

Europe:

Workers Fight Capitalist Austerity



Getty

Demonstration in Lyon against government austerity, October 19, part of national day of protests that drew 3.5 million.

French Strike Wave: No to a New Popular Front! For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

The capitalist rulers worldwide are unleashing savage attacks on jobs, working conditions and social programs amid the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Unlike in Canada and the U.S., where labour struggle remains at a low level, the austerity attacks have precipitated waves of class struggle in Europe. This has been particularly intense in Greece, where the government is headed by the populist PASOK party (see "Workers Protests Rock Greece, SC No. 165, Summer 2010), as well as other countries on Europe's southern tier, notably France and Spain.

In early December, the Spanish social-democratic government sent the army to break a walkout by air traffic controllers protesting massive wage cuts. This came just over a week after millions of Portuguese workers joined a countrywide general strike. More than 100,000 protesters marched in Dublin on November 27 against the harshest attacks on workers' living

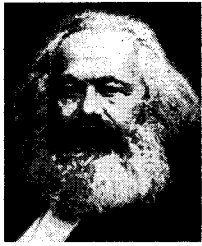
standards in the history of the Irish state. Earlier, millions of workers and students shook the French government with weeks of strikes and mass protests against its attacks on pensions.

For all the workers' combativity, the effectiveness of their struggles has been undermined by their reformist misleaders, who accept the inevitability of capitalist austerity while seeking only to soften the blows. What is needed is the forging of a new, revolutionary leadership of the working class based on the understanding that there are no common interests between the working class and the capitalist exploiters and their governments.

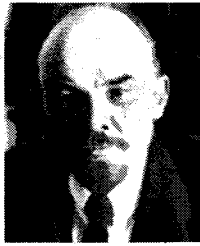
We reprint below an article on the French strikes by our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France, first published in *Workers Vanguard* No. 968, 5 November 2010.

PARIS, November 1—The fight by French workers to defend their retirement pensions against government attack has been one of the sharpest class battles this country has seen in years. Strikes by workers at oil refineries and strategic fuel terminals, which were at the core of the struggle, eventually shut down all 12 of the country's refineries before being called off last week. Strikes by railroad, subway and airport

(continued on page 11)



Marx



Lenin



Trotsky

Proletarian Struggle and the Transitional Program

The class struggles against capitalist austerity that have broken out in Europe pose sharply the question: what kind of program and leadership do the workers need to defeat the rampage of the ruling class? As the Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky argued in the 1938 founding program of the Fourth International, it is necessary to fight for a series of transitional demands which start from the current consciousness of the working class and its daily struggles against the bosses and the government and lead to the goal of proletarian revolution.

Classical Social Democracy, functioning in an epoch of progressive capitalism, divided its program into two parts independent of each other: the *minimum program*, which limited itself to reforms within the framework of bourgeois society, and the *maximum program*, which promised substitution of socialism for capitalism in the indefinite future. Between the minimum and the maximum program, no bridge existed. And indeed the Social Democracy has no need of such a bridge, since the word *socialism* is used only for holiday speechifying. The Comintern has set out to follow the path of the Social Democracy in an epoch of decaying capitalism: when, in general, there can be no discussion of systematic social reforms and the raising of the masses' living standards; when the bourgeoisie always takes away with the right hand twice what it grafts with the left (taxes, tariffs, inflation, "deflation," high prices; unemployment, police supervision of strikes); when every serious demand of the proletariat, and even every serious demand of the petty bourgeoisie, inevitably reaches beyond the limits of capitalist property relations and of the bourgeois state.

The strategic task of the Fourth International lies not in reforming capitalism but in its overthrow. Its political aim is the conquest of power by the proletariat for the purpose of expropriating the bourgeoisie. However, the achievement of this strategic task is unthinkable without the most considered

attention to all, even small and partial, questions of tactics. All sections of the proletariat—all its layers, occupations, and groups—should be drawn into the revolutionary movement. The present epoch is distinguished not because it frees the revolutionary party from day-to-day work but because it permits this work to be carried on indissolubly with the actual tasks of the revolution.

The Fourth International does not discard the program of the old "minimal" demands to the degree to which these have preserved at least part of their vital forcefulness. Indefatigably, it defends the democratic rights and social conquests of the workers. But it carries on this day-to-day work within the framework of the correct actual, that is, revolutionary, perspective. Insofar as the old partial, "minimal" demands of the masses clash with the destructive and degrading tendencies of decadent capitalism—and this occurs at each step—the Fourth International advances a system of *transitional demands*, the essence of which is contained in the fact that ever more openly and decisively they will be directed against the very foundations of the bourgeois regime. The old "minimal program" is superseded by the *transitional program*, the task of which lies in systematic mobilization of the masses for the proletarian revolution....

The question is one of guarding the proletariat from decay, demoralization, and ruin. The question is one of life or death of the only creative and progressive class, and by that token of the future of mankind. If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish. "Realizability" or "unrealizability" is in the given instance a question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle. By means of this struggle, no matter what its immediate practical successes may be, the workers will best come to understand the necessity of liquidating capitalist slavery.

—Leon Trotsky, "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International" (1938)

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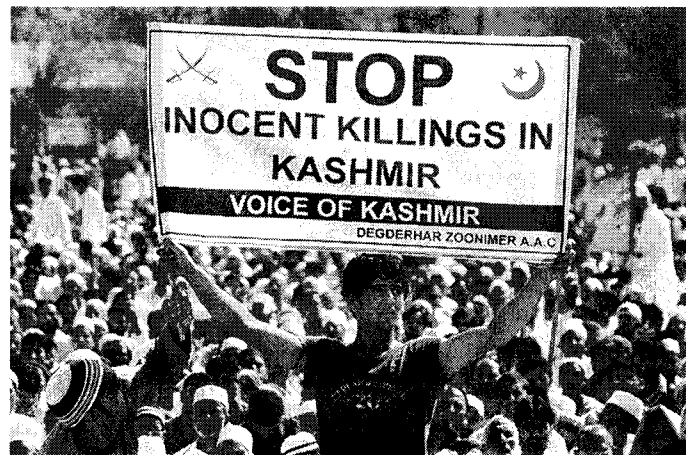
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All Indian and Pakistani Troops Out Now!

Down With India's Bloody Repression in Kashmir!



EPA



AFP

Srinagar: Indian paramilitaries attack Kashmiri protesters, Aug. 13 (left); rally against Indian occupation, Sept. 11 (right).

We print below an article published by our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain in their newspaper, *Workers Hammer* (No. 212, Autumn 2010). After its publication, separatist protests continued in Kashmir. In response, India's repression has worsened and its human toll has increased. Over 100 have been killed since June. As reported by the *London Guardian* (26 September): "In addition to the dead, many thousands have been seriously injured or beaten" and hundreds have been detained. New Delhi has deployed hundreds of additional troops, and curfews remain in effect.

In late September, the Indian government offered a cynical "peace" package that included cosmetic moves to "ease" the security strictures in major cities and blood money to families of those killed by Indian troops. Not surprisingly, India's proposal has been rejected by the Kashmiri separatists.

In recent months the Indian state has stepped up its murderous repression of the majority Muslim population in the Kashmir Valley. On 11 June, 17-year-old student Tufail Ahmad Madoo was killed by police who fired a teargas canister at his head, sparking angry protests. Youths armed only with stones have fought daily battles with Indian police and soldiers, while hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets demanding "Go India! Go back!" and "We want freedom."

More than 60 people have been killed in the latest shootings and hundreds injured, many of them teenagers. An article titled "The Angry Housewives Setting Kashmir Ablaze" on the *BBC News* website (16 August) quotes a woman protester, Firdousi Farooq, whose son was also killed by a teargas shell fired by Indian police:

"Why should I not protest? Why should I not pick up a stone? I am doing this in the honour of my martyred son. I am doing this for azadi (freedom) from subjugation and repression."

The latest round of killings is but the continuation of decades of repression of the Kashmiri people's struggle against national oppression. Since 1990, when around 100 unarmed demonstrators were shot dead by Indian troops on Gawakadal Bridge in the summer capital Srinagar, as many as 80,000 have been killed. The Indian military maintains an occupying force of nearly 700,000 troops and paramilitaries there, enforcing a brutal regime of curfews, arbitrary arrests, executions, rape and torture.

But the conflict in Kashmir has potentially catastrophic consequences beyond the sufferings of the Kashmiri people. The Himalayan territory is a major bone of contention between India and neighbouring Pakistan, nuclear-armed foes who have already fought three wars for control of Kashmir, in 1947-48, 1965 and again in 1999. The 1947-48 war, fought while both armies were still under British generals, resulted in the partition of Kashmir. Hundreds of thousands of troops still face each other across the Line of Control, the de facto border dividing Kashmir. The on-off "peace talks" between the two countries were abruptly halted following the criminal 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai which killed 174 people and for which India blamed Pakistan.

In the event of war between these equally reactionary capitalist powers we call on the workers of India and Pakistan to turn the war into a struggle against their "own" capitalist rulers. We applied this revolutionary defeatist position towards India and Pakistan in 1971 when India seized upon the just struggle by East Pakistan (Bangladesh) for independence from West Pakistan as a pretext for war. When the nationalist Awami League handed military control of the Bengali independence struggle over to India, we said, "the just struggle of the Bengalis was entirely subordinated and integrated into the interests of the predator India at the expense of the predator

(continued on page 16)

Free the Class-War Prisoners!

"The mills of capitalist justice grind out victims for the penitentiary...."

"In one sense of the word the whole of capitalist society is a prison. For the great mass of people who do the hard, useful work there is no such word as freedom. They come and go at the order of a few. Their lives are regulated according to the needs and wishes of a few. A censorship is put upon their words and deeds. The fruits of their labor are taken from them. And if, by chance, they have the instinct and spirit to rebel, if they take their place in the vanguard of the fight for justice, the prisons are waiting."

—James P. Cannon, "The Cause that Passes Through a Prison" (*Labor Defender*, September 1926)

Following in the tradition of Cannon's International Labor Defense (ILD) in the United States, the Partisan Defense Committee honours the class-war prisoners—those brave men and women railroaded to prison for standing up to racist capitalist oppression—irrespective of their particular political views or affiliation. Twenty-five years ago, the PDC revived the ILD program of providing monthly stipends to class-war prisoners and additional funds for their birthdays as well as holiday gifts for them and their families. Fundraising efforts for this unique and necessary program include benefits in Chicago on December 18, New York City on January 21 and Toronto on January 28.

The \$25 monthly stipends help ease a little bit the horrors of "life" in capitalist dungeons. More importantly, they are a necessary expression of solidarity with these prisoners—a message that they are not forgotten. In letters to the PDC before last year's Holiday Appeal, the prisoners gave a glimpse of what the program means to them:

Hugo Pinell: "Your care and solidarity has provided me with extra strength and drive to keep on pushing and evolving and I hope that my company has served you well. I am with you, in life and struggle."

Janine Africa: "I want to thank everybody for yalls support all of these years. I'm not just talking about the holiday donations, I'm talking about the work yall do for the release of political prisoners from prison."

Jaun Laaman: "This solidarity and support is important and necessary for us political prisoners, especially as the years and decades of our captivity grind on.... Being in captivity is certainly harsh, and this includes the sufferings of our children and families and friends. But prison walls and sentences do not and can not stop struggle."

Tom Manning, Laaman's Ohio 7 comrade: "Just so you know, it [the stipend] goes for bags of mackerel and jars of peanut butter, to supplement my protein needs."

The struggle to free all class-war prisoners is critical to educating a new generation of fighters for the oppressed. This is given added meaning as we build for this Holiday Appeal. Persecution of those imprisoned for their political views and actions has not only continued unabated in Obama's America, but he and his top cop, Attorney General Eric Holder, are making reservations for many more to join them. The Obama administration has launched an ominous escalation of state repression, accelerating the repressive measures adopted during the Clinton/Bush years that will be wielded against those who propelled him to office—labour, blacks, immigrants and leftist youth.

Mumia Abu-Jamal, whose case will again be a focus of the Holiday Appeal, is threatened with the reinstatement of the

**Partisan Defense
Committee**

Annual Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners



COC Productions

**Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!
Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!**

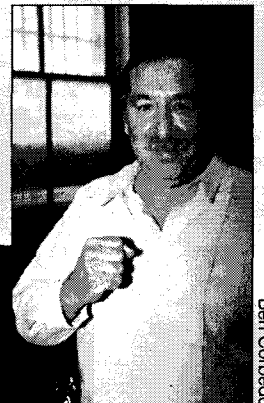
Friday, January 28, from 7 to 10 p.m.

Steelworkers Hall, 25 Cecil Street, Toronto

(1 block south of College at Ross Street, west of Queen's Park Station)

\$5.00 for advance tickets, \$8.00 at the door

*All proceeds from the Holiday Appeal will go to the
Class-War Prisoners Stipend Fund*



Ben Corbett

**Free Leonard Peltier! Down With
Racist Repression of Native Peoples!
Defend the G20 Protesters! Drop All the Charges!**

Sponsored by the Partisan Defense Committee

P.O. Box 314, Station B, Toronto, ON M5T 2W1

phone: (416) 593-4138 • email: pdctoronto@bellnet.ca • website: www.partisandefense.org

The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste.

Defend All G20 Protesters!

Following the brutal police violence and mass arrests of over 1,100 anti-G20 protesters last June, the capitalist state has pursued a sinister witchhunt against the left. Nineteen activists and organizers face an array of conspiracy charges and long prison sentences if they are convicted. The Canadian rulers mean to use the trials of these so-called "ringleaders" to intimidate and deter all those who would protest the poverty and violence of this imperialist capitalist order.

Among those charged are Peter Hopperton, Leah Henderson, Amanda Hiscocks, Alex Hundert, Syed Hussan and Jaggi Singh. All have highly restrictive bail conditions including house arrest. They may not associate with fellow activists, possess a passport or use a cell phone. They are barred from taking part in any public demonstration. Hundert has been specially targeted. For speaking at a political meeting on September 17, he was re-arrested. Again, on October 23, he was thrown in jail—where he remains—after copying down the license plate of a crown prosecutor! Native rights activist Jaroslava Avila was nabbed by ten plainclothes cops at the University of Toronto after attending a public meeting.

Also still in jail is Byron Sonne, a computer expert arrested just before the summit. Sonne faces a slew of trumped-up charges for simply vowing to keep tabs on the police during the summit. Meanwhile, Roger Clement, a former federal

government employee, has been convicted in the firebombing of an Ottawa branch of the Royal Bank in protest against the G20. Free Hundert, Sonne and Clement now!

The capitalist rulers have a long history of using such frame-up prosecutions against the left and labour movement. As far back as 1837 trade unionists in Ontario were targeted by conspiracy laws. Today, such conspiracy charges are favoured by the state as a means to go after perceived opponents against whom there is no evidence of any crime.

Multiple inquiries have been launched with the sole purpose of deflecting attention and quelling public anger. Calls for such inquiries have been eagerly embraced by the reformist left, who always push the illusion that the capitalist state and its cops can be reformed to serve the interests of the oppressed. Meanwhile, many of these left groups joined in the state witchhunt of the Black Bloc anarchist protesters (see "Police State Crackdown in Toronto," *SC* No. 166, Fall 2010). Defend *all* the G20 protesters! Drop the charges!

We urge our readers to contribute to the legal defense of those facing G20-related charges. Send contributions payable to OPIRG York, with "G20 legal defence" in the subject line, to: Toronto Community Mobilization Network, 360A Bloor St. W., P.O. Box 68557, Toronto ON M5S 1X0. ■

death sentence following a November 9 court hearing. Seventy-one-year-old leftist lawyer Lynne Stewart has been resentenced to ten years in prison for the "crime" of representing her client. The PDC has added Stewart to the stipend recipients. In Chicago and Minneapolis, the FBI recently raided the homes of leftists, antiwar activists and unionists under the rubric of the "war on terrorism." Among those targeted were members of the Freedom Road Socialist Organization and others, who have run afoul of Washington for their open support to leftist rebels in Colombia opposed to the U.S. puppet regime, the secular-nationalist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Iranian-backed Lebanese Hezbollah.

Here in Canada, the cop rampage and mass arrests during last summer's G20 protests in Toronto expose the lie that capitalist Canada is some kind of "progressive" alternative to the U.S. Defense of the anti-G20 protesters now being dragged through the courts will be highlighted at the Toronto Holiday Appeal (see article above).

The PDC initiated the stipend program at the height of the reactionary Reagan years in the U.S., defining features of which included the destruction of the PATCO air traffic controllers union, the bombing of the Philadelphia MOVE commune and efforts to classify leftists and union militants as terrorists and criminals. It was an important component of fighting efforts to criminalize leftist political dissent—and it remains so today, as the "war on terror" has given the capitalist governments in the U.S., Canada and other countries repressive powers that Reagan could only dream of.

We have provided stipends to over 30 prisoners, including eight union militants, on three continents. Many of these prisoners, largely victims of the racist American rulers' war

against militant black activists, have been there from nearly the beginning of our stipends program. The U.S. government has repeatedly demonstrated its determination to make sure they die behind bars from old age or medical neglect—or in the case of Mumia, by legal lynching. In fighting for their freedom, we are dedicated to searing the injustice of these cases into the consciousness of the working masses—today and for generations to come. Regular features of the Holiday Appeal are presentations by PDC representatives to union locals in various cities. As Cannon noted, "The victory of the class-war prisoners is possible only when they are inseparably united with the living labor movement." *An injury to one is an injury to all!*

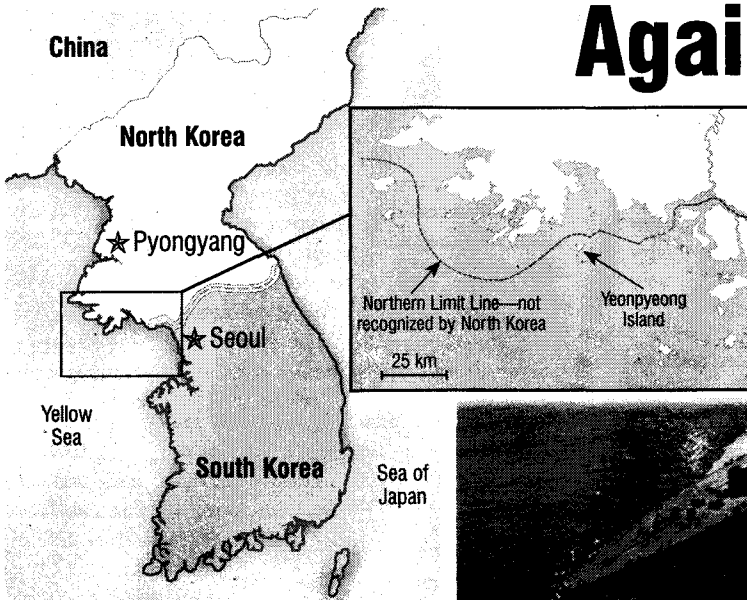
The 17 class-war prisoners described below receive monthly stipends from the PDC.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is a former Black Panther Party spokesman, a well-known supporter of the MOVE organization and an award-winning journalist known as "the voice of the voiceless." In January 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court took a big step toward the legal lynching of this innocent man. The Court vacated a March 2008 decision of the federal Third Circuit Court of Appeals that had upheld a 2001 decision by federal district court judge William Yohn overturning Mumia's death sentence. The high court in essence gave marching orders to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals to reinstate the death penalty.

This December marks the 29th anniversary of Mumia's arrest for a killing that the cops know he did not commit. Mumia was framed up for the 1981 killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner and sentenced to death explicitly for his political views. Mountains of evidence proving Mumia's innocence, including the sworn confession

(continued on page 15)

Down With Imperialist Provocations Against North Korea!



SC Graphic (sources include Toronto Star)

Reuters

Right: Japanese and U.S. warships stage military manoeuvres in Pacific Ocean, December 5, part of imperialist provocations against North Korea that included naval exercises near garrison island of Yeonpyeong just off North Korean coast (see map inset).

The following article is reprinted from Workers Vanguard No. 970 (3 December).

NOVEMBER 30—In a calculated provocation directed against both North Korea and China, the U.S. has dispatched the nuclear aircraft carrier USS George Washington along with other warships for a joint exercise with its South Korean junior partners in the Yellow Sea. This brazen display of imperialist military force comes less than a week after a South Korean naval exercise prompted an exchange of artillery fire in nearby waters off North Korea's coast. North Korea's shelling of the garrison island of Yeonpyeong resulted in the deaths of four South Koreans, including two civilians. U.S. president Barack Obama responded by openly threatening North Korea, declaring its regime to be "a serious and ongoing threat that has to be dealt with."

It is in the vital interest of the proletariat internationally to defend North Korea, a bureaucratically deformed workers state, against U.S. imperialism and the South Korean capitalist rulers. It is the imperialists and their lackeys who are an ongoing, deadly threat to Asia's working people. U.S. imperialism carried out the atomic incineration of 200,000 people in the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. U.S. imperialism went on to slaughter some three million Koreans in the 1950-53 Korean War and another three million Vietnamese in the 1960s and '70s in failed efforts to crush social revolutions. Among the crimes of Japanese imperialism was its brutal 40-year colonial occupation of Korea, which ended with Japan's defeat in World War II. In the aftermath of the war, the northern part of the Korean peninsula was liberated from capitalist rule through a social revolution carried out under the protection of Soviet troops.

In addition to its military provocations, the U.S. is demanding that the UN tighten economic sanctions, attempting to starve North Korea into submission. For its part, the

Japanese government has strengthened coast guard monitoring in the Sea of Japan and increased the number of spy flights in the area. Treacherously adding their voices to the war cries against North Korea are Japan's Social Democratic and Communist parties, whose parliamentary deputies voted for a resolution calling to "strengthen collaboration with South Korea and the U.S." and to consider further sanctions against Pyongyang. In South Korea, where right-wing legislators demanded aggressive action against the North, including air strikes, the government dumped its defense minister and the military issued new, less restrictive guidelines on how to "respond" to North Korea.

A Pentagon official has hinted that the U.S.-South Korean exercises might well take place within 200 nautical miles of China's coast—a zone that China considers to be under its sovereignty. The U.S. is increasingly trying to pressure Beijing to "rein in" North Korea, which is heavily dependent on its economic as well as diplomatic ties with the Chinese deformed workers state. In the trove of U.S. diplomatic cables just released by WikiLeaks is a stern message from 2007 demanding that China "take action" to stop North Korea from shipping missile parts to Iran through Beijing. Now, with China refusing to condemn North Korea for the shelling of Yeonpyeong, the U.S., Japan and South Korea are rejecting Beijing's request for emergency talks over the crisis.

The Yeonpyeong incident took place only days after the Obama administration raised a renewed hue and cry over North Korea's nuclear capacity. Stanford University scientist Siegfried Hecker, a former director of the U.S. nuclear lab at Los Alamos, had reported that North Korean officials had shown him a light-water reactor construction site at the Yongbyon nuclear complex. While Hecker noted that the facility was "much more suitable for making electricity than for bombs," he also opined that a companion ultramodern uranium enrichment facility designed to support civilian electrical

generation had the ability to provide fuel for dozens of nuclear bombs. North Korea manifestly needs both electricity and nuclear weapons, the latter to deter imperialist military attack. Indeed, the fact that Pyongyang has demonstrated such capacity has served to stay the hands of the U.S. and its South Korean client state.

The current U.S.-South Korean exercises follow similar military maneuvers that began in July, ostensibly in response to the sinking of the South Korean Navy corvette *Cheonan* near Baengnyeong Island in March. A U.S.-South Korean report claimed that the warship had been sunk by a North Korean torpedo, which Pyongyang denied. China and Russia refused to go along with the story. We noted at the time that “the ‘official’ story stinks.” But we insisted that “even if the North Korean navy did sink the *Cheonan*, it would have been an act of defense against repeated provocations by the U.S. and South Korea” (“Defend North Korea Against U.S. Imperialism!” WV No. 960, 4 June). Our article explained, “As Marxists, our attitude regarding this affair is determined not by claims of who was responsible for the sinking, the cause of which is shrouded in mystery, but by *class* considerations: Despite being saddled with a nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy, North Korea is a workers state based on the overthrow of capitalist rule.”

The U.S. launched the Korean War (under the UN flag) not only to smash social revolution on the peninsula but also to overthrow the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state that issued out of the 1949 Revolution. The entry of a million Chinese People’s Liberation Army troops turned the tide against the imperialist forces, leading to a stalemate at the 38th parallel, which divides North from South Korea. A peace treaty was never signed, and the South refused to sign the armistice agreement between the U.S. and North Korea. Both Yeonpyeong and Baengnyeong islands lie in disputed waters demarcated by a line unilaterally drawn by the U.S. which the North has never recognized. Since the Korean War, the U.S. has maintained a massive military presence in the South, today numbering 28,500 troops, while subjecting North Korea to decades of military encirclement and embargo. We say: *All U.S. troops and bases out of South Korea!*

Despite the rule of a nepotistic and bizarre Stalinist regime, North Korea’s planned economy significantly outperformed the South until the mid 1970s, creating a modern industrial infrastructure. At the same time, being divided from the South by a “demilitarized zone” packed with more weaponry per square meter than any place on earth has severely distorted the North’s economy. The situation became desperate in the aftermath of the 1991-92 counter-revolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, which had provided the bulk of military and technological aid to North Korea. In 1992, China’s nationalist Stalinist regime cut off shipments of cheap oil to the North in order to obtain diplomatic and economic relations with South Korea. In 1995, North Korea was hit by a horrific famine, stemming from floods and droughts, from which it has still not recovered.

As Trotskyists, we stand for the unconditional military defense of the deformed workers states—North Korea, China, Vietnam and Cuba—against imperialism and internal capitalist counterrevolution. At the same time, we fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies, whose policies are encapsulated in the dogma of “building socialism in one country.” Opposing the fight for international proletarian revolution, the privileged bureaucracies instead pursue a futile quest for “peaceful coexis-



Workers Vanguard

New York City protest denounces U.S. threats against North Korea, November 29.

tence” with imperialism, undermining the defense of those states against the class enemy.

In 2006 and again in 2009, China criminally voted for sanctions against North Korea in the UN Security Council following missile tests by Pyongyang. Likewise, Beijing has repeatedly brokered “six-party talks”—involving the U.S., China, Japan, Russia and the two Koreas—aimed at disarming North Korea. Beijing’s craven appeasement of imperialism not only imperils North Korea but dangerously undermines the defense of China itself.

For their part, the North Korean Stalinists have long called for “peaceful reunification” with the South—a recipe for reunification on a capitalist basis. An article titled “WikiLeaks Row: China Wants Korean Reunification, Officials Confirm” in the London *Guardian* (30 November) cites Chinese officials in Europe who say that Beijing also favors the “independent and peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula in the long term.” The program of *capitalist* reunification is a betrayal not only of the North Korean workers state but also of the historically militant and combative South Korean proletariat. As we go to press, Hyundai workers on temporary contracts are in the 16th day of a plant occupation in Ulsan, and warrants have been issued for the arrest of seven of the strike leaders.

Many South Koreans feel a sense of solidarity with the North based on strong nationalist sentiments fed by a century of Japanese and American imperialist overlordship. But Korea is divided along *class* lines. Korean nationalism, promoted by both the North Korean Stalinist regime and the South Korean reformist left, serves to tie the South Korean proletariat to its own capitalist ruling class. What is needed is the forging of a Leninist-Trotskyist party based on proletarian internationalism to lead the struggle for the *revolutionary reunification of Korea*—for socialist revolution in the South and workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats in the North. Linked to the fight for proletarian political revolution in China, this struggle must ultimately extend to the victory of proletarian rule in the imperialist heartlands of Japan and the U.S. ■

Young Spartacus

Join the Spartacus Youth Clubs!

The SYCs intervene into social struggles armed with the revolutionary program of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. We work to mobilize youth in struggle as partisans of the working class, championing the liberation of immigrants, women, Natives and all the oppressed. The SYCs fight to win youth to the perspective of building the Leninist vanguard party that will lead the working class in revolution, laying the basis for a world free of capitalist exploitation and imperialist slaughter.

What We Fight For

1. Mobilize students behind the social power of the working class! Picket lines mean don't cross! On strike means shut it down! For union-run job recruitment and training programs for minorities and women! For union hiring halls! Down with union-busting "workfare" schemes! Jobs for all at union wages! Organize the unorganized! Down with multi-tier wages, which pit younger and older workers against each other! Cops, prison guards, security guards out of the unions! Keep the capitalists' government and courts out of the unions!
2. Independence for Quebec! Down with English Canadian chauvinism! Down with the "Clarity Act" and Ottawa's other machinations against Quebec's national rights! Chauvinism and nationalism are poison to working-class struggle! No support to the bourgeois nationalist Bloc/PQ! Equal language rights for all! Down with chauvinist "English-only" ordinances and restrictive French language legislation!
3. Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Down with racist anti-immigrant laws! Down with anti-immigrant, anti-Semitic and all racist bigotry! No deportations! No detention of immigrants or refugee claimants! Down with the government's "anti-terrorism" scare! For mass labour/minority mobilizations to stop the fascists and race terrorists! No reliance on the capitalist courts! Fascist terror is not a question of free speech! Stop the Nazis! Stop the KKK!
4. For free, quality education for all! For an end to streaming! For open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for all students! Abolish the administration—the universities should be run by those who work and study there! Cops off campus! Drive army and police recruiters off campus! For a single secular school system! No prayer in the schools! For separation of church and state! Defend science against superstition and mysticism! For the right of people to be educated in the language of their choice! Defend bilingual education programs and ESL training!
5. For women's liberation through socialist revolution! For free abortion on demand! Down with parental consent laws and "squeal rules"! For free, quality 24-hour childcare! Down with attacks on medicare—for free, quality healthcare for all! For mass, labour-backed mobilizations to defend abortion clinics! Equal pay for equal work! Down with reactionary age of consent laws and all laws against consensual sex! Full democratic rights for gays! Government out of the bedroom! Down with the anti-sex witchhunt! Down with all laws against "crimes without victims" like prostitution and drugs!

6. The capitalist state—at its core consisting of the cops, courts, prisons and the standing army—is the executive committee of the ruling class, an instrument of organized violence by the capitalists against the working class and the oppressed. The state is not neutral and cannot be reformed—it must be smashed through workers revolution! Defend victims of racist cop terror and police frame-up! Down with the "war on drugs," a racist war by the ruling class against blacks, immigrants, Natives and other minorities! For mass labour protests against cop terror! Free all class-war prisoners! There is no justice in the capitalist courts! No illusions in civilian review boards or "community control" of the police! Abolish the Senate and reactionary relics like the monarchy and governor-general! No to gun control! For the right of armed self-defense!

7. Labour must defend Native rights! Abolish the racist Indian Act and the Department of Indian Affairs! Police and courts keep off the reserves and other Native land! Only socialist revolution can end the deep-going oppression of Native people.

8. Down with Canadian nationalism! Defeat Canadian imperialism through workers revolution! For the defeat of Canadian imperialism in all its military adventures! Not one person, not one penny for the Canadian military! Beware the fraud of "human rights" imperialism! Canadian imperialist troops are not "peacekeepers" but bloody enemies of the world's workers and oppressed! The UN is a den of thieves, their victims and their lackeys! All Canadian/UN/NATO troops out of Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf! Down with the colonial occupation of Iraq! Defend the Palestinian people against Zionist terror! For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

9. Down with anti-communist China bashing! Defend the gains of the 1949 revolution which smashed the rule of the landlords and capitalists, and collectivized property! No to imperialist penetration of China! For unconditional military defense of China and the other bureaucratically deformed workers states—Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea—against imperialism and internal capitalist counterrevolution! Defend their right to nuclear weapons! For workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats and establish regimes of workers democracy based on the power of workers councils and revolutionary internationalism! Workers of the world unite!

10. Break with the Anglo-chauvinist, pro-imperialist NDP—a bourgeois workers party that upholds the rule of racist capitalism! The trade union bureaucracy is an agency of the capitalist class—for a class-struggle leadership of the unions! For international working-class solidarity! Smash NAFTA through united class struggle from the Yukon to the Yucatán! Down with the chauvinist poison of protectionism! For a revolutionary, multiracial, binational workers party that fights for socialist revolution! Look to the example of the heroic, Bolshevik-led workers of 1917 Russia! For new October Revolutions! For the international rule of the working class!

The Spartacus Youth Clubs are the youth groups of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

2010 Subscription Drive SC Welcomes New Readers

Comrades and sympathizers of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste and Spartacus Youth Clubs concluded a five-week subscription drive in early October, exceeding our quota of 400 points by 23 percent. This represents 220 subscriptions to *Spartacist Canada*, 107 to *Workers Vanguard*, biweekly newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S., and 59 to other publications of the International Communist League. All subscribers also received copies of *Spartacist*, our international theoretical journal, while subscribers to *WV* or *Le Bolchévik*, newspaper of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France, also got a free ICL pamphlet. The most popular pamphlets this year were *The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution* and *Marxism vs. Anarchism*, especially the French-language version which we distributed in Montreal.

Our annual subscription drive gives us a picture of current political consciousness and moods, from campuses to workplaces and union halls. This year's drive took place in the context of the continuing capitalist economic crisis, the worst since the Great Depression. Our most successful sales to trade unionists came at the Toronto and Hamilton Labour Day marches, where comrades sold 23 subscriptions and 224 papers and pamphlets.

Comrades in Vancouver who set up literature tables at the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University reported that many subscriptions were sold to newer students with little knowledge of Marxism. Our articles on the Near East, South Africa and India received a lot of interest, while our placard calling for free abortion on demand was very polarizing. Comrades made regional trips to other B.C. campuses and helped SL/U.S. supporters with work in Washington state. The trip to Nanaimo's Vancouver Island University was particularly fruitful, as comrades made the quota in the first three hours.

The Toronto SYC netted an impressive 105 points at the Uni-

versity of Toronto. At the annual U of T clubs fair, the SYC protested the presence of the campus cops' booth, which the student bureaucrats provocatively placed next to the "political" (i.e., leftist) tables. Following the massive state repression around the G20 summit earlier in the year, which included roundups of activists at U of T, our placard calling for "Cops Off Campus" set us apart sharply from the various pseudo-socialist groups at the fair—namely the Fightback group, which claims that police are "workers in uniform." Our comrades made impromptu speeches against the cop presence, polemicizing as well against the NDP social democrats (whose stall was also nearby) and the fake-socialist groups who support them. Against illusions in parliamentary reformism, we fight to win workers and youth to Marx's understanding of the need to sweep away the rule of the capitalist exploiters through socialist revolution.

Toronto comrades also set up tables at York and Ryerson universities and organized a regional trip to Peterborough and Ottawa, selling 43 subscriptions. Our placard defending the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state against imperialism and counterrevolution drew attention at the University of Ottawa and Carleton University, where we sold several Chinese translations of ICL material. The Montreal regional, carried out with comrades from the SL/U.S., centred on work at the francophone universities, where we sold 37 subscriptions to *Le Bolchévik*. Comrades also distributed a French-language version of our recent polemic, "Québec Solidaire: No Choice for Workers" (*SC* No. 165, Summer 2010).

Congratulations to all comrades for their hard work in making this campaign a success, and especially to comrade Jon in Toronto who sold the most subscriptions (61.5 points). We welcome new readers and those who renewed their subscriptions, and encourage you to let us know what you think of our press and to get involved in the activities of the TL/LT and SYCs. ■

Sub Drive Results	Quota (in points)	Final Totals	%
Toronto	250	317	127%
Vancouver	150	155	103%
At Large	—	21	—
Total	400	493	123%

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 - \$5/4 issues of *Le Bolchévik* (includes French-language *Spartacist*)
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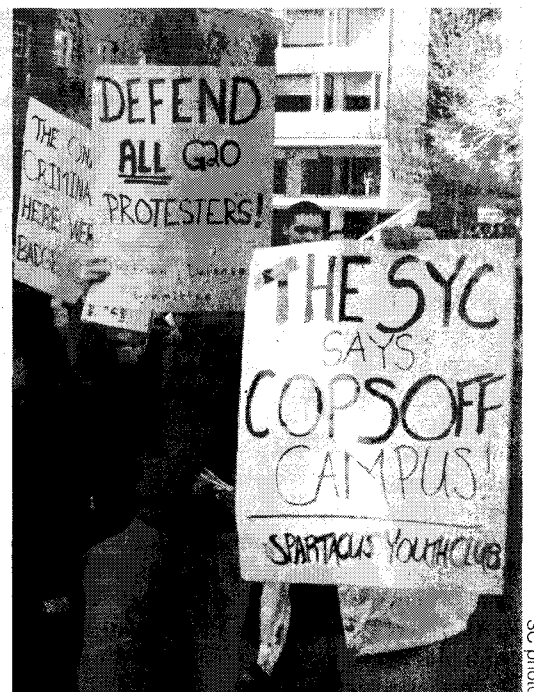
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SC photo

Britain: Hands Off Student Protesters!

On December 9, up to 30,000 protesters filled the streets of central London as the British parliament voted to massively increase university tuition and scrap the education allowance for low-income youth. Protesters were met with brutal police violence and 43 were injured. When the heir to the British throne, Prince Charles, and his wife arrogantly drove through the protests en route to a "royal" gala, their car received a broken window and a splash of white paint. Recalling the fate of Charles I, protesters chanted "off with their heads!" This minor challenge to royal prerogative has sparked hysteria and calls for a state crack-down. No reprisals! Abolish the monarchy!

The article below, by our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain, is reprinted from Workers Vanguard No. 969 (19 November).



Getty

November 10: Demonstrators try to gain entry to Conservative Party headquarters in London in protest against government plans to triple tuition fees.

LONDON, November 14—Britain's capitalist rulers are baying for blood after their vicious attacks on education met with sharp protest on the streets of London on November 10. In the largest demonstration so far against the Tory-Liberal Democrat government, more than 50,000 students, together with lecturers and others, marched against plans to nearly triple the upper limit on university tuition fees, to £9,000 [\$14,500] a year beginning in 2012, while slashing university budgets by 40 percent.

During the march, a sizable group of protesters split off to rally at the headquarters of the Tory party at Millbank Tower. Some windows were smashed, then a couple hundred demonstrators briefly occupied the building before being ejected by police. Over 50 were arrested and released on bail, another 250 were searched and photographed to face possible charges, and hundreds more could be snared in the police dragnet. Outrageously, a protester who allegedly threw a fire extinguisher (that hit no one) may be charged with "attempted murder." The Spartacist League/Britain demands: *Defend the Millbank protesters! Drop all charges! No reprisals!*

Immediately after the protest, Tory prime minister David Cameron, in chorus with Labour Party Members of Parliament and the bourgeois press, began to howl about the "violence" of the protesters who scuffed up Millbank Tower. To the press's anguished cries of "Why?", one protester quipped, "Tory HQ, property of the capitalist state, mate!" All the clamour about "violence" is rich coming from Cameron, and from Labour: tell it to the peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan who know the brutality of occupation by British and U.S. imperialist troops.

Ominously, the Metropolitan police are vowing to be better "prepared" next time. These are the same police who killed Ian Tomlinson during a bloody cop rampage against last year's G20 protest; who executed Brazilian electrician Jean Charles de Menezes on the London Tube in 2005 in the name of the racist "war on terror"; and who daily assault black and Asian youth using "stop and search" powers. The cops are at the core of the capitalist state—which also comprises the courts, prisons and military—the purpose of which is to maintain through violence the system of exploitation of the working class by the bourgeoisie.

The coalition government's massive budget cuts amount to

an all-out assault on working people, the poor and elderly, as well as youth, on a breathtaking level. Members of David Cameron's cabinet—stuffed with some 18 millionaires and assorted Eton graduates—sneer that "benefit cheats" are draining the British economy and label single mothers on welfare as "scroungers." The unemployed are ordered to "get a job," even as the government announces cuts that will wipe out half a million public sector jobs and many more in the private sector. Railing against the "dependency culture" and calling it a "sin" to refuse any miserable job on offer, work and pensions secretary Iain Duncan Smith is hatching schemes to cut benefits for millions of people. The government is taking a budget axe to youth centres, social services, libraries, parks, the National Health Service, schools, programs for the elderly...anything that provides a lifeline to working people and the poor.

The student protest shows the depth of anger against Cameron's Tories and not least against Nick Clegg, leader of the Liberal Democrats, who pledged not to raise student fees during the election campaign. Chanting "Tory scum!" and "Nick Clegg, we know you, you're a f---ing Tory too!", reformist organisations such as the Socialist Workers Party seek to channel this anger into support for a Labour government, under newly elected leader Ed Miliband. What an inspiration! Labour: which before the general election promised cuts "deeper and tougher" than Margaret Thatcher's in the 1980s; which for 13 years carried out imperialist butchery abroad and union-busting and racist immigrant-bashing at home; and which in fact first brought in university tuition fees in 1998, and later tripled them.

Any capitalist government—whether Labour, Tory and/or Liberal Democrat—would try to gouge the working class to pay for the current economic crisis. What's needed is class struggle to defend the working class and poor against these attacks. The Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League, fights to build a multiethnic revolutionary workers party that will lead the struggle for socialist revolution to uproot the capitalist order and put in power a workers government. ■

France...

(continued from page 1)

workers crippled transportation, while shortages closed gasoline stations across the country and threatened the fuel-needy industrial sector. A 33-day-long strike by fuel terminal workers in the Marseille area stranded some 80 vessels offshore in the Mediterranean. Sanitation workers struck in at least ten cities. In Marseille, 11,000 tons of uncollected trash piled in the streets.

In protests held in September and October, millions mobilized throughout the country. Yet in the face of overwhelming public opposition to the pension “reform” pushed by right-wing president Nicolas Sarkozy, parliament gave final passage last week to a law increasing the minimum retirement age by two years to 62 and the age to receive a full pension to 67.

Determined to make French capitalism competitive against its imperialist rivals, Sarkozy played hardball with the strikers. Hundreds of riot cops were mobilized to forcibly disperse picket lines blocking refineries, fuel depots and other industrial sites. Near Nantes, the entire town of Donges, which has one of the largest refineries in the country, was placed under a state of siege by an army of riot cops. Strikers at the Grandpuits refinery near Paris were ordered to return to work in the interests of “national defense” or face six-month prison terms. Since mid October, the government has arrested at least **2,500 people**.

These attacks on strikers—and on the very right to strike—coincided with systematic police violence against high school youth, particularly those from working-class trade schools with a strong minority component. Youth joined the protests in large numbers, conscious that extending the retirement age would further increase youth unemployment, which stands at 23 percent for those under 25. The last few years have seen countless protests by high school youth, including against the slashing of jobs in education. Some 50,000 teachers’ jobs have been cut since 2007, with the only new spending for education going to “security,” police patrols and private security guards. We demand: **Drop all charges against the strikers and high school students! Free the protesters now!**

Across Europe, the capitalist rulers are determined to make workers pay for the world economic crisis by gutting pensions, slashing the wages of public sector workers and taking an ax to what remains of “welfare state” social programs. This has provoked a series of one-day general strikes this year—half a dozen in Greece alone—with another called for later this month in Portugal. However, the workers’ combativity runs up against the political program of the labor bureaucracies, which seek only to soften the “excesses” of capitalist austerity.

In France, the union movement is broken up into various federations under the influence of one or more reformist parties. For these reformists, the workers struggle against the attack on pensions should serve to “weaken” Sarkozy and lay the basis for the election of a “left” government in 2012, when presidential and parliamentary elections are scheduled. This was expressed by the spokesman of the New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA), Olivier Besancenot, who declared in August that “much of the outcome of 2012 is playing out over the fight on pensions. It’s now that we must weaken the government and the right.”

The workers’ militancy has been undercut by the servility



Getty

High school students in Montpellier march against pension “reform” scheme, October 14.

of the trade-union leaders. Committed to defending the interests of French capitalism, these bureaucrats accept the necessity of “reforming” the public pension system in order to cut costs—they simply demanded a seat at the negotiating table. For months, the trade-union tops have insisted that they would accept an increase in the number of years of work needed to qualify for a full pension (the position of the CFDT union federation) or an increase in the pension taxes that are deducted from workers’ wages (the position of the CGT federation). An aide for CFDT head François Chérèque told the Paris daily *Libération*: “Secretly, several leaders of the confederation wouldn’t look unfavorably on a petering-out of the movement.”

From the outset of the fight over pensions, the *intersyndicale*—a coalition of bureaucrats representing the various trade-union federations that has been supported by the left-wing organizations including the NPA and Lutte Ouvrière (LO)—centered the mobilization around a series of single “days of action.” These events were largely staggered according to the rhythm of the parliamentary debate on the pension “reform” bill—as the National Assembly debated the bill, as the Senate voted, etc.—with the aim of wringing some concessions on the wording of the law.

After this bitterly fought wave of strikes, many returned to work angrily cursing Sarkozy and pledging that he will be out of a job when the next presidential election rolls around. But the question is: in what direction will this anger be focused? Will it be channeled into supporting a new popular-front government in which the reformist workers parties manage the affairs of the bourgeois state in alliance with the parties of the capitalist class enemy? Will the bourgeoisie and union bureaucrats channel the workers’ anger into anti-immigrant racism and national chauvinism? Or will the proletariat mobilize independently in defense of its class interests? At bottom, what is posed is the question of leadership. This underlines the need to forge a revolutionary workers

(continued on page 12)

France...

(continued from page 11)

party grounded in the Marxist understanding that the capitalist system must be overthrown through socialist revolution.

Particularly since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the reformist workers' leaders and the "far left" have imbibed the capitalists' "death of communism" crusade that falsely portrays communism as, at best, a "failed experiment." In our interventions in the recent strike movement, as in all our work, the Ligue Trotskyste de France, section of the International Communist League, has sought to reassert the revolutionary program of Bolshevism and the liberating ideals of communism.

The capitalist rulers have time and again demonstrated that they are enemies of human progress. Against the reformists who uphold the inviolability of the capitalist order, our aim is the building of a revolutionary multiethnic workers party to lead the struggle for socialist revolution. As Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky underlined in the 1938 Transitional Program, written amid the Great Depression, "If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish."

The Popular Front: A Deadly Illusion for Workers

The capitalist government, whether administered by parties of the left or right, serves the interests of the bourgeoisie at the expense of the workers and oppressed. To see how a left government would seek to dismantle the gains of the working class, one need only look beyond the Pyrenees to Spain, where the government of José Luis Zapatero's PSOE (Socialist Workers Party) is also seeking to impose austerity measures, including an increased retirement age. The PSOE's new labor law could be characterized as the CPE—but for everyone, not just youth. (The CPE was a 2006 French law, withdrawn after protests, that stipulated that new workers under 26 years of age be subject to a two-year probationary period, during which they could be fired without cause.)



AP

Coal miners march in northern Spain to protest working conditions and unpaid wages, September 28.

When workers staged a one-day general strike in September against the new labor law, Zapatero sent cops to smash the picket lines (they went so far as to use firearms against picketing workers at the CASA aircraft plant near Madrid).

Yet the Spanish union tops preach to workers that the PSOE in power represents "their" government. When Zapatero announced his labor law in June, Spain's union officials called for a one-day general strike to be held...three months later, which amounted to seeking the government's permission for the strike. The government responded to the September 29 general strike by appointing a representative of the UGT union federation, Valeriano Gómez, as the new labor minister in charge of pension "reform"!

In France, left bourgeois governments take the form of "popular fronts"—i.e., coalitions between the reformist working-class parties and outright representatives of the bourgeoisie. Revolutionaries are unconditionally opposed to these alliances, which chain the workers to the capitalist class enemy through the open class collaboration of their leaders. Historically, the popular front has served to short-circuit workers struggles, including by heading off the prospect of workers revolution, and set the workers up for often bloody defeat. In the French general strike of June 1936, the popular front—a coalition of the social democrats, the Stalinist Communist Party (PCF) and the bourgeois Radical Party—stifled a pre-revolutionary situation by channeling the upsurge onto the parliamentary plane, ultimately leading to the 1940 granting of full powers to the pro-Nazi Marshal Pétain.

The destruction of the Soviet Union has led to a profound, though uneven, regression in political consciousness internationally, with even the more advanced workers no longer identifying their struggles with the ultimate goal of socialism. Today, though the West European bourgeoisies have no immediate fear of Red Revolution, popular-front governments have nonetheless often proven themselves more effective than right-wing regimes in pushing through anti-working-class measures. It was a 1991 "white paper" published by the popular-front government of François Mitterrand/Michel Rocard that two years later served as the basis for an increase—from 37 and a half years to 40 years—in the number of years of work needed to qualify for a full pension in the private sector. In December 1995, a wave of militant strikes forced the right-wing government to back down on plans to pare back public sector pensions. But the misleaders of the working class betrayed the workers' militancy and self-sacrifice. The result was new elections that in 1997 brought into power a popular-front government under Socialist prime minister Lionel Jospin, which included PCF ministers in the government. It was under Jospin that the "Charpin Report"—which, among other things, effectively called to raise the retirement age to 65—was published, providing the framework for today's attacks on pensions.

The Fight for a Revolutionary Leadership of the Proletariat

In the face of Sarkozy's determined attack on pensions, many militant workers clearly understood that isolated "days of action" were not sufficient. Small locally based and generally brief initiatives mushroomed, including by rail workers, like an anarchic ferment lacking a plan. However, unlike December 1995, when rail and transit workers were in the vanguard of the struggle that effectively spelled the end of the right-wing government of Jacques Chirac/Alain Juppé by



AP
Charles de Gaulle Airport, August 20: French police expel Romanian gypsies during mass anti-Roma deportation campaign.

shutting down public transportation for over three weeks, the situation today is far more difficult for railroad workers. In line with the 2007 law on “social dialogue,” the union bureaucrats have negotiated with the bosses the maintenance of a minimum level of rail service during strikes.

The union bureaucrats accept the framework of capitalism and only dare to demand what they consider to be compatible with the maintenance and prosperity of their own national ruling class, from whom they hope to gain a few crumbs. Thus by its nature, trade-union opportunism is narrowly national. And the bureaucrats themselves contribute to the spreading of chauvinist poison within the working class.

This directly undercuts the struggles of the working class, such as the recent strikes by refinery workers who, while in the forefront of the struggle to defend pensions, were also combating threats to their own jobs. From the capitalists’ viewpoint, with fuel exports to the U.S. having collapsed due to the recession, there are a dozen too many refineries in Europe. French courts recently authorized the shutting down of the Dunkirk refinery, and Petroplus has announced the closure of the Reichstett refinery, near the eastern city of Strasbourg.

It was necessary for French refinery workers to appeal to their class brothers in Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and elsewhere to stop delivery of refined products to France intended to break the strike. According to *Le Monde* online (26 October), Belgian trade unionists picketed a Total-owned fuel depot at Feluy, Belgium in order to stop deliveries destined for France. But the possibility of internationalist class struggle is undercut by the nationalist perspective of the trade-union bureaucrats, whose view is: if there must be plant closures and job losses in Europe, let them be in other countries (in opposition to this, see the joint statement by the ICL’s British, French and German sections, “For United International Class Struggle Against Airbus Bosses!” WV No. 889, 30 March 2007).

The situation cries out for a new, revolutionary leadership of the proletariat. Forging such a leadership requires a political struggle against the workers’ present leadership, and in par-

ticular against those like the NPA and LO, which work within the unions to provide a left cover for the bureaucracy.

A revolutionary leadership would fight for a series of transitional demands that start from the current consciousness of wide layers of the working class, addressing their daily struggles against the capitalists, and lead to the necessity of proletarian revolution. It is essential to fight to eliminate the myriad differences in contractual status among workers—temporary employees, trainees, those with fixed contracts—as well as opening up full-time jobs for all those, especially women, who can now only find part-time work. That means fighting for free, quality childcare, open 24 hours a day. Faced with mass unemployment, which has disproportionately hit older workers and youth, it is necessary to share the work among all available workers, with no loss in pay.

There must be a struggle against racist discrimination in hiring and for an end to all work restrictions imposed on workers from East Europe (which notably target Roma from Romania). More broadly, this means a fight for *full citizenship rights for all those who are in this country*, whether they are documented or not, employed or not, wear the veil or not. The government-led racist “war on terror” targets those of Muslim origin in the first place and ultimately the entire working class. On September 14, the French parliament passed a law forbidding women, including French citizens, from wearing the face-covering Muslim *niqab* or *burqa* in public. In the name of defending the “equality” of women, the government is stigmatizing Muslim minorities as the “enemy within.” *Down with the racist law on the burqa!*

It is also necessary to put a stop to the attacks on the education and health systems as well as other social programs, which hit working-class and minority neighborhoods hardest. This requires a program of major public works to build or rebuild housing, transport infrastructure, schools and high schools, hospitals and health centers that the capitalists are in the process of shutting down. The goal of the capitalist production system is to pocket profits rather than address the needs of the population, meaning that the capitalists are incapable of responding to such a set of demands. But for the working class, what is ultimately posed is the question of survival, which is why the workers must understand that the capitalist system must be overthrown by workers revolution.

For the Independence of the Trade Unions from the Bosses and Their State!

In one of his final writings, Leon Trotsky observed that a common feature of modern trade unions “is their drawing closely to and growing together with the state power” (“Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay,” 1940). Trotsky emphasized that to “turn the trade unions into the organs of the broad exploited masses and not the organs of a labor aristocracy” requires the “complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state.”

France has one of the lowest rates of unionization of any industrialized country, with as few as 5 percent of private sector workers organized. Furthermore, it is the norm for this small minority of organized workers to be divided up among several competing unions in the same workplace, which often scab on each other during strikes. The unions depend more on subsidies from the capitalist state and the bosses than on their own members’ dues. How those subsidies are distributed depends largely on the various unions’ relative vote totals in workplace

(continued on page 14)

France...

(continued from page 13)

elections, in which all workers—not just the small minority who are unionized—can vote. This means that the bureaucrats do not have the perspective of organizing the unorganized, but rather of maximizing their vote totals in workplace elections—which are run by the bosses and the state—in order to obtain a larger slice of the pie than their union competitors.

A key part of the struggle to overcome the divisions between competing union federations is the fight to forge industrial unions that unite all workers from the same industry into a single trade union, regardless of their political affiliation and work status. This is inseparable from the struggle to build a revolutionary leadership of the working class.

All the union federations—particularly the CGT, FO and UNSA (but also the SUD and CFDT)—have cops, customs officials and/or prison guards in their ranks. These bodies of armed men, who have a monopoly of armed power to enforce the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, constitute the core of the bourgeois state, an instrument of class oppression against workers and oppressed. The cop terror that has been meted out against strike pickets and youth in the banlieues (suburban ghettos) provides very tangible proof of the fact that police are on the other side of the class line. The bourgeois state and its armed gangs must be destroyed through a workers revolution that replaces the rule of capital with the dictatorship of the proletariat, which will have its own armed bodies. These will come from the workers militias and other red guards forged in the struggle to defend the working class against police strikebreaking and fascist terror. *Foremen, cops, prison and security guards out of the unions!*

Reforge the Fourth International! For New October Revolutions!

The intersyndicale coalition of union bureaucrats was seen by many workers as a guarantee of working-class unity. In fact, it has served as a means for the bureaucrats to coordinate their actions on the basis of the lowest common denominator and to mask their treachery behind the facade of “unity.” The role of the “far left” in the recent strikes has been to sell the line of the intersyndicale bureaucrats to restive workers. Thus Lutte Ouvrière (22 October), writing about the union bureaucracy at SNCF (the nationalized railroad system), declared:

“The attitude of the union leaders has also reassured the strikers. So far they have all pushed for strengthening, if not broadening the movement. This is contrary to the policy they held in 2003 and 2007 when they opposed rallies bringing different services together, visits by strikers to other sectors and even jointly held demonstrations. The movement has thus refound the tones of 1995 with the famous ‘All together, all together.’”

What LO leaves out is that the “All together” unity of 1995 was channeled into electing the Jospin popular-front regime—indeed, what the reformists are angling for today is another popular front.

LO has lately been fond of repeating that the elections won’t change a thing and that what matters is struggle. But this is belied by their practice, which helps tie the workers to the popular front. For the past two years, LO has helped administer capitalism as part of municipal governments, including by voting for local budgets. When the Communist Party mayor of Bagnolet—a municipality in the Paris suburbs where LO is in

a governing coalition with its senior partners in the PCF—forcibly evicted the tenants of an apartment building partly occupied by African workers last winter, LO condemned this racist action. But they treacherously remained in the coalition, providing a left cover for their municipal partners (see “Lutte Ouvrière’s Municipal Antics,” WV No. 960, 4 June).

LO recently signed on to the popular-front slate for the December municipal election in Corbeil-Essonnes, south of Paris, in order to “fight the right.” Alongside the PCF, the PS and the Greens, LO has set out to locally manage capitalism on a program that denounces the right-wing municipality’s “failure regarding security” and pledges to “put in the resources” to change this situation—in other words, more racist cops to terrorize the ghetto. At the national level, the next alliance of class collaboration being planned for the 2012 elections between bourgeois parties and workers parties looks set to take on a pink-green hue, with reformist workers parties like the PS, the PCF and Jean-Luc Mélenchon’s Left Party joined by the Green Party and some other bourgeois forces (like the Left Radicals and supporters of capitalist politician Jean-Pierre Chevènement).

This class-collaborationist lash-up can be certain of receiving the electoral support of Besancenot’s NPA. The NPA was founded in 2009 out of the thoroughly social-democratic Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR). In founding the NPA, the LCR openly renounced Trotskyism, revolution and communism—after having done so in practice for decades—in a rare mark of honesty demonstrating the extent to which they imbibe the bourgeoisie’s “death of communism” myth. They also inscribed in the NPA’s “founding principles” their openness to participating in a bourgeois government, declaring: “We will contribute to their implementation [of progressive measures] if the voters give us such a responsibility.” During the 2007 elections, Besancenot stated his willingness to join a bourgeois government coalition, provided it called itself “anti-capitalist,” declaring, “the LCR will assume its responsibilities in such a government.”

For decades, the LCR voted for the candidates of successive popular-front coalitions, from Mitterrand to Jospin to Ségolène Royal in 2007. They also voted in the 2008 Marseille municipal elections for the slate led by Socialists that included right-wing bourgeois politicians—these same Socialists recently called on the state to crush the Marseille port workers strike. The NPA, whose forebears in the LCR voted for the right-wing Jacques Chirac in 2002, when he was opposed by the fascist Jean-Marie Le Pen, should hardly have a problem stomaching a vote for a Socialist candidate—including current IMF head Dominique Strauss-Kahn, who openly supported Sarkozy’s attacks on pensions.

LO, NPA, et al. have something fundamental in common: They reject the 1917 October Revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. They all supported the various counterrevolutionary forces that destroyed the Soviet Union and deformed workers states of East Europe in the late 1980s-early 1990s. To the extent of their limited forces, they thus contributed to the victory of capitalist counterrevolution. The working class must reappropriate Marxism and the lessons of the Bolshevik Revolution. The International Communist League, of which the LTF is a section, represents the programmatic continuity of the Bolshevik party of Lenin and Trotsky. We fight to build the internationalist revolutionary workers party that is indispensable for leading the next revolutionary uprisings of the proletariat to victory. ■

Holiday Appeal...

(continued from page 5)

of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed Faulkner, have been submitted to the courts. But to the racists in black robes, a court of law is no place for evidence of the innocence of this fighter for the oppressed.

While others plead with President Obama and his attorney general to "investigate" violations of Mumia's "civil rights," the PDC says that Mumia's fate cannot be left in the hands of the government of the capitalists. The racist rulers hate Mumia because they see in him the spectre of black revolt. The stakes are high and the situation is grim, but any real fight for Mumia's freedom must be based on a class-struggle opposition to the capitalist rulers, who have entombed this innocent black man for more than half his life.

Leonard Peltier is an internationally renowned class-war prisoner. Peltier's incarceration for his activism in the American Indian Movement has come to symbolize the racist repression of Native peoples, the survivors of centuries of genocidal oppression. In 1976, the Trudeau Liberal government denied Peltier asylum and extradited him back to the U.S. The RCMP and Canadian authorities were utterly complicit in the campaign of persecution against him. Peltier's frame-up trial, for the 1975 deaths of two marauding FBI agents in what had become a war zone on the South Dakota Pine Ridge Reservation, shows what capitalist "justice" is all about. Although the lead government attorney has admitted, "We can't prove who shot those agents," and the courts have acknowledged blatant prosecutorial misconduct, the 66-year-old Peltier is still locked away. Last year, the U.S. Parole Commission again turned down Peltier's parole request and declared they would not reconsider his case for another 15 years.

Eight MOVE members—**Chuck Africa, Michael Africa, Debbie Africa, Janet Africa, Janine Africa, Delbert Africa, Eddie Africa and Phil Africa**—are in their 33rd year of prison. They were sentenced to 30-100 years after the 8 August 1978 siege of their Philadelphia home by over 600 heavily armed cops, having been falsely convicted of killing a police officer who died in the cops' own cross fire. In 1985, eleven of their MOVE family members, including five children, were massacred by Philly cops. After more than three decades of unjust incarceration, nearly all of these innocent prisoners again had parole hearings this year, but none were released.

Lynne Stewart is a radical lawyer incarcerated for zealously defending her client, a blind Egyptian cleric imprisoned for an alleged plot to blow up New York City landmarks in the early 1990s. On July 15 she was resentenced to ten years—more than quadrupling her original sentence—in a loud affirmation by the Obama administration that there will be no let-up in the massive attack on democratic rights under the "war on terror." Stewart, now 71 years old and suffering from breast cancer, is known for her defense of Black Panthers, radical leftists and others reviled by the capitalist state.

Jaen Laaman and Thomas Manning are the two remaining anti-imperialist activists known as the Ohio 7 still in prison, convicted for their roles in a radical group that took credit for bank "expropriations" and bombings of symbols of U.S. imperialism, such as military and corporate offices, in the late 1970s and '80s. Before their arrests in 1984 and 1985, the Ohio 7 were targets of massive manhunts. Their

children were kidnapped at gunpoint by the Feds.

The Ohio 7's politics were once shared by thousands of radicals during the Vietnam antiwar movement and by New Leftists who wrote off the possibility of winning the working class to a revolutionary program and saw themselves as an auxiliary of Third World liberation movements. But, like the Weathermen before them, the Ohio 7 were spurned by the "respectable" left. From a proletarian standpoint, the actions of these leftist activists against imperialism and racist injustice are not crimes. They should not have served a day in prison.

Ed Poindexter and Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa are former Black Panther supporters and leaders of the Omaha, Nebraska, National Committee to Combat Fascism. They were victims of the FBI's deadly COINTELPRO operation under which 38 Black Panther Party members were killed and hundreds more imprisoned on frame-up charges. Poindexter and Mondo were railroaded to prison and sentenced to life for a 1970 explosion that killed a cop, and they have now served more than 40 years in jail. Nebraska courts have repeatedly denied Poindexter and Mondo new trials despite the fact that a crucial piece of evidence excluded from the original trial, a 911 audiotape long-suppressed by the FBI, proved that testimony of the state's key witness was perjured.

Hugo Pinell is the last of the San Quentin 6 still in prison. He was a militant anti-racist leader of prison rights organizing along with George Jackson, his comrade and mentor, who was gunned down by prison guards in 1971. Despite numerous letters of support and no disciplinary write-ups for over 28 years, Pinell was again denied parole last year. Now in his 60s, Pinell continues to serve a life sentence at the notorious Pelican Bay Security Housing Unit in California.

Jamal Hart, Mumia's son, was sentenced in 1998 to 15½ years without parole on bogus firearms possession charges. Hart was targeted for his prominent activism in the campaign to free his father. Although Hart was initially charged under Pennsylvania law, which would have meant a probationary sentence, Clinton's Justice Department intervened to have Hart thrown into prison under federal law. The U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals has turned down Hart's habeas corpus petition, and he has faced myriad bureaucratic obstacles and racist targeting throughout his incarceration.

Contribute now! All proceeds from the Holiday Appeals will go to the Class-War Prisoners Stipend Fund. This is not charity but an elementary act of solidarity with those imprisoned for their opposition to racist capitalism and imperialist depredations. Send your contributions to: PDC, P.O. Box 314, Station B, Toronto ON M5T 2W1.

—Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 969,
19 November 2010

Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste

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Kashmir...

(continued from page 3)

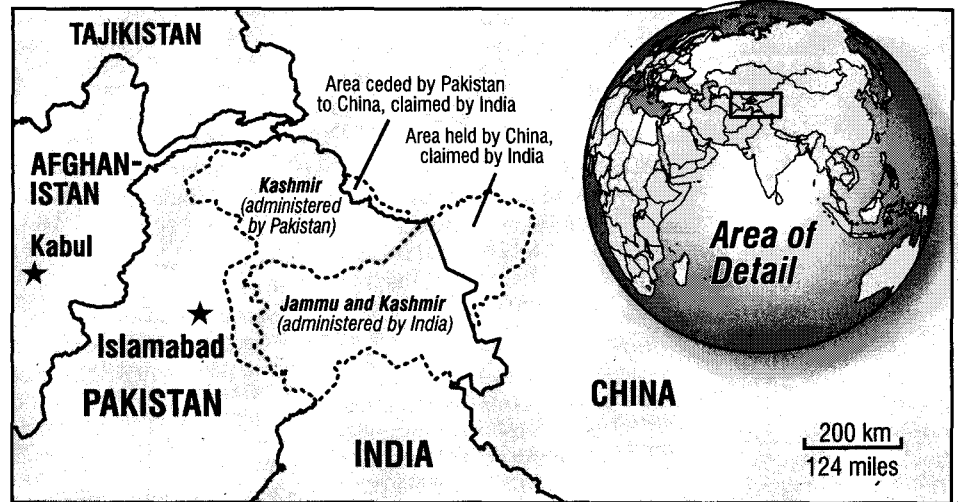
Pakistan." We added that: "Under these conditions to call for support to the Bengali independence struggle is to play into the hands of [then Indian Prime Minister] Indira Gandhi and the Bengali national traitors. Revolutionary defeatism, the policy that calls upon both armies to turn their guns against their own rulers, is the only policy which can achieve the aspirations of the working masses" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 4, January 1972).

Today, insofar as the Kashmiri struggle is not decisively subordinated to a military conflict between

the Pakistani ruling class and its Indian rival, Marxists uphold the right of self-determination for the people of Kashmir, which means the right to independence or—should they so choose—to merge with Pakistan (or India). Historically, despite the virulent Hindu chauvinism of New Delhi, union with Pakistan has found little support in Indian-controlled Kashmir, whose population, in addition to the four million Muslims in the valley of Kashmir, includes two million Hindus, concentrated in Jammu, as well as a smaller number of Sikhs and Buddhists. Pakistan is a stultifying Islamic theocracy which has long denied basic civil and political rights to its own people, much less to the Kashmiris in so-called Azad (Free) Kashmir on the Pakistani side of the Line of Control. Like India, Pakistan is a prison house for its national and religious minorities.

In supporting the right of self-determination for Kashmir we do not give an ounce of political support to any of the competing Kashmiri opposition forces—neither the "secular" separatist Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), nor the various Islamic-fundamentalist outfits like Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba. All of these forces are hostile to the class struggle of the workers and peasants against capitalist oppression and exploitation whether in India, Pakistan or Kashmir. Especially since the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 and the subsequent counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, many of the imperialist-backed Islamic-fundamentalists who were fighting the Red Army in Afghanistan have shifted to Kashmir where they have largely supplanted the JKLF in the leadership of the anti-India struggle. Far from fighting for the national emancipation of the Kashmiri people, these reactionary forces engage in communalist terror against non-Muslim religious minorities in Kashmir and India, and pose a deadly threat to Kashmiri women in particular.

While power remains in the hands of the bloody capitalist rulers in Islamabad and New Delhi, backed by the imperialists, the prospects for Kashmiri national liberation are slim indeed. This is especially so given Kashmir's strategic location and historical role in relations between India and Pakistan. The cause of national justice for the Kashmiri people is inseparably tied up with the revolutionary struggle of the working masses of both countries against their capitalist oppressors. There can be no genuine expression of the right of Kashmiri self-determination without the withdrawal of both occupying armies. In opposition to the chauvinism of



Workers Vanguard Map (sources include Economist)

the rulers in New Delhi and Islamabad workers in both countries must demand: all Indian and Pakistani troops out now!

Divide and Rule

Both India and Pakistan are beholden to the imperialist powers, today chiefly the U.S. The antagonism between the two countries, as well as the attendant communal and ethnic divisions, are the legacy of a deliberate policy of divide-and-rule practised by the British imperialists as colonial overlords of the subcontinent. This policy was succinctly described by W.H. Fitchett, a pro-imperialist historian writing about Britain's suppression of the 1857 Indian uprising against British rule, who said:

"What a demonstration the whole story is, of the Imperial genius of the British race! 'A nation,' to quote Hodson [a British military chief]—himself one of the most brilliant actors in the great drama—'which could conquer a country like the Punjab, with a Hindoostanee army, then turn the energies of the conquered Sikhs to subdue the very army by which they were tamed; which could fight out a position like Peshawur for years, in the very teeth of the Afghan tribes; and then, when suddenly deprived of the regiments which effected this, could unhesitatingly employ those very tribes to disarm and quell those regiments when in mutiny—a nation which could do this, is destined indeed to rule the world!'"

—*The Tale of the Great Mutiny* (1902)

The continued slaughter in Kashmir today is a legacy of the 1947 partition of India, carried out under [Prime Minister] Clement Attlee's Labour government. India was divided along religious-communal lines, creating the modern states of India and Pakistan. The partition led to the slaughter of up to a million people and massive population transfers. The princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, despite having a majority Muslim population, was ruled at the time by a Hindu maharaja (under the suzerainty of the British Crown) who, according to Indian sources, opted to accede to India. When Pathan tribesmen from Pakistan crossed the border in 1947 in an attempt to force the issue in favour of Pakistan, the popular Kashmiri leader Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, fearing the dominance of the Muslim Punjabi landlords, also opted for India, conditional upon an eventual plebiscite. However, the Indian bourgeoisie reneged on this promise; a vote has never been held, and while the Hindu-chauvinist Indian bourgeoisie today declares Kashmir to be an "integral part of India," there is overwhelming sentiment

among the Muslims of the valley of Kashmir for an end to Indian occupation.

For a Socialist Federation of South Asia!

Kashmir is strategically placed on India's borders not only with Pakistan and Afghanistan, but also with China, which controls Aksai Chin, a territory that India claims as part of Kashmir. The Tawang district in Arunachal Pradesh is also disputed by India and China who fought a war in 1962. Today the rivalry between the two countries is acute. In any military conflict between capitalist India and the People's Republic of China, we Trotskyists stand for unconditional military defence of China, a deformed workers state. The 1949 Revolution, led by Mao's peasant-guerrilla army defeated the Guomindang nationalist regime of Chiang Kai-shek, shattered capitalist rule and liberated the country from subservience to Japanese and Western imperialism.

The Chinese Revolution resulted in enormous social gains for workers, peasants and women. But the workers state that issued out of it was *bureaucratically deformed*, ruled by a privileged caste headed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). We fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy in Beijing and to establish a regime of workers democracy. Stalinism—of which Maoism is a variant—arose as an ideology in the Soviet workers state following the defeat of the revolutionary wave in Europe that followed the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. Beginning in 1923-24, a conservative bureaucratic caste which Stalin came to lead usurped *political* power from the proletariat, while resting on the social and economic gains of the revolution. The Soviet Union thus became a degenerated workers state.

In the treacherous tradition of Stalin and the bureaucratic caste which ruled in the former Soviet Union, Mao and his heirs in the CCP leadership aligned themselves with U.S. imperialism, and with Pakistan, betraying the interests of the oppressed masses. During the 1980s, the Chinese Stalinists supported the imperialist-backed Islamic *mujahedin* in Afghanistan—ultra-reactionary forces who were waging *jihad* (holy war) against the Soviet Union.

The Red Army posed the possibility of a social transformation that would have lifted Afghanistan from the feudal social conditions that prevail, especially for women.

Instead, Mikhail Gorbachev's withdrawal of the Soviet troops was a precursor to counterrevolution in the USSR itself in 1991-92. This catastrophe for the working masses of the world had a direct impact in Kashmir, where the *mujahedin* turned their attention, strengthening the hold of the most reactionary forces within the national liberation struggle. Kashmir epitomises the seething complex of national and communal conflicts that extend from Afghanistan to Pakistan and India. The brutal repression in Kashmir, the only majority Muslim state in India, gives the lie to New Delhi's claims that it is a "secular" democracy. The Indian state was founded on naked Hindu chauvinism and brutal oppression of minorities has been the rule under the "secular" Congress party, as well as the avowedly chauvinist BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party]. Today India's much vaunted economic progress has brought fabulous wealth to a tiny elite while the vast majority of workers and peasants are mired in abject poverty. Age-old caste oppression remains pervasive while women are the slaves of slaves throughout the subcontinent.

For Pakistan, Kashmir represents its pretence to stand for "one nation" of all Muslims. Pakistan's rulers can ill afford to support independence for Kashmir, which would pose the same question for the minorities within its own borders, including Baluchis, Pathans and Sindhis, who chafe under Punjabi domination. But Pakistan itself is an artificial state—Pathans are divided between Pakistan and Afghanistan; Baluchis between Iran and Pakistan and today such ethnic divisions are once again being exacerbated by the U.S. and British imperialist occupation of Afghanistan.

The key to ending the national oppression of the Kashmiri people, as well as the myriad sufferings wrought by capitalism, is the fight for socialist revolution throughout the subcontinent and the establishment of a socialist federation of South Asia. For that it is necessary to forge Leninist-Trotskyist parties which would seek to mobilise the powerful proletariat of India and Pakistan at the head of all the oppressed to sweep away the capitalist system. Indian and Pakistani workers in the diaspora in Britain, the U.S., Canada and elsewhere form a human bridge to the working class in the imperialist centres where socialist revolution can lay the basis for a socialist future for mankind. ■

SPARTACIST CANADA

India: The Nandigram Massacre



"Left Front" Government's State Repression in West Bengal

The Communist Party of India (CPI) has decided to... (text continues with details of the Nandigram massacre and the political stance of the CPI and other groups in West Bengal).

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Left: Kabul, 1988. Soviet Army intervention in 1979 opened road to liberation of Afghan women. Right: Women in Afghanistan today. Withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1989 betrayed Afghan women, leftists.

Women's Liberation...

(continued from page 24)

on Parliament Hill for the banning of abortion. Heavily mobilized by the Catholic church, the rally included several Tory and Liberal MPs. There was no countermobilization by the defenders of abortion rights—an indictment of the misleaders of the trade unions, of the NDP social democrats and the feminists.

It was indicative that one of Harper's first acts in office was to cancel the paltry childcare program negotiated under the Liberals in favour of a "pro-family," anti-working-class measure pushed by the right-wing REAL Women of Canada. Now we have a new outrage in the ongoing offensive against Muslim women, a particularly ugly face of the racist "war on terror." When the Quebec government moved to ban women wearing the face-covering *niqab* from receiving any government services and from all public-sector employment, Harper and the leader of the federal Liberals, Michael Ignatieff, fully backed this racist move.

As part of our fight for women's liberation, we oppose the veil in all its forms as an instrument and symbol of women's subjugation and oppression. But we utterly oppose these racist bans which mean fully veiled Muslim women are to be hounded out of public and social life. They reek of the Nazi edicts that forced Jews to wear yellow stars.

Like the bourgeois Tories and Liberals, the New Democrats trumpet so-called "family values." The NDP is what Marxists call a bourgeois workers party. While linked to the unions via the labour bureaucracy, it has a thoroughly pro-capitalist program of maintaining the present system with a few cosmetic reforms. It is a left prop to capitalist rule and, when in power, it oversees the administration of the bourgeois state and the exploitation of the working class. As such, it is a political obstacle to the struggles of workers and all the oppressed, not least women.

Grinding unemployment, poverty, lack of social services—all this is intrinsic to capitalism. Huge numbers of working-class families teeter on the brink of disaster. It is workers who are being made to pay for the capitalist economic crisis,

and as capitalist governments pile up massive deficits, workers will pay for them too, in layoffs and cuts to social services. Defeating this onslaught requires the fight for a new leadership of the working class and oppressed—a revolutionary workers party dedicated to the fight to sweep away this barbaric system of capitalist exploitation.

Why We Defended the Soviet Union

To understand the world today, it is necessary to understand the impact of the capitalist counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union and East Europe twenty years ago. This was catastrophic for workers internationally and a direct blow to women in every corner of the globe. In the Soviet Union and East Europe, the return of capitalism saw the dismantling of social gains like abortion, free childcare, health care and education.

Upon coming to power through the October 1917 workers revolution in Russia, the Bolsheviks put into practice a number of crucial measures to begin the liberation of women. They made marriage and divorce simple matters of civil registration, entirely independent of the reactionary Orthodox church, as part of an early decree giving women equal rights with men. Insofar as the poverty of the country allowed, they established communal kitchens, laundries and childcare centres to free women from the drudgery of housework—measures that sought to bring women into the workforce and political life and lay the basis for replacing the family with socialized alternatives.

The Bolsheviks abolished all laws regarding consensual sexual relations (e.g., sodomy, adultery, homosexuality) because they thought the state had no business interfering in private sexual matters. In 1919, the Communist Party created the Department of Working Women and Peasant Women, or *Zhenotdel*, to organize special work among women, which included building over 25,000 literacy schools and donning the veil to reach the women of the Muslim East. In 1920, abortion was made legal, free and available. For the Bolsheviks, the liberation of women was an integral part of the emancipating goals of the communist program. The proletariat as a whole must embrace the fight against women's

oppression as part of its historic task of freeing humanity from the outmoded system of private ownership and production for profit.

In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884), Friedrich Engels traced the origin of the institutions of the family and the state to the division of society into classes. With the rise of a social surplus beyond basic subsistence, a ruling class could develop based on private appropriation of that surplus. The centrality of the family flowed from its role in the inheritance of property, which required women's sexual monogamy and social subordination in order to determine the paternity of the offspring. Engels termed this "the world historical defeat of the female sex."

In the thousands of years since the advent of class society, the institution of the family has taken many different forms according to the needs of the ruling class, its economy, politics, religion and culture. Under capitalism, the family serves not only as the principal mechanism of inheritance for the propertied classes, but as the means by which the next generation of wage slaves is raised. A big part of this is instilling bourgeois ideology, "morals" and obedience to the powers that be. As such, the family is vital to the maintenance of production for profit. Full equality for women, abortion, divorce, the myriad forms of sexual expression human beings enjoy—these questions are explosive because in some way they challenge the institution of the family.

The Bolsheviks understood that only socialist revolution could lay the material basis for the replacement of the necessary functions of the family. They recognized, too, that without qualitative economic development, a fully socialist economy and the liberation of women were a utopian fantasy in backward, isolated Russia. Most importantly, they founded the Communist International with the goal of forming revolutionary proletarian parties and fighting for socialist revolution, especially in the advanced industrial countries like Germany.

In *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky explained that from the beginning the Bolsheviks recognized that "the real resources of the state did not correspond to the plans and intentions of the Communist Party. You cannot 'abolish' the family; you have to replace it. The actual liberation of women is unrealizable on a basis of 'generalized want.' Experience soon proved this austere truth which Marx had formulated eighty years before."

The gains made by women in the Soviet Union are one of the reasons why we Trotskyists stood for its unconditional military defense against imperialist threats and internal counterrevolution. Stalin turned back the clock on many of these gains—for example, abortion was made illegal in 1936—but the enormous power of the planned economy remained. Despite its Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration, the Soviet workers state was able to provide all with a job, housing, health care and education.

Afghanistan and Counterrevolution

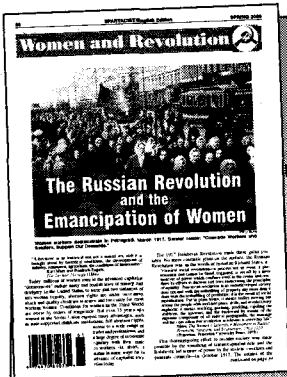
The road to capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR went through Afghanistan—and so I'm going to take some time to sketch this history, which has so fundamentally shaped the present

world. Since their 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, the U.S. and Canadian imperialists have used the brutal oppression of Afghan women under the former Taliban regime to justify the neocolonial occupation of that country. Indeed, in defending the persecution of women wearing the *niqab*, Quebec's minister responsible for the status of women, Christine St-Pierre, invoked this bloody imperialist occupation. "There are people in Quebec, in Canada, and other countries around the world," she said, "who have gone to Afghanistan and spilled their blood so that these things won't be tolerated" (*Globe and Mail*, 10 March). The ban on the *niqab* has as much to do with women's liberation as the NATO occupation of Afghanistan does, i.e., nothing.

The news is full of stories about the horrors of life for women in that country. A few weeks ago, the horrific death by stoning of a young couple made headlines. We are told that Afghanistan's maternal and infant mortality rates are among the highest in the world, that for a girl to attend school is a death-defying act as the air in some schools is deliberately poisoned, that schoolgirls regularly get doused with acid, that female politicians are shot for daring to work outside the home. All this, and much worse, is true. But the bourgeoisie's concern about the plight of women is counterfeit. Its sole purpose is to line up support for the imperialist occupation.

The anti-woman Islamic cutthroats came to power in Afghanistan in the early 1990s with the *support* of U.S. and Canadian imperialism, and of the NDP social democrats. Today's U.S. puppet regime in Kabul upholds the same hideous oppression of women. In the lead-up to the 2001 invasion, we called for the military defense of Afghanistan against the imperialists, while giving no political support to the woman-hating Taliban fanatics. From the outset, we called for class struggle at home against this bloody war and occupation. Every blow struck against the imperialist occupiers is a blow struck against our "own" ruling class. U.S., Canada, NATO: Out of Afghanistan now!

When there was a real possibility of liberating Afghan women, the imperialists were on the other side. In the late 1970s, a modernizing Afghan government moved to implement modest reforms for women, lowering the bride price and instituting education. The Muslim fundamentalist *mujahedin* responded with violence and terror. To protect its borders from this threat, which was backed by the CIA, in late 1979 the Soviet Union sent its Red Army into Afghanistan at
(continued on page 20)



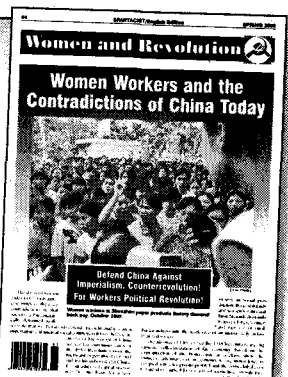
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Women's Liberation...

(continued from page 19)

the invitation of the left-nationalist Kabul government. The U.S. government spent billions to fund the *mujahedin* "holy war" against the Soviet Union, the biggest CIA operation in history.

We declared "Hail Red Army!" and we called to extend the social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples, especially the terribly oppressed women. Sending the Soviet army to clean out the reactionary insurgency opened a road to liberation for the Afghan peoples. For us, the overriding class and social questions—defense of the Soviet Union and the fight for women's rights and social progress in Afghanistan—were crystal clear.

Under the Soviet military umbrella, the Afghan government began mass literacy campaigns and provided medical care. By the late 1980s, half of all university students in Afghanistan were women. Women made up 40 percent of the country's doctors, 70 percent of its teachers and 30 percent of its civil servants. 440,000 female students were enrolled in educational institutions. Women in the workforce increased fifty-fold, and 15,000 women served as soldiers and commanders in the Afghan army. Once nothing more than chattel property, women enjoyed a real measure of freedom from the veil and subjugation for the first time in Afghan history.

Objectively, the Soviet intervention cut against the grain of the nationalist Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country." We warned from the start that the Kremlin bureaucracy, in its quest for "peaceful coexistence" with U.S. imperialism, might cut a deal at the expense of the Afghan peoples. In the end, that is exactly what happened. The Soviet forces were pulled out in 1988-89, paving the way for a bloody onslaught against Afghan workers, women and leftists. None of this mattered to the anti-Soviet reformist "socialist" and feminist organizations of the 1980s. They howled with the imperialist wolves in demanding Soviet troops get out of Afghanistan. When the Red Army withdrew, the International Socialists grotesquely called this a "victory," gloating that a "defeated Russia will spur the struggles of the oppressed nationalities in Eastern Europe and inside Russia itself" (*Socialist Worker*, March 1989).

But the Soviet Union was *not* militarily defeated in Afghanistan. The withdrawal was a political betrayal. It flowed from the whole outlook of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which subordinated the interests of the international proletariat to defense of its own privileged position as a parasitic layer resting atop the USSR's collectivized economy. Thus the bureaucracy undermined the defense of the Soviet workers state. We fought for a proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist misrulers and to return the Soviet Union to the Bolshevik internationalism of Lenin and Trotsky.

The Soviet bureaucracy's attempt to trade Afghan blood for good will in Washington only whetted the appetites of the imperialists, who were intent upon the utter destruction of the Soviet workers state. Strengthening the forces of capitalist restoration, this betrayal was a direct precursor to the final collapse of the USSR itself.

The Fight for Abortion Rights

This brings us back full circle to the struggle for women's liberation, now more difficult because of the colossal defeat of counterrevolution. Its impact has been felt around the



CP
Henry Morgentaler confronted by anti-abortion bigot, Winnipeg, July 1983. Manitoba NDP government prosecuted him with draconian conspiracy charges.

world, both materially and on the ideological level. Reactionary ideas take hold and grow in reactionary periods, and over the past two decades there has been a rise of fundamentalism of every kind. All variants of the "opium of the people," as Marx called religion, are freely disseminated. This false consciousness is rooted in despair and the lie that class struggle and authentic communism are no longer possible.

It's not accidental then that we encounter increased opposition to abortion among young people, men and women, including those who express interest in communist politics. The right to abortion is an explosive issue because, in allowing a woman to control her own fertility, it poses the question of women's equality. It represents an attack on the holy institution of the family in bourgeois society. We oppose the restrictions the ruling class imposes on this basic right, including the unwritten ones of class, race, prejudice and access. At all stages of pregnancy, this is a medical procedure between a woman and her doctor in which the state has no place.

In 1988, thanks above all to the efforts of the heroic Dr. Henry Morgentaler, Canada's reactionary abortion laws were struck down in the Supreme Court. Since then, there has been no legal restriction on abortion in this country. Yet access is so poor in some parts of Canada that it might as well be illegal. Today only one in six hospitals across the country offers abortion services. In rural and northern communities, women must travel hundreds of miles to reach one of the few clinics or hospitals where the procedure is available. In PEI, there are no abortion services. Doctors are flown into Kelowna, B.C. because local doctors are so besieged by anti-abortion fanatics. And Canadian women had to seek the help of Dr. George Tiller, murdered in 2009 by an anti-abortion fanatic in Kansas, one of the few doctors anywhere to provide late-term abortions.

For Native women, who face huge barriers of every kind, it is much worse. There is no privacy on the reserves, and to even get her travel paid for a woman must often get permission from the band council. Eighteen years ago, in an article titled "Torture of Native Women in NWT" (SC No. 89, Fall

1992), we described how Native women were forced to endure abortions without anesthetic. We also wrote about the cultural and social taboos among the Nisga'a elders in B.C. who barred a teenager from getting an abortion.

Barriers to abortion are only one part of the terrible conditions of life for many Native women, who are disproportionately targets of sexual violence and brutal racism. Over 500 Native women—mostly young, vulnerable, poor, sometimes with drug addictions—have been murdered or gone missing in recent years, preyed upon by racist, sadistic killers. The lives and deaths of these women are a matter of utter indifference to the ruling class. It will take a socialist revolution to smash this racist order and put an end to the deep-going oppression of Native peoples.

Harper's far-right coterie—including the cabinet—is full of religious "end-of-days" revivalists who are vicious opponents of abortion, gay rights, women's rights, evolution and much else. A recent book by journalist Marci McDonald, *The Armageddon Factor*, documents the all but unfettered influence of Christian fundamentalists in Ottawa, some of whom are truly wacko. The parliamentary aide to Saskatoon MP Maurice Vellacott, Timothy Bloedow, wants a society where tribal councils dispense biblical "justice" as they did in the days of ancient Israel. He is an acolyte of one Rousas J. Rushdoony, who, according to McDonald, believes that for "sodomy, adultery and blasphemy, or even consulting a fortune teller, the sentence prescribed in the book of Leviticus should apply: death by stoning." And it's not only Harper and the Conservatives. True to its Christian Fabian roots, the NDP has a "faith" caucus. The Liberal Party has been aggressively courting evangelicals, and the parliamentary "pro-life" caucus includes numerous Liberals.

Over the past several years, anti-abortion MPs have introduced a flurry of reactionary bills—a dozen, according to *Canadian Dimension* (July/August 2010). One would have made it a separate offence for killing a fetus when a pregnant woman was murdered. Another would have penalized anyone who "coerced" a woman into an abortion. None became law. But, ultimately, what the capitalists will be able to get away with will be conditioned by the level of labour and other social struggles.



Abortion rights demonstrators in Montreal, 1970.

La Presse

The regulation of abortion and contraception has historically been a powerful weapon in the hands of organized religion and the state. Modern abortion laws show how social and legal institutions have changed to reflect the interests of the capitalist class. In 1803, Britain's Ellenborough Act marked the advent of abortion as a statutory crime in the English-speaking world. The preoccupations of the ruling class shown in this law and others that followed include protecting the male's right to heirs, punishing women for illicit sex and protecting population growth.

Abortion was made illegal in Canada in 1869, punishable by life imprisonment. For the next 100 years, botched abortions were the leading cause of death for women in their child-bearing years. In a 1938 test case in Britain, a Dr. Alec Bourne turned himself in after performing an abortion for a 14-year-old girl raped by four soldiers. He was acquitted on the basis that her pregnancy "would make the woman a physical or mental wreck." The case was pivotal in Commonwealth countries and, until 1969, a loophole in the anti-abortion laws.

By the 1960s, the political climate was changing. In the U.S., the mass mobilization of black people in the Southern civil rights movement and the subsequent Northern ghetto rebellions challenged the racist bourgeois order, shattering the Cold War anti-Communist consensus. This paved the road for the mass protest movements that followed—against the dirty U.S. war in Vietnam, for the rights of women, gays, students.

There was also growing discontent in Canada, particularly in Quebec where opposition to national oppression provoked deep-going social struggles. In 1968, Pierre Trudeau became prime minister and, particularly in English Canada, the myth is widely believed that he was some kind of liberal reformer. After all, he famously proclaimed that "The state has no business being in the bedrooms of the nation" and liberalized the laws on abortion and homosexuality. But abortion remained in the Criminal Code and a committee of doctors had to approve the procedure. More to the point, the capitalists do not dole out social reforms out of the goodness of their hearts, but only in response to social struggle. Trudeau's main role was to repress the fight for social and national emancipation in Quebec, notably when he sent the army into Montreal to round up hundreds of left-wing activists in the 1970 "October Crisis."

The fight for abortion rights waged by Henry Morgentaler, a Polish-born Jewish survivor of the Auschwitz death camp, came in the context of the struggles in Quebec to throw off the shackles of the Catholic church. The tumultuous battles of the 1960s and early '70s reshaped Quebec society. The dominance of the Catholic hierarchy was broken, and birth rates plummeted from one of the highest in the world to one of the lowest.

Morgentaler started out in the Montreal of the early 1960s as a humanist fighting against the confessional school system. Alongside the Mouvement Laïque de la Langue Française, he launched the Committee for Neutral Schools. He began his long battle to overturn Canada's reactionary abortion laws by opening a clinic in Montreal's francophone East End in 1969.

Throughout the 1970s Morgentaler was viciously prosecuted by the Canadian government. Acquitted three times by largely working-class francophone Québécois juries, he was vindictively retried and jailed for ten months. Only in 1976 was he finally absolved of all criminal charges. His

(continued on page 22)

Women's Liberation...

(continued from page 21)

prosecutors had to reluctantly admit that no jury in Quebec would convict him.

The enforced subjugation of Quebec within a unitary country is a cornerstone of the Canadian capitalist state. The class and other social struggles in Quebec during this period culminated in the near-insurrectionary general strike of 1972. Instead of solidarity, these struggles were met with a wave of chauvinism from the NDP and the Canadian Labour Congress union misleaders. This Anglo chauvinism in turn pushed Québécois workers deeper into the arms of their own class enemies, represented by the bourgeois-nationalist Parti Québécois.

Recognizing that the working class of this country is deeply split on national lines, undermining its ability to wage anti-capitalist class struggle, we Marxists advocate independence for Quebec. Taking the national question off the agenda would create far better conditions for the workers to see that their real enemies are their "own" capitalist exploiters.

Anti-Abortion Reaction in the 1980s and '90s

In the renewed Cold War climate of the 1980s, as the imperialists joined with the most retrograde anti-woman forces in Afghanistan, the war on women was brought home as the Canadian ruling class again targeted abortion rights. In 1983, Morgentaler opened his Toronto and Winnipeg clinics, and they were quickly raided by the cops. In Manitoba, the ruling NDP government, whose cops twice raided Morgentaler's clinic, hit him with conspiracy charges as well.

When I interviewed him for our journal *Women and Revolution* (No. 27, Winter 1983-84), he denounced this "most vicious of prosecutions" at the hands of the Manitoba NDP. Fuelled by the state's legal persecution, a shears-wielding anti-abortion fanatic attacked Morgentaler outside his Toronto clinic. Would-be murderers besieged the clinic after it reopened in 1988. It was firebombed and destroyed in 1992.

The feminists who organized the abortion rights campaigns of the time were generally pro-NDP. Many were around ostensible socialist groups which, in true reformist fashion, kept their demands within the limits acceptable to bourgeois liberals. The campaigns were framed around single-issue calls such as "repeal the abortion laws," later reduced to "choice."

The idea that poor and working women, facing poverty and the pressures of the family, can exercise "choice" over their own lives is a cruel joke. The wealthy will always be able to get medical care, including abortions. The barriers and restrictions target young, working-class and poor women, who can't afford quality health care, childcare or housing. We intervened in these struggles with our program of women's liberation through socialist revolution. As we do today, we called for free abortion on demand—part of free, quality health care for all—and for free 24-hour childcare to address the deep class and race oppression of poor and minority women.

We stood out for our defense of women's rights internationally—from Afghanistan to Poland—and for this were routinely attacked and excluded from protests by the feminists and their often male enforcers, including at International Women's Day demonstrations. The "pro-choice" feminists and reformists lined up behind the Cold War drive against the Soviet Union, thereby trampling on women's rights. In Poland, then a bureaucratically deformed workers state, they

hailed counterrevolutionary Solidarność, the clerical-nationalist outfit promoted by the Pope, the CIA and the pro-capitalist CLC tops. Solidarność came to power in 1989, and in 1993 it made virtually all abortions illegal.

During the 1990s and later, a tidal wave of anti-abortion violence saw clinics, doctors and nurses in the U.S. and Canada subjected to firebombings, murders and attempted murders. Patients faced vicious harassment by the anti-abortion fanatics. So-called "bubble-laws," called for and supported by the feminists, were enacted, preventing *any* protest around a clinic. This included pro-abortion protests, depriving clinics of any measure of social defense.

Portraying the capitalist state as an ally flows directly from the political logic of feminism, which puts the fundamental dividing line in society between men and women. Marxism, in sharp contrast, sees the *class divide* as fundamental. We look to the working class—women and men—as the social force with the power to lead all the oppressed in struggle and ultimately to sweep away the entire barbaric capitalist system. In the face of murderous anti-abortion reaction, we call for a fight to defend and extend women's rights, including the right to abortion, through the independent mass mobilization of the oppressed backed by the social power of labour.

Defend Women's Rights, Defend Immigrant Rights!

Here as in Europe, there has been a sharp spike in nativist reaction and anti-immigrant racism. The French ruling class has just expelled 8,000 Roma. In Britain last year there was an outbreak of virulently chauvinist strikes. In Canada, the Conservative government has whipped up another wave of vile anti-Tamil racism against desperate refugees from Sri Lanka.

We have long defended the just cause of the oppressed Tamil people, championing their right to self-determination. During the civil war in Lanka, we called for military defense of the nationalist Tamil Tigers and opposed the Canadian government's ban of the Tigers under "anti-terrorism" laws. We demand full asylum for Tamil refugees fleeing the bloody triumphalist Sinhalese regime in the wake of the Tigers' defeat in 2009.

The fight for women's liberation is inseparable from the fight to defend immigrants and ethnic minorities. The Canadian working class is decisively multiracial, and minority and immigrant women are increasingly a central part of that working class. These workers are horribly exploited and abused. One figure tells the story: in 1980 immigrant women made 23 percent less than Canadian-born women, but by 2000 the gap had doubled to 45 percent.

An all-out struggle to organize minority and immigrant women workers would do much to revitalize the declining labour movement. But instead of waging a serious unionization campaign, the union tops push nationalist protectionism against the "export" of jobs to China and Mexico. Poison to class struggle, this channels anger over job losses into hostility toward foreign workers and immigrants while building illusions in the benevolence of one's "own" capitalists, who are responsible for the destitution of the working class.

Today the rulers scapegoat Muslims in the so-called "war on terror." It is in the direct interest of the working class to combat this racist hysteria. Muslims are the immediate target, but a more fundamental purpose is to divide, intimidate and constrain the struggles of working people. The state-backed furor against Muslims has increasingly targeted Muslim women. The Quebec



SC photo

Trotskyist League contingent in Vancouver abortion rights demonstration, September 1981.

ban on fully-veiled women from receiving public services has had wide support across the country, thanks to a decade of stepped-up anti-Muslim racism. The claim that banning the veil will foster women's equality is itself a veil for racism and anti-woman bigotry. These bans only deepen the isolation and oppression of Muslim girls and women, driving them from schools, universities and the workforce.

The greater prevalence of the Muslim veil today is partly due to the rise of political Islam internationally. But it is also due to the endless racism, poverty and hardship suffered by Muslim immigrants and their descendants, which also reinforce the reactionary hold of the family and religion. Alongside the veil, there has also been an increase in what are essentially "honour" killings. Violence against women is brutally indifferent to class and ethnicity. But these killings grow out of the clash between a woman's desire for independence from "traditional" culture and the legacy of pre-capitalist social and economic norms that persist in large swathes of the world.

We stand with the many women who seek to escape the cruel tyrannies of religious traditionalism, from the veil to the bride price and arranged marriage. Not so for many of our opponents on the left, whose embrace of Islamic reaction goes back to 1978-79, when they backed the Iranian mullahs as they swept to power. We were thus pretty much alone on the left in opposing the proposed introduction of *sharia* courts in Ontario a few years ago, and in decrying the "honour" killing of Pakistani teenager Aqsa Parvez by her father in suburban Toronto (see "The 'Honour' Killing of Aqsa Parvez," *SC* No. 156, Spring 2008).

We Marxists fight for the voluntary integration of all minorities based on full equality, and for full citizenship rights for everyone who makes it here. The eradication of racism, women's oppression and all forms of discrimination requires a revolutionary struggle, mobilizing the power of the multiracial working class to uproot capitalism and liberate humanity from poverty and want. This is counterposed to the "multiculturalism" propounded by the Canadian rulers and

the reformist left, which promotes illusions that the capitalist state can be used as an instrument to fight racist oppression.

This state exists to defend class rule based on private property; it is used by the capitalists to suppress and exploit the working class. The supposedly liberal program of multiculturalism strengthens the hold of "community leaders," with their ties to mosque, church or temple, and denies that minority communities, like the rest of society, are class-divided. The struggles of immigrant and other minority workers for jobs, unions and equal status require breaking free from the political grip of religious and other conservative community leaders.

The fight for women's liberation is a litmus test for revolutionaries everywhere. Thumb through the back issues of our paper and you will see our articles opposing the bourgeoisie's moral panics and anti-

sex witchhunts—against pornography, prostitution and youth sexuality—that have seen countless people framed up for entirely consensual relations with youth, and gay and women's rights trampled.

It is a measure of how far back political consciousness has been thrown in this post-Soviet period that the reformist left groups rarely address the explosive questions of women's oppression. The political horizons of these groups, who aim only to ameliorate the "excesses" of capitalism, typically through political support to the NDP, are defined by what is possible under the rule of capital.

We fight to build a multiracial vanguard party of the type built by the Bolshevik leaders Lenin and Trotsky, which led the world's first socialist revolution in October 1917. Karl Marx defined communism as "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs." The woman question is a very powerful lens through which to see this goal. We are for a society where everyone can fulfill their potential in a materially abundant world where want puts no limits on human development. In this world, a woman will be able to have children (or not) with the full support of society, including contraception, abortion, childcare, medical care, time off from work and every other thing she might need.

We are a very long way from that day. But I hope that, by putting it in the context of the international situation and the broader fight for human liberation, you have a perspective beyond the immediate horizon. We are in a trough right now where the class struggle is mainly being waged by the class enemy. But one thing you can be sure of: it will change. And when the working class again begins to flex its muscle and to move onto the stage of history, we revolutionaries will be there, fighting for the program of communist revolution. In a communist future, women will be fully and equally integrated into society, and anti-woman violence and bigotry, the reactionary constraints of family and religion, and the repressive role of the capitalist state will all be but barbaric memories of the past. ■

Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Down With Harper's War on Women's Rights!



Mikula/Ottawa Citizen



Getty

Anti-abortion rally on Parliament Hill, May 2009 (left). Harper with pope in Vatican, June 2009 (above).

Free Abortion on Demand!

We print below, edited for publication, a presentation by Miriam McDonald, editor of Spartacist Canada, at a September 25 Trotskyist League forum in Toronto.

Women and Revolution

For us communists, the struggle for women's emancipation is crucial to the struggle to overthrow the oppressive, exploitative capitalist order. The oppression of women is central to all class societies. In countries of belated capitalist development, it is deeply rooted in pre-capitalist "tradition" and religious obscurantism. In these countries, the fight against women's oppression is a motor force of revolutionary struggle.

The condition of women in the most advanced capitalist countries, while far different, shows the limits of freedom and social progress under capitalism. The institution of the family is the main source of women's oppression in both the imperialist and neocolonial countries. I'll expand on this later, but this understanding really goes to the heart of the question.

of the condition of women, which is in turn, to paraphrase the great utopian socialist Charles Fourier, an index of the general advancement of any society. This spring, right-wing Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper announced a "foreign aid" plan ostensibly to improve maternal health in the so-called Third World. Typical of imperialist "aid," this had nothing to do with assisting women. Indeed, Harper's plan denies funding for abortion. Abortion is almost completely illegal in most of Africa and South America. Worldwide, at least 70,000 women die every year from botched backstreet abortions. Some 8 million suffer complications and are maimed and disfigured.

Harper's scheme provided a perfect snapshot of how the imperialist system works to reinforce and deepen the oppression of women in the countries it subjugates. But it was also a wedge against abortion rights in this country and had everything to do with bolstering his anti-abortion Christian fundamentalist base. Indeed, on May 13 some 15,000 people rallied

(continued on page 18)