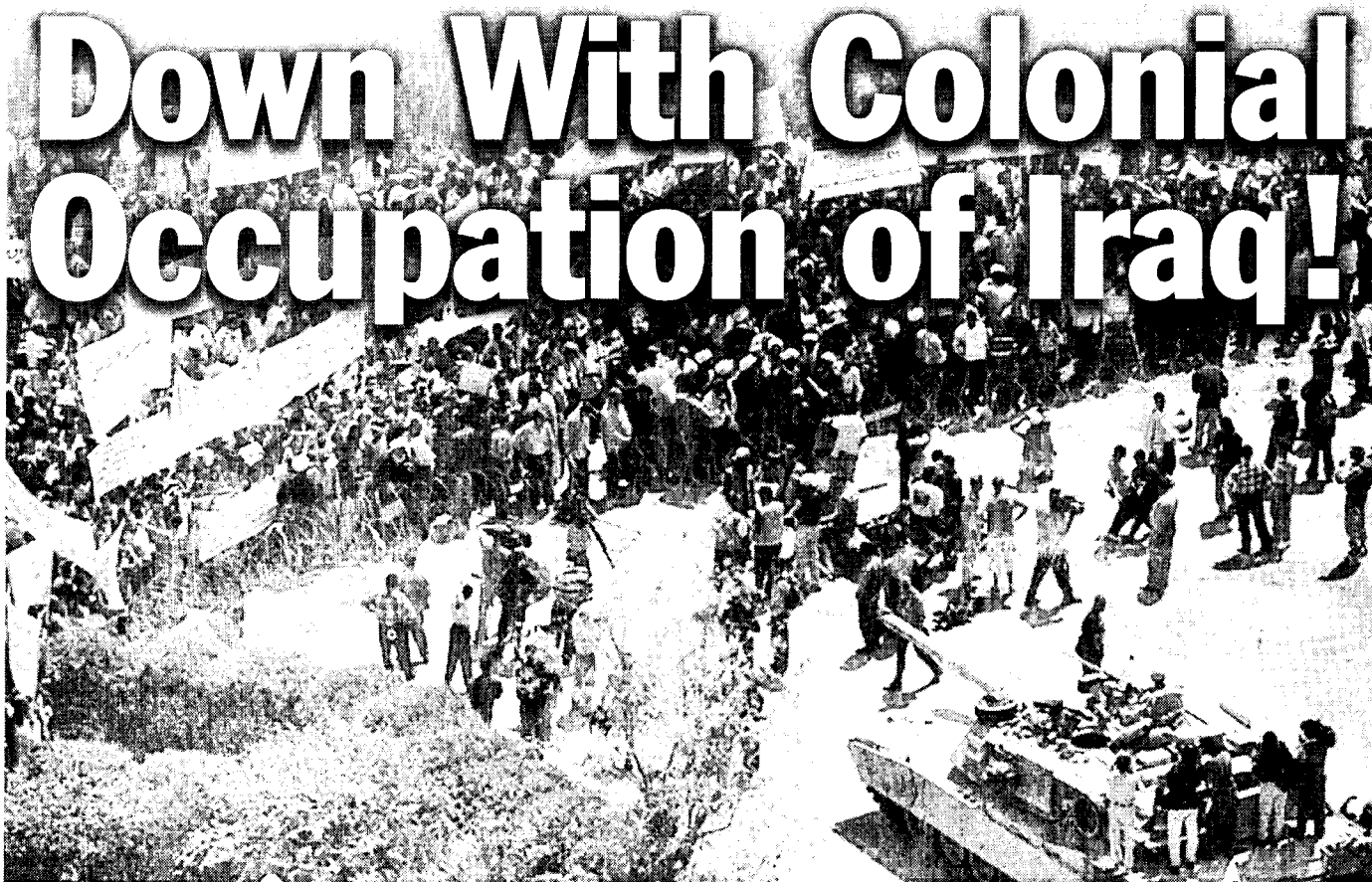


U.S./Canada/UN Out of the Near East!



U.S. rape of Iraq has provoked outrage throughout the country. April 28 protest outside Palestine Hotel in Baghdad, under guns of U.S. military. AP

The colonial subjugation of the Iraqi people under U.S. military occupation has begun. The rapid victory of American and British forces was not a war but a one-sided slaughter. The imperialists pounded Iraqi cities with anti-personnel cluster bombs designed to kill the maximum number of people in densely populated areas. Hospitals and morgues overflowed with dead and wounded men, women and children. The U.S. and British military now lord it over a population lacking just about every necessity of daily life.

In the wake of a relatively easy military victory for the imperialists, the colonial occupation has provoked outrage and resistance among the population. Scores of Iraqis have already been shot dead by U.S. troops during protests against the occupation. Demonstrations of tens of thousands in Baghdad and other cities have demanded that the U.S. "Go Home" and "Leave Our Country. We Want Peace." At the same time,

the imperialist occupation has encouraged reactionary forces to emerge, from fundamentalists demanding an Islamic republic to monarchists to "democrats" on the CIA payroll.

Ethnic and religious antagonisms, stoked by the British imperialist conquest at the end of World War I and fueled by decades of bourgeois-nationalist rule, now threaten to erupt in an orgy of bloodletting. In the areas

of northern Iraq dominated by the U.S.-allied nationalists of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), mobs have driven thousands of Arabs from their villages. In Mosul, Arab protesters not only chanted "U.S. out!" but also "Kurds out!" And the Turkmen minority is so besieged that they have appealed for military intervention by Turkey.

Mosul was a stronghold of the Ba'ath Party. However,

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Defend the Palestinians!

Toronto Feminists Ban Iranian Leftists

As the imperialists prepared to rain bombs down on Baghdad, the International Women's Day in Toronto organizers outrageously excluded the Action Committee on Women's Rights in Iran (ACWRI) from their meetings and barred them from having display tables at the IWD fair. Why? Because at last year's IWD rally, ACWRI staged a depiction of a woman throwing off her veil in an act of defiance against centuries of women's oppression by mosque and state. From the vantage point of "Canada the good" social democrats, this passionate act of anger against the stoning, torture and imprisonment of women in Iran is disruptive and might "offend" Muslims. We strongly protest this ban, carried out in the service of covering for Islamic fundamentalism and anti-woman bigotry.

This is typical of the IWD organizers, as well as the reformist left, many of whom supported the anti-woman Islamic bigots and mullahs behind the Iranian "revolution" in 1979 under the guise of anti-imperialism. The International Socialists ran laudatory articles about the mullah-led "mass movement" which overthrew the shah, with headlines like "The form—religion. The spirit—revolution" (*Workers' Action*, February 1979). Uniquely on the left, we told the truth: the Islamic regime would be one of barbaric repression of women, workers and national and religious minorities. We said: "Down with the Shah! No support to the mullahs! For workers revolution in Iran!"

We defend the ACWRI—and the Worker-communist Party of Iran (WCPI) with which it is affiliated—against exclusions. Nevertheless we have serious political differences with the WCPI. At protests against the Iraq war they appeared quite militant, with red banners and appealing slogans such as "Long live Socialism" and "Long live Karl Marx." But despite the "red" coloring, their program is reformist to the core. They have long sought to pressure the agencies of imperialism to aid the people of the Near East. They call on the governments of Canada and other imperialist countries to take action against the Iranian regime by shutting down its embassies. Now the WCPI calls on the UN to take over the colonial occupation of Iraq. At a Vancouver protest they chanted, "U.S. Out, UN In!" Their statement on the fall of Baghdad argues: "the most appropriate and immediate solution is the urgent withdrawal of US and British troops and the introduction of UN forces for a transitory period...."

The UN is nothing but an instrument serving the interests

of the great imperialist powers. The UN put its stamp on the slaughter of the first Gulf War against Iraq, and UN sanctions took a hideous toll on the Iraqi people with the death of 1.5 million by starvation or disease. To call on this fig-leaf



Atta Kenare/AFP


Teheran rally defies Islamic regime on International Women's Day, March 8.

for imperialism to end the subjugation of Iraq is worse than absurd—it builds illusions in the very forces we need to combat.

We of the International Communist League call for the immediate withdrawal of all U.S., Canadian and UN troops out of Iraq and the Near East. We fight to mobilize the international proletariat to liberate neocolonial nations from imperialism and overthrow capitalism in the imperialist countries through socialist revolution. Printed below is the Trotskyist League's March 18 protest letter to the Toronto IWD organizers.

We are in receipt of "An Open Letter to the 'Organizers' of IWD," a leaflet dated February 18, 2003 from the Action Committee on Women's Rights in Iran - Toronto (ACWRI). We protest your decision to ban these women's rights activists from attending your organizing meetings and from setting up display tables at the International Women's Day Fair. The exclusion of any organization fighting for women's rights from IWD is a repugnant practice, but to ban a Middle Eastern women's organization for the "crime" of protesting the anti-woman laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran is outrageous. As the ACWRI wrote in its open letter: "Our members have experienced first hand what [it] is like to be treated as [the] Second Sex. We have experienced segregation, stoning, and Islamic Dress Code." Yet, ACWRI writes that they have been banned for "disrespect of 'others'" when they showed the courage to speak out against these outrages. The ACWRI leaflet continues: "On that day [International Women's Day 2002] we symbolically chained a woman and she was dragged by a Mullah wherever he wanted to drag

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SPARTACIST CANADA 

Newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste
Canadian section of the International Communist League
(Fourth Internationalist)

Editorial Board: Jane Clancy, Charles Galarneau, Arthur Llewellyn, John Masters, Miriam McDonald (Editor), Jon Seville (Editor, Young Spartacus pages), Russell Stoker (Production Manager)

Circulation Manager: Russell Stoker

Published four times a year by Spartacist Canada Publishing Association, Box 6867, Station A, Toronto ON M5W 1X6. Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.
Printed in a union shop by union labor.

Publications Agreement No. 461717 ISSN: 0229-5415
Summer 2003 Date of issue: June 2003

Massive Strike Wave Sweeps France

A strike by up to two million workers brought France to a virtual halt on May 13 as schools and government offices were closed and public transportation and air traffic were brought to a near standstill. French workers are fighting to beat back attempts by the government of conservative president Jacques Chirac to cut retirement benefits for public employees and increase their payments into the pension system. The union leaders meant the strike to be a one-day “show of force” to back up their negotiations with the government, but the workers were not following the bureaucrats’ script. Workers at many locations, voting daily in general assemblies on the shopfloor, continued the strikes, keeping the country largely tied up throughout the week.

There has been considerable public support for the strikes despite the disruption that accompanied them. Lines of tied-up traffic around Paris totaled some 300 kilometers; the streets of the capital were filled with people walking, skating or cycling to their destinations. It is widely understood that attacks on state employees’ pensions are simply a prelude to attacks on everyone’s pensions and other social benefits. But leaders of the main trade-union federations, fearful of the explosive anger among the ranks, have tried to put a lid on the situation. Leaders of the Socialist Party-led CFDT trade-union federation broke the united front of all the major union federations by signing a deal with the government and then despicably engaging in active strikebreaking against the workers who continued to strike. The division of the proletariat into separate unions run as political fiefdoms weakens the workers’ struggles. Our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France fight for industrial unionism—one industry, one union—to maximize the workers’ *unity* against the employers and the capitalist state.

On May 19, hundreds of thousands of strikers—primarily teachers, hospital personnel and postal workers—braved heavy rain to march in Paris and other cities. However, while public transportation was shut down in Marseille, most rail, subway and other public transportation workers, who were key in tying up the country, have returned to work. Calling for a nationwide demonstration on Sunday, May 25, the leaders of the Force Ouvrière and CGT union federations are cynically manipulating the combativity of the workers back into a parliamentary framework of “pressuring” the government.

While centered on public employees, the strikes mobilized a significant component of workers from the private sector. In the industrial city of Lyon, fully one-half of the strikers



Reuters

Paris, May 25: Hundreds of thousands protest against government’s attacks on workers’ pension rights.

**Down With Racist Expulsions!
For a Multiethnic Revolutionary Workers Party!**

were in private industry. This is significant because the strategic component of immigrant workers in the French industrial proletariat is entirely concentrated in the private sector (racist French law bans non-citizens from public sector jobs). “Left” and right-wing governments alike have used racist attacks on minorities to divide and demoralize the working class in France, from racist discrimination in hiring, education and housing to the Vigipirate campaign of military and police terror against immigrants and minorities. Seizing on the terror attacks in Morocco in mid-May, the French government announced that it is raising the Vigipirate “anti-terrorism alert” to “Code Orange,” a threat not only to the country’s besieged minority communities but to striking workers as well.

We reprint below a 15 May leaflet issued by the LTF, section of the International Communist League.

With the massive May 13 strikes and demonstrations, which continue today, the working class is ripping apart the reactionary national unity behind the Chirac government that was stitched together by the SP [Socialist Party], CP [Communist Party] and LCR (Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire) together with the trade-union bureaucrats. From their outright vote for Chirac last year “against Le Pen,” to heralding the French imperialists as a force for “peace” against U.S. imperialism’s colonial slaughter of Iraq, these traitors have done everything in their power to tie the working class to the class enemy. This strengthened the hand of

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Toronto, Montreal:

State Vendetta Against Leftists Beaten Back

Left-wing militants, workers and all defenders of democratic rights won some rare but important victories this spring when ominous show trials in Montreal and Toronto blew up in the prosecution's face.

Three Montreal activists—Jaggi Singh, Jonathan Aspireault-Masse and Christina Xydous—faced bogus charges of rioting and unlawful assembly. These stemmed from a police attack on a demonstration of over 1,000 people in downtown Montreal against a meeting of the G-20 finance ministers and central bank governors in October 2000. After a three-week trial, the jury returned an emphatic “not guilty” verdict on all charges. As Jaggi Singh, a prominent anarchist and spokesman for CLAC (Anti-Capitalist Convergence) declared: “The verdict today is not just a victory for the three defendants, but also a modest win for political organizing in Montreal.”



Peter Edwards/Toronto Star

Drop all charges against OCAP Three! From left, Stefan Pilipa, lawyer Peter Rosenthal, John Clarke and Gaétan Héroux.

At the same time, three militants of the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP)—John Clarke, Gaétan Héroux and Stefan Pilipa—were being dragged through the courts on frame-up charges stemming from a June 2000 demonstration at the Ontario Legislature against attacks on homeless people and the poor. The charges included counseling to riot and counseling to assault police, carrying possible jail terms of up to seven years. In fact, the march on Queen's Park was met by a cop riot, with police charging the crowd on horseback and brutally beating demonstrators. The court case against the OCAP Three ended in a mistrial with the jury at an impasse. As OCAP leader Clarke commented at the end of the four-month ordeal, “the divisions that the Harris and Eves government have created in Ontario society showed up in that jury room. There is a political polarization in this province and the assumption that this was going to be some prosecutorial cakewalk for them was misplaced” (*Toronto Star*, 12 May).

The OCAP trial was a rallying point for leftists, defenders of the poor and the homeless. Members of the Trotskyist League joined with others in packing the courtroom on several occasions in a show of defiance against the state's vendetta. Attendees wore OCAP buttons in solidarity with the defendants, giving a message to the court and cops on hand that fighting poverty and homelessness is not a crime. Underscoring that the three defendants did not stand alone, this show of support had a clear impact on the jury, aiding in the resulting mistrial.

The targeting of leftist protesters comes in the context of the post-9/11 so-called “war on terrorism.” It includes waging war on basic civil liberties, witchhunting immigrants, overturning hard fought union gains and criminalizing oppo-

sition to imperialist war. Among hundreds of such cases is that of 29-year-old Moroccan immigrant Adil Charkaoui. He is being held in prison in Montreal under a CSIS security certificate and faces deportation, even though he has not been accused of any crime. In Toronto, Mahmoud Jaballah has been held in solitary confinement for close to two years as a suspected “terrorist,” part of the government's attempt to deport him to Egypt where, according to Ottawa's own assessment, he will face torture and death. Neither these men nor their lawyers can even see the purported “evidence” against them. As Jaballah's lawyer Rocco Galati said, the message to Arabs here is: “You don't have any constitutional rights.”

The state's “war on terror” has extended to left-wing activists like OCAP. Toronto police chief Julian Fantino denounced the OCAP march on Queen's Park as “domestic terrorism” and characterized its activities as “organized crime at its finest.” The fact that the government has spent months carrying out show trials to prosecute leftists, using millions of dollars, while the homeless are dying and services for working people have been axed speaks volumes to the bankruptcy of the capitalist system! It is part and parcel of this rotten system to attack working people, minorities, the poor and anyone else who stands in the way of their profits. The bourgeois state (including the cops, courts and prisons) is the armed fist of repression for the ruling class. The capitalist rulers are going after groups like OCAP and CLAC with added vengeance because their militant protests

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Young Spartacus

Report on Migrant Farm Workers

“Made in Canada” Racist Hell

This article is based on a report by comrade Kristy of the Toronto Spartacus Youth Club.

As the imperialist war drive has occupied itself with slaughter and plunder in Iraq, racist attacks on minorities and immigrants here at home have increased. Although these groups have always faced repression from the capitalist courts, prisons and police, this has been intensified since September 11 and the so-called “war on terror.” Such attacks must be challenged by the working class, which has the social power and objective class interest to defend all of the oppressed. Particularly in a country like Canada, immigrants aren’t just victims; they are a key sector of the working class. The emancipation of the working class from the capitalist system of war, racism and poverty is integrally linked to the defense of immigrants and minorities from all forms of oppression.

Isolated and often unseen, farm workers are one of the most oppressed and abused sectors of Canadian society. Slaving away for 12 to 15 hours a day during peak periods, a great many of these workers are migrants or minorities.

As a teenager from Chatham, a small city in southwestern Ontario where jobs are scarce, I have vivid memories of spending my summers toiling in the corn fields. Working in the blistering heat for minimum wage, my fellow workers and I would complain about our slave-driving crew leader, who often had us work more than 12 hour days with insufficient breaks. I remember kids passing out from heat-stroke.

A few years later, I worked another agricultural job as an asparagus buncher, and although I was thankful to be working in a barn out of the sun, I still spent 11 hours a day on my

feet. I noticed the vast majority of my fellow workers didn’t speak English; they were migrant workers from Italy.

A friend of mine recently worked planting tomatoes and tobacco. He was one of three white Canadians. The rest of the crew were migrant workers from Trinidad. He would comment bitterly that while his wages increased up to \$11.00 an hour, the experienced workers from Trinidad earned only \$7.25. Although the white people were told to keep quiet about their higher pay, the unequal wages were well known.

In Chatham, both an agricultural and aging industrial city, the segregation of black Canadians whose ancestors settled here through the Underground Railroad is openly visible. Most live in the East End, the run down part of town infested with crack cocaine and prostitution. The Native population in neighboring Wallaceburg is stigmatized as “violent alcoholics” by bigots. In smaller communities such as this, the effects of the capitalist state’s racist policies are crystal clear.

In order to generate greater profits, capitalists continually seek cheaper labor sources. They often find these from countries purposely kept underdeveloped by imperialist exploitation, like Mexico, Jamaica, or the Philippines. Hence the introduction of the Commonwealth Caribbean Seasonal Agricultural Workers (SAW) program, the use of which has been steadily increasing since its inception in the 1960s (a similar program for Mexican workers emerged in the mid-1970s). Though forced to pay Employment Insurance premiums, they are denied coverage. Migrant workers are also

excluded from social programs such as education, welfare and (for practical purposes) health care coverage. After months of back-breaking labor, they are then summarily sent back to their countries, often to a life of extreme impoverishment.

Agricultural employers often refuse to pay sick days or overtime. Workers are not covered by the occupational health and safety legislation, and are often exposed to harmful pesticides. Their living conditions are often worse than those they face in the Third World. The threat of deportation at their own expense serves to silence and intimidate them from taking action against their exploiters.

Last November, Queen’s Park passed the cynically named Agricultural Employees Protection Act banning farm workers’ right to unionize. Ontario’s 100,000 farm workers have been lobbying for years to gain this

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Craig Berggold

Immigrant farm workers picket against farm owners in B.C., mid-1980s. Foreign-born workers are key to class struggle against racist Canadian capitalism.

Canadian Left and the Test of War

The bloody U.S. war of conquest against Iraq was a litmus test for the left. Millions internationally and hundreds of thousands in Canada rallied against the war. Yet it is patently clear that the biggest antiwar demonstrations in history had no effect whatsoever on the war-crazed American ruling class.

In statement after statement, speech after speech, the reformist organizers of the antiwar protests claimed that we could "stop the war" by building the broadest possible movement. In the U.S. that meant an alliance with "antiwar" Democratic Party politicians. In Germany and France it meant rallying workers and leftist youth behind their "antiwar" imperialist governments. In Canada it meant pushing the imperialist rulers in Ottawa to take a stand for "peace."

At demonstrations and teach-ins, on the campuses and among trade unionists, the Trotskyist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs sharply opposed the nationalist pacifism promoted by the reformist left. We insisted that the struggle against imperialist war cannot be separated from the struggle against the capitalist system that breeds war. We said that the rulers in Ottawa—or Paris and Berlin—are not potential "antiwar" allies but deadly enemies of working people and the oppressed. We exposed the antiwar pretensions of the NDP, which supported the imperialist drive to disarm Iraq through the United Nations and painted capitalist Canada as a force for peace. We built Revolutionary Internationalist Contingents in antiwar protests, calling "Down With U.S./Canadian Imperialism! Defend Iraq!" Immediately after the war began, we mass distributed a statement by our comrades of the Spartacist League/U.S. which proclaimed:

"It is in the class interest of the international proletariat to clearly take a side in defense of Iraq without giving any political support to the bloody Saddam Hussein regime. Every victory for the U.S. imperialists can only encourage further military adventures. In turn, every humiliation, every setback, every defeat they suffer will serve to assist the struggles of working people and the oppressed around the globe."

Given the colossal military advantage of the U.S., we emphasized that the chief means of defending Iraq was through international working-class struggle. In Europe, Italian dock and rail workers as well as Scottish train drivers took action against the transport of munitions, showing a glimpse of the social power that could be brought to bear. Citing such labor actions, the longshore union in Saint John, New Brunswick pledged to boycott military cargo destined for the Persian Gulf.

Everywhere, "left" talking union bureaucrats made fiery antiwar speeches...until the bombing began. Then they predictably rallied behind their own governments. In Britain, the Trades Union Congress refused even to participate in a ten-minute European-wide work stoppage against the war. The Canadian Labour Congress saluted Chrétien's transpar-



Tony Bock/Toronto Star

March 20: Youthful antiwar demonstrators block downtown Toronto intersection during rush hour.

ently phony "opposition" to the war while beseeching "employers and business decision-makers in this country to raise their voices on the side of peace."

"Left" Apologists for Canadian Nationalism, Pro-Imperialist NDP

Reformist groups like the Communist Party (CP) and International Socialists (I.S.) unashamedly covered for the labor tops and NDP while denouncing youthful activists seeking a left-wing alternative. An article in the CP's *People's Voice* (1-15 April) attacked antiwar militants in B.C. who sought "a 'more advanced' policy emphasizing opposition to capitalism." The CP complained that "an anti-capitalist 'basis of unity' would mean condemning the Canadian government"—the last thing these Maple Leaf socialists would ever countenance. Such a stance, they warned, would "make it more difficult for us to include forces with other world views" in the antiwar parades. What the CP had in mind was people like Larry Campbell, the NDP-allied Vancouver mayor. Even as *People's Voice* praised mayor Campbell for marching for "peace," he was unleashing the cops to round up immigrants and the poor in the destitute Downtown Eastside!

The I.S. pushed the same wretched perspective of "unity" with the NDP and pressure on the Canadian government. Rather than fighting to win workers and youth to a struggle against Canadian capitalism, they issued pathetic pleas like "Just say 'no', Jean" and "Hold Chrétien's feet to the antiwar fire," and repeatedly hailed empty "antiwar" speeches by NDP politicians.

At the same time, the I.S. has waged an outrageous smear



SC photo

Trotskyist League/Spartacus Youth Club contingent at Toronto antiwar demonstration, March 22.

campaign against left-wing activists in Toronto. A 16 April *Socialist Worker* editorial claimed that during a March 20 antiwar demo, "A small group literally smashed their way through the front of the march as it was marshalling, and proceeded to hold their own, supposedly 'more militant' snake march. This breakaway march then rushed to a church where a mass meeting had been planned, stormed the doors, and effectively prevented the meeting from happening in an effective fashion."

This is a tissue of lies from start to finish. Fed up with endless polite parades pleading with the powers-that-be to "give peace a chance," several thousand youth (close to half the demonstration, including contingents from the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty and the Trotskyist League, among others) broke off to march on the British Consulate and then snaked through downtown streets. Upon reaching the church where the meeting had been announced, marshals from the "official" demonstration barred the doors and stopped them from entering.

Following this and a similar breakaway march two days later, the cops began rounding up and arresting protesters. Nowhere has the I.S. even taken the elementary stance of defending these militants against state repression. To the contrary, *Socialist Worker* echoes the capitalist media by printing violence-baiting diatribes about leftists "smashing" through lines of marshals and "storming" antiwar meetings! No wonder some youth issued a leaflet spoofing the I.S. and their "Peace Marshals" who "are keeping you safe from yourself, precisely as the Police do everyday and it's absurd to think about resisting the Police, isn't it?"

Direct Action and the Antiwar Movement

Repulsed by the servile reformism of much of the left, many activists have embraced a strategy of civil disobedience or other forms of direct action. In some cases, this is

little more than an attempt to add a patina of militancy to the mainstream antiwar movement. Vancouver's Fire This Time Movement has won support for its sometimes audacious protests on behalf of the oppressed, such as an action at the Vancouver airport which forestalled the deportation of an Iranian refugee. Yet for all its rhetoric about solidarity with the peoples of the "Third World," Fire This Time breathed not a word of criticism of the mainstream, Canadian-nationalist antiwar movement.

After the U.S. conquest they went so far as to call the antiwar movement a "huge success," claiming that it "forced the imperialist ruling class to change direction and become less offensive" (*Fire This Time*, May 2003). This is frankly ludicrous. It should be clear to all that the broad antiwar coalitions that mobilized millions across the world did nothing to stop or even limit the ability of the world's bloodiest imperialist power to devastate Iraq. Fire This Time's claim bespeaks a deep faith that capitalism can be fundamentally reformed, or at least restrained, through mass pressure.

Other direct action organizations take a more left-wing stance. Many militants in OCAP, Montreal's CLAC (Anti-Capitalist Convergence) and various anarchist collectives would agree that the task at hand is not merely to end one particular war, but to end the system behind all wars. The question is how to do this.

In a leaflet titled "We Must Fight This War in Every Way Possible!" the Vancouver Fight 4 Peace Coalition writes: "This movement is all bark and no bite! Our hollow calls for abstract 'peace' fall on deaf ears.... We must do all we can to drag the economy to a halt. We must take **Direct Action** against the economic system that supports this war." And to what end? The leaflet continues: "The Canadian government will **never** condemn this war unless it fears real and dire consequences; and these consequences must be enforced by us." Thus these anarchists call for determined action in order to...force the rulers in Ottawa to make noise against the U.S.

There is a fundamental congruence between this perspective and that of the mainstream peace movement, which begs the capitalists to be nicer to the people of the world. Each seeks in its own way to pressure the rulers to cease their imperialist aggression. A break from liberal docility does not in itself represent a break from the liberal program of capitalist reform. A strategy of looking to the ruling class as the instrumentality for change—in this case through militant pressure—is incapable of overthrowing the ruling class. And the political consequence of looking to the rulers, however indirectly, is to deflect focus from the system of capitalism itself, therefore standing as an obstacle to effective struggle against imperialism. The problem is that as long as capitalism is around, the world will continue to suffer imperialist wars.

In fact, the militant moral protest approach to the question of war taken by groups like Fight 4 Peace is consistent with the traditional outlook of anarchism. Historical anarchist figures like Mikhail Bakunin and Peter Kropotkin similarly upheld the view that there is a good, moral side to all human

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Colonial Occupation of Iraq...

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among its population of some one million, one-third are Kurds, who also form a majority in the surrounding region. Under the Ba'ath regime's "Arabization" scheme, hundreds of thousands of Kurds, Turkmen and Assyrians were driven from the region. With 300,000 Kurdish refugees planning to return, the threat of communalist bloodshed hangs over the whole area. A reporter for the *Guardian* (17 April) noted that "Mosul looked more like a Beirut war zone than a liberated city."

No one really knows the number of civilians killed during the war, or even the number of Iraqi soldiers slaughtered while defending their country. What little civil infrastructure survived the U.S./British bombing and 12 years of starvation sanctions has been devastated through widespread looting carried out under the gaze of U.S. occupation forces who rushed to secure the country's oil fields. Countless hospitals closed because of looting and arson. Those still functioning are without basic drugs. Baghdad and other cities have been without electricity or water for weeks, as fear of the spread of cholera and other diseases spreads with people drinking contaminated water from the rivers.

What we are witnessing is the return to old-style colonial pillage, with the hated cops of the Ba'athist regime once again terrorizing the population as puppets of the colonial invaders. While U.S. troops guarded the Ministry of Oil, the imperialist occupiers gave a green light to the sacking of the Baghdad museum and the torching of the library—the cultural heritage of Iraq and indeed of humanity. In an eyewitness account, Robert Fisk wrote in the London *Independent* (13 April):

"Our feet crunched on the wreckage of 5,000-year-old marble plinths and stone statuary and pots that had endured every siege of Baghdad, every invasion of Iraq throughout history—only to be destroyed when America came to 'liberate' the city....

"Not since the Taliban embarked on their orgy of destruction against the Buddhas of Bamiyan and the statues in the museum of Kabul—perhaps not since the Second World War or earlier—have so many archaeological treasures been wantonly and systematically smashed to pieces."

This imperialist conquest is a blow not only to the people of Iraq and the Near East but to working people and the oppressed the world over. America's rulers have shown the world just how ruthless they can be in killing defenseless civilians. TV networks showed a Baghdad crowd cheering the toppling of Saddam Hussein's statue, but they did not show American troops shooting up an ambulance in Baghdad the same day, killing two injured people on the way to a hospital.

Canadian Imperialism and the Iraq War

The Chrétien government's posture of opposing the Iraq conflict was a transparent fraud. Canada had 1,000 troops in the region throughout the war, some embedded with the U.S. military and others on naval vessels which helped escort U.S. and British warships to Iraq under the guise of the "war on terror." On the eve of the war, Ottawa announced that thousands of troops would be sent to Afghanistan to aid

the U.S. occupation army there; now it has offered RCMP officers to train a future Iraqi police force in better clamping down on the population. Stephen Harper, leader of the right-wing Alliance, quipped: "We have seen nations in the past support a military action without sending forces, but this is the first time we have ever seen a country not support a military action and send forces anyway" (*Toronto Star*, 18 March).

Had they openly backed the U.S. war, the ruling Liberals would have had to confront massive opposition among their heavily immigrant voting base and in Quebec. Antiwar protests in Montreal and other Quebec cities were enormous, peaking at 250,000 people, and many featured a sea of nationalist *fleurdelysée* flags. Subjected to Anglo domination for centuries, the Québécois have a long history of opposition to wars perceived to be in the interest of British and now American imperialism. So unpopular was the latest war that all three main bourgeois parties had to oppose it, even the far-right Action démocratique of Mario Dumont. The rulers in Ottawa calculated that open support to Washington's attack would translate into sharply heightened support for the bourgeois-nationalist Parti Québécois in the then-imminent provincial election, and perhaps pave the way for a new surge in support for Quebec independence.

The New Democratic Party tried to posture as the "anti-war party" in English Canada. But while decrying a "unilateral" U.S. war, the NDP openly backed the disarmament of Iraq by United Nations "inspectors." Following the war, party leader Jack Layton called for Canadian "peacekeepers" to be sent to Iraq under UN command. In short, the NDP simply wants the imperialist rape of Iraq to be carried out under a different flag.

As proletarian internationalists who called for the military defense of Iraq without giving any support to the Saddam Hussein regime, we say: **Down with the colonial occupation of Iraq! All U.S./British troops out of Iraq! All U.S. and Canadian troops out of the Near East and Afghanistan now!** Far from being a "peaceful" alternative to U.S. militarism, the Canadian imperialist rulers are vicious enemies of working people and the oppressed at home and abroad. Capitalist Canada is rooted in the national oppression of the Québécois, while Native people and non-white immigrants



Getty

Distraught Iraqi National Museum official amid artifacts destroyed by looting.



Colonial occupation and devastation of Iraq. Left: American Marines occupy central Baghdad, April 9. Right: Baghdad home destroyed by U.S. bombing, March 31.

are subjected to daily racist degradation. When sent abroad, Canadian forces help to oppress and brutalize the masses of the "Third World," as in their UN-sanctioned Somalia murder mission in 1993-94. Opposing our "own" ruling class down the line, we Trotskyists advocate independence for Quebec and seek to rally the working class in defense of immigrants, Native people and all the oppressed. ***Down with U.S. and Canadian imperialism!***

U.S. Imperialism Threatens the World

Washington has wasted no time in warning the rest of the world that Iraq's fate waits in store for any other country deemed to be defying American diktat. First in the firing line was Syria, with the White House trotting out the usual litany of war threats, claiming Syria was a "rogue state" that had "weapons of mass destruction" and harbored former Iraqi leaders. Also on America's hit list is the North Korean deformed workers state. The *New York Times* (21 April) reported: "Hardliners in the Pentagon—and some at the White House—say that the United States should use its speedy victory in Iraq to drive home to North Korea that it could meet the same fate." We stand for the unconditional military defense of North Korea, including its right to nuclear weapons, against imperialist attack and capitalist counterrevolution.

The world's working and semicolonial peoples are paying the price for the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92. That historic defeat resulted in a catastrophic devastation of life and culture in the former Soviet Union. It has also emboldened American imperialism, proclaiming itself the "world's only superpower," to aggressively assert its dominance over the globe. While the reformist "socialists" who today proclaim themselves antiwar and anti-imperialist joined in cheering the demise of the USSR, we Trotskyists fought to the end in defense of the Soviet workers state and the collectivized property forms established by the October Revolution of 1917. This was part of our struggle for new October Revolutions around the world.

The naked colonial aggression against Iraq is the real face of imperialism, of the irrational, anarchic, profit-driven capitalist system made even more irrational in its epoch of decay. Mass slaughter is the concentrated expression and ultimate logic of the "normal" brutal workings of the capitalist system, which daily condemns countless numbers around the world to death by malnutrition, lack of medical care and industrial murder. The only way to put an end to imperialist war is to tear up this whole system by its roots through socialist revolution and the creation of a rational, planned economy internationally. We fight to build revolutionary workers parties as part of a reformed Trotskyist Fourth International to lead the proletariat in the struggle for power.

Zionist Neocons, Christian Fundamentalists

The takeover of Iraq "opens up all sorts of new possibilities for us," proclaimed a spokesman for the Bush administration, whose policies are increasingly determined by a cabal of Zionist neo-conservatives and Christian fundamentalists. These types are intent on again reshaping the Near East—as it was earlier reshaped by British and French imperialism after the fall of the Ottoman Empire—including through the creation of a *cordon sanitaire* between Israel and potentially hostile states. Former U.S. general Jay Garner, the first *gauleiter* of occupied Iraq, was closely linked to Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon. In the baggage train of this imperialist occupation force was Christian evangelist Franklin Graham, son of Billy Graham and a prominent fixture at this year's Pentagon Good Friday service, who has railed against Islam as a "very evil and wicked religion."

The neocons' favored choice as the U.S.' "native" stooge is Ahmed Chalabi, head of the U.S.-funded Iraqi National Congress (INC) and a U.S.-educated banker who fled Jordan years ago to evade a conviction for bank fraud. Chalabi's American champions extend far beyond the right wing of the Bush administration. His INC was the chief beneficiary of

(continued on page 10)

Colonial Occupation of Iraq...

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the Iraq Liberation Act signed by Clinton in 1998. Another longtime booster of Chalabi is self-styled "anarchist" Noam Chomsky, who has promoted Chalabi and the Iraqi "opposition" for over a decade.

In the buildup to the 1991 Gulf War, Chomsky pushed as an "alternative" to war "the peaceful means prescribed by international law: sanctions and diplomacy" (*Z Magazine*, February 1991). Another "alternative" he promoted was Chalabi's "democratic opposition," lecturing that the media "have scrupulously avoided the Iraqi democratic forces" because "they are again calling for democracy in Iraq while Washington seeks to install some clone of Saddam Hussein" (*Lies of Our Times*, September 1991). Two years later, Chomsky complained that "the US always dismissed the Iraqi democratic opposition with disdain, including its most conservative elements, such as London-based banker Ahmed Chalabi" (*Z Magazine*, May 1993).

Only months before the passage of the Iraq Liberation Act, Chomsky again talked about how the Chalabi opposition had been an "alternative" to war in 1991, again complaining of the U.S.: "Regional opposition was regarded as a problem to be evaded, not a factor to be taken into account, any more than international law" (*Z Magazine*, April 1998). Even after Chalabi rode into Baghdad with American troops in early April, Chomsky said approvingly, "The US-backed opposition demands that the UN play a vital role in post-war Iraq and rejects US control of reconstruction or government" (*ZNet*, 13 April).

Stepped-up belligerence against Syria and Iran, now also targeted for "regime change," has long been a policy of the U.S. neocons' Project for a New American Century (PNAC), which in a post-9/11 letter to Bush declared that "the administration should consider appropriate measures of retaliation" against Iran and Syria, which they deemed to be "known state sponsors of terrorism." The letter continued, "Israel has been and remains America's staunchest ally against international terrorism, especially in the Middle East. The United States should fully support our fellow democ-

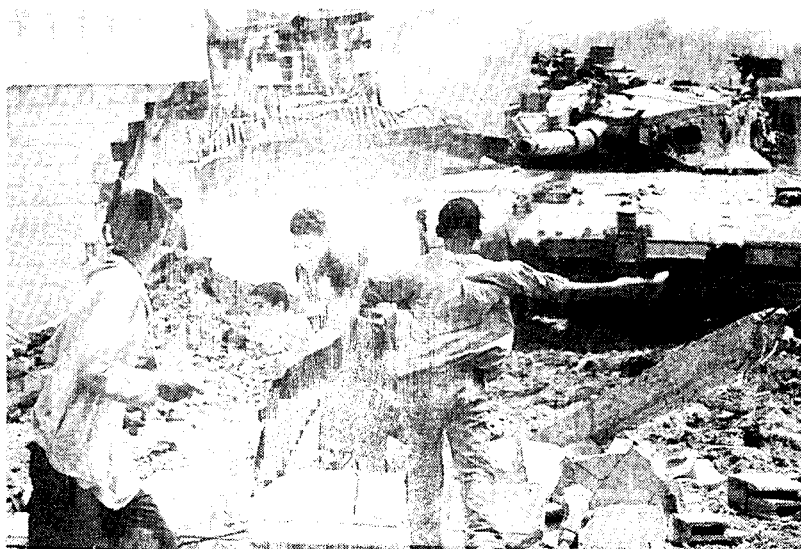
racy in its fight against terrorism." The Zionist rulers have taken full advantage of the Iraq war and the massive American military presence to intensify their murderous attacks on the Palestinian people.

After months of lying war propaganda about Iraqi "weapons of mass destruction," not a single such weapon has been found by the occupation forces. But they could find hundreds of nuclear weapons in Israel. As documented by courageous Israeli nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu, who is serving an 18-year sentence for this service to humanity, the Zionist state had already acquired an arsenal of at least 200 nukes by the 1980s. To ensure its regional nuclear monopoly, Israel launched a "pre-emptive" strike against Iraq's sole nuclear reactor in 1981. From the 1960s on, Israel developed its nuclear and missile programs in collaboration with the white-supremacist regime in South Africa which, according to American satellite surveillance, carried out a nuclear test in 1979. The Zionist state and the apartheid regime jointly decided to end their nuclear collaboration in the early 1990s, when the African National Congress was about to come to power, and by the time Nelson Mandela became the country's first black president in 1994, the nukes were gone.

Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle, leading lights in PNAC and the Bush administration, served as consultants to Benjamin Netanyahu when he ran for Israeli prime minister at the head of the ultra-Zionist Likud Party in 1996. And the U.S. Democratic Party is no less rabid in its support to Zionist Israel. Among the Congressional sponsors of the "Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act" are Democrats Eliot Engel and California Senator Barbara Boxer. Although in recent years Syria bought subsidized oil from Iraq, the Syrian rulers were by no means supporters of Saddam Hussein's Iraq—Syria backed Iran against Iraq in the 1980-88 war and supported the U.S.-led Desert Slaughter in 1991. The Syrian leadership's real crime in the eyes of both the neocons and their Democratic allies is its hostility to Israel, from whom Syria demands the return of the Golan Heights seized in 1967.

While a minor player in the region, the Canadian ruling class is no less committed to backing the Zionist state in its repression of the Palestinians. As in the U.S., pro-Palestinian academics and student activists are increasingly targeted for repression by campus authorities and the state. Youth seeking to protest the Israeli atrocities in the Occupied Territories are vilified as "anti-Semitic" by the capitalist press. This lying, hysterical campaign has been stepped up since the successful mass protest against Netanyahu at Concordia University in Montreal last fall, where campus security and the police were unleashed to stop any pro-Palestinian activists from attending (see "Defend Leftist and Palestinian Protesters!", *SC* No. 135, Winter 2002/2003). ***U.S. hands off Syria and Iran! Defend the Palestinian people! All Israeli troops, settlers out of all the Occupied Territories!***

The criminal role played by the Kurdish nationalist leaders in acting as pawns for U.S. imperialism will only set the Kurdish people up for yet another betrayal. What all the regional bourgeoisies, as well as all the imperialist powers, do not want to see is the creation of an independent



Getty

Zionist tanks wreak death and destruction in Occupied Territories. Defend the Palestinians!

Kurdish state, which would challenge the stability of the bourgeois order in the Near East. This underscores that any struggle for Kurdish national liberation must be based on implacable opposition to imperialism.

The Kurdish nation is divided among four capitalist countries, Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey, which has threatened military intervention across the border to suppress any move toward Kurdish statehood. It is only through the overthrow of capitalist rule in these countries—establishing a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan—that the Kurdish people can finally realize national self-determination. Only within the framework of a socialist federation of the Near East can the rights of the disparate nationalities and ethnic and religious peoples of the region be guaranteed.

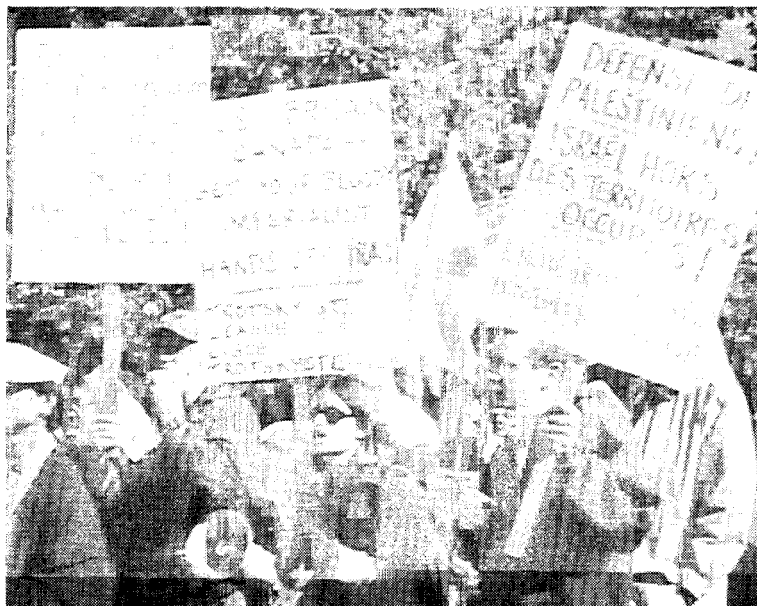
Only Workers Revolution Can End Imperialist War!

The war against Iraq was a naked assertion of American military superiority, not only over the Near East, but over its weaker rival imperialist powers. It is also a way for the U.S. to assert its control of the Near East oil spigot, on which Japan and West Europe are particularly reliant. Having been the driving force behind the starvation blockade for the past 12 years, the U.S. imperialists have now pushed through the lifting of the sanctions so that they can fully exploit their control over Iraq's oil wealth on the world market. At the same time, Wolfowitz has demanded that Russia, Germany and France forgive billions of dollars in debts owed them by Iraq.

The capitalist rulers of France, Germany and Russia, who, like the Canadian rulers, posed as peace-loving opponents of American "unilateralism," are now trying to get in on the division of the spoils, including the scramble for contracts for "reconstruction" of ravaged Iraq. Behind their pleas for the UN to have a central role in reconstruction is their own thirst for profit. The French capitalist rulers, for example, hope to hold on to massive French investments in Iraq on behalf of oil giant TotalFinaElf. But the U.S. masters insist that they fought for and stole Iraq for themselves. The contracts for rebuilding Iraq will overwhelmingly go to American corporations like Halliburton and Bechtel, for which the Bush administration essentially acts as a public relations department.

If nothing else, this flagrant imperialist aggrandizement certainly refutes the so-called theory of globalization, which was promoted by various leftists and liberals who declared that the capitalist nation-state had been superseded by multinational corporations and international agencies like the World Bank. Capitalist imperialism is premised on the existence of and competition among distinct nation-states defending the interests of their own respective capitalists. And as the examples of Bechtel and Halliburton demonstrate, the capitalists and their government form what is essentially one large interlocking board of directors. As V.I. Lenin, leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, wrote in a 1913 article titled "Armaments and Capitalism":

"Governments manage the affairs of the capitalist class, and the managers are well paid. The managers are shareholders themselves. And they shear the sheep together, under cover of speeches about 'patriotism...'"




SC photo

Trotskyist League contingent calls for defense of Palestinians, imperialist hands off Iraq on September 2002 Ottawa protest.

From the beginning of the drive to war, in our propaganda and our intervention on the ground, we Trotskyists have insisted that the struggle against imperialist war cannot be separated from the struggle against the capitalist system that breeds war. Genuine opposition to war must be based on class struggle and political protest independent of all the political parties that uphold capitalist rule. U.S. imperialism's conquest of Iraq will only strengthen the ability of its ruling class to plunder the world. The Canadian rulers will also seek to take advantage of this imperialist victory to reinforce their oppressive rule here and their influence abroad. The rapacious North American capitalists must be swept away through workers revolution. The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste, along with our comrades of the Spartacist League/U.S., is committed to forging the multiracial revolutionary workers party needed to lead that struggle to victory in the heartland of world imperialism.

—Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 802, 25 April

<p>Spartacist No. 57 (English edition)</p>	 <p>Statement of the International Communist League</p>
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Strike Wave Sweeps France...

(continued from page 3)

the bourgeois state to launch a murderous rampage with thousands of soldiers in the Ivory Coast, troops Chirac now threatens to send to Congo. At home the government used national unity to increase its racist war on immigrants with the first "charter flights" of deportations in many years. Emboldened by its success in trampling over the rights of Africans at home and abroad, the capitalist ruling class now has the organized trade-union movement in its cross hairs.

This is the biggest strike wave in this country since the powerful December 1995 strike against the attack on pensions by the Gaullist government of Juppé. It is crucial that the working class draw the lessons of 1995. The strikes then did force the right-wing government to withdraw its attack, but this was channeled into bringing to power the Jospin popular front in 1997, where the CP and SP ruled in alliance with the capitalist Chevènementistes [followers of ultra-chauvinist politician Jean-Pierre Chevènement] and Greens. Like all popular fronts—governmental alliances between workers parties and capitalist parties which rule on behalf of capital—this one did its job in attacking the interests of the workers and serving those of the capitalists and in shifting the struggles from the factory to parliament. After five years of savage attacks and racist "security campaigns" under Jospin, Le Pen's fascists got a massive vote and the Gaullists came back to power with a vengeance, and with an even more drastic assault on pensions.

Every gain the government wants to take back today is one the workers movement wrested through hard class struggle. It's going to take more such struggle and a *political* fight to hold on to past conquests and win new ones. Against the sectarian division of the working class we need to unite all the workers as one solid fist: **one industry, one union**. We need solid industry-wide strikes which **shut down production**. The government's challenge that our strikes are "illegal" is an ominous prelude to unleashing the forces of capitalist law and order against strikers and moving in scabs. We need **picket lines which mean "don't cross!"** Government experts whine that we don't understand the demographics and costs of the looming pension and social security crisis. We say, we've created the wealth of this society and we won't pay for the crisis of the inherently unjust capitalist system. The owners who have made millions in profits off our sweat should pay. We demand **a sliding scale of wages and hours: 30 hours work for 40 hours pay!** To combat the "divide and conquer" schemes which pit older workers against youth and French-born against immigrant, we must **organize the unorganized and the unemployed into the unions!** The cutting edge of the government's attempt to fracture the unity of the working

class is the toxic anti-immigrant campaign. It is imperative that the union movement take up the defense of its most vulnerable sector, the immigrant workers. We demand: **Stop the deportations! Vigipirate means racist state terror against immigrants! Down with Vigipirate! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!**

The power of the French proletariat is demonstrated in these massive strikes which have brought France to a halt, paralyzing transportation and disrupting the flow of profits into the bosses' coffers. Our class brothers and sisters in Italy, Greece, Spain, Germany and Britain have also engaged in powerful strikes to defend themselves from ruin. If militancy and self-sacrifice alone were sufficient to combat the injustices of the capitalist system, then all of Europe and indeed the whole world would be a society of justice and equality. Instead it's a world of imperialist war, racism, sexism and attacks on the living standards of the working people by profit-gouging capitalists. The problem is essentially one of leadership. Even to secure the minimal needs of the workers posed by the strike (pensions, wages, employment), the point of departure is a clear understanding that the workers must stand politically independent from and in opposition to their class enemy. This demands a break from the treacherous misleaders who subordinate the workers' interests to the French bourgeoisie, from the misleaders who exploited the unions as their springboard to support Jospin and Chirac. We need to forge **a new, revolutionary, internationalist workers party**. This is what we stand for, as the French section of the International Communist League.

It is not only the spectre of the December 1995 strikes which brought down the Juppé government that haunts the Chirac government. In its wholesale assaults against the teachers unions, the government and its minister of education, Ferry, have been on a rampage to eradicate the "spirit of May '68" in the educational system. This is an ominous threat against women's rights like co-education, abortion and divorce, which were gained in the turbulent years of class struggle that followed the May '68 general strike. The sellout then by the French CP of the pre-revolutionary situation created by that strike immeasurably contributed to restabilizing the bourgeois order in West Europe in the early '70s. This in turn helped open the way to the new cold war of the 1980s against the Soviet degenerated workers state, unleashing the forces of capitalist counterrevolution which finally destroyed the USSR in 1991-92. This catastrophic defeat for the world working class ushered in a new world order of inter-imperialist rivalries and neocolonial wars of depredation, in which the capitalist governments no longer feel constrained to maintain the "welfare state," centrally pensions and health care. To sweep away this capitalist system and to eliminate racism and war, a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party must be built to link together all forms of resistance to immiseration and oppression and to create an egalitarian socialist society here and internationally.

It is notable that in contrast to the December 1995 strikes contingents from the private sector have already come out in protest. However, the strike has remained concentrated in the public sector where the workers have citizenship rights and more protection against layoffs and victimization. This underscores that to bring out the private sector it is vital for the whole proletariat to take up the defense of its more vulnerable class brothers and sisters and their children. That means opposing the racist cops who daily terrorize the ghet-

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Le Bolchevik

Paris, February 15: French Trotskyists' banner calls to defend Iraq against imperialist attack.

tos, not having police "unions" obscenely parade in workers demonstrations, as they did on May 13. The cops are not workers but the guard dogs of capitalist private property against any encroachment by the workers on the capitalists' rights to exploit us and oppress minorities. **Cops, prison and security guards, out of the unions!**

Although presently a small organization, the LTF has shown the way in exemplary actions in defense of immigrants. In a statement protesting the deportations, we warned that "this 'war on terror' is designed to marginalize the most vulnerable workers, to weaken the working class by dividing it between European and immigrant, the better to carry out assaults on the *entire* workers movement and its gains wrested through decades of class struggle." We said that the government

"counts on the time-worn 'divide and conquer' scheme of racism. We better prove them wrong! The powerful trade unions across Europe should stand by their most vulnerable class brothers and sisters. Give every man and woman in the hellish detention centers and squats a union membership card and mobilize the power of the organized working class in their defense!"

Left groups like the LCR who were busy saluting the "antiwar" credentials of the Chirac government did nothing to mobilize against these deportations. Today they are cynically yelling "general strike." A general strike, bringing the country to a grinding halt, poses the question of who shall rule: the workers or the capitalists. With their support for the Gaullist government these treacherous "leftists" have already cast their vote. In contrast, we have fought down the line against the reactionary "national unity" front. During the war we argued for mobilizing the working class in class struggle against the French imperialist rulers as the way to defend Iraq against the neocolonial U.S. imperialist slaughter. We fight to organize the workers movement in this country against the predatory imperialist schemes of this ruling class abroad. **French troops out of Africa! U.S. and allied troops out of the Near East!**

Workers must beware of their present struggles being derailed again into a new popular front. This is the political

perspective of the LCR. Behind its calls for a general strike stand the LCR's repeated statements that it is ready to be part of a so-called "government of the left," i.e., a new bourgeois popular front. (Indeed their comrades in Brazil have already done so with their own minister in the Lula popular-front government—an alliance with the arch-capitalist and racist party of textile magnate José Alencar Gomes da Silva.) The LCR, which mobilized a goon squad to defend Chevènement against the indignation of undocumented immigrants and anarchists in the March 5 Paris antiwar demonstration, has already shown in action that they are willing to do the dirty work necessary for such governmental positions.

In contrast to the rest of the left, Lutte Ouvrière stood out for its refusal to call for a vote to Chirac during last year's elections and also again during the war for not signing its name to chauvinist appeals to the Chirac government. But, as we noted during last year's elections, LO's opposition to both Jospin's "plural left" and later to voting for Chirac was vitiated by its refusal to oppose

Vigipirate and its explicit support for reactionary cop mobilizations in November 2001. Today, LO has a strong implantation among the teachers in the Seine Saint-Denis district, which is heavily immigrant. These teachers have been waging strike action for weeks against the government's attacks on education, which if implemented would be particularly devastating for immigrant and minority youth. While LO argues that teachers must be mobilized against these attacks, it echoes the government as well as the SP and CP in their campaign to forcibly "assimilate" youth of immigrant origin by expelling young girls for wearing the *hijab* [Muslim headscarf] in public schools. One can hardly "assimilate" into a society that offers no jobs and only police repression!

The indifference of the French left and trade-union bureaucrats to racial oppression flows directly from their program of class collaboration. Despite its statements that workers' emancipation will be the work of the workers themselves, LO, far from offering a program for the workers to emancipate themselves from their traitorous misleaders, simply calls on the workers to be more militant in order to make the bureaucrats fight, arguing that "if part of the workers who were mobilized on May 13 continued the next day, it would put pressure on the union federations to continue" (editorial in LO's factory bulletins, 5 May).

Appealing to the justified anger of many workers against the reformist trade-union misleaders and their "far-left" supporters, the Confédération Nationale du Travail (CNT) claims to be building a new, "revolutionary" trade union. To substitute the idea of a "revolutionary union" or a "syndicalist party" only further fractures the labor movement. We need big, powerful, industry-wide unions which embrace the majority of the proletariat as a class. But to move beyond the framework of economic struggle at the shopfloor, to politically mobilize for the overturn of the inherently unjust capitalist order and to build a society where the workers rule requires forging a new and authentically communist party. The LTF is dedicated to building this party as a revolutionary **tribune of the people** which will fight every injustice, every act of discrimination, as part of a revolutionary internationalist struggle to bring the workers to power. Join us! ■

“Bolshevik Tendency”: Counterfeit Marxists

The deadly dangerous events of today’s world—the bloody U.S. wars on Iraq and Afghanistan, the sabre rattling against North Korea and Iran, the looming crisis in China—are massively conditioned by the destruction of the Soviet Union. This bureaucratically degenerated workers state for decades acted as a partial counterweight to U.S. military and political global dominance. The counterrevolution there has been an unparalleled disaster for the working people everywhere, not least in the former Soviet Union itself.

We revolutionary Trotskyists stood forthrightly for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of East Europe—these were conquests for the proletariat. We have only contempt for the “leftists” running the various antiwar coalitions who supported the forces of capitalist counterrevolution that destroyed the former USSR, thus contributing directly to the emergence of U.S. imperialism as the world’s unrivaled military power.

Which brings us to the International Bolshevik Tendency (IBT), who made their own slimy little contribution. Some may have wondered who owned an (unsigned) banner reading “Defend Iraq Against Imperialist Attack!” on the Toronto antiwar protests—it was the IBT’s. This group comes to virtually all our public events, spouting r-r-revolutionary rhetoric about their supposed opposition to imperialism and our supposed “flinches.” Most recently, they railed at us for not raising the call “Victory of the Taliban” during the U.S.-led imperialist war on Afghanistan. Of course, this hot air is solely restricted to our meetings—the IBT themselves never raised this absurd slogan anywhere else. Their rhetoric about a Taliban victory over the most powerful military forces on the planet is ludicrous. But it speaks volumes about the IBT’s willingness to embrace and prettify grossly alien class forces—and the further away the better.

Contrast this to their contemptuous attitude toward forces whose struggles were truly in the interests of the working people. The IBT founders are renegades who individually fled our party in the early 1980s, unwilling to go against the heightened reaction of Cold War II. This renewed imperialist offensive against the Soviet Union was launched after Red Army troops moved into Afghanistan in December 1979 to aid the pro-Moscow, left-nationalist regime then besieged by a CIA-backed Islamic insurgency. Noting this posed not only the defense of the Soviet Union, but also the possibility of extending the social gains of the 1917 October Revolution to the Afghan peoples, especially women, we declared “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!”

We always knew that those who founded the IBT hated this slogan, and sure enough, in 1988 they publicly repudiated it, declaring “Trotskyists never hail Stalinist traitors or their state.” This was a chemically pure expression of social-patriotism on what was then a defining question of opposition to the imperialist rulers. The U.S.’s dirty war in Afghanistan was meant to be a launching pad for the destruction of the Soviet Union. Indeed the withdrawal of Soviet troops by the wretched Stalinist bureaucrats in Moscow was a direct precursor to counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. Albeit administered by a nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy, the Soviet Union was a *workers state* based on proletarian property forms. The IBT’s sneering dismissal of the Soviet Union as a

“Stalinist state” reflected their own social-democratic hatred for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the necessary instrument for the suppression of counterrevolution.

In the intervening years the IBT has gone very far down this flagrantly opportunist path. The imperialists now declare North Korea, a deformed workers state, to be part of an “axis of evil,” targeting it for destruction. Revolutionaries who oppose their own imperialist rulers must stand for the unconditional military defense of North Korea, including its right to nuclear weapons. What of the IBT? In December 2002 they issued a lengthy treatise on the South Korean elections, which nowhere upheld North Korea’s right to possess nuclear weapons, nor even called for U.S. troops to get out of South Korea! Moreover, they gave “critical” electoral support to the Democratic Labor Party, whose stand for “reunification of the fatherland” would mean capitalist counterrevolution. Behind their *pro forma* statement that capitalist reunification of Korea would be a “defeat for the proletariat internationally” is a repulsive indifference to the existence of the North Korean workers state, for they say nothing about the devastating impact counterrevolution would have on the already impoverished North Korean working masses.

The IBT bares their opportunist underbelly on all kinds of other questions, from an indifference to the special oppression of blacks in America to chauvinist opposition to Quebec independence here in Canada. Along with the Canadian government they called for a “No” vote in the 1995 Quebec referendum on independence; their sole member in Quebec, as he quit, denounced the IBT’s “de facto bloc with the Canadian bourgeoisie.”

But for revolutionary Marxists, the “Russian Question” is the key. We defend all the countries that have overthrown capitalism—today China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba—for, as Leon Trotsky wrote, “Those who cannot defend old positions will never conquer new ones.” The IBT is far removed from this perspective. For the full monty on this outfit, see our pamphlet “The International Bolshevik Tendency—What Is It?” and “IBT’s Centrist Phrasemongering,” in SC No. 131, Winter 2001/2002. ■

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Canadian Left and Test of War...

(continued from page 7)

beings, including the capitalists, that can be appealed to. In contrast, Marxists understand that *class* divisions and *class* struggle are key in the fight to rid the world of oppression and war. By virtue of its centrality to capitalist production, the working class is today the only force with the potential power and material interest to smash capitalist class rule.

The Working Class and the Revolutionary Party

Unlike Fight 4 Peace, whose crowning demand is “for a People’s Counter Attack!”, the group called (No War But The) Class War Toronto correctly points to the centrality of the working class. In our last issue we answered an earlier leaflet by this tendency which polemicized against our call to defend Iraq against imperialism while giving absolutely no support to the butcher Saddam Hussein. We pointed out that failure to stand for military defense of neocolonial Iraq is ultimately a chauvinist position. It accepts the framework of imperialism, which divides the world into a handful of powerful imperialist states and everyone else, to whom the imperialists can do whatever they like. As we wrote, “All nations are not equal. Some wear the imperialist boot; others, subjugated by imperialism, are trampled by it. Would these anarchists have been neutral in conflicts between the British Empire and its Indian colony? Between the bloody French imperialists and Algeria?” (“Down With U.S. and Canadian Imperialism! Defend Iraq!” SC No. 136, Spring 2003).

In a subsequent leaflet issued just before the bombing began, (No War But The) Class War calls for “anti-war strikes, slowdowns, work-to-rules and other disruptions in our workplaces,” adding: “If, as is likely, your union won’t organize a strike against the war then organize a wildcat strike. We would like to see the labour movement hold a worldwide general strike against the war.” All well and good, but who is to fight for such a perspective?

Revolutionaries must intervene into the unions to fight the illusions that workers have in the NDP, the Liberals and the supposedly “progressive” nature of Canadian capitalism. This is part of the fight to oust the pro-capitalist labor misleaders and forge a class-struggle union leadership that champions the cause of the oppressed and mobilizes the social power of the proletariat in struggle against the bosses and their system. Far from presenting such a perspective, (No War But The) Class War looks to *individual* resistance, as shown by its call to “CALL IN SICK! If, like many workers, it is impossible to organize a strike or workplace action against the war then we advocate calling in sick to work.” They call this “a significant form of class struggle resistance”; in fact, it would be little more than an impotent gesture.

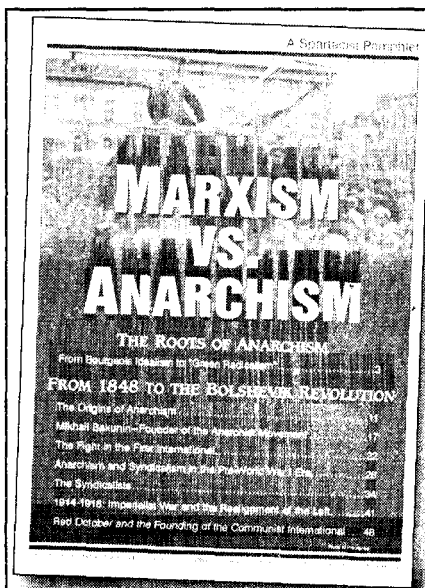
Revolutionary-minded youth and workers need to be won away from leftists who peddle an alliance with the class enemy. But that requires they be won to

something—a revolutionary program and party. The anarchist infatuation with autonomous actions and leaderless movements misses the key point: there will always be leadership, and if it is not revolutionary it will be anti-revolutionary. Nowhere has a spontaneous, atomized movement overturned an old social order. The ruling class is organized, and it has a state to protect its interests. It is conscious of its class aims. In order to smash capitalism, the workers must be equally organized and conscious of their class interests: ending capitalism and establishing working-class rule as the only road to a socialist future.

The capitalist produces for profit by exploiting labor. Imperialism is the stage of capitalism marked by competition among the advanced industrial nations for control of markets, raw materials and spheres of exploitation in pursuit of such profits. This control over and subjugation of other parts of the world is enforced militarily in the final analysis. Likewise, the competition to exploit and plunder the world leads sooner or later to wars between the imperialist ruling classes, as was shown in two bloody world wars.

(No War But The) Class War also hopes that the military’s “business as usual” can be disrupted. They “call on all enlisted members of the armed forces to resist by declaring yourself a conscientious objector, deserting, refusing to fight, engaging in sabotage, fragging officers, and mutinying. Turn your guns around and fight the rich, not their wars.” But a perspective of individual martyrdom can never generate a mass revolutionary movement of the working class. The idea that war will end when individual soldiers, one by one, decide to refuse to fight is an old, discredited notion. It properly belongs to religious pacifists like the Quakers, who believe that what happens in society is the sum total of the moral decisions of each individual. In capitalist society, the ruling class has the power to compel young workers to fight its wars or face the consequences. The

(continued on page 16)



\$2.50
(56 pages)

Order from/pay to: SCPA, Box 6867,
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This pamphlet reprints a series by Spartacist League/U.S. Central Committee member Joseph Seymour originally published in *Workers Vanguard*. It presents a comprehensive historical analysis of the origins of anarchism and the views of its leading figures through the 1871 Paris Commune and the split in the First International. Later articles discuss the pre-World War I period and the impact of the war, the 1917 October Revolution and the founding of the Communist International on the anarchist and syndicalist movements.

The first article addresses radical youth today who, in an ideological climate conditioned by the so-called “death of communism,” are drawn to all variants of anarchism, Green radicalism and left liberalism. The pamphlet is dedicated to the fight to win a new generation to revolutionary Marxism, the communism which animated Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolshevik Party.

Canadian Left and Test of War...

(continued from page 15)

working class must organize to take that power away from them through socialist revolution.

Leon Trotsky, co-leader of the only successful workers revolution in history, the Russian Revolution, and later commander of the Red Army, observed in his *History of the Russian Revolution* (1932):

"There is no doubt that the fate of every revolution at a certain point is decided by a break in the disposition of the army. Against a numerous, disciplined, well-armed and ably led military force, unarmed or almost unarmed masses of the people cannot possibly gain a victory. But no deep national crisis can fail to affect the army to some extent. Thus along with the conditions of a truly popular revolution there develops a possibility—not, of course, a guarantee—of victory."

As in Russia in 1917, the military can be split only when bourgeois rule is in the grip of a deep social crisis and the proletariat shows itself to be a real contender for power, organized and conscious of its aims through the active intervention of a vanguard party.

But even when proletarian power is realized, anarchists deny the revolution the right to consolidate its gains in the form of working-class rule. Just as the capitalist state is the fundamental force for defending the capitalists and their interests against the workers, so too is the workers state the central organization for defending the workers and their interests against counterrevolution. We share the anarchists' goal of seeing the disappearance of the state as the instrument of organized class coercion. But we understand that the workers in power require a means of defense against counterrevolution, and that a stateless, classless society cannot emerge until imperialism has been smashed on a world scale, the capitalists expropriated and an international division of labor established. Anarchists, in contrast, renounce the state "in general," which explains why they renounced defense of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union.

The final destruction of the Soviet Union a decade ago has emboldened the U.S. bourgeoisie to pursue its unbridled appetite for world domination. We Trotskyists fought to the



Indymedia

February 15: Millions marched on antiwar protests around the world, including 250,000 in Montreal.

end in defense of the deformed and degenerated workers states of the USSR and East Europe. Those leftists who capitulated to anti-Soviet bourgeois public opinion and cheered counterrevolution can only be seen as complicit in the horrors inflicted in consequence. The question is not merely a historical one: the devastation that counterrevolution has wreaked on the former Soviet Union shows graphically why all those who support the international proletariat must defend the remaining deformed workers states—China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba.

While recoiling from defense of gains already won, anarchists shun the task of party building essential to new victories. Although radical youth by their own "direct actions" cannot fundamentally disrupt the system of profit and war, historically mass working-class movements, with the social power to effectively paralyze capitalist society, have done so. In Italy in the early 1920s, the radicalized proletariat engaged in nonstop strikes and general strikes for two years. But the workers lacked the resolute revolutionary leadership to take the offensive against the ruling class and fight for state power. Capitalist society was held hostage, but was never dealt its death blow. The crisis drove the desperate middle classes into the arms of reaction, and Mussolini's Fascists came to power, welcomed by the bourgeoisie in the name of restoring order.

The capitalist system of racism, exploitation and bloody war cannot be reformed; it must be overthrown. We fight to build the party that can make the revolution possible. Even if today's anarchists could somehow win mass support, they would have no more of a clue than the Italian syndicalists—or the Spanish anarchists of the 1930s, some of whom actually *joined* a bourgeois government—of how to finally put an end to this hateful system. Youth serious about wanting to change the world would do well by studying the lessons of history and Marxist theory with the Trotskyist League and the Spartacus Youth Clubs while intervening in social struggles alongside us. ■

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SC137

Feminists Ban Leftists...

(continued from page 2)

her. Why do you take umbrage of [this]? When women who have escaped this hell symbolically threw their veils and crushed them under feet, it now seems that you were offended! You call this disrespecting others!? You believe that women from Islam-stricken societies deserve nothing else but *hejab* and segregation!?" The veil is an expression of the subjugation of women, who are oppressed by all religions.

We recall International Women's Day 1998 when the organizers of IWD gave display stalls to recruiters for the Canadian Army along with propagandists for the murderous Islamic Republic of Iran. When hundreds of protesters gathered to shut down these provocations the organizers called the campus cops on the protesters. As revolutionary internationalists, the Trotskyist League is proud to have taken part in the protests against representatives of the misogynist Iranian government as well as recruiters for the racist, imperialist Canadian state.

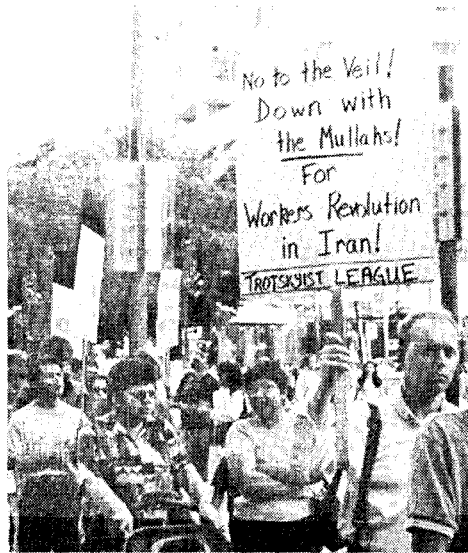
As the world totters on the brink of an imminent U.S.-led imperialist war against semi-colonial Iraq, you may try to justify your actions by citing the Canadian government's attacks on Muslims and other minorities as a reason not to criticize the reactionary nature of Islamic fundamentalism.

But democratic rights are indivisible. For our part, our fight against the anti-immigrant racism of our own government is not at the expense of, but is necessarily linked to, the fight for women's liberation from religious bigotry and imperialist oppression—through socialist revolution.

Yours in protest,

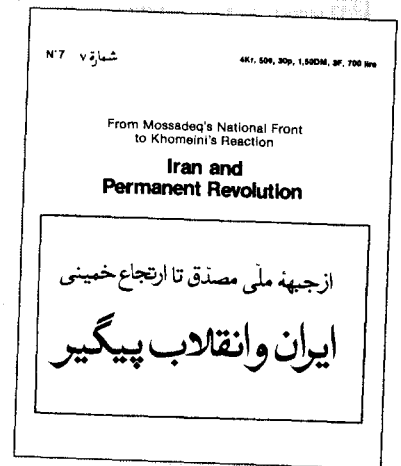
Janet Yeung

for the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste, Toronto Branch



SC photo

Vancouver, July 1999: ICL advanced revolutionary proletarian program internationally at protests in defense of Iranian students.



ICL Farsi pamphlet (\$1). Also available in Farsi, "Iran 1979: Proletarian Revolution or Islamic Reaction" (25¢). Order from/pay to: SCPA, Box 6867, Station A, Toronto ON, M5W 1X6

State Vendetta...

(continued from page 4)

cut against the craven reformist and parliamentarist grain of the mainstream "left."

There are still more court battles to be fought and won. The court has set a June 18 date for a hearing on whether to re-try the OCAP Three. Amidst a violence-baiting media frenzy, forces on the side of bourgeois injustice including the

cops are pushing for a retrial. We join with others in demanding that all charges against the OCAP activists be dropped.

In Quebec, Jaggi Singh alone faces four more trials this year, including on charges stemming from the 2001 anti-FTAA protests in Quebec City and last year's protest against anti-Palestinian war criminal Benjamin Netanyahu at Montreal's Concordia University. Countless other charges against OCAP supporters and leftist anti-war protesters are also pending.

We stand in solidarity with these activists despite our political differences. It is imperative for the labor movement to take up the defense of these embattled militants—for this is the same kind of repression the state metes out to the working class when they strike against the bosses. In the spirit of the old Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) we say "an injury to one is an injury to all!" **Hands off the OCAP Three and all leftist protesters! Drop all the charges now!**

The Partisan Defense Committee, the legal and social defense organization associated with the Trotskyist League, has donated to OCAP's defense, and we urge others to do the same. Send donations payable to OCAP to: 517 College St., Suite 234, Toronto ON M6G 4A2. Send protest letters demanding no retrial to: Norm Sterling, Attorney General, Government of Ontario, 720 Bay St., Toronto ON M5G 2K1. ■

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Migrant Farm Workers...

(continued from page 5)

right, which the NDP under Bob Rae granted (after years of savaging health care and slashing public sector jobs and wages). But the NDP introduced its law in order to demobilize workers struggle: it imposed a binding arbitration procedure that effectively outlawed farm worker strikes. When the Conservatives came to power in 1995, the right to unionize was then abolished. Under capitalism, any rights gained can be easily taken away. **Down with all union-busting legislation!**

We communists seek to mobilize the social power of the working class to overthrow the capitalist system of wage slavery, where production is based on maximizing profit. We fight to replace it with an international centrally planned economy, where production will instead be based on the needs of society. We demand: **full citizenship rights for all immigrants!** Anyone who makes it here should be allowed to stay. We warn against looking to the capitalist state as any kind of ally—it is a tool of repression used by the bosses **against** workers, immigrants and leftists.

Leader of the Russian Revolution, V.I. Lenin, writes in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* that the economic and political power of North American, European and Japanese capitalism rests on the super-exploitation and oppression of billions throughout the colonies (today, the neocolonies or Third World). In economic boom periods, the capitalists import labor from poor countries. When the economic cycle is in decline, they incite anti-immigrant racism to weaken working class solidarity, cut off the flow of immigrants and expel others from the country.

In the 1930s during the Great Depression, thousands of unemployed immigrants were deported as a supposed “drain on the public purse.” It was not a coincidence that many of these workers were militant communists. During the post-World War II period, the main purpose of immigration screening was to keep out communists and open the doors to fanatical anti-communists fleeing from the defeat of Hitler’s troops by the Soviet Red Army. Even Nazis were welcomed with open arms.

In the 1960s when the Canadian government lifted the immigration color bar, it had nothing to do with pluralist “liberal multiculturalism.” Rather, it was because the flow of preferred white immigrants was cut off. Asian and Caribbean

workers were imported while the bosses kept the proletariat divided along racial and ethnic lines in an attempt to cripple its ability to fight against capitalist attacks. (See “For a Class-Struggle Fight Against Anti-Immigrant Racism!” *Spartacist Canada* Nos. 98-99, July/August and September/October 1994.)

In the fields of southwestern Ontario, migrant workers are isolated and have few defenses. But alongside the endless rows of vegetables and tobacco, there are unionized industrial plants, like the Navistar truck assembly factory and the giant Heinz factory in Leamington. I was won to the politics of the Spartacus Youth Club shortly after visiting the Navistar picket line in Chatham last summer. We spoke with striking workers, whose union hall was covered with hundreds of messages of international solidarity, sent by union locals from Mexico to Israel. In our conversations, we sought to link the attacks against the working class with the post-9/11 anti-immigrant witchhunt. We explained how Marxists fight to mobilize the tremendous strength of working class militancy in common cause with all those targeted by the Canadian capitalist state.

Unions like the powerful and militant Canadian Auto Workers union (CAW), which organizes Navistar in Chatham and auto plants in regional cities like Windsor, could lend vital aid to the farm workers’ cause. A mass, union-led organizing drive in defiance of the government’s laws would strike a blow against union-busting and anti-immigrant attacks across the country. The Heinz factory is surrounded by tomato fields worked by super-exploited migrant workers, many of them Mexican. Imagine the impact if the workforce refused to handle tomatoes in solidarity with a unionization drive by farm workers.

But the pro-capitalist trade union bureaucrats at the head of the CAW and other unions, together with the union-busting NDP, push a dead-end “Canada First” policy of protectionism. The call to “protect Canadian jobs” blames workers from other countries for unemployment and plant closures. This tells workers not to rely on their own social power, but to look towards pressuring the capitalist state. In this, the NDP and union tops are aided by pseudo-Marxists, like the International Socialists, who work to get out the vote for the NDP at every election.

The SYC fights to build the party that can bring revolutionary consciousness to the one force that has the power to overthrow capitalism, the industrial proletariat. Across the country, anarchist/direct action groups like the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, Vancouver’s Fire This Time and No One Is Illegal have inscribed the defense of immigrants high on their banner. But these groups, despite their sometimes audacious and inspiring efforts to aid undocumented workers, have no perspective of struggling in the unions **against** the nationalist politics of the trade union bureaucracy and winning the working class to the revolutionary politics of internationalism. A revolutionary workers party would fight to expose the treacherous nationalism of the trade union misleaders and mobilize the working class in defense of all of the oppressed as part of the struggle against the capitalist system. **For class solidarity! Workers and students must come to the aid of immigrant and migrant workers trapped in the lowest paid, most menial and dangerous jobs! The only way to do this is to organize the unorganized! For union-led recruitment and job training programs aimed at minorities and women! Down with the Agricultural Employees Protection Act! ■**



SC photo

Trotskyists march in defense of immigrants, Palestinian rights at September 28, 2002 Ottawa demo.

SARS...

(continued from page 24)

cocktail. Asians were shunned on Toronto subways, restaurants openly segregated people of Asian appearance and schoolchildren were taunted with calls of "Chinese, go away." A woman who lost two family members to SARS said bitterly, "People treat us like monsters. They say we eat like rats and live like pigs" (*Globe and Mail*, 8 April). In the Maritimes, Acadia University told students from China, though *not* Toronto, to stay away. The University of California in Berkeley threatened to ban all students from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore (but again not Toronto). While it eventually allowed some 80 of these students to enroll, 500 were still kept out.

Alongside the hysteria and bigotry has been a widespread and quite rational belief that the ruling class was royally screwing this up. Lives depend on rapid containment of SARS, but Canada's capitalist rulers have responded with chauvinism, incompetence and above all an indifference born of capitalist greed to the well-being of the population. Toronto's first announcements on SARS were not even translated into Chinese. Told by the WHO to implement screening at airports, Health Canada arrogantly refused, whining about cost. Vietnam and Singapore quickly installed the thermal-imaging sensors to detect the high fever that is a symptom of SARS, but not Canada even though Vancouver is one of the few places these machines are made! After a couple of suspected Canadian SARS cases turned up in other countries, and a woman from Canada died of SARS in the Philippines, the WHO issued a travel advisory on Canada because SARS was not properly contained here. There were howls of injured national outrage, but if SARS spreads to poverty-stricken countries in Africa and Asia it could kill millions.

The impact of SARS has hit the working class hard. Up to 10,000 people were quarantined in Toronto at the height of the outbreak. In a new outbreak, by late May some 7,000 more were in quarantine. The "lucky" ones in union jobs have been forced to use up sick time or holidays, but others had nothing to fall back on. The Ontario government's initial categorical refusal to provide any compensation for these workers undermined this basic public health measure, as some people broke their quarantine, fearing they would not otherwise survive economically.

SARS is also being used by the airline bosses to further slash their unionized workforces. Internationally, airline officials say SARS has hit them harder than the combined effects of 9/11 and the imperialist war on Iraq. But bankrupt Air Canada is invoking SARS to demand an immediate 10 percent pay cut and another 10,000 layoffs, part of its drive to gut the unions and slash wages and jobs. Airline union leaders have rolled over before these attacks, agreeing to mass layoffs and other givbacks.

SARS directly cost 27,000 jobs in Ontario in April, 12,000 in hotels and restaurants alone. Many of these workers are part-time and will be lucky to get a dime under the draconian employment insurance rules. The fact that **14,000** of these jobs were lost in the health sector amid a medical emergency is stunning. These workers are SARS "collateral damage," the result of shutting down out-patient facilities and stopping treatment of any but the most critical cases, even seriously ill cardiac patients. Already cancer patients



Robin Bull/Toronto Star

1993: Health care workers protest Ontario NDP attacks that paved way for Tory onslaught.

had to endure a life-threatening two-month wait for surgery. With SARS this has now grown to more than three months.

Capitalist Austerity Shreds Health Care

Effective treatment of SARS requires great medical resources—respirators, antibiotics, isolation wards, diagnostic equipment, protective gear and many nurses and doctors—things poverty-stricken countries in Asia and Africa lack. But in wealthy imperialist Canada, health care has been deliberately eviscerated by capitalist austerity. When SARS hit Toronto, there were not enough nurses, doctors, hospital beds, laboratories and diagnostic services to handle "regular" needs, let alone this medical emergency.

Since 1995, when the Conservatives under Mike Harris came to power, billions have been slashed from health care and other vital social services. After mass layoffs and dozens of hospital closures, there are **25,000** fewer health care workers than in 1995. Medicare covers less and less and people pay huge sums—\$1072 per person this year—for procedures no longer covered. An astounding 900,000 Ontarians do not have a family doctor.

The New Democrats have complained loudly about the cuts to health care, demanding a debate in the parliamentary talkshop. But it was Bob Rae's NDP government in the early 1990s that paved the way for this onslaught. They slashed billions from social services, education and health care, closing hospitals and eliminating free prescriptions for the poor and elderly. In a vindictive racist act, they withdrew medical coverage for refugee claimants. The union-busting "social contract" slashed public sector workers' paychecks. The Conservatives brutally escalated these attacks in tandem with sweeping cuts to health care and other social services by the Chrétien Liberals in Ottawa.

The irrational destruction of health care and basic infrastructure has hit virtually every aspect of public life in Canada. It has also taken lives. Three years ago, after Ontario's water testing facilities were privatized, seven people in the town of Walkerton died from the *E. coli* bacterium, and

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SARS...

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more than 2,300 became ill. A year later the Tories got rid of Ontario's top five microbiologists, blithely and stupidly declaring that "It would be highly unlikely that we would find a new organism in Ontario"! Faced with a new and dangerous mosquito-born virus, West Nile, the chief scientist researching it was fired. In Alberta, it took five months to perform tests on the carcass of a cow now known to have mad cow disease, significantly increasing the danger that the disease entered the food chain. Willfully destroying the technical facilities needed to respond to infectious diseases, the capitalist rulers cannot even guarantee the most basic public health measures to ensure water that's safe to drink and food that's safe to eat.

The ripping up of what was known as the "welfare state" is a global phenomenon. The decade since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union has seen brutal and unremitting attacks on the workers and oppressed everywhere. The Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state, acted as a counterweight to global imperialist domination and undercut the capitalists' ability to carry out wholesale attacks on the working class. But since its destruction the capitalists no longer feel the need to fend off the "threat of Communism" by means of reforms, health services and welfare provision, which were designed to buy off working-class resistance.

Savage attacks on the unions and social programs have ripped through the living conditions and basic rights of the working class as the capitalists drive to maximize profits and compete internationally. At every level—from the devastation brought to the people of the former Soviet Union, to the wreckage of social programs in West Europe and North America, to the sharp increase in bloody imperialist wars from the Balkans to Iraq—capitalist restoration in the former USSR has been an unmitigated disaster for working people everywhere.

Nurses On the Frontlines

On every front the heroic efforts of nurses, doctors and others to contain SARS and protect themselves have run up against an increasingly decrepit Canadian public health system. There has been little coordination of services, information and resources, all crucial to controlling an infectious disease. Infection control procedures in Toronto hospitals are substandard: some single-use medical devices such as EMG needles and catheters are used more than 20 times. Even the masks used to prevent infection have been considered obsolete in the U.S. for 30 years! Little wonder so many health care workers have been infected.

The huge layoffs starting ten years ago saw thousands of nurses laid off. Only 54 percent of Ontario nurses now work at full-time jobs. Many are casuals working on call from hospital to hospital. Because of the SARS risk, thousands of these nurses have been thrown out of work, with others forced to work massive overtime.

Hundreds of nurses have been quarantined.

Even with the added punishing conditions imposed by SARS—the double gowns and masks, the tension and fear—nurses have still had to work brutal 12-hour shifts. Nurses and doctors are the heroes of the SARS outbreak, but they have also born the brunt of the disease. Fully two-thirds of SARS cases are health care workers and their families. Grotesquely, some nurses who became ill with SARS were not "officially" diagnosed with it, thus denying them Workers Compensation. Nurses have endured wage freezes, roll-backs and repeated strikebreaking back-to-work laws whenever they have fought back. Small wonder SARS was the last straw for many and some simply quit.

Public Health, Capitalism and Racism

When epidemics strike, public health measures are required which are sometimes drastic and intrusive but necessary to save lives. There is always tension between public health and individual rights, but which has more weight at a given moment can only be decided by examining the particular health threat posed. With no vaccine or reliable treatment for SARS, quarantine is the only way to isolate and contain it. Similarly, screening international travelers at airports to detect potentially symptomatic people could reduce SARS' spread and save lives. Yet such public health measures are indelibly stamped by the race and class biases of this capitalist society.

The most powerful contemporary example of this is AIDS. From the outset AIDS, intersecting disease and sex, has been manipulated in the service of bigotry and reaction. In 1982, public health authorities knew that it could be transmitted sexually, and that the risk of contracting AIDS was maximized by promiscuity. Studies had shown that the people who frequented the San Francisco bathhouses were getting sick at a very high rate. The logical thing would be to slow the already exponential spread of the disease. Closing the baths, an extraordinary public health measure, could



Canadian National

15,000 Chinese workers built Canadian railroad. Brutal conditions saw 2,000 killed. Down with anti-Chinese racism!

have helped to alert gay men most at risk, who were either uninformed or dismissive of the facts, that they were at risk for contracting a fatal disease. But, as we wrote in *Women and Revolution*:

“Could a government of Anita Bryants and Jerry Falwells have convinced gay people about anything? It was not so unreasonable that in 1981 and 1982 many gays reacted to the rumors of a new killer disease spread through sex as if it were a lie to create anti-gay hysteria. This is a classic Catch-22. **In fact, this vicious anti-gay bigotry is precisely why the bathhouses were not closed down.**”

—“The Agony of AIDS,” No. 35, Summer 1988

Every approach to AIDS—research, prevention, medical care, education—has been treated with criminal neglect. The Canadian government and Red Cross *knowingly* distributed potentially deadly blood and blood products during the 1980s, infecting more than 1,200 people with AIDS, including 800 hemophiliacs, because the capitalist ghouls running this state deemed it too costly to test the blood. Even after



Reuters

April 17: Decontamination of the Hanoi French Hospital. Workers state mobilized its resources against SARS.

this, thousands more people were infected with Hepatitis C after receiving contaminated blood.

Underscoring the absolute indifference of the bosses to the lives of working people, when the anthrax scare hit in the wake of 9/11, the U.S. Postal Service let unknown numbers of postal workers get infected. Yet nothing was overlooked to protect a handful of U.S. senators—even Capitol Hill police dogs got tested for anthrax before postal workers did.

The anti-Asian racism that accompanied SARS is deeply rooted in this country. Marked by explosive pogromist violence such as the 1907 Vancouver riots, anti-immigrant racism has always been entwined with hysteria about disease. Fifteen thousand Chinese workers came here in the 19th century to build the railroads, 2,000 of whom died from the cruel and dangerous conditions under which they toiled. A few caught leprosy (Hansen’s Disease) in the overcrowded camps. Even then it was known that leprosy was not highly contagious, yet the Chinese who got this disease were treated with great brutality. In 1882 a Chinese man with leprosy was lynched. Others ended up in Canada’s own leper colony for Chinese people on D’Arcy Island near Vic-

toria, a prison visited a few times a year by ships carrying food, drugs and opium. In Calgary during an 1892 smallpox outbreak, a racist mob rampaged through Chinatown after a Chinese man was released from quarantine.

Such venomous racism is not dusty old history. When four boats carrying desperate would-be immigrants from Fujian, China washed up on the B.C. coast in 1999, the hysteria against them was replete with all the inflammatory racist saws of 100 years earlier about Asian immigrants spreading syphilis, malaria and other diseases.

It is breathtaking that the North American capitalist rulers and their mouthpieces attack immigrants as bearers of disease, be it SARS, AIDS or anything else. Europeans brought such pestilence and death to North and South America that 90 percent of the original inhabitants, lacking the immunities of their English, Spanish and French conquerors, were simply wiped out by smallpox, cholera and other diseases. And some of it was deliberate, as in distributing blankets infested with smallpox to the Native peoples.

Vietnamese Workers State Contains SARS

The Canadian capitalist rulers were furious when the WHO lumped them in with countries like China. More galling was to be unfavorably contrasted with economically weak Vietnam, the first country to contain SARS. In 1975 the Vietnamese workers and peasants dealt the U.S. imperialists a stunning battlefield defeat, smashing capitalist rule in the South and ending almost 30 years of bloody imperialist war in which two million Vietnamese people were killed. Today, especially after the capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, Vietnam’s economy is in dire straits. Here, as in China, the bureaucrats at the head of the Vietnamese deformed workers state are moving toward so-called “market reforms,” a deadly danger to the gains of the Vietnamese Revolution. Yet even now, Vietnam’s ability to deal with SARS speaks to the capacities and potentials of a workers state organized on lines other than capitalist profit.

Vietnam threw enormous social resources into combating SARS. As soon as a patient at the Hanoi French Hospital appeared with an unusual and serious flu-like virus, the hospital notified the WHO. When medical staff started to fall ill, the government quickly organized to combat the outbreak. Patients were isolated and sent to two designated Hanoi hospitals. Contacts of the infected were assiduously traced and visited daily, while infrared machines were set up at airport and border crossings to detect people with high temperatures. An infectious disease specialist with Médecins sans Frontières, Carlo Urbani, who went to Vietnam to assist this work, later died of SARS. Vietnam had only 63 cases of SARS, more than half health care workers, and five deaths, four of whom were nurses and doctors.

China: The Deadly Mix of “Market Reforms” and SARS

SARS is sending shock waves through the Chinese deformed workers state. Fueled by bureaucratic venality, lies and cover-ups and, more than anything, by the destruction of public health in the service of the accelerating drive to capitalist restoration, SARS has infected well over 5,000 people and killed over 300. The Chinese bureaucracy criminally hid the nature and extent of this disease, issuing nostrums to soothe their capitalist investors while doing little to inform

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SARS...

(continued from page 21)

the Chinese people. The disease has now spread to rural areas and distant regions like Inner Mongolia.

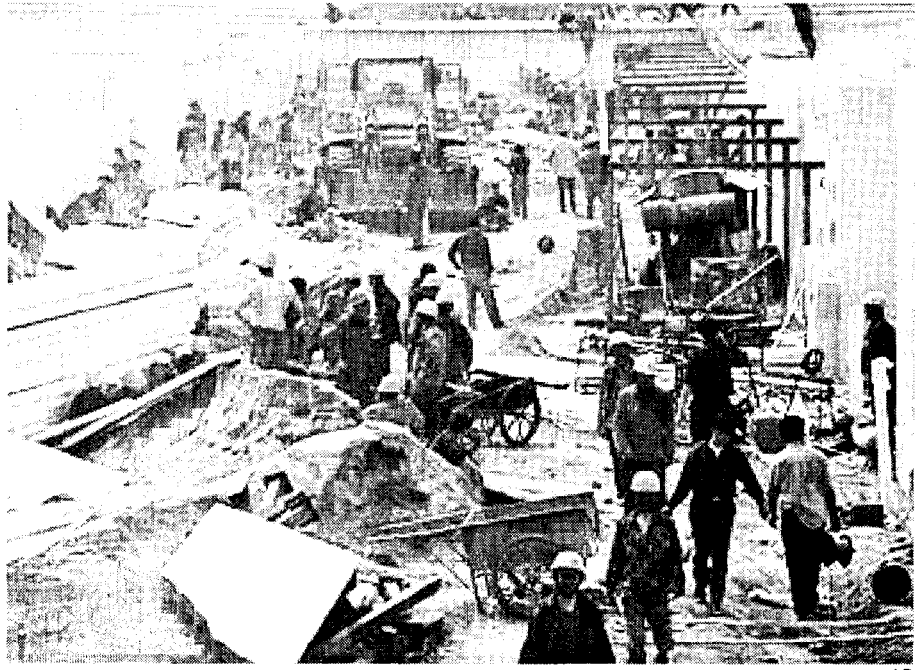
Months later, the Chinese bureaucracy is now aggressively trying to deal with the SARS epidemic, even constructing an entire hospital in a few days. Because China is still based on a nationalized economy, the country is able to marshal resources to combat the disease. But this is highly contradictory and at times stupidly brutal, invoking, for example, the death penalty for those who break quarantine.

As part of its anti-SARS campaign, the Chinese government is resurrecting the memory of Norman Bethune, the courageous Canadian Communist doctor who died on the Long March in 1939 while serving with the Chinese Red Army. Yet this same Stalinist bureaucracy is destroying the enormous gains of the 1949 Revolution, not least the health care system that was a signal achievement of the planned economy. In contrast to capitalist India or other "Third World" countries where the masses have long lived in abject misery reinforced by imperialist subjugation, in China even the most remote villages received basic care from "barefoot doctors," medical personnel with minimal training. Health campaigns aimed at improving sanitation and providing clean drinking water helped control diseases like TB and neonatal tetanus. But the "market reforms" initiated by Deng Xiaoping, who came to power in 1978, have changed all this, disastrously.

An *Asia Times Online* (19 April) article notes there are now "hundreds of millions of peasants in the Chinese countryside without even basic preventative care." Along with factory closures and layoffs, public health services, preventative care, disease surveillance and medical control have collapsed, a perfect culture medium for an epidemic. China has inadequate respirators, drugs and isolation facilities to respond to the crisis. In the countryside, where many of the clinics and hospitals have closed down, the situation is grimmer. In a vast country that once had free health care, SARS patients are being turned away if they cannot make hefty cash down payments for their care. As a farmer in Qingxu near Beijing, said, "A peasant's life in China has never been worth anything. I made \$300 last year, and I'm rich compared with some of my neighbors. But it costs \$250 to go to the hospital."

Recent years have seen massive explosions of proletarian anger as the bureaucracy dismantles the planned economy that was the legacy of the 1949 Chinese Revolution. The ravages of privatization and closure of state-owned industries have left millions of workers without the guaranteed housing, education, medical and retirement benefits that came with those jobs.

Distrust of the authorities has fuelled SARS' spread and ignited pre-existing social tinder. Students and migrant workers have fled Beijing back to their home towns, some bringing SARS with them. SARS patients are fleeing hospi-



SARS isolation hospital under construction on the outskirts of Beijing. AP

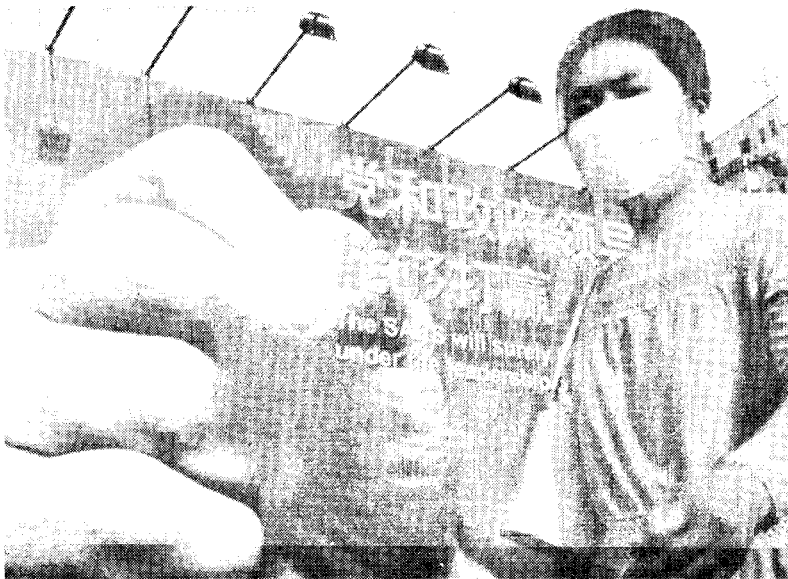
tals to die at home and in one village, angry and frightened peasants rioted, destroying a facility meant to hold SARS patients. In some rural areas, oracles and prayers are filling the void left by the destruction of medical care.

Even the *Wall Street Journal* (19 May), right-wing mouthpiece for the U.S. financiers, was compelled to note the dire consequences of "free market" health care in China. The *Journal* notes that in the early years after the Revolution, "China nearly accomplished the utopian goal of full medical coverage in the countryside. In 1975, about 85% of rural residents had community-financed health care, under a commune system. Today, about 10% do." The article continues:

"Today, China has the second-highest number of people in the world suffering from tuberculosis, after India, with the disease killing 130,000 Chinese every year. In addition, China has an estimated 1.5 million people with HIV/AIDS. Last year, the United Nations predicted the number of such cases in China would climb to 10 million by 2010."

The condemnations of China's handling of SARS by the capitalist press are rank hypocrisy. This catastrophe is driven by the very "free market reforms" they have cried out for. Their concerns are not for Chinese people, but for the danger SARS poses to the supply of extremely cheap, well-educated labor on whose exploitation their investments depend. Truly, as Karl Marx said of the capitalist, "his soul is the soul of capital."

The imperialists are bent on re-enslaving China and reducing it again to semicolonial subjugation. The unprecedented economic and social collapse in the ex-Soviet Union following capitalist restoration gives a measure of the stakes in China today. Fully 75 percent of the population in Russia and the other former Soviet states lives below or barely above subsistence level. Fifteen million are actually starving. Life expectancy has fallen to **57 years** for men, below what it was a century ago. Malnutrition is the norm among schoolchildren and diseases like TB are rampant as a country that was once a major industrial power has been turned into a pauperized wasteland.



Michael Reynolds

Beijing sign boasts that Communist Party will conquer SARS. Stalinists' own "market reforms" undermine such efforts.

Just as we fought to the end against counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, today we Trotskyists stand for the unconditional military defense of the gains of the Chinese deformed workers' state against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution. It is the urgent task of the Chinese proletariat to sweep away through political revolution the Stalinist bureaucracy which has gravely undermined the system of nationalized property that resulted from the 1949 Revolution.

Expropriate the Capitalist Rulers Through Socialist Revolution!

The Canadian ruling class responded to SARS about as badly as they possibly could, but they did respond. When the capitalists want to do something about an illness, especially if they think *their* class might be at risk, they do act. In the early days of the AIDS epidemic, the rulers of North America saw it as a disease of blacks and gays and therefore simply didn't give a damn. Then they discovered otherwise, and more money was spent on research and treatment. But even the drugs available to treat the disease today are very expensive—which means they are not made available to the masses of black Africa, where AIDS is killing millions. Under capitalism, medicine like everything else is ultimately run on the basis of profit.

There is an irrational component to this as well. The capitalist rulers, especially in the U.S., have long waged a "war on drugs" as a pretext to beef up police powers against minorities and the poor. So they block perfectly rational public health measures like needle exchange programs, which could significantly reduce the spread of AIDS among HIV users. We also note with bitterness that an entirely preventable and curable disease, TB, has been allowed to become epidemic in Native communities and in the homeless shelters in Toronto.

In the mid-1990s there were huge protests and one-day strikes against the Ontario Tories' vicious destruction of social services and jobs. Hundreds of thousands of workers hit the streets repeatedly, aiming to beat back the bosses' frontal assault on the working people. But these struggles were channeled into backing the same NDP that had already

delivered its own blows against the working class. Now, as the ruling Tories ready for elections, they are planning another installment in their side of the class struggle, opening the door to private medical facilities, making all teachers' job actions illegal, while handing piles of financial goodies to their friends.

The NDP, whose antiwar posturing has helped to refurbish its tattered credentials, is gearing up to corral workers into the dead-end of parliamentary politics, which can achieve nothing of lasting significance for the proletariat. The New Democrats have a working-class base but their politics and program are thoroughly bourgeois, and in power they are driven by the same imperatives as the parties of capital. There is plenty of anger at the Tories' gutting of social services. But an NDP government would only mean a knife in the back, as opposed to the more frontal attacks of the open bosses' parties.

A hundred years ago SARS would not have moved so far and so fast. But air travel ensured its rapid spread outside of China. With its technological development, capitalism has knit all of the globe together by creating a world market. Yet this system, based on competition and production for profit, produces war, poverty and massive inequality, especially in the countries subjugated by imperialism. Even eminently practicable public health measures such as vaccines and clean water are unavailable to hundreds of millions.

An international planned economy would take immediate steps to direct the necessary resources to areas affected by dangerous viruses like SARS, not to mention AIDS, which is killing tens of millions. Free, quality health care for all is within the bounds of material possibility, but not under capitalism, where the availability and quality of health care for the masses of working people is subordinate to the drive for profit. Even now, with no treatment for SARS in sight, there is an obscene scramble to patent the virus. At the same time, the big drug companies are not rushing to invest in SARS research because the small numbers affected thus far do not make it profitable.

Leon Trotsky, with V.I. Lenin leader of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, noted how:

"...world capitalism has drunk its progressive mission to the last drop. The development of the productive powers comes to rest against two reactionary barriers: private ownership of the means of production and the frontiers of the national state. Unless these two barriers are swept away, that is to say, unless the means of production are concentrated in the hands of the community, and unless there is an organized planned economy which can gradually enfold the whole world, the economic and cultural collapse of mankind is foredoomed."

—January 1935 introduction to *Terrorism and Communism*

Out of the coming political struggles, the goal of we revolutionary Marxists of the Trotskyist League is to organize the growing social anger against the capitalists' incessant attacks into a revolutionary struggle to overthrow this entire system of exploitation. Poverty, homelessness and starvation will be eradicated from the earth and the modern gains of science put fully at the service of humanity when world socialist revolution sweeps away capitalist rule. ■

SARS: Capitalism, Racism and Public Health



SC photo

Toronto: May 10 protest against health care privatization. At right, paramedics move SARS patient.



Ananova

Free, Quality Health Care for All!

In six months the SARS epidemic has infected more than 8,000 people worldwide, killing over 750. In Toronto, the epicenter of the disease outside east Asia, SARS has killed 30 people and infected more than 300, and is still spreading. This virulent disease is wreaking havoc in China where the dismantling of the planned economy has left hundreds of millions without health care. In Canada SARS put a spotlight on the wreckage of Ontario's public health care system after over a decade of brutal budget-slashing, layoffs and hospital closures by NDP and Tory governments alike.

SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) is thought to have been transmitted from animals to humans in the markets of the Guangdong region of China last November. On February 21, a sick doctor from China visited Hong Kong, unwittingly infecting travelers from Hanoi, Toronto and Singapore who infected others when they got home. At that point little was known about SARS, though it was known

that a serious atypical pneumonia had killed people in China. These first patients were not isolated and many hospital workers became ill. On March 14, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued a worldwide alert about SARS.

While the numbers affected by SARS are minute beside the millions killed by AIDS and malaria, the death rate from the disease is very high—put at 7-10 percent by the WHO and almost 20 percent in Hong Kong according to a new *Lancet* study. With no effective treatment or vaccine, SARS has spawned enormous panic and social and economic dislocations through Asia and Canada. The hysteria accompanying the SARS outbreak in Toronto has far outstripped the virus itself, which so far is largely confined to hospitals. For many weeks, restaurants, stores, churches and sports arenas were deserted. Subway ridership fell by 50,000 a day. Schools canceled field trips, big corporations kept their executives out of Toronto, and major conventions canceled one after another. U.S. tabloids blared that Toronto was a "Pariah City."

Hysteria mixed with anti-Chinese racism in a poisonous
(continued on page 19)