of the Trotskyist League of Canada, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

SPARTACIST CANADA



On June 5, in the city of Dhaka, Bangladesh, 33-year-old Rumana Monzur was permanently blinded and disfigured by her husband. For 25 long minutes, he tortured Rumana, gouging out her eyes and chewing off her nose and parts of her face. An assistant professor in international relations at Dhaka University, Rumana has been pursuing a master's degree in political science at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver. She returned home to Dhaka in May to visit her family, including her five-year-old daughter, while completing her thesis. This attempt on her life was intended to put a stop to Rumana's academic career; in her own words, "he hated the idea that I would become educated."

Reportedly, it was only after the Dhaka University teachers union in Bangladesh threatened to strike that Rumana's husband Hassan Sayed was arrested on June 15. He has now been charged with attempted murder. His arrest came on the heels of June 14 protests by students and teachers at the university who organized two human chains and a march through the campus. In view of the danger of making her story public, protesters also demanded security for Rumana's family. Additional calls were made for the government and Dhaka University to pay her medical bills. Because of the publicity surrounding this horrific crime, Rumana was able to receive medical care in India and Canada, but attempts to save her vision were tragically in vain. She has now been granted temporary residence in Canada, along with some of her immediate family.

Her story also sparked outrage in Canada. On June 26, students at St. John's College, the UBC residence where Rumana had been living, organized a 300-strong rally. The protest drew students, teachers, trade unionists and women's organizations, as well as supporters of the Trotskyist League. Placards carried included "Justice for Rumana" and "Respect Women's Right to Education."

At the rally and in Canadian newspaper articles some feminists insisted that the attack had nothing to do with religion and was purely a "domestic violence" issue, claiming that to say otherwise would be racist. It is true that violence against



Priyo

women occurs in all societies, crossing class, religious and national bounds, but what happened to Rumana had all the markings of an attempted "honour killing." There have been countless such murders in the Near East, in South and Central Asia as well as in many imperialist countries. These brutal crimes grow out of the clash between a woman's desire for independence from "traditional" culture and the legacy of pre-capitalist social and economic norms that persist in large swathes of the world.

The attack on Rumana is reminiscent of the murder of 17-year-old Aqsa Parvez at the hands of her father in suburban Toronto four years ago, and of the series of brutal murders of Sikh women in B.C. [British Columbia] by their husbands and other relatives. Aqsa had refused to wear the Islamic *hijab* (headscarf); a pattern among the Sikh women was that their relative economic independence, with jobs as teachers, nurses, software engineers, etc., clashed with traditional Sikh society, where arranged marriages and dowry are the norm. In Rumana's case, her academic pursuits and independent life abroad were similarly at odds with traditional Muslim culture.

Such crimes highlight the explosive mixture of women's oppression and anti-immigrant racism in Canada today. We denounce attempts by racist reactionaries and capitalist politicians to exploit these horrible murders in order to fuel anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim bigotry. Racist hysteria against Muslims has been the domestic fuel of the rulers' "war on terror," which has seen countless frame-ups, detentions, people "rendered" to other countries to be tortured and a sustained assault on the rights of everyone. As an extension of the "war on terror," veiled Muslim women



Province

Left: Dhaka University students protest on June 13 in support of Rumana Monzur (above), an assistant professor at the university who was blinded in attack by husband.

have been repeatedly scapegoated.

We sharply oppose this racist ruling-class drive against Muslims and other minorities. At the same time we strongly solidarize with women who seek to throw off the strictures of religious traditionalism. Bangladesh, like the rest of the Indian subcontinent, bears the imprint of pre-capitalist social and economic norms. This neocolonial country is dominated by the dictates of the imperialist order while also subject to the tyranny of religious obscurantism; capitalist exploitation manipulates and deepens the ancient traditions and taboos.

The concept of "family honour"—control of a woman's sexuality by her family—is not the exclusive purview of Islam but occurs in a number of religions, including Christianity. It is the reflection of the treatment of women as the property of their husbands or fathers. This was powerfully captured by Friedrich Engels in his classic work *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884): "In order to make certain of the wife's fidelity and therefore of the paternity of the children, she is delivered over unconditionally into the power of the husband; if he kills her, he is only exercising his rights."

Understanding the deadly consequences for a woman in Bangladesh if her "virtue" is questioned, Rumana's family solicited testimonies from classmates and friends in Vancouver to attest to her fidelity after her husband accused her of adultery to "justify" his torture. Such allegations have meant death for many women and young girls. This was the fate of Hena Acuter, a 14-year-old rape victim who was whipped to death in January following a "fatwa" issued by local Muslim clerics that declared her an adulteress. Since then at least three other Bangladeshi women have reportedly killed themselves after being subjected to similar public humiliation and torture.

In places like Bangladesh, burdened by centuries-old "customs," even basic questions of democratic reform can be explosive. In 1994 Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasrin was hounded out of the country by Islamic fundamentalists incensed by her fight for the rights of women, including to contraception and abortion (see "Women and the Permanent Revolution in Bangladesh," *Women and Revolution* No. 44, Winter 1994-Spring 1995).

In April of this year, reactionary fundamentalists staged a general strike in response to the government's National Women's Development Policy. The policy has drawn the fundamentalists' ire for its modest reforms to family law codes enacted under Islamic edicts. A number

of left-leaning women's groups, including the Women's Cell of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, have rallied under the platform "Equal rights is our minimum demand." They protest the incompleteness of the government policy and demand a "unified" family law and equal rights of inheritance for women. Whatever reforms can be wrested from the bourgeois rulers, however partial, must be defended. However, reliance on appeals to bourgeois governments to protect women and create real equality between the sexes is a dead end.

Christianity and Judaism, in their many variants, also preach stifling moral codes to uphold the patriarchal family, the main social institution oppressing women. But these religions, though they had roots in pre-capitalist society, adapted to conform with rising industrial capitalism and the bourgeois democratic nation-states where they existed. The radical democratic principles of the Enlightenment were the ideological reflection of historical material advances over a backward, feudal society. As a religion Islam has not had to adapt, largely because it is rooted in those parts of the world where the imperialists have reinforced social backwardness as a prop to their domination.

The emancipation of women as part of the liberation of all the downtrodden of Bangladesh and the entire subcontinent requires a struggle for *permanent revolution*—the working class seizing power at the head of the peasantry and oppressed masses through socialist revolution, reorganizing society on the basis of collectivized property and fighting to extend the revolution internationally, especially to the imperialist centres. The best historical model for this is the great October 1917 Revolution in Russia led by the Bolshevik Party of V. I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky. Such a perspective means taking up the fight against religious obscurantism and women's oppression. Bangladesh has a vibrant and potentially powerful working class with a significant component of women workers concentrated in the garment and jute industries. Such women workers will be a great motor force for the revolution. As Trotsky wrote in 1924:

"And this, moreover, means that the Eastern woman who is the most paralysed in life, in her habits and in creativity, the slave of slaves, that she, having at the demand of the new economic relations taken off her cloak will at once feel herself lacking any sort of religious buttress; she will have a passionate thirst to gain new ideas, a new consciousness which will permit her to appreciate her new position in society. And there will be no better communist in the East, no better fighter for the ideas of the revolution and for the ideas of communism than the awakened woman worker." ■

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Down With Racist “War on Drugs”!

NYPD Rips Apart Black Families

You might not be arrested if the cops find a few grams of marijuana in your home in New York City—but they can take your children away! This is the racist reality faced by dozens of black families after police raided their homes and failed to uncover enough marijuana to prosecute them, only to call in the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS). The children were then snatched on the pretext that pot in the home can be a sign of “neglect.” Jose Gunnell of Harlem lost custody of his one-year-old daughter after an employee at a homeless shelter where he was staying found a \$5 bag of marijuana during an inspection. Hundreds more parents are facing similar marijuana-related neglect allegations and risk losing their children. These cases—rarely if ever filed against white parents, according to defense lawyers—sometimes are based on nothing more than a parent’s admission to a caseworker of past marijuana use.

The racist contempt shown for these black families is redolent of the practices of chattel slavery, when masters could break up slave families at will. An ACS spokesman defended snatching children, saying: “Drug use itself is not child abuse or neglect, but it can put children in danger of neglect or abuse.” With this twisted puritanical logic, children are “protected” by being thrown into the city’s foster care system. Last year, Mayor Michael Bloomberg merged the ACS with the Department of Juvenile Justice, so that “neglected” children put in the city’s care automatically come under the violently brutal criminal justice system.

The breaking up of black families has gone together with skyrocketing arrest rates for pot possession, making NYC the marijuana arrest capital of the world. From 1997 through 2008, the NYPD arrested 430,000 people, mostly teenagers and young adults, for possessing small amounts of marijuana—*12 times more* marijuana arrests than in the previous 12-year period. The blatantly racist nature of this campaign was captured in a 2008 New York Civil Liberties Union report that stated: “U.S. government studies find that young whites use pot at higher rates than black or Latinos. Yet, NY City has been arresting and jailing young Latinos for pot possession at over three times the rate of whites, and arresting and jailing young blacks at six times the rate of whites.”

The Spartacist League calls for the decriminalization of drugs. We oppose all laws against “crimes without vic-

tims”—from drug use to prostitution, gambling and pornography—which are at bottom designed to maintain social control. We also oppose drug testing in the workplace, which the bosses use as a pretext to go after union activists and cow the entire workforce.

Nationally, the “war on drugs” has been waged particularly against black people as well as Latinos, with hundreds of thousands incarcerated in prison hell-holes. A drug felony conviction can close

In their stop-and-frisk campaign, the cops often coerce their victims into removing any marijuana from their pocket or purse, making it “open to public view.”

In 2008, the Center for Constitutional Rights filed a lawsuit against the City and the NYPD challenging the overtly racist nature of stop-and-frisk. City officials tried to get it dismissed, but on August 31 a Federal Court judge ruled that a trial could go forward. Less than a week later, black City Councilman Jumaane Williams

In a statement defending Williams and Foy, Democratic Party Congresswoman Yvette Clarke evocatively compared the level of harassment of black people in NYC to South Africa under the hated apartheid-era pass laws. While ghetto youth being stopped by the police is as American as apple pie, black bourgeois politicians can see that their own children are at greater risk of run-ins with the cops when the net is cast so widely. In criticizing stop-and-frisk, their aim is to make the police more effective as an agency of repression. The police, together with the courts and prisons, are the means by which the capitalist class defends its rule and profits, employing organized violence against the working class and the oppressed. This does not change whether it is the Democrats, the Republicans or “independents” who sit in City Hall, the state capitol or the White House.

Under Democratic president Obama, the situation for black people has further deteriorated, with rollbacks of union gains, mounting job losses, home foreclosures and increased cuts in services. In NYC, the billionaire Bloomberg is adding to the pain by laying off teachers and running housing projects better suited for roaches, bedbugs and rats than humans. The decaying capitalist system cannot be reformed to serve the interests of the workers and the ghetto and barrio masses. We need a workers party built in political opposition to the Democratic and Republican parties of capital—a party that mobilizes the social power of labor, including its key black component, to fight against racist injustice and to champion the cause of all the exploited and oppressed. A revolutionary workers party is the necessary instrument to lead the struggle to sweep away the racist capitalist system and replace it with the rule of the working class, under which there would be jobs and quality housing and services for all. For black liberation through socialist revolution! ■



WABC-TV

NYC: Police stop-and-frisks reached 600,000 in 2010.

the door to higher education, well-paying jobs, housing and social services, compounding the already grinding conditions of life for the masses of American blacks, whose oppression is rooted in the capitalist economy.

The urban ghettos used to provide a reservoir of mostly unskilled labor for manufacturing. But with the shuttering of plants in recent decades, the black poor have been written off as a “surplus population” by the racist ruling class. The capitalists see no reason to spend money educating and providing for those they’ve thrown onto the scrap heap, instead serving up greater repression. Now impoverished black women, long demonized by racist demagogues screaming about “unfit” single mothers, are having their kids ripped from them for suspected marijuana use, without even being charged with a crime.

Drug busts are a big part of the “stop and frisk” policy, which has become the NYPD’s favored tool in its daily harassment and dehumanization of blacks and Latinos. In 2010, the NYPD made *over 600,000* street stops, and the numbers are increasing this year, amounting to a more than sixfold increase since Bloomberg became mayor in 2002. In 2009, blacks accounted for more than half of those stopped by cops, while making up only 26 percent of the city’s population. The NYPD has been able to compile a huge database containing personal information—and in some cases fingerprints and photos—of primarily minority youth, whether or not they are charged with a crime.

One of the opening shots in the national “war on drugs” was the passage of the New York State “Rockefeller drug laws” in the early 1970s, under which some 200,000 men, women and children were condemned to decades in prison. In 1977, those laws were altered so that the legal charge for possession of less than 26 grams of marijuana was reduced from a misdemeanor crime to a violation. However, having marijuana “open to public view” remained a misdemeanor. The NYPD has manipulated this distinction to haul in large numbers of minority youth.

of Brooklyn, a known critic of stop-and-frisk, was detained for walking down a closed sidewalk at the West Indian Day Parade despite displaying City Council identification. A video of the detention and assault on Kirsten John Foy, a black city official accompanying Williams, was posted on YouTube. These arrests were a clear message from the cops, who had complained of the councilman’s “arrogance and ego,” that black people, whatever their station in life, should “know their place.”

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Guatemala Under the Imperialist Boot



Above: Coffee pickers in Guatemala carrying their loads, 2008. Right: Migrants crammed into tractor-trailers on their way to U.S. were stopped in southern Mexico in May.



Just a month after more than 500 starving, dehydrated immigrants were found huddled in two tractor-trailers in southern Mexico in May, several hundred more were detained in two similar incidents. The immigrants, almost all of whom have been deported back to their countries of origin, were mainly from Central and South America, with some from as far away as India and China. Migrant laborers such as these face enormous risks in trying to reach the U.S. Those who manage to evade Mexico's state forces risk facing the terror of the drug cartels before they can even attempt to cross the militarized U.S. border. The slaughter of 72 immigrants in northern Mexico in August 2010 is but one of the most gruesome examples of what may befall them.

Most of those found in the tractor-trailers were from the country immediately south of Mexico, Guatemala. What is driving this emigration are the ravages inflicted by U.S. imperialism: desperate poverty and landlessness, enforced by decades of murderous repression. The Guatemalan workers and peasants have suffered imperialist military intervention, the brutality of the venal local bourgeoisie and its U.S.-financed death squad regimes, and wholesale appropriation of the land by agribusiness giants like the United Fruit Company (now Chiquita).

Underscoring the effects of U.S. imperialist plunder was an article in the London *Guardian* (31 May) based on a report by Oxfam titled, "Growing a Better Future—Food Justice in a Resource-Constrained World." The article described the hopeless situation of a man working ten to twelve hours a day, six days a week, on a sugar plantation that supplies bioethanol fuel for cars in the U.S.: "His settlement in the fertile Pacific coastal area is surrounded by industrial farms, but he earns so little his family cannot afford to eat every day. Some days he survives his shift of hard physical labour on nothing but the mangoes that drop from trees by the roadside." The worker explained: "The money I make is not enough to feed us. We feed the children first because the girls cry so much when they are hungry, but it's not enough."

His two daughters suffer from stunted growth—now a widespread scourge in Guatemala, especially among Mayans and other indigenous peoples. Children under five suffer from chronic malnutrition at a

rate that is the highest in Latin America and fourth-highest in the world. Three percent of babies don't live past their first year, the highest rate in Central America. Two years ago, hundreds died after a drought decimated harvests and famine swept parts of the country.

Yet Guatemala is rich in agriculture, one of the world's largest producers of sugar, coffee and bananas. The misery of the rural masses is rooted in the fact that the country's main productive resource, the land, is under the ownership or control of U.S. corporations and the local oligarchy. Barely 2-3 percent of the population owns more than two-thirds of the productive land, where cash crops are raised for sale on the world market. We observed in Part Two of "Imperialism Starves World's Poor" (WV No. 920, 12 September 2008) that precolonial societies based on subsistence agriculture suffered periodic famines and mass starvation resulting from drought and other natural disasters. But in the capitalist-imperialist era, starvation arises from the drive "to bolster the profits of the masters of Wall Street, the City

of London and the banks of Frankfurt and Tokyo."

To defend the status quo in Guatemala, the U.S. has sponsored one death squad regime after another. During a 36-year campaign against a leftist guerrilla insurgency that began in 1960, some 200,000 people—mostly Mayan peasants—were killed and another 45,000 "disappeared." This year, in the run-up to the September 11 general election, there have been at least 36 political assassinations. Today, Guatemala is second only to Colombia as the deadliest country in the hemisphere for unionists. Five officials of the SITRABI banana workers union have been assassinated in recent years, including the union's treasurer, Idar Joel Hernández Godoy, who was gunned down in May on his way to the union hall.

Guatemala's bourgeois rulers are currently looking to strengthen their repressive forces in the name of fighting drug trafficking. Sixteen people were shot and burned to death on a bus east of Guatemala City in November 2008, while in May of this year 25 farm workers were

beheaded near the Mexican border. Seizing on the murderous violence, which has spilled over from Mexico, each of Guatemala's top presidential candidates has vowed to step up state repression, from mobilizing the military to increasing the number of executions. The U.S. government has given millions in aid to the Guatemalan regime, as well as to Colombia and Mexico, to beef up military and police forces. These armed forces constitute the core of the capitalist state, an apparatus of organized violence directed against the working class, the peasantry and all the oppressed.

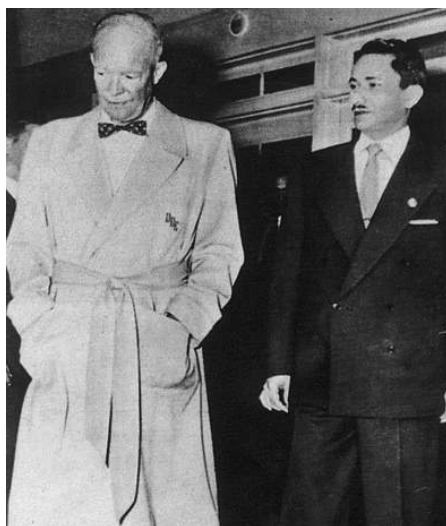
It was the "debt restructuring" programs forced onto Mexico and other Third World countries by the International Monetary Fund and other imperialist agencies in the 1980s that laid the basis for the rise of the drug trade by axing agricultural subsidies and social welfare programs. This was exacerbated by the imperialists' later imposition of the NAFTA "free trade" accord. The effect was that small agricultural production was wrecked and a mass of ruined peasants flocked to the cities to get by in the "informal economy" (see "Mexico: Down With 'Drug Wars' Militarization!" WV No. 953, 26 February 2010).

The massive displacement of the population in Mexico and points South has also spurred the rise in immigration to the U.S. in recent decades. From Los Angeles port truckers to North Carolina meatpackers, workers who have made the perilous journey to *El Norte* can enrich the U.S. labor movement here with their experiences of bitter class battles and U.S.-sponsored repression. The labor movement must demand a stop to anti-immigrant repression and must organize immigrant workers into the unions. **Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!**

Legacy of the 1954 Coup

The history of U.S. depredations in Guatemala serves as a classic example of how countries in Central America and the Caribbean have been crushed under the imperialist boot and maintained as neo-colonies. When president James Monroe declared in 1823 that South and Central America were off-limits for colonization by the European powers, the U.S. was in no position to enforce the so-called Monroe Doctrine. By the end of the 19th century, that had changed.

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Above: U.S. president Eisenhower in 1955 with Castillo Armas, installed in power the year before in CIA-orchestrated right-wing coup. Right: Victims of Guatemalan army massacre of "suspected guerrillas" in 1982.



Cuba...

(continued from page 1)

under his brother and longtime lieutenant Raúl, Cuba’s workers and peasants have gained enormously from the overthrow of capitalism. The elimination of production for profit through collectivization of the means of production, combined with central economic planning and a state monopoly over foreign trade and investment, provided jobs, housing and education for everyone and removed the yoke of direct imperialist domination. Cuba has one of the highest literacy rates in the world and a renowned health care system. Infant mortality is lower than in the U.S., Canada and the European Union. Abortion is a free, readily available health service.

The International Communist League stands for the unconditional military defense of the Cuban deformed workers state against imperialism and internal capitalist counterrevolution. We call for an end to Washington’s crippling economic embargo and demand that the U.S. get out of Guantánamo Bay. At the same time, we call on the Cuban proletariat to sweep away the Castroite bureaucracy through a political revolution, establishing a regime of workers democracy. This is the only way to redress the endemic corruption, inefficiencies and shortages due to bureaucratic mismanagement, which arrest economic growth and create huge dislocations.

Leon Trotsky’s explanation of the material roots of the Soviet bureaucracy in his 1937 book *The Revolution Betrayed* can equally be applied to the Cuban regime today:

“The basis of bureaucratic rule is the poverty of society in objects of consumption, with the resulting struggle of each against all. When there are enough goods in a store, the purchasers can come whenever they want to. When there is little goods, the purchasers are compelled to stand in line. When the lines are very long, it is necessary to appoint a policeman to keep order. Such is the starting point of the power of the Soviet bureaucracy. It ‘knows’ who is to get something and who has to wait.”

From the inception of the Cuban workers state, the ruling bureaucracy has acted as an obstacle to the further advance toward socialism—a classless, egalitarian society requiring qualitatively higher levels of production than even the most advanced capitalist country. Instead the Stalinists purvey the myth of “socialism in one country,” which in practice means opposition to the perspective of workers revolution internationally and accommodation to world imperialism and its neocolonial clients through a policy of “peaceful coexistence.”

A Cuba ruled by elected workers and peasants councils—open to all parties that defend the revolution—would be a beacon for working people throughout Latin America and beyond. The ultimate answer to Cuba’s economic backwardness and the only road to a future of material abundance, social equality and personal freedom is international proletarian revolution—not least in the U.S. imperialist bastion—leading to rational global economic planning and an egalitarian socialist order. The necessary corollary to this perspective is the forging of a Trotskyist party in Cuba, part of a reborn Fourth International, to lead a proletarian political revolution to victory.

The “Special Period” and Bureaucratic “Reform”

While the proposed “market reforms” are deepgoing, the kind of policies they represent are hardly new for Cuba. Starting around 1993, i.e., shortly after the destruction of the Soviet Union, the Castro regime undertook a set of market-oriented policies to address the self-described “Special Period.” These included the legalization of self-employment and individual U.S. dollar holdings and a major expansion of foreign tourism, including through joint ventures.

The most dramatic effect of these measures was to greatly increase inequality on the island. Amid pervasive petty and not

so petty corruption, the scramble for hard currency has come to dominate the lives of Cuba’s working people. Under the country’s dual currency system, workers are paid in domestic Cuban pesos, but most goods can only be purchased in special stores or on the black market using a currency called the convertible peso (CUC), which is valued at 24 Cuban pesos and is the currency used by tourists. This has forced most workers to take on second or third jobs to secure basic needs, in turn greatly affecting labor productivity. Cuba has also witnessed a resurgence of prostitution.

Those with access to hard currency through remittances from abroad, the tourist industry or other means now have much higher living standards than other Cubans. Among the latter are most Cuban blacks, who are far less likely to have relatives in Miami and are underrepresented in jobs in the tourist sector. While black people gained tremendously from the Cuban Revolution, many of these advances are being rolled back.

Beginning in 1996, Cuba managed to

izing the sale and purchase of homes. Greater direct foreign investment through joint ventures and special economic zones is also contemplated. The reforms aim to encourage the growth of the hitherto very constrained private sector by various means: lifting restrictions on self-employment; loosening controls on the sale of private agricultural produce; and formalizing the existence of small private businesses in an attempt to regulate and tax the informal economy. These businesses will be allowed to hire labor outside their own families for the first time since 1968. Such measures can only lead to even greater inequality. They will also serve to increase the economic influence of right-wing Cuban exiles, as Cubans with families in the U.S. will be among the few with enough capital to launch businesses.

The campaign by a sector of the U.S. imperialists (centered in agribusiness) to relax the embargo while continuing to impose diplomatic/political pressure on Cuba points to another possible road to subverting the socialized economy: flood-

gins of the deformed workers state. The guerrilla forces that marched into Havana under Fidel Castro’s leadership in January 1959 were a heterogeneous petty-bourgeois movement initially committed to no more than a program of radical democratic reforms. Importantly, however, their victory meant not only the downfall of the widely despised U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship but the shattering of the army and the rest of the capitalist state apparatus, allowing the new petty-bourgeois government wide latitude.

The new government had to confront U.S. imperialism’s mounting attempts to bring it to heel through economic pressure. When Washington sought to lower the U.S. quota for Cuban sugar in early 1960, Castro signed an agreement to sell a million tons yearly to the Soviet Union. The refusal by imperialist-owned refineries to process Soviet crude oil led to the nationalization of U.S.-owned properties in Cuba in August 1960, including sugar mills, oil companies and the power and telephone companies. By October of that year, 80 percent of the country’s industry had been nationalized. Cuba became a deformed workers state with these pervasive nationalizations, which liquidated the bourgeoisie as a class.

The forerunner of the ICL, the Revolutionary Tendency (RT) of the American Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the early 1960s, was forged in the struggle for a Marxist perspective in Cuba. While defending the Cuban Revolution against imperialism, the RT sharply opposed the SWP’s adulation of Castro as an “unconscious” Trotskyist and the program of rural guerrillaism associated with the *fidelistas* and, earlier, the Chinese Maoists. As we wrote in the 1966 Declaration of Principles of the Spartacist League/U.S.:

“The Spartacist League fundamentally opposes the Maoist doctrine, rooted in Menshevism and Stalinist reformism, which rejects the vanguard role of the working class and substitutes peasant-based guerrilla warfare as the road to socialism. Movements of this sort can under certain conditions, i.e., the extreme disorganization of the capitalist class in the colonial country and the absence of the working class contending in its own right for social power, smash capitalist property relations; however, they cannot bring the working class to *political* power. Rather, they create bureaucratic anti-working-class regimes which suppress any further development of these revolutions towards socialism. Experience since the Second World War has completely validated the Trotskyist theory of the Permanent Revolution which declares that in the modern world the bourgeois-democratic revolution can be completed only by a proletarian dictatorship supported by the peasantry. Only under the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat can the colonial and semi-colonial countries obtain the complete and genuine solution to their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation.”

—“Basic Documents of the Spartacist League,” *Marxist Bulletin* No. 9

In the absence of the proletarian democracy of a state directly won by the working

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Getty

Cobbler in Havana, 2010. Stalinist regime encourages petty entrepreneurs while preparing to shed jobs in state industry.

emerge from the depths of the Special Period and achieved some economic growth, albeit from a low base. In 2002, some 40 percent of the sugar mills, whose produce had earlier largely been exported to the USSR, were shut down in an attempt to diversify agriculture and feed the population. But with a continued lack of equipment and fuel and amid considerable disorganization, food production continued to stagnate. By 2006, 40 percent of the trucks available to the state agency responsible for procuring and distributing agricultural produce were out of service, and the rest were at least 20 years old.

With half of all agricultural land still unproductive, Cuba has to import 80 percent of its food, much of it from the U.S. An article by University of Glasgow professor Brian Pollitt summarizes the dire situation: “While Cuba’s sugar exports alone could finance the island’s total food imports some four times over in 1989, during the years 2004-06 her exports of sugar, tobacco, other agricultural products and fisheries combined could not finance even one half of her food imports” (*International Journal of Cuban Studies*, June 2009).

The Threat of Mass Layoffs

The economic *lineamientos* (guidelines) approved by the regime are all about improving economic performance through harsher conditions for the Cuban people. They state that it is necessary to “reduce or eliminate excessive social expenditure...and evaluate all activities that can move from a budgeted [state] sector to the business system.” In 2009, the government ordered the closing of all workplace cafeterias, while giving workers a wage increase of 15 Cuban pesos (about 70¢ U.S.). Meanwhile, the meager package of basic foodstuffs at cheap prices available through ration cards is being further reduced.

The new measures seek to foster greater investment by European, Canadian and other foreign companies by easing restrictions on offshore real estate ownership, including 99-year leases, and legal-

ing it with cheap imports. This approach is in line with the long-standing policy of the West European and Canadian rulers. Cuba should of course have the right to trade and have diplomatic relations with capitalist countries. However, this underlines the importance of the state monopoly of foreign trade—i.e., strict government control of imports and exports.

The government says it expects that 40 percent of the workers who lose their jobs will redeploy into cooperatives, while the rest will be urged to set up small businesses, become self-employed or seek work elsewhere. A party document admits that a large proportion of new businesses could fail within a year due to lack of access to credit and raw materials. And the prospect of many workers getting by in subsistence occupations like food vending and shoe repair amid the ongoing economic troubles is grim, to say the least.

Wider autonomy is also being given to state companies, which will be expected to finance their own operations or be liquidated. As we explained in the context of the “market reforms” introduced in the final years of the Soviet Union, such measures impel state managers to compete with each other to buy and produce cheap and sell dear. This in turn tends to undermine the state control of foreign trade and further fuel pro-capitalist appetites among sections of the bureaucracy. As for the regime’s scheme for “perfecting state companies” by linking wages to productivity, this is just another name for piecework wages, which serve to undermine the basic social solidarity of the working class by turning workers into individual competitors for higher wages. Under Stalinist rule, such schemes, which pose economic anarchy and greater social inequality, are the only available “answer” to the distortions created by bureaucratic rigidity and commandism.

Origins of the Cuban Deformed Workers State

To understand Cuba’s current predicament, it is necessary to examine the ori-

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Cuba...

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people, the decisive section of Castro's forces made the transition to a bureaucratic caste resting atop the newly nationalized economy. By virtue of their newly acquired social position, the Castroites were compelled to embrace the ersatz Marxism ("socialism in one country") that is the necessary ideological reflection of a Stalinist bureaucracy, in the process merging with the wretched pro-Moscow Popular Socialist Party, which had at one point served in the Batista government. The existence of the Soviet degenerated workers state provided a model and, more importantly, the material support that made this outcome possible.

The Cuban Revolution demonstrated yet again that there is no "third road" between the dictatorship of capital and the dictatorship of the proletariat. In this sense, it confirmed Leon Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. But the Cuban Revolution was a far cry from the Russian Revolution of October 1917, which was carried out by a class-conscious urban working class, supported by the poor peasantry, under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party.

Cuba and the Soviet Collapse: Background to the Crisis

Contrary to the falsehood spread by various self-styled leftists that the USSR was an "imperialist" power, the Soviet Union was a workers state that issued out of the first victorious socialist revolution in history. Internationalist to the core, Lenin, Trotsky and the other Bolshevik leaders saw the revolution in economically backward Russia as the first step in a worldwide socialist revolution, crucially including the advanced capitalist countries. But the failure of a number of revolutionary opportunities in the period after World War I—particularly the defeat of the 1923 German Revolution—deepened the isolation of the Soviet state. This, combined with the economic devastation of World War I and the subsequent Civil War, allowed for the emergence of a conservative bureaucratic layer in the party and state apparatus.

Beginning in 1923-24, the USSR underwent a qualitative bureaucratic degeneration, a political counterrevolution in which the working class was deprived of political power. The nationally narrow conservatism of the consolidating bureaucratic caste was given ideological expression by Stalin's promulgation in late 1924 of the theory that socialism could be built in a single country. This anti-Marxist dogma served as a rationale for increasingly blatant rejection of Bolshevik internationalism—leading to overt betrayal of proletarian revolutions abroad, as in the case of Spain in the 1930s—in favor of futile attempts to accommodate imperialism.

Despite bureaucratic rule, the workers state's ability to marshal the economic resources of Soviet society through economic planning produced great advances, transforming the USSR from a backward, largely peasant country into a modern industrial power. That fact stands out ever more sharply today as the capitalist world is again mired in a global economic crisis. However, as Trotsky noted in *The Revolution Betrayed*:

"The farther you go, the more the economy runs into the problem of quality, which slips out of the hands of a bureaucracy like a shadow. The Soviet products are as though branded with the gray label of indifference. Under a nationalized economy, *quality* demands a democracy of producers and consumers, freedom of criticism and initiative—conditions incompatible with a totalitarian regime of fear, lies and flattery."

Growing economic stagnation, exacerbated by the need to keep pace with U.S. imperialism's massive anti-Soviet military buildup, came to a head in the 1980s. The regime of Mikhail Gorbachev introduced a program of market-oriented measures (*perestroika*), which precipitated the fracturing of the bureaucracy, including along national lines. In August 1991, seizing on a failed coup attempt by



Wide World

Left: Cuban militiaman guards U.S. oil refinery expropriated in 1960. Right: Fidel Castro with Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev at May Day parade in Moscow, 1963.

Sovfoto



Gorbachev's lieutenants, the openly pro-capitalist Boris Yeltsin seized power in league with the U.S. imperialist government of George H.W. Bush. In those pivotal days, the ICL issued and distributed more than 100,000 copies of a Russian-language statement calling on Soviet workers to "Defeat Yeltsin-Bush counterrevolution!" But decades of Stalinist misrule had left the proletariat atomized and demoralized, and the absence of proletarian resistance to the counterrevolutionary tide paved the way for the final destruction of the gains of the October Revolution.

The false notion that the Soviet Union was an exploitative "imperialist" power is completely disproved by its support to Cuba, which was crucial to that country's economic progress. By the 1980s, the Soviet Union subsidized up to 36 percent of Cuba's national income, bartering oil and its derivatives for sugar under extremely favorable conditions for the island. The huge advances in Cuban health care and education were also conditioned by the Soviet subsidies, which in the 1970s allowed the country to open free public universities, including medical schools in all of its 14 provinces.

After the USSR's destruction, Cuban imports dropped by *80 percent* and its Gross Domestic Product plunged by *35 percent*. With no Soviet-supplied fuel, machinery or spare parts, half of Cuba's industrial plants had to be closed, as the country underwent an economic collapse proportionally greater than the Great Depression in the U.S. We see here in the language of

model of encouraging foreign investment. Some others are concerned that "market reforms" might lead Cuba to the abyss, looking at the fate of the Soviet Union under Gorbachev's *perestroika* policy.

In comparing China to Cuba today, it is important to note that by the last two decades of the Cold War (the 1970s and '80s) China had become a strategic ally of U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union. The Sino-Soviet split in the 1960s was a reflection on both sides of the counterrevolutionary implications of "socialism in one country." The Chinese Stalinists' criminal policy of allying with Washington against Moscow, which began under Mao, helped set the stage for the Deng Xiaoping bureaucracy's opening of China to large-scale industrial investment by Western imperialism. In contrast, U.S. imperialism has remained implacably hostile to Cuba and shows no sign of easing its brutal embargo. This is despite overtures by the Havana regime, such as the release of over 120 right-wing "dissidents" beginning last year, in which the reactionary Catholic church played a crucial role.

Washington's hardline stance toward Cuba not only blocks American investment, it also constricts investment from West Europe and Canada, given the long reach of U.S. extraterritorial law. Moreover, Cuba has neither the pre-existing industrial base nor the vast reservoir of cheap labor that fueled China's economic advance over the past three decades. The idea that Cuba could successfully undertake an export-driven form of economic

continue to pursue a two-pronged strategy to foment counterrevolution, supplementing economic penetration with military pressure and provocations along with championing anti-Communist "dissidents."

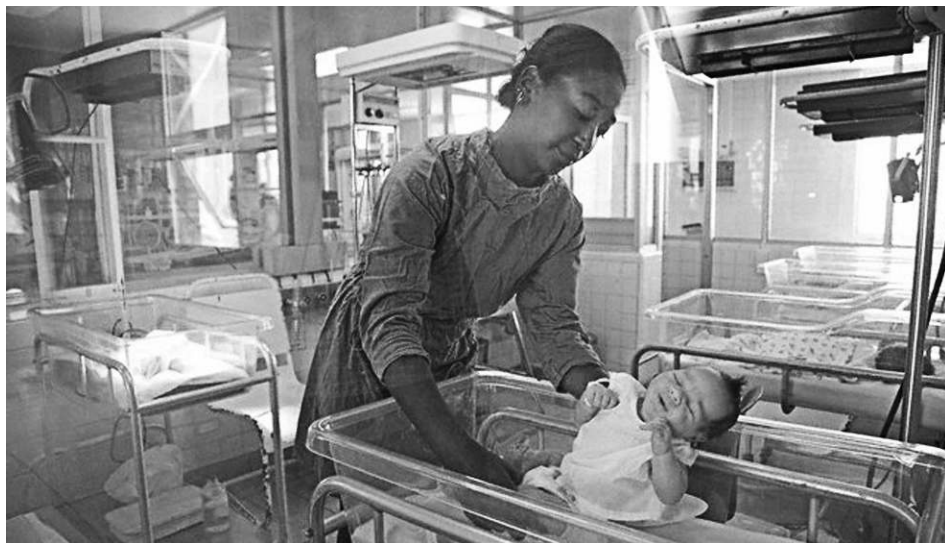
Cuban Bureaucracy: A Contradictory Caste

Against the views propounded by the likes of Everleny, others, both in Cuba and internationally, argue against following the "market socialism" model implemented in China, a country they consider to be capitalist or even imperialist. An example is the Liga de Trabajadores por el Socialismo (LTS), Mexican section of the Trotskyist Fraction-Fourth International (FT-CI), a split from the tendency led by the late Argentine political chameleon Nahuel Moreno. In a September 2010 statement on Cuba, the FT-CI writes: "Despite a 'socialist' and 'anti-imperialist' discourse, the ruling bureaucracy has for years justified the so-called 'Chinese,' or Vietnamese, 'model,' i.e., a program of marching toward a gradual process of capitalist restoration under the leadership of the PCC [Cuban Communist Party], and they are already taking measures in that direction" (www.cubarevolucion.org).

Contrary to what the LTS/FT-CI contends, there cannot be a "gradual process of capitalist restoration" either in China or in Cuba. Capitalist counterrevolution would have to triumph on the political level—in the conquest of state power. It would not come about through a process of ever more quantitative extensions of the private sector, whether domestic or foreign. The Stalinist bureaucracy is incapable of a cold, gradual restoration of capitalism from above. As the events in the Soviet Union in 1991-92 showed clearly, a major social crisis in a deformed workers state would be accompanied by the collapse of Stalinist bonapartism and the political fracturing of the ruling Communist Party. What would emerge from such a situation—capitalist restoration or proletarian political revolution—would depend on the outcome of the struggle of these counterposed class forces. The key to a working-class victory will be the timely forging of a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party rooted in the most advanced layers of the proletariat.

The LTS/FT-CI treats the Cuban bureaucracy as if it were committed to the destruction of the workers state. Thus it states that Cuba's army, the Revolutionary Armed Forces, is "the vanguard of capitalist restoration" in Cuba today. This notion contradicts the very essence of Trotsky's understanding of the Stalinist bureaucracy as a contradictory caste, a parasitic growth on the workers state and its collectivized property forms. With its stifling bureaucratism, lies, corruption and concessions to capitalism, the bureaucracy certainly helps prepare the way for a possible counterrevolution. But to label it (or a section of it) "the vanguard of capitalist restoration" is an outrageous whitewash of U.S. imperialism, the Catholic church, the counterrevolutionary Cuban exiles, and right-wingers within Cuba like the "dissidents" of *Las Damas de Blanco* ("Ladies in White").

To cover its tracks, the LTS/FT-CI seeks to draw a distinction between the current ruling bureaucrats and Che Guevara, Fidel Castro's comrade-in-arms. Like many others on the left, the LTS/FT-CI lauds Che's



Corbis

Maternity ward in Havana. Cuba's infant mortality rate is lower than that in U.S., Canada and European Union.

cold, hard statistics the historic gains that were made possible by the existence of the Soviet Union—and the disaster that unfolded with its destruction. This stands as a sharp indictment of the fake-socialist groups that made common cause with the Yeltsinite forces of imperialist-backed counterrevolution and now vituperate against Cuba's "market reforms" as a sellout!

The "Chinese Model"

The introduction of "market reforms" has intersected and provoked hot debate among Cuban intellectuals on the road forward. Influential economists like Omar Everleny, deputy director of the Center for Studies on the Cuban Economy, applaud the proposed changes, arguing that they can bring modernization and indefinite economic growth. Everleny, among others, advocates following a Chinese- or Vietnamese-style economic

expansion via substantial imperialist investment is a fantasy.

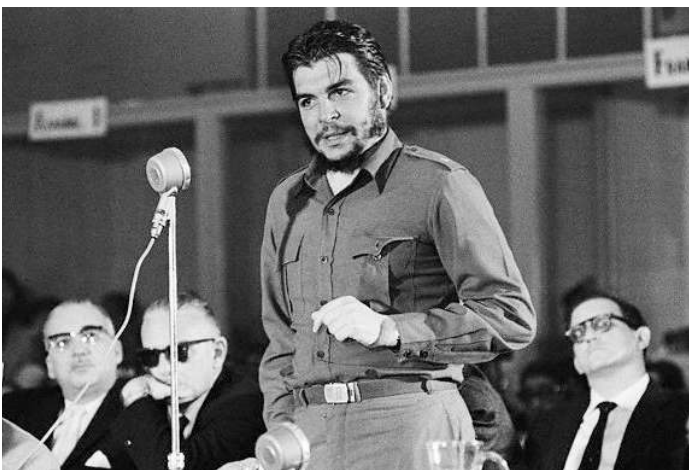
Despite the pro-market measures introduced since the late 1970s, the main economic sectors in China (as in Cuba) remain nationalized and under state control. Large-scale investment by Western and Japanese corporations and the offshore Chinese bourgeoisie has, on the one hand, resulted in high levels of economic growth and a huge increase in the weight of China's industrial proletariat, a progressive development of historic importance. On the other hand, "market socialism" has greatly increased inequalities, including the creation of a sizable class of indigenous capitalist entrepreneurs on the mainland, many with familial and financial ties to the Communist Party officialdom. This has made China a cauldron of economic and social contradictions and explosive labor unrest. Meanwhile, the imperialists con-

“internationalism,” asserting in its article that he approached “a consistent strategy for international socialist revolution.” Guevara’s murder by the CIA in Bolivia in 1967 while leading a small band of peasant guerrillas makes him a heroic figure. But his peasant-based strategy, which has brought so many militants to tragic ends, was a flat rejection of Marxism, in no way distinguishable from that of other “Third World” Stalinist guerrillaists.

The LTS/FT-CI also endorses Guevara’s economic policies in the early 1960s, when he served as Minister of Industry, against Cuba’s more recent policies of economic liberalization and decentralization. No less than his fellow Stalinists, Guevara accepted the framework of “building socialism” on one small, poor and besieged island. What defined his economic views was a particularly voluntarist and utopian brand of Stalinism characterized by upholding “moral incentives” over material ones as a purported road to rapid industrialization. This led to gross misuse and squandering of material and human resources. In dismissing workers’ aspirations for decent living standards as “bourgeois ideology,” Guevara helped to enforce the Cuban government’s complete political disenfranchisement of the proletariat.

The LTS/FT-CI’s claim that capitalist restoration is underway in Cuba is designed to facilitate their dropping defense of the deformed workers state against counterrevolution, which is precisely what this outfit did two decades ago in supporting pro-capitalist forces in the USSR, East Germany (the DDR) and the East European deformed workers states. The LTS’s cothinkers in the Argentine Partido de los Trabajadores Socialistas even raised the

Che Guevara, then Cuba’s Minister of Industry, denounced U.S. imperialists at Inter-American Economic and Social Conference in Uruguay, August 1961.



Bettmann

peasants, who became a corrosive influence on the apparatus of the workers state. The early NEP legislation, drawn up under Lenin’s direct guidance, had severely restricted the hiring of labor and acquisition of land. However, in 1925 these restrictions were greatly liberalized by Stalin’s regime. Trotsky’s Left Opposition, which formed to fight the growing bureaucratic degeneration, called to increase taxation of the rich peasants to finance industrialization and for the systematic introduction of large-scale, mechanized collective agriculture. By the end of the 1920s, as the counterrevolutionary threat from the new stratum of rich peasants and merchants brought the USSR to the brink of disaster, Stalin belatedly turned against his former ally Nikolai Bukharin and moved to collectivize agriculture, in his own characteristically brutal and administrative fashion.

Even as they implemented the NEP, Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks fought with all their might to extend the gains of October to the workers of the world. They

’70s, he endorsed Salvador Allende’s popular-front bourgeois regime in Chile, whose political and physical disarming of the proletariat paved the way to Pinochet’s 1973 military coup and the massacre of more than 30,000 leftists and workers.

When the masses of Nicaragua, under the leadership of the radical petty-bourgeois nationalist Sandinistas, overthrew the Somoza dictatorship in 1979, shattering the capitalist state, the road was opened to a social revolution. We said: “Defend, complete, extend the Nicaraguan revolution!” But Castro advised the Sandinista government to “avoid the early mistakes we made in Cuba,” such as “premature frontal attacks on the bourgeoisie.” The Sandinistas maintained a “mixed economy,” which meant that the capitalists were never destroyed as a class. With the U.S. bankrolling a dirty war by CIA-backed “contras,” the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie was able to reassert control a decade later, defeating the revolution. The net result of the Cuban leaders’ policies of “peaceful coexistence” has been the continued immis-



Prensa Latina

Fidel Castro with Chile’s Salvador Allende (left), who was elected president in 1970; with Nicaraguan leader Daniel Ortega (right) in 1980s. Cuban regime endorsed bourgeois popular front in Chile and advised Sandinistas not to create “another Cuba.”

scandalous call for “the defense of the right of the German masses to unite however they wish, even if they decide to do so in the framework of capitalism” (*Avanzada Socialista*, 30 March 1990)! This amounted to a blank check for the capitalist annexation of the DDR by West German imperialism.

False Parallels to Lenin’s NEP

Some academic apologists for the proposed pro-market policies in Cuba have pointed to Lenin’s New Economic Policy (NEP), adopted in the Soviet republics in 1921, which allowed concessions to the peasants in the form of an internal market where agricultural produce would be exchanged for industrial goods. In his book *Russia: From Real Socialism to Real Capitalism* (2005), Cuban historian Ariel Dacal argued that “the great merit of this policy, albeit contradictory,” was as “an alternative for development against capitalism” in non-developed countries. Such views are echoed by sections of the left internationally. Making heavy reference to the NEP, a statement justifying the Cuban reforms by the U.S. Party for Socialism and Liberation asserts: “This is not the first time that a communist-led government has reverted to the expansion of a private market” (“A Marxist Analysis of Cuba’s New Economic Reforms,” PSLweb.org).

The Soviet NEP was not a model for sustained development but a temporary retreat after the devastation of the Civil War in a backward, overwhelmingly peasant economy in which industry had broken down and was utterly disorganized. While the NEP did succeed in reviving economic life, it also enriched a layer of speculators, small traders and well-off

built the Third (Communist) International to guide and unite the struggles of revolutionary Marxists internationally. Such policies are utterly counterposed to those of the Stalinists, who instead subordinate the interests of the world proletariat to their efforts to curry favor with “progressive” capitalist regimes.

Stalinism: Class-Collaborationist Betrayal

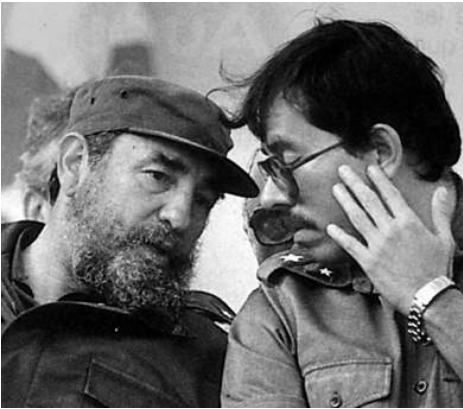
Cuba’s defiance of the U.S. imperialist colossus over the years has inspired large numbers of militant workers and radical youth in Latin America and elsewhere. But this does not mean that the Cuban regime is intrinsically more radical than its Stalinist counterparts elsewhere. During its first two decades under Mao, the Beijing regime was likewise viewed by impressionistic Western leftists as a revolutionary alternative to Moscow. We warned as early as 1969 against the growing objective possibility—given the tremendous industrial and military capacity of the Soviet Union—of a U.S. deal with China, a prediction which soon came to pass. The bottom line is that whatever their particular immediate policies and pressures, *all* Stalinist bureaucracies are characterized by class collaboration on the international level. Differences in posture and rhetoric are explained simply by the degree to which these regimes are under the gun of direct imperialist hostility.

The foreign policy of the Cuban bureaucracy has criminally betrayed the interests of the working masses of Latin America. In the 1960s, Fidel Castro supported bourgeois nationalists such as João Goulart in Brazil and saluted the Peruvian military junta as “a group of progressive officers playing a revolutionary role.” In the early

eration of the Latin American masses and further isolation for the Cuban Revolution.

Prominent among the pseudo-Marxist tendencies that have given political support to Cuba’s Castroite bureaucracy is the International Marxist Tendency (IMT) of Alan Woods. In recent years, Woods has been able to posture as a “Trotskyist” inside Cuba, including in occasional speaking tours. The precondition for such activities is the IMT’s outright adulation of Fidel Castro and its adamant opposition to the Trotskyist call for proletarian political revolution.

The IMT has a decades-long history of liquidation into social-democratic or outright capitalist parties, from the British Labour Party to Mexico’s bourgeois Party



Sygma

of the Democratic Revolution. Today, like the Cuban bureaucracy, Woods & Co. give political support to Venezuelan capitalist strongman Hugo Chávez and his supposed “socialism of the 21st century.” They write:

“The Venezuelan Revolution, together with Cuba, has provided a rallying point for the revolution in Bolivia, Ecuador and other countries. The initiative taken by President Chavez to launch the Fifth International, dedicated to the overthrow of imperialism and capitalism, should receive the most enthusiastic support of the Cuban revolutionaries. This is the hope for the future!”

—“Where Is Cuba Going? Towards Capitalism or Socialism?” marxist.com, 17 September 2010

Chávez, a former army colonel, came to power through the bourgeois electoral process and rules a capitalist state in which the Venezuelan bourgeoisie and the imperialists continue to carry on a booming business, however hostile Washington has been toward his regime. His piecemeal nationalizations do not challenge capitalist private property, any more than did nationalizations by other national-populist *caudillos*, such as Lázaro Cárdenas in Mexico in the 1930s or Juan Perón in Argentina in the 1940s (see “Venezuela: Break with Bourgeois Populism! For Workers Revolution!” WV No. 907, 1 February 2008). In passing off this bourgeois politician as “anti-capitalist,” the IMT does its own small part in keeping the Venezuelan working masses under the boot of imperialist plunderers.

Since 2000, Venezuela has been Cuba’s main trade partner, providing oil in exchange for some 20,000 Cuban doctors and teachers. Cuba’s present dependence on Chávez’s ability (and desire) to continue subsidizing his populist literacy and health campaigns by importing skilled Cuban professionals is, to say the least, an extremely unstable basis for economic survival.

Cuba at the Crossroads

In April 2010, a senior black Communist Party intellectual, Esteban Morales, director of the U.S. Studies Center at the University of Havana and a regular political commentator on Cuban television, wrote an article titled “Corruption: The True Counterrevolution?” He argued:

“When we closely observe Cuba’s internal situation today, we can have no doubt that the counterrevolution, little by little, is taking positions at certain levels of the State and Government. Without a doubt, it is becoming evident that there are people in positions of government and state who are girding themselves financially for when the Revolution falls, and others may have everything almost ready to transfer state-owned assets to private hands, as happened in the old USSR.”

A month after the publication of this article it was announced that Morales had been expelled from the Communist Party; following an appeal, he was reinstated this summer.

The Castro regime asserts that corruption originates with opportunistic individuals who have made their way into the state administrative apparatus, while the

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Spartacus Youth Club Events

LOS ANGELES

Thursday, September 29, 6:30 p.m.
Meet the Marxists
UCLA, Ackerman Union, Room 2410
Information: (213) 380-8239
sisycla@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Tuesday, September 27, 7 p.m.
The Russian Revolution of 1917
How the Working Class Took Power
— Part One —
Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism
CCNY, NAC Room 1/209
138th and Amsterdam Ave.
(1 train to 137th St.-City College)
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025
nysi@tiac.net

TORONTO

Wednesday, September 28, 6 p.m.
The Capitalist State:
Racist Police Terror and War
Location TBA
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
spartacan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Friday, September 23, 2:30 p.m.
Meet the Marxists
UBC, SUB Room 42T
Information: (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

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

Cuba...

(continued from page 9)

core of the historic Communist Party leadership remains irreversibly loyal to maintaining the Cuban workers state. In fact, corruption is a *direct product* of Stalinist bureaucratic rule, and it seeps into every pore of Cuban society. Everyone knows that if you know the right person you can obtain the necessary goods, so why work hard for nothing? Only a regime of workers democracy can instill the necessary labor morale, prevent bureaucratic misuse of resources and check tendencies toward capitalist restoration.

The Cuban regime has tried to shield itself against criticism through periodic purges and “anti-corruption” campaigns and has at times reversed some of its own “liberalizing” measures. This is *not* because these Stalinists are irrevocably committed to the defense of the collectivized economy. The Havana bureaucracy is not a social class; its components do not own stocks in state industry and cannot transmit ownership of the means of production to the bureaucrats’ heirs. Rather, it is a parasitic and contradictory formation balancing between the imperialist bourgeoisie and the Cuban working class. As Trotsky wrote of the Soviet



A. I. Savelyev

V.I. Lenin addressing Third Congress of the Communist International in Moscow, 1921.

bureaucracy, “It continues to preserve state property only to the extent that it fears the proletariat.”

Insofar as the Cuban Stalinists’ reform program creates a new layer of small capitalists, they will necessarily develop their own interests counterposed to those of the workers state. At the same time, it is possible that the regime’s moves will generate

significant popular dissent and that the political hold of the bureaucracy will start to fracture, providing fertile ground for forging a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party among workers and advanced intellectuals seeking a road to authentic Marxism.

In outlining the road forward for the Soviet working class in the 1930s, Trotsky emphasized: “It is not a question of sub-

stituting one ruling clique for another, but of changing the very methods of administering the economy and guiding the culture of the country. Bureaucratic autocracy must give place to Soviet democracy.” The 1938 Transitional Program, the founding document of the Fourth International, laid out key elements of the program for proletarian political revolution, including:

“A revision of *planned economy* from top to bottom in the interests of producers and consumers! Factory committees should be returned the right to control production. A democratically organized consumers’ cooperative should control the quality and price of products.
“Reorganization of the collective farms in accordance with the will and in the interests of the workers there engaged!
“The reactionary *international policy* of the bureaucracy should be replaced by the policy of proletarian internationalism.”

An isolated and backward workers state, even one much larger and more resource-rich than Cuba, cannot reach, much less surpass, the levels of labor productivity in the advanced capitalist countries. Only successful socialist revolutions internationally, particularly in the imperialist centers, can eliminate scarcity and open the road to a world communist society. The ICL seeks to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution, as the necessary leadership in this struggle. ■

Guatemala...

(continued from page 6)

In 1898, the U.S. entered the imperialist order on the world stage in the Spanish-American War, taking over the Spanish colonies of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines. During the first three decades of the 20th century, U.S. imperialist troops intervened in Central American and Caribbean countries on nearly 20 occasions. In the military’s baggage train rode the representatives of giant U.S. corporations such as the United Fruit Company. By mid-century, United Fruit alone controlled almost 5,500 square miles of land throughout this region. In countries such as Guatemala, Honduras and Costa Rica, which were derisively referred to as “banana republics,” United Fruit’s will was law. When banana workers in Colombia went on strike in 1928, the military gunned down strikers and their families in the town of Ciénaga, a massacre immortalized by novelist Gabriel García Márquez in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

In Guatemala, Washington engineered the 1954 overthrow of bourgeois populist president Jacobo Arbenz, who had attempted to institute such reforms as nationalizing some of United Fruit’s land. Arbenz ordered that unused land, which included 85 percent of United Fruit’s holdings, be purchased at its declared value and distributed to landless peasants. United Fruit countered that \$628,000, its earlier valuation of the land for tax purposes, was not enough and demanded \$16 million instead.

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and his brother, CIA chief Allen Dulles, were connected to United Fruit’s law firm, and the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., was a big stockholder. But it was the context of the Cold War against the Soviet Union that underlay Washington’s anti-Communist frenzy over Arbenz’s modest agrarian reforms. Minor participation in his government by the tiny Stalinist Guatemalan Labor Party (PGT) was seized upon to launch a red-scare propaganda campaign to go along with direct backing for reactionary Guatemalan cutthroats. The CIA worked to oust Arbenz from within, while a ragtag army of a few hundred was organized in Honduras under the exiled Carlos Castillo Armas, who had received training at Fort Leavenworth in Kansas.

Key to the invasion’s success was the bombing and strafing of Guatemala City by U.S. airplanes flown by U.S. pilots. CIA honcho Howard Hunt (infamous for his role in the 1972 Watergate scandal) starkly—and shamelessly—described the mission in CNN’s documentary series *Cold War*: “What we wanted to do was have a terror campaign, to terrify Arbenz particularly, terrify his troops, much as the German Stuka bombers terrified the populations of Belgium, Holland and Poland at the onset of World War II and just rendered everybody paralyzed.”

Abandoned by his army, Arbenz resigned, ceding power to Colonel Carlos Enrique Díaz. John Peurifoy, the U.S. ambassador, presented Díaz with a list of alleged Communists to be killed. Díaz responded by declaring his intention

to release all political prisoners, including PGT members. Peurifoy ordered the bombing to continue, and Díaz was removed from office at gunpoint. A U.S. embassy plane flew in with Guatemala’s new leader, Castillo Armas, and waves of bloody repression soon ensued. PGT members as well as peasant and labor leaders were rounded up and incarcerated or executed, and land was returned to United Fruit and the oligarchs. Three years later, Castillo Armas was shot dead, one of the “regime changes” that would be commonplace in Guatemala over the next few decades.

U.S. imperialism’s “labor lieutenants” were active in anti-Communist intrigues in Guatemala, as they were throughout the world. American Federation of Labor operatives undermined PGT influence in the unions and recruited right-wing unionists for the invasion force. Guatemala was a training ground for the treacherous role that the AFL-CIO bureaucracy would later play in Central and South America through its notorious American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), which worked with the CIA to destroy militant, left-led unions.

As we explained in “Guatemala—CIA’s Mass Murder Inc.” (WV No. 621, 21 April 1995), “Grisly repression is a fundamental feature of the U.S. empire, which repeatedly drives the workers and peasants in its neocolonies to desperate uprisings as Wall Street literally drains their lives to fill its coffers.” In the early 1960s, nationalist officers launched a guerrilla insurrection out of disgust with the puppet government’s subservience to Washington. In response, U.S. military “advisers” began training Guatemalan forces in political assassinations on a mass scale and other “counterinsurgency” measures.

As the U.S. launched Cold War II in the late 1970s and early ’80s, it sent millions of dollars in aid to El Salvador’s death squad regime as it was fighting against a leftist insurgency and armed and trained the contra reactionaries fighting to overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Some of the bloodiest terror in Central America was carried out in Guatemala, where the juntas’ war against the guerrillas and indigenous populations of the western highlands reached genocidal levels. Trained and supplied with arms and helicopters by the U.S., the Guatemalan military carried out more than 600 massacres, wiping out villages and slaughtering unarmed men, women and children—sometimes hundreds at a time. The slightest social protest was branded as “communist” and “pro-guerrilla.” The most bloodthirsty of Guatemala’s military butchers, General Efraín Ríos Montt, declared: “We don’t have a scorched

earth policy! We have a scorched communists policy!”

“Truth and Reconciliation” = Illusions and Impunity

Survivors of the U.S.-sponsored terror in Guatemala want justice for what they suffered. A common scene in recent years is crowds of Mayans gathered around mass graves as teams of forensic anthropologists dig up the remains of their loved ones. The markings on the skeletal remains provide testimony to the sadistic manner in which the victims were shot, hacked and bludgeoned to death. Several memorials have been established at the sites of the massacres, with lists of names of the victims and vivid murals depicting the horrors they were subjected to.

Guatemala’s current center-left government has recently rehabilitated Arbenz, who will be recognized in the national school curriculum and have a highway named after him. But this is just whitewash for the murderous capitalist state apparatus that continues to bludgeon the working class and all the rural and urban poor on behalf of the Guatemalan bourgeoisie and its imperialist overlords. A few prominent figures have been charged with genocide, and some low-level military figures have been jailed. But key orchestrators of the military/death squad terror are still around, including Otto Pérez Molina, the likely new president. In one recent “reconciliation” measure, monetary “compensation” has been granted to the Civilian Self-Defense Patrols, the paramilitary forces that carried out some of the most horrendous atrocities! As one trade unionist put it, “How can it be that the same people that were massacred by these organizations have to pay them for the damage they’ve done?”

The horrors suffered by the Guatemalan masses are emblematic of the workings of capitalism in the colonial and neocolonial countries. But just as it has spread its exploitation and terror around the globe, the capitalist system has also spread the seeds of its own destruction by creating a proletariat with the capacity to seize the wealth accumulated by the capitalists from the brutal exploitation of labor. The only way out of the misery imposed by the imperialists on Guatemala lies through proletarian revolution in Central America and Mexico and, crucially, in the U.S. imperialist heartland. As we wrote in our 1995 article on Guatemala, “The tentacles of the octopus (as United Fruit was known throughout Central America) can be cut off, as in Cuba, but Yankee imperialism will continue to strangle the hemisphere until it is struck in the heart.” This struggle requires the leadership of Trotskyist parties, sections of a reformed Fourth International. ■

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: 1st Sat. of every month, 2-5 p.m., and by appointment, 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
spartcan@on.aibn.com
- Vancouver** Box 2717, Main P.O., Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2, (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

Longview...

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The ILWU demonstrated the power of labor that lies in its collective organization, discipline and above all its capacity to shut down the flow of goods. Working people around the country, whose unions, jobs, wages and working conditions have been ravaged in a one-sided class war that has hit especially hard during the current economic crisis, cheered the ILWU’s action: *Finally*, a union is standing up and fighting back! To be sure, it is not easy to win in the face of the forces of the capitalist state. But it is better to fight on your feet than die on your knees! And when an important strike is won, it can dramatically alter the entire situation. In 1934, the San Francisco general strike that forged the ILWU and the mass strikes in Toledo and Minneapolis—all led by reds—set the stage for the 1937 Flint sitdown strike against General Motors and the rise of the CIO.

Labor Traitor Trumka Stabs ILWU in the Back

The ILWU must not stand alone! Unions must be mobilized in concrete actions of solidarity, beginning with the Teamsters-affiliated Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen who drive the BNSF trains. Nothing should move in or out of the EGT facility! The International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA), which organizes longshoremen on East Coast and Gulf ports, issued a statement of solidarity with the ILWU, condemning the police attack on McEllrath and other union members. The Washington Federation of State Employees (AFSCME Council 28) did likewise, condemning “the management actions to break the ILWU at Longview or any port along the West Coast.” It’s going to take more than words to stop the EGT union-busters.

Outrageously, AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka has come out in *opposition* to the defense of the ILWU! Instead, Trumka is peddling the lie that what’s involved in Longview is a “jurisdictional dispute” between the ILWU and International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 701, whose members are scabbing on the ILWU. Trumka’s “jurisdictional dispute” line is the same one being pushed by EGT as a fig leaf for its union-busting. While the company went through a show of negotiating with the ILWU, it’s been clear from the beginning that EGT wants a non-union facility.

In January, EGT filed a court suit against the provision in its lease with the Port of Longview mandating that the company employ ILWU Local 21 members, arguing that “the lease did not impose any obligation whatsoever upon EGT to utilize *union labor* at the terminal” (our emphasis). After longshoremen shut down the BNSF grain shipment in July, EGT turned around and hired a subcontractor which employs Local 701 labor. Ever since, these scabs have been crossing the ILWU’s picket lines, while EGT cynically boasts that it is providing “local, family-wage” union jobs. Only a company dupe could buy this line.

The executive committee of the Oregon AFL-CIO passed a resolution condemning the IUOE “scab labor actions” at Longview despite the attempt by state federation president Tom Chamberlain to rule it out of order. In August, Trumka sent a letter backing Chamberlain, arguing that “the resolution should be considered void, and no action should be taken by the state federation under the resolution.” Trumka wants the ILWU to call off its fight and submit to a complicated hearing under the AFL-CIO’s provision for jurisdictional disputes. The only “jurisdictional” dispute in Longview is between capital and labor! And Trumka has taken the side of the bosses.

While the ILWU was fighting for its life in Longview on September 8, Trumka was a guest of honor at Barack Obama’s “fight for jobs” speech to Congress. The AFL-CIO president is especially concerned that militancy at Longview could



Mic Smith/Post and Courier

January 2000: Charleston ILA Local 1422 prevailed against union-busting after facing down attack by hundreds of state and local cops.

ignite a class battle that would threaten Obama’s re-election. The *Wall Street Journal* sees the same possible outcome. In a September 9 editorial headlined “A Union Goes Too Far,” this mouthpiece for the corporations and bankers declared: “If ILWU shops begin slowdowns in sympathy with the union in Washington state...the events yesterday will become a national issue demanding the attention of a President who is desperately trying to hold his union base together. This one is worth watching.”

The price that has been paid for the bureaucrats’ subordination of the unions to the Democratic Party—which less

September 8 struggle. Defense of the “community” has fed “outside agitator” baiting by the cops, directed against ILWU members from outside Longview, including McEllrath.

Illusions that the cops are just regular community folks are suicidal. The job of the police is to “serve and protect” the interests of the corporations, as was more than amply demonstrated in their brutal assault on ILWU picketers. Every hard-fought labor struggle in the history of this country has been a pitched battle with the capitalists’ strikebreaking thugs, from cops and company goons to National Guardsmen and other scabherders. Behind them stand the courts and other state agencies. These are all part of the machinery of the capitalist state, whose purpose is to defend the property and profits of the capitalist owners through the suppression of the working class.

This machinery includes the NLRB, which was created under the Democratic Party administration of that “friend of labor” icon, Franklin Roosevelt, to head off and co-opt the class battles of the 1930s. The NLRB exists to tie the unions up in endless legal machinations in order to prevent workers from using their collective power to organize, stop work and stop the flow of profits. Today, the suit against the ILWU by the NLRB—two of whose three current members were appointed by Democrats—is a brief for EGT union-busting.

The lie peddled by the union tops that the state can be pressured to serve the workers’ interests is matched by their promotion of the interests of American capitalism against its overseas competitors. In a press statement, ILWU spokeswoman Jennifer Sargent said that the purpose of militant actions by longshoremen in Longview is “to stand up to a foreign company that’s trying to get a foothold in Washington and undermine the grain industry.” Agriculture is big business in America, and one of the few where the U.S. has a competitive advantage. But anyone who thinks that this has benefited U.S. agricultural or other workers is severely deluded. No less than their foreign counterparts, American corporations are in business for one reason only, and that is to generate profits. The workers have no interest in promoting the profitability of their “own” capitalist rulers, which is purchased through the increasingly brutal exploitation of labor. U.S. grain bosses are just as eager as EGT’s non-American components to bust the ILWU.

For longshoremen whose very jobs are dependent on foreign trade—both imports and exports—to wave the red-white-and-blue “made in the U.S.A.” banner is particularly ludicrous. Unlike the Trumka leadership of the AFL-CIO, the International Transport Workers’ Federation has issued a statement in support of the ILWU. Whether or not the ILWU wins this battle might well depend on support actions by port and maritime workers throughout Asia refusing to handle scab EGT grain shipments. The ILWU isn’t going to win such support by waving the flag of U.S. imperialism, which is soaked

in the blood of countless workers and oppressed masses around the globe.

Break with the Democrats! Build a Workers Party!

With their backs against the wall, the ILWU leadership has taken some bold action. The fight has been engaged and there’s no going back. The strength of the union lies in its multiracial coast-wide membership. The Pacific Maritime Association bosses have long tried to pit one port against another, playing the overwhelmingly white Pacific Northwest locals, the largely black San Francisco local and the largely Latino membership in Los Angeles/Long Beach against each other. It is crucial that the union stand as one and fight to galvanize the rest of the labor movement in struggle behind it.

Trumka’s treachery vividly illustrates the role of the labor bureaucracy as the bosses’ agents in the unions, in which they serve as a central obstacle to working-class struggle. In 1921, in the face of an “open shop” offensive that was decimating the unions, James P. Cannon, then a leader of the Communist movement and later the founder of American Trotskyism, described the political program necessary to reforge the labor movement:

“The ‘open shop’ campaign is one of the manifestations of a state of war that exists in society between two opposing classes: the producers and the parasites. This war cuts through the whole population like a great dividing sword; it creates two hostile camps and puts every man in his place in one or the other....

“Let the unions put aside their illusions; let them face the issue squarely and fight it out on the basis of the class struggle. Instead of seeking peace when there is no peace, and ‘understanding’ with those who do not want to understand, let them declare war on the whole capitalist regime. That is the way to save the unions and to make them grow in the face of adversity and become powerful war engines for the destruction of capitalism and the reorganization of society on the foundation of working class control in industry and government.”

—“Who Can Save the Unions?” (7 May 1921), reprinted in *James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism* (Prometheus Research Library, 1992)

In 1934, Cannon and his party would provide the leadership for the series of strikes in Minneapolis that forged the Teamsters as an industrial union.

There is massive discontent at the base of American society that can be galvanized through class battles like that at Longview. But to realize this potential poses the question of leadership. The current labor misleadership must be ousted and replaced with workers’ leaders who link the fight to defend the unions to building a multiracial revolutionary workers party. The Spartacist League/U.S. uniquely puts forward the program to build such a party, the necessary instrument to lead the working class in the fight to do away with the entire system of capitalist wage slavery through socialist revolution. ■



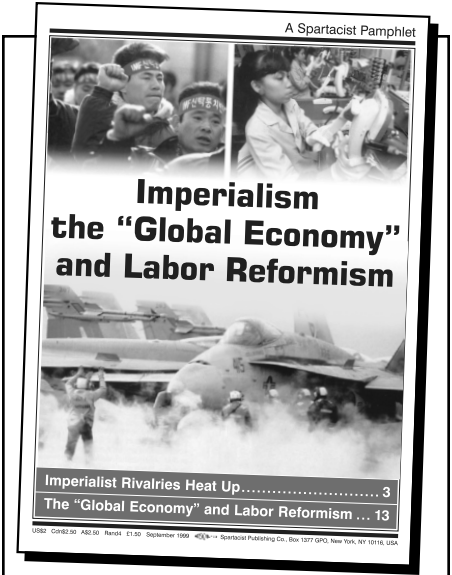
AP

September 8: Port of Tacoma was shut down when ILWU members walked off the job in support of Longview union struggle.

crudely than the Republicans represents the interests of the capitalist class—can be seen in decades of broken unions and busted strikes. Such class collaboration is a central obstacle to the workers waging the kind of class battles needed to defend their interests. The AFL-CIO officialdom’s commitment to the Democratic Party is equally shared by the ILWU International leadership. But with the very existence of the union on the line, McEllrath has been propelled into an episode of the class struggle that is inevitable in a society based on the exploitation of the many for the profits of the few.

“There Are No Neutrals There”

The ILWU’s battles in Longview have starkly laid bare the irreconcilable class divide between the workers and the capitalist class enemy. But this is obscured by presenting it as a fight of the Longview “community” against a giant multinational conglomerate. The refrain of the old coal miners’ Harlan County fighting song asks: “Which Side Are You On?” This question is being increasingly posed in Longview, where shopkeepers are under pressure to remove signs supporting the ILWU from their windows. The local newspaper ran an appeal from Cowlitz County sheriff Mark Nelson to turn in union militants involved in the



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WORKERS VANGUARD

Longshoremen Play Hardball in Longview, Washington

ILWU Fights Deadly Threat

SEPTEMBER 13—For decades the unions in this country have been taking it in the teeth, their leadership lying down in the face of a union-busting juggernaut launched when the PATCO air traffic controllers were smashed in 1981. But on September 8, in the port town of Longview, Washington, members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) and their allies in other unions mobilized the kind of militant labor action that built the union movement in this country.

In the early hours of the morning, a picket of more than 500 unionists massed outside the newly built \$200 million grain terminal of the giant EGT Development conglomerate, which wants to keep the ILWU out. Police who had earlier clubbed and pepper-sprayed picketers decided to take a hike. Faced with hundreds of longshoremen, the Longview police chief said, the cops had “used the better part of discretion.” The company’s security guard thugs also fled under police escort. Now EGT is complaining that grain cargo aboard a 107-car Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) train that had pulled into the terminal earlier was dumped on the tracks and that the train’s brake lines were cut. Later that day, a federal judge who had brought down a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) injunction against “aggressive picketing” in Longview complained that he felt “like a paper tiger.”

For months, ILWU Local 21, which has controlled all work loading and unloading ships in Longview for more than 70 years, has fought the EGT union-busters. In mid July, a mass picket of hundreds of ILWUers and other unionists stopped a BNSF train from delivering grain to the terminal (see “ILWU Battles Union Busters,” WV No. 984, 5 August). BNSF suspended service to the terminal. Then, on September 7, the company tried to move in a train carrying grain from Minnesota. At the port of Vancouver, Washington, just up the Columbia River from Longview, the train was blocked by 200 picketers occupying the tracks. While the unionists temporarily prevailed, later that day the train was on the way to Longview, where 300 longshoremen and their allies massed on the tracks to stop it.

Attacked by riot-equipped cops wielding clubs, tear gas and guns loaded with rubber bullets, the picketers stood down. ILWU International president Bob McEllrath was brutally manhandled by a gang of cops. Calling on the workers to disperse for now, he argued, “You can get maced and tear-gassed and clubbed” or wait for the backing of other longshoremen. ILWU members were outraged by pictures of McEllrath being roughed up and detained by the cops—an attack reminiscent of PATCO leaders being led away in shackles. The ports of Seattle, Tacoma and Everett were shut down as union members walked off the job early on September 8.

Hours later, there were reinforcements on the Longview picket lines. EGT, its hired thugs and the cops got a real taste of union power. Even the *New York Times*

September 7: Longshoremen and supporters block train to stop grain delivery to terminal run by union-busting EGT. Inset: Cops attack unionists to clear tracks.



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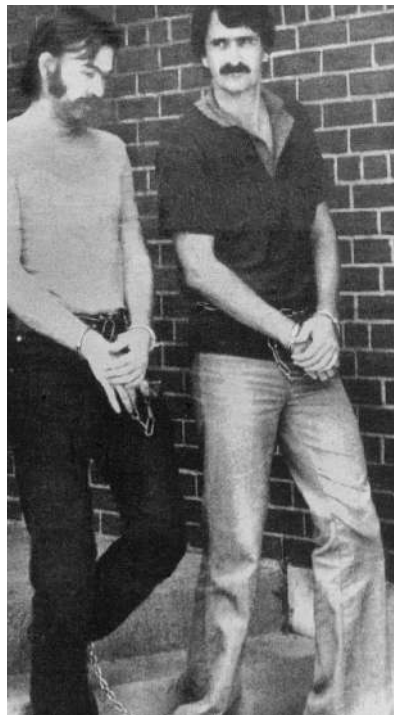
(9 September) acknowledged: “The longshoremen’s actions were a rare show of union militancy, reminiscent of labor actions a century ago.” Today it was reported that two pro-union protesters have been

arrested, one of them on four felony charges, with the police threatening more arrests. All labor must back the ILWU and demand that all charges against the unionists and their supporters be dropped.



Dawn Des Brisay

Left: ILWU International president Robert McEllrath being detained in Longview, September 7. Right: PATCO air traffic controllers union leaders hauled off in chains during 1981 strike. Smashing of PATCO set stage for decades of union-busting.



AP

The stakes in this battle are high. Negotiations for a new Northwest Grainhandlers Agreement between the ILWU and the giant conglomerates that dominate the grain business begin this month. EGT—a joint venture between St. Louis-based Bunge North America, the Japanese Itochu Corp. and the South Korean shipping giant STX Pan Ocean—is Bunge’s first foray into the Pacific Northwest. If EGT gets away with keeping the ILWU out at Longview, it will be a declaration to other grain companies that it’s open season on the union. A defeat at Longview would be a body blow against this powerful union, whose core longshore division contract is up in 2014.

Behind EGT stands the power of the capitalist state. In August, the NLRB filed for an injunction seeking to stop “aggressive picketing” at the Longview terminal and challenging the ILWU’s right to the jobs at EGT. On the afternoon of the September 8 action, a federal judge made permanent the injunction requested by the NLRB, although he refused the NLRB request that all picketing be banned. Carrying fines of \$25,000 per violation, the injunction was extended to cover the entire ILWU. The union now faces a “contempt of court” hearing. Nationwide, the hired pens of the capitalist media have unleashed a rabid, labor-hating barrage against the ILWU, slamming it as a pack of “thugs.”

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