

The

September-October 2002

No. 14

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# Internationalist



***Defeat U.S. Imperialism! Defend Iraq!***

## **Iraq: U.S. Prepares New Desert Slaughter**



## **Pentagon's First Strike Strategy – Careening Toward World War III**

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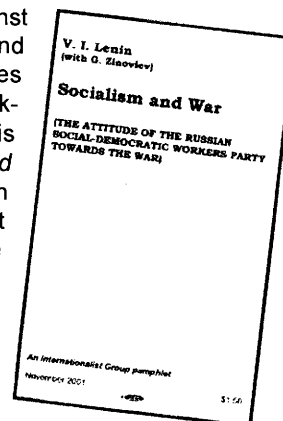
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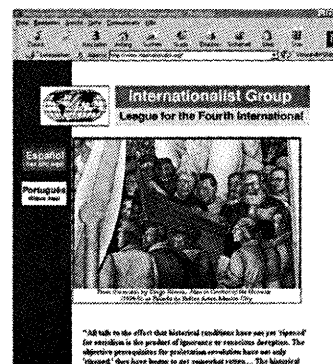
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## The Internationalist

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for the Reforging of the Fourth International



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September-October 2002



## Pentagon's "First Strike" Strategy: Careening Toward World War III

# Defend Iraq – Defeat U.S. Imperialism!

*The following is a statement by the Internationalist Group, U.S. section of the League for the Fourth International, issued October 17.*

Imperialist war criminals are about to launch an Armageddon on the Tigris and Euphrates.

In the early morning hours of October 11, the United States Senate joined the House of Representatives in voting war powers for President George W. Bush to launch the full weight of the imperialist war machine, "as he deems appropriate and necessary," against Iraq. The Pentagon now has a "bipartisan" green light to carry out the wanton slaughter that the White House had long since ordered. After the ritual debate and rubber-stamp approval from Congress, there will be a similar charade in the United Nations. There will then be some haggling among the "Great Powers" in this imperialist den of thieves – as Lenin called its predecessor, the League of Nations – over if and how much provocative "inspection" of Iraq to require, or whether to have a one-stage or two-stage resolution to trigger the attack. Most likely, Saddam Hussein will be presented with an ultimatum he can't accept (as the UN did earlier with Yugoslavia's Milosevic), demanding unhindered movement for "UN" forces inside Iraq – an invasion without war. And then, sooner rather than later, the "preemptive" U.S. invasion will be launched, the terror bombing of Baghdad will begin, and Iraqi blood will run like rivers over the sands.

**The League for the Fourth International and its U.S. section, the Internationalist Group, call on the international working class to defend Iraq and fight to defeat the imperialist war, "at home" and abroad.** The U.S. "superpower" has decided to show off its military prowess by carrying out mass murder on a vast scale, hoping to intimidate the rest of the world (including its "allies") and grab direct control of the world's second-largest oil reserves. The war on Iraq is also a war on the workers, on black and Latino minorities, on immigrants and all those in the U.S. who produce the wealth while stock market speculators and corporate criminals rake off billions and the economy goes to hell. It is a war to regiment the



Internationalist photo

**Internationalist Group banner at New York City protest against war on Afghanistan, 27 October 2001.**

population for more war. This is *capitalist* carnage, the product of a boom-bust system which endlessly spawns war, racism and poverty. Today, U.S. rulers use endless incantations of "September 11," hoping to befuddle the population and whip up bloodlust. The "free but responsible" media marches in lockstep to war. But no matter how much they censor the news from Baghdad, as the cruise missile show on TV is replaced by images of soldiers' body bags, opposition to the war will increase. Many will see that the "glory" of an empire that sucks the lifeblood of the peoples of the world while keeping total control over the oil spigot means misery for the Iraqi masses, and wholesale attacks on the working class in the U.S.

It is urgently necessary to mobilize opposition to this impending slaughter. But on what program? Already 400,000 marched in London and a million and a half demonstrated around Italy against the war on Iraq. On October 26, a protest has been called in Washington, D.C. to "stop the war before it begins" (as if it ever ended). In the coming weeks, tens and hundreds of thousands will join in antiwar demonstrations where they will hear moral appeals from clergymen, slippery speeches by bourgeois "dove" politicians politely dissenting from their "hawk" colleagues, empty rhetoric from union bureaucrats who will do nothing that could endanger the capitalist system which they support. There will be a sprinkling of would-be socialists on the podium – often in the guise of one or another "campaign," "coalition" or "mobilization" – to piece off the left and keep impatient youth in line. What they will *not* say is that the bloodbath won't be stopped with peace parades and appeals to "conscience." Calls for a more "humane" foreign policy or a

multilateral approach are hogwash: the warmongers in Washington will not be swayed by appeals or opinion polls, they must be defeated. As opposed to bourgeois pacifism, we communists call instead for *class war against the imperialist war*.

### U.S. Plans to Nuke Iraqi "Bunkers"

The invasion of this impoverished, semi-colonial country is as blatant an imperialist aggression as there has been since Mussolini attacked Ethiopia in 1935. The murderous rampages of a tin-pot strongman like Saddam Hussein are nothing compared to the devastation that is about to be unleashed by the real "Butcher of Baghdad," who is sitting in the White House. Washington is carrying out this carnage not because of a mythical Iraqi "threat" but because U.S. imperialism *needs this war* to enforce its world hegemony. In 1999, Democrat Clinton bombed hospitals in Belgrade, Yugoslavia in the name of "human rights" for Kosovo. Last year Republican Bush conquered Afghanistan, using the indiscriminate September 11 attack on the World Trade Center as an excuse. Today Bush II is preparing a new "Desert Slaughter" against Iraq, to "finish the job" that Bush I left undone in the first Gulf War. And tomorrow? **The endless "war on terror" proclaimed by the U.S. will be a prelude to a third imperialist world war** – in which the ultimate targets are its Japanese and European allies and rivals, who are naturally less than enthusiastic about the impending Iraq attack.

In the diplomatic horse-trading, the Europeans, Russians and Chinese in the UN Security Council want to dispatch "inspectors" to Iraq to look for "weapons of mass destruction." (The Bush administration has gone into "thwart mode" to block this, since all its scare talk of "WMD" in Hussein's hands is purely a pretext – sucker-bait for "lily-livered liberals" and the like – and it doesn't want anything to delay its planned attack.) It should be clear that such inspections are nothing but spying on the victim of the upcoming imperialist attack. The U.S. now claims that Iraq "expelled" UN inspectors in November 1998, whereas the reality is that the UN withdrew them in order to make way for the U.S. bombing of Baghdad that December, code-named "Desert Fox" after the nickname for World War II German general Rommel. Iraq complained at the time that the inspectors were secretly funneling information for the U.S. It was later revealed that this is exactly what happened, as CIA and NSA agents disguised as "UNSCOM" inspectors placed an elaborate electronic eavesdropping system in key sites which was then used to guide U.S. bombers.

The claims of "legality" for the various "sanctions," "inspections" and other measures against Iraq are ludicrous. The so-called "no-fly zones," prohibiting Iraqi aircraft and allowing NATO warplanes over two-thirds of the country, were simply decreed by the U.S. and Britain. The UN "sanctions" cut off and then severely limited Iraqi oil exports, while prohibiting the importation of medical supplies and vitally needed machinery to restore electrical plants and waterworks systematically bombed by the U.S.-led "coalition" in the first Gulf War. The resulting toll has been more than 1.5 million Iraqi dead from preventable diseases, among them a million children, in addition to the 200,000 killed in the U.S. attacks on Baghdad, Basra and other cities. For the past dozen years, Iraq, once the most

prosperous and literate country in the Near East, has been driven into dire poverty by the UN sanctions regime. Now Bush and his poodle, British prime minister Tony Blair, are getting ready to blast the country again, deepening the misery and taking untold lives. And the U.S. war planners expect the Iraqis to stand on their rooftops and welcome the "Allied" bombers as "liberators"!

Opponents of imperialism must reject demands for "inspection" and oppose all UN "sanctions" against Iraq, which are nothing but punishment of the Hussein regime and the Iraqi people for losing the 1990-91 Gulf War. U.S. imperialism has huge quantities of nuclear weapons (which it used on Japan) as well as of chemical and biological weapons (used in carpet-bombing Vietnam) – not to mention the radioactive "depleted uranium" shells it has rained on Iraq, Yugoslavia and Afghanistan. So does its ally Israel. The fact is that if Iraq really had nuclear weapons, which it has every right to, this would serve as a deterrent to a U.S. invasion. Bush charges that Hussein has "used chemical weapons on its own people." What the U.S. war propaganda leaves out is that Iraq used mustard gas, VX and other C-weapons during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war with the full knowledge of the United States, which armed Iraq, supplied it with satellite photos of Iranian positions and had on-site battlefield observers. While the existence of this clandestine program was reported by the *New York Times* (18 August) in a dispatch that was quickly forgotten, the *Times* neglected to mention that *the United States also supplied Iraq with "seed chemicals" to jump-start its chemical weapons program*.

The cynicism of the U.S. rulers knows no limit. While endlessly proclaiming that it is "advancing democracy," after imposing an imperialist protectorate on Afghanistan, whose puppet "president" Karzai is guarded by U.S.-contracted mercenaries, the White House is preparing to impose a *U.S. military occupation government on Iraq that will be in place for years*. General Tommy Franks "would assume the role that Gen. McArthur served in Japan after its surrender in 1945" (*New York Times*, 11 October) – that is, he would be an all-powerful dictator over the Iraqis' destinies. This is what is euphemistically known as "regime change" in the Orwellian language of Bush-speak. Meanwhile, amid all the talk of Hussein's hypothetical "weapons of mass destruction," the fact is that *the Pentagon is preparing to use "tactical" nuclear weapons on Iraq*. The *U.S. News & World Report* (22 July) revealed:

"The Pentagon's nuclear priesthood believes an earth-penetrating nuclear bomb might be used to destroy underground bunkers.... This dramatic shift in nuclear policy is the most recent evidence of a new Bush administration military strategy that contemplates pre-emptive first strikes – and even the remote possibility of using nuclear weapons – against outlaw states such as Iraq."

Just as the German Nazis used the Spanish Civil War to try out their Messerschmidt and Junker warplanes by dive-bombing Republican columns and obliterating Guernica, the Yankee imperialists want to test-drive their nukes in the Iraqi desert...and on Iraqi cities. Don't forget the more than 400 women and children killed in the U.S. "surgical" bombing of the Al Amiriyah air raid shelter with a U.S. GBU-27 "bunker buster" in 1991.



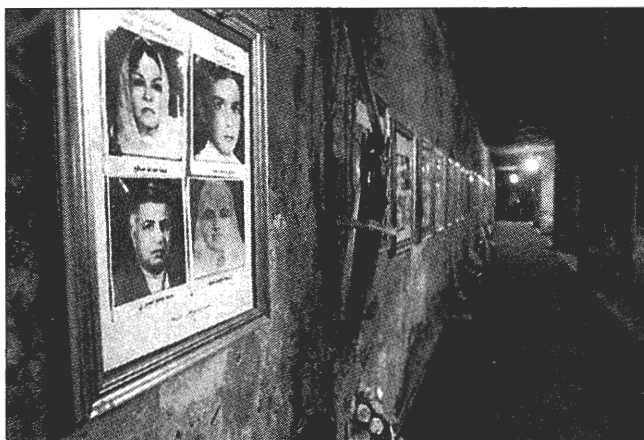


**Shrine in the Al-Amiriya bomb shelter in Baghdad. In February 1991, U.S. launched a “surgical strike,” punching a hole in the roof with a bomb, followed by a cruise missile. 408 were killed, mainly women and children.**

Absolutely nobody among the movers and shakers in Washington believes the government’s stated reason for the war. Even the CIA admitted, in declassified sections of a report to the Senate Intelligence Committee, that the Iraqi regime is “drawing a line short of conducting terrorist attacks” against the U.S., that the chances of Hussein initiating an attack with weapons of mass destruction were “low” if unprovoked but “high” if Iraq is invaded (*New York Times*, 9 October). The forces that have most actively pushed for a war on Iraq are practically a caricature of “Daddy Warbucks” weapons manufacturers, military construction firms and oil millionaires extending into the White House. They think war will be great for business, and may even pull the Dow Jones stock index out of its downward spiral. Spokesmen for the Bush administration assure journalists that the fighting will all be over in a matter of two weeks to two months. The Congressional Budget Office estimates three months, at a cost of \$44 billion (*Wall Street Journal*, 1 October).

Those who are counting on a cakewalk and getting war on the cheap may be sorely surprised, but even if the U.S. military force is able to overwhelm all resistance, an imperialist occupation of the country would drag on for years. (Where Bush I got NATO and Japan to cough up the cash to pay for the war, Bush II intends to pay for it with money siphoned off of Iraqi oil production – kind of a “leveraged buyout” on a grand scale.)

The fight to defeat the imperialist war drive must be waged not only in Iraq but internationally, in particular in the imperialist countries, notably the United States. Asked why the administration’s drive for war suddenly went into high gear in September, coinciding with the kick-off of the fall election campaign, the White House chief of staff cynically replied: “From a marketing point of view, you don’t introduce new products in August.” The White House took the measure of the Democratic leaders, who predictably roll over and play dead when accused of being soft on Saddam. But those who think that marketing war is just like selling toothpaste could get a rude awakening from the very people they think they are hoodwinking. Popular support for this war is very thin and can be broken.



Paul Kitagaki Jr./Seattle Post-Intelligencer

### Attack on Iraq: Trigger for New World War

The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International (IG/LFI) warned last year, in calling to defeat the U.S. assault on Afghanistan, that Bush’s “war on terror” is a prelude to a new inter-imperialist war:

“Just as the Balkan wars of 1908-1913 fed into and touched off World War I, just as the Spanish Civil War, Japan’s invasion of China and Italian imperialism’s war on Ethiopia (Abyssinia) prepared World War II, the U.S.-led imperialist wars over the last decade against Iraq, Yugoslavia and now Afghanistan point to a third imperialist world conflagration growing out of the heightened rivalries between the major capitalist powers.”

– *The Internationalist* No. 12, Fall 2001

The second war on Iraq sharply escalates this drive to world war, particularly over the Bush Doctrine of “pre-emptive strikes.” Combined with growing inter-imperialist economic tensions it could trigger spiraling clashes between the “great powers,” in which erstwhile allies from the anti-Soviet war drive increasingly become enemies. While various reformist left papers – *People’s Weekly World* (CPUSA), *Socialist Worker* (ISO), and *Workers World* (WWP) – have reported the horrors of the Gulf War and the martyrdom of the Iraqi people under a dozen years of UN sanctions (while conveniently leaving out their own treacherous role in blocking with the Democratic liberals who first called for sanctions), they pass over lightly the wider dimensions of the new war on Iraq.

The U.S. imperialists’ war aims go far beyond seizing the Mesopotamian “cradle of civilization” and its oil riches. Last year, U.S. vice president Cheney declared that the open-ended “war on terror” would last the lifetime of most adults. Now the U.S. administration has unveiled a new military doctrine calling for “pre-emptive strikes” against perceived enemies of U.S. imperialism. “America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed,” Bush’s National Security Strategy announced in September. Proclaiming a “single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise,” the strategy talks of “the possible renewal of old patterns of great power competition” and “aggression from other great pow-

ers,” declaring “that the president has no intention of allowing any foreign power to catch up with the huge lead the United States has opened since the fall of the Soviet Union more than a decade ago” (quoted in the *New York Times*, 21 September). Written at Bush’s insistence in macho language so it could be understood by “the boys in Lubbock” (Texas), the document states: “Our forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military buildup in hopes of surpassing, or equaling, the power of the United States.”

This is clearly not referring to Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, the Afghan Taliban, the conglomeration of Islamic “holy warriors” Washington has dubbed “Al Qaeda,” or any of the other countries currently listed on Bush’s “axis of evil.” Rather, it is aimed at the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state, the capitalist Russia that emerged from the collapse of the USSR, and the European NATO imperialists who bridle at Washington’s arrogant behavior. In a thinly veiled call for counterrevolution, the national security strategy document declares that “China’s leaders have not yet made the next series of fundamental choices about the character of their state” and warns Beijing against pursuing “advanced military capabilities that can threaten its neighbors in the Asia-Pacific region.” We have repeatedly warned that the U.S. imperialists are hell-bent on destroying the remaining deformed workers states (China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam) along the road to a third imperialist world war. Ultimately, Washington fears the economic powerhouse of West Europe united with a resurgent Russia with its military/nuclear capabilities and tremendous oil and gas resources.

This is not a new obsession. For decades during the anti-Soviet Cold War, the U.S. was able to keep the other imperialist powers in line by emphasizing the need for a common front against the “threat of Communism.” The Soviet workers state, born of the October 1917 Revolution led by Lenin and Trotsky, was a conquest of the world proletariat which Trotskyists tenaciously defended, even after its bureaucratic degeneration under Stalin and his heirs with their conservative nationalist dogma of “socialism in one country.” The very existence of the USSR also made it difficult for Washington to simply sweep away various Soviet-allied “Third World” nationalist regimes. No more. As the Soviet-bloc regimes were crumbling under the relentless economic and military pressure of imperialism, a collapse that was prepared by the treacherous policies of “peaceful coexistence” pursued by the sell-out Stalinist bureaucracies, George Bush Sr. proclaimed the “death of Communism” and the birth of a New World Order at the time of the first Gulf War. But while the United States emerged as the “sole superpower,” a U.S.-dominated New Order has not been nailed down. Instead, the post-Soviet world has been marked by rampant *disorder*, with raging nationalist bloodletting and repeated imperialist wars.

Bush Jr. is the front man for the team of Cold Warriors who led the assault on the Soviet Union under Bush Sr. and who now vow to establish a global American Reich. U.S. military forces are now stationed in more than 130 countries around the world. Their purpose was summed up in a document (“Defense Strategy for the 1990’s”) written in January 1993 by Dick Cheney, then U.S. secretary of war, which is the precursor to

the Bush strategy doctrine. The central focus of the Cheney document was “to preclude any hostile power from dominating a region critical to our interests” (defined as Europe, East Asia, the Middle East/Persian Gulf and Latin America) and to “strengthen the barriers against the reemergence of a global threat to the interests of the United States and our allies.” The “unilateralism” of the second government of the Bush dynasty was already laid out in this document, which declares that the U.S. must not “allow our critical interests to depend solely on international mechanisms.” Earlier drafts of the Cheney document were developed by a team led by Paul Wolfowitz, Lewis Libby and Eric Edelman, who are once again the “defense” ideologues of Bush II.

This strategic orientation of U.S. imperialism is behind Washington’s supreme indifference to whether it has the support of the UN or an international “coalition” for its war on Iraq. The Bush gang want to demonstrate to one and all that they can go it alone, the rest of the world be damned. The United States doesn’t need Persian Gulf oil, which supplies barely 12 percent of

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American consumption; Europe and Japan do, and U.S. rulers want to make it clear that they can turn off Near Eastern energy supplies at will. At the same time, the Bush administration proclaims the virtue of “free trade” while slapping protectionist tariffs on steel imports and maintaining huge subsidies to American agribusiness. This has caused consternation among its NATO allies. French president Jacques Chirac has dug in his heels over Washington’s demand for a one-shot UN Security Council resolution authorizing war on Iraq. German chancellor Gerhard Schröder just won re-election by loudly declaring he would not join an Iraq invasion, whether or not it is authorized by the United Nations. This is simply posturing, for in the end they will go along with the action demanded by the U.S. But the European imperialists are not just worried about being frozen out of a post-invasion Iraqi oil bonanza. They understand that the Bush doctrine is aimed at them.

In the United States, West Europe and other imperialist countries, the “war on terrorism” has been accompanied by a dramatic escalation of police-state repression, as we warned immediately following last year’s September 11 attack (see the IG statement, “U.S. Whips Up Imperialist War Frenzy, Drives Toward Police State” [14 September 2001] reprinted in *The Internationalist* No. 12, Fall 2001). The Bush regime wants to use this war as a wedge to attack trade-union rights while establishing military tribunals for “aliens” and even U.S. citizens it labels enemies, ordering indefinite detention without charge, hundreds of thousands of deportations and blatant racial profiling for immigrants, carrying out massive electronic spying, introducing pervasive “security” measures and establishing a “unified military command” with the authority to deploy the armed forces against the domestic population. The government – with the full participation of the Democrats, who first called for a “Homeland (Fatherland) Security” department – is consciously laying the basis for rule by state of siege. To defeat the drive for a police state and endless imperialist war requires a break from the twin capitalist parties of war and racism, the Democrats and Republicans, as well as minor bourgeois parties such as the Greens, and the building of a revolutionary workers party in the fight to reforge the Fourth International.

### **Class War Against Imperialist War – For International Socialist Revolution!**

The Marxist approach to the fight against imperialist war was developed during the First World War by V. I. Lenin and the Russian Bolsheviks, in the face of the ignominious capitulation by the “Socialist” Second International, whose main parties lined up behind the respective capitalist classes in the imperialist slaughter. Lenin stressed in fighting against both open reformists and vacillating centrists that it was necessary for revolutionary socialists to stand for the defeat of “their own” bourgeoisie in the inter-imperialist war, while taking the side of colonial and semi-colonial peoples in their wars for independence from the colonial powers. In his essay “Socialism and War” (September 1915), which has been republished as a pamphlet by the Internationalist Group, Lenin wrote:

“Both the advocates of victory for their governments in the present war and advocates of the slogan ‘neither victory

nor defeat,’ equally take the standpoint of social-chauvinism. A revolutionary class cannot but wish for the defeat of its government in a reactionary war, and cannot fail to see that the latter’s military reverses must facilitate its overthrow.”

Lenin noted that “the sentiments of the masses in favor of peace often express incipient protest, anger and consciousness of the reactionary character of the war.” But, he said, while socialists intervene in demonstrations and protests seeking to intersect these sentiments, “they will not deceive the people by conceding the idea that peace without annexations, without the oppression of nations, without plunder, without the germs of new wars among the present governments and ruling classes is possible in the absence of a revolutionary movement.” Calling to “turn the imperialist war into civil war,” Lenin stressed that it would take international socialist revolution to achieve genuine peace. And that is the program on which the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky carried out the October Revolution.

The policy of the organizers of the various “peace movements” around the world is diametrically opposed to this revolutionary program. Placing themselves on the political terrain of bourgeois democracy, they all implicitly or openly call on capitalist and pro-capitalist forces to put a stop to the war. In the United States, the October 26 antiwar march is sponsored by the International A.N.S.W.E.R. coalition, led by the International Action Center founded by Ramsey Clark together with the Workers World Party. This is the same Ramsey Clark who as U.S. attorney general under Lyndon Johnson presided over the murderous COINTELPRO war on the Black Panther Party. In a July 29 letter to members of the UN Security Council, Clark called on them to “denounce the continuing threats by the United States against Iraq, to demand immediate cessation of the threats and to warn the United States that an attack by it on Iraq would violate the Charter of the United Nations.”

The idea that the United Nations can bring the U.S. dogs of war to heel is just the kind of deception of the people that Lenin warned against. This feeds into the call of Democratic Party politicians who want more UN “inspections,” counterposing the “war on terror” to Bush’s war on Saddam Hussein. There is no counterposition, the attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq are part of the same war and the task of UN “inspectors” will be to set it off. UN sanctions set the stage for the first Gulf War and have continued to impoverish and murder the Iraqi people ever since. From the Korean War to the war on Yugoslavia, the United Nations has served as a cover for aggression by U.S. imperialism. Now, whatever its outcome, a new UN “debate” will again lead to untold death and destruction in the Near East, not only in Iraq but also in Palestine. Israeli rulers led by the butcher Ariel Sharon are chomping at the bit to carry out mass expulsions of the Arab population from their lands in the West Bank and Gaza (euphemistically called “transfer” by the Zionists) the minute the first U.S. bomb drops on Baghdad. Revolutionaries demand an *end to all sanctions and inspections of Iraq* and that *all U.S. and UN forces get out of the Near East, now!*

If it is grotesque to ask the UN to bring the U.S. to order, it is no less absurd to call on the European imperialists to rein in the American “cowboys,” as many liberals and reformists on



the Old Continent do. Ignacio Ramonet, the leader of ATTAC, the French bourgeois “anti-globalization” umbrella organization, wrote recently in *Le Monde Diplomatique* (October 2002):

“An empire doesn’t have allies, it only has vassals. Most of the states of the European Union seem to have forgotten this historical reality. Before our eyes, under pressure from Washington, which has obliged them to enroll in its war on Iraq, countries which are in principle sovereign have allowed themselves to be reduced to the sorry condition of satellites.”

Ramonet goes on to explicitly appeal to *NATO* to block “this first war of the new imperial era.” He calls on “Europe” to “block the military instrument, NATO, which Washington is counting on for its imperial expansion and whose use is subject to the vote of the European states.” But these fellow imperialists already have their hands covered with blood from the wars on Yugoslavia and Afghanistan, wars that Ramonet neglects to mention because they were largely supported, to one degree or another, by the “anti-globalizers,” and they are not about to become a force for “peace.” By joining with such forces and appeals, various European pseudo-Trotskyists such as the French Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) are lining up with their own bourgeoisies, as the social democrats did in World War I.

Authentic Trotskyists call to defeat the imperialists not only on the battlefield, where Iraqi forces face massive U.S. firepower, but through mobilizing the power of the working class worldwide, independent of all bourgeois forces, against the war. U.S. seizure of Iraq could set off roiling unrest threatening decrepit “old regimes” that have a tenuous grip on power in many predominantly Muslim countries. While reactionary Islamic fundamentalist forces will seek to profit from this, they do not have a monopoly on opposition to these deeply corrupt regimes. Where the war sparks broad social unrest, proletarian internationalist forces would seek to intervene with a program to pose the struggle along class lines. In Algeria, the revolt of secular youth and minority populations that swept Berber regions last year has been quieted but not eliminated – witness the recent mass boycott of the regime’s phony elections in Kabylia. In Pakistan, trade-union opposition to the U.S.-allied military dictatorship of General Musharraf has frequently clashed with Islamist *jihadis* (“holy warriors”). In Turkey there are sizeable leftist-led unions and numerous self-proclaimed socialist groups. In Indonesia, where shadowy military cliques allied with Muslim fundamentalists are trying to destabilize the shaky Megawati government with terrorist provocations, the opposition labor movement that helped bring down the Suharto dictatorship is restive. The question is not whether mass opposition to the imperialist war is possible, but rather on what class program it is built.

In the United States, Britain and all countries involved in the war Trotskyists call for workers actions against the war drive. This includes blocking the transport of war materiel by union pickets, demanding the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan and Iraq, and undertaking workers strike action against the imperialist war. Communists should vigorously protest the presence of bourgeois politicians and spokesmen at “antiwar” rallies, pointing out that the “doves” as well as the “hawks” among the capi-

talist politicians are all warmongers, strikebreakers and enemies of the exploited and oppressed. In the U.S., the use of the Taft-Hartley slave labor law against West Coast ILWU dock workers locked out by the maritime bosses directly posed the link between the class struggle and the fight against the imperialist war. In a series of leaflets distributed on the picket lines, the Internationalist Group called to shut the ports down tight with strike action, and to block any movement of military goods.

While IG members were present on the dock workers’ picket lines in Oakland daily during the lockout, a number of left groups showed up for a solidarity rally on October 5. The reformist International Socialist Organization and Workers World Party and Socialist Action pushed their respective popular-front “peace” events. For its part, the Spartacist League failed to mention the issue of war materiel, much less call to boycott it, in an article on the ILWU lockout. Nor did the front-page article in *Workers Vanguard* (4 October) utter a word of criticism of union leader of Jim Spinosa, who tried to introduce flag-waving “anti-terrorist” slogans into the strike; nor, for that matter, did it call on dock workers to defy the Taft-Hartley injunction which was clearly in the works, or urge that the rest of the working class undertake strike action against the slave labor law. Not a word about the need for international dock workers’ solidarity actions either.

The SL for many years stood for the politics of revolutionary Trotskyism, and still claims to do so. However, amid the “anti-terrorist” hysteria whipped up by the government last fall, it hesitated for weeks before calling to defend Afghanistan, and obstinately refused to call for the defeat of U.S. imperialism in the war, calling the IG and the League for the Fourth International “revolutionary phrasemongers” and supposedly pandering to “anti-Americanism” for insisting on this Leninist policy. (At the same time, the SL hailed quintessential Democratic dove Barbara Lee for dissenting from the vote of war powers for Bush, while keeping silent for weeks about the fact that she voted for the \$40 billion war budget.) The SL claimed that their internationalist duties were fulfilled by calling for “class struggle at home” in war time. The ILWU lockout presented a golden opportunity to show what this meant, yet the SL was barely present at the picket lines and its propaganda ducked every single issue in which the dock workers’ struggle intersected the war!

In contrast to the early years of the Vietnam War, there is already widespread unease in the labor movement over the war on Iraq. In August, the Washington State AFL-CIO convention passed a “Resolution Against the War, Attacks on Civil Liberties and Cuts in Public Services” that sharply criticized “the national AFL-CIO’s uncritical support for this profit-driven war,” calling to “campaign for the repeal of the USA Patriot Act and defeat of similar ‘anti-terrorism’ measures,” to “refuse to cooperate with FBI spying on political, union, and anti-globalism activists or comply with INS harassment of Arabs and other immigrants and people of color in the U.S.,” to “demand the immediate release of the hundreds of Middle Eastern, Arab and other immigrants who are still being detained” and to “oppose the U.S. government’s open-ended ‘war on terrorism’.” Lest anyone think that labor officialdom had sud-

New York Times



AP

**Left: Protesters hold up signs calling for “Inspections, Not War!” during Congressional testimony by Pentagon chief Donald Rumsfeld, September 18. But UN “inspections” of Iraq are nothing but spying in preparation for war. Right: U.S. member of UNSCOM inspection team displays flag. It was later revealed that U.S. spies in UNSCOM planted communications devices used to guide bombers in December 1998 air strikes.**

denly turned into a hotbed of “reds,” the resolution ended with a call to “pressure President Bush and Congress to stop the war and redirect money from corporate handouts and the military budget to assist laid-off workers.”

This is the classic “butter instead of guns” rhetoric of social-chauvinists whose real concern is the domestic costs of the war – which hinder their class-collaborationist schemes – and who would not dare to take a stand on the side of the working people of Iraq, who are once again to be the victims of monstrous war crimes that the U.S. is gearing up to commit. Moreover, this motion (and a similar one by the San Francisco Labor Council) would never have been passed but for the fact that the local Democratic Party had come out against the war. The fact that Democrats in the House of Representatives voted 126-81 against the war powers resolution is indicative of the divided opinion in the country. (Recent polls show barely 51 percent for the war, falling to 33 percent if there are 5,000 casualties – so much for the premature announcement of the death of the “Vietnam Syndrome.”) But the House Democrats “took pains to describe their vote as not simply a pacifist protest against all military action, but rather a difference of opinion on the need for an international force versus unilateral action” (*New York Times*, 11 October). Rather than an “open-ended ‘war on terrorism,’” they want a more “focused” war arguing that the main enemy is Bin Laden, not Hussein. We say the enemy is U.S. imperialism, which is by far the most murderous terrorist force around.

The fight against the renewed war on Iraq and the U.S.-dominated “New World Order” must be a fight against the imperialist system, which can only be swept away through international socialist revolution. It means a fight against all brands of bourgeois nationalism and religious reaction and in favor of proletarian internationalism. In the Near East, Trotskyists defend the besieged Palestinian population against the Zionist occupation in fighting for an Arab-Hebrew workers state, opposing any reli-

gious-based state (whether the “Jewish state” of Israel or an “Islamic republic”) and recognizing the national rights of both peoples crowded together in this tiny land.

In Iraq as well, we fight for workers revolution to throw out the bloody dictator Saddam Hussein, who was installed with U.S. help, supplied by the CIA with lists of Communists to kill, and armed by the Pentagon to fight against Khomeini’s Iran. This revolution would bring together workers and peasants from the Shi’ite Muslim majority and Sunni Muslim minority, as well as Kurds, Turkomans and other national minorities. Recognizing that the current national boundaries were established in the imperialist carve-up of the Ottoman Empire following World War I, communists call for a socialist republic of united Kurdistan.

A successful workers revolution anywhere in the region would sound the death knell for tottering monarchies such as Saudi Arabia and Morocco, nationalist military-dominated regimes (Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Egypt, Libya, Algeria) and imperialist protected oil sheikdoms (Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, etc.), while offering the prospect of liberation for Iranian working people who have smarted under the dictatorship of the shah and the mullahs. As in the case of Israel/Palestine and other countries (such as Lebanon) with intractable national and communal divisions, disputes over conflicting democratic rights and scarce resources such as oil and water can only be resolved in the framework of a socialist federation of the Near East, which would make possible all-sided social emancipation, in particular for women. While the imperialists inflame national hostilities with their talk of a “clash of civilizations,” the communist program alone can overcome the colonial heritage of “divide and rule” and bring together all the nations, peoples and fragments of peoples who are scattered through the region precisely because it has always been a crossroads of civilizations.

*Defeat U.S. Imperialism – Defend Iraq! For International Socialist Revolution!*







**"The Dock Worker," monument to the 1941 Amsterdam port workers' strike against deportation of Jews by Nazi occupiers and Dutch puppet regime.**

Workers International of Peter Taaffe) all line up behind the openly pro-war Greens or the social-patriotic Socialistische Partij (SP, a haven for former Maoists). Thus the SAP, complaining of "less democracy" (as does the SP), is concentrating its fire on the Dutch purchase of a U.S. fighter plane instead of opposing its own imperialist bourgeoisie.

They all joined with Stalinist leftovers and the reformist "Socialist" Party to endorse a "Manifesto against the 'New' War" in Afghanistan which impotently begs imperialist Netherlands "to make an effort to end military actions" without so much as a word about the racist war on immigrants on the home front!

The LFI called from the outset to defend Afghanistan and Iraq and to defeat the imperialists and their terrorist "war on terrorism." ***Not popular front anti-war coalitions but class war against the imperialist war!***

As in the United States, the European bourgeoisie have launched a hysterical campaign that brands Muslims (and in Holland especially Moroccans) as internal enemies in order to push through police-state measures. The attacks on democratic rights and anti-immigrant racism are part of a broader anti-working class offensive. This drive by Dutch capitalism of Shell, Unilever, Phillips and other trusts put Pim Fortuyn on the platform in the Netherlands as the representative of a reactionary movement to replace the discredited "Purple" coalition (whose anti-immigrant policies paved the way for Fortuyn) and built mass support for increasing repression and broad attacks on the gains of the labor movement and immigrants. After his assassination, the left capitulated to the hysteria, joined in the condolences for Fortuyn and, in the case of the Socialist Party and Offensief, even anasthetized his racist "anti-crime" demagoguery.

With [immigration minister Hildbrand] Nawijn replacing

Sea against "terrorists" while it heads the military command of imperialist occupation of Macedonia. With or without UN resolutions, the Balkenende government supports the planned cold-blooded mass murder in Baghdad and Basra.

The so-called "Trotskyists" of the Socialistische Arbeider Partij (SAP, section of the United Secretariat, followers of the late Ernest Mandel), International Socialists (I.S., supporters of the "state capitalist" current founded by Tony Cliff) and Offensief (part of the Committee for a

Pim Fortuyn, the ruling class has found a new manipulator of racist hysteria, as we predicted they would. The LPF (Pim Fortuyn Slate) is clearly acting as the virulently racist tribune for the bourgeois coalition government. As we wrote, "Whatever coalition government takes office will be dedicated to increasing the racist repression of immigrant populations" (*De Internationalist*, May 2002) pushing anti-crime hysteria and a "new moral order" to further regiment society. The "new" BVD (AIVD – political police) has been beefed up over the last year and raids are common practice now: this August 154 "illegals" were arrested in Rotterdam, and on September 4, some 82 Bulgarians were dragged out of their homes to be deported the very next morning!

The proposal to deport even Dutch citizens of North African descent and other anti-immigrant measures must be fought. The February 1941 workers' strike against the deportation of Jews by the Nazis and their Dutch police auxiliaries is an inspiring example. Revolutionary Marxists stand for the right of anyone who has reached Dutch territory to remain here. ***Full citizenship rights for all immigrants ("legal" and "illegal") and their families!***

These anti-immigrant measures are the opening wedge for attacks on the whole working class. Business representatives even talk about going around the trade unions (despite the servile class collaboration of the union bureaucrats) since they are not "representative." This means further attacks, for example on the right to strike, as when the KLM ground workers staged a wildcat strike at the end of July, which was banned by the bourgeois courts and heavy fines were imposed. This offensive along with the accompanying austerity measures and massive cutbacks in health care, education and public transportation that are on the table demands class-struggle resistance all along the line.

The recent successful strike by Arriva bus drivers demonstrates again that the conditions for a resurgence of class struggle exist. But working-class opposition to austerity must be linked to opposition to anti-immigrant campaigns. The response of the multi-ethnic labor movement must not be limited to defending past social gains which are now being ripped away, but rather there must be a counter-offensive in defense of fellow immigrant workers (whatever their status) in opposition to the racist war on the home front and against imperialist adventures against the oppressed peoples in neo-colonial countries, leading to the expropriation of the capitalist class. Those who labor must rule!

The truth is that war, racism and economic crisis will not end until capitalism is overthrown through international socialist revolution. It is urgent today to gain workers and youth to the need to build a revolutionary workers party to lead that struggle. Our organization, the League for the Fourth International, seeks to cohere a nucleus of cadres for the construction of Trotskyist workers parties throughout world that can swim against the tide as the Bolsheviks did during the first inter-imperialist war that led to the Socialist Revolution of October 1917. The LFI fights today to build a reformed Fourth International as the authentic world party of socialist revolution, the only way to prevent the ruling classes from plunging the planet into a wasteland of imperialist wars and racist barbarism. Join us. ■

# The Internationalist

## Revolutionary Reconstruction Club

### Revolutionary Reconstruction Group Joins the Internationalist Group

AUGUST 25—The Revolutionary Reconstruction Group, the core of young Marxist activists who lead the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club at Bronx Community College in New York, joined the Internationalist Group at a meeting of the two organizations on August 25. This follows the RRG's presentation of the following statement to an IG meeting earlier this month:

"After a period of joint work between the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club and the Internationalist Group, during which time the ruling class, amidst an imperialist war in the U.S. and other countries, has engaged in increasingly repressive measures against workers and the oppressed, we of the RRG have seen for ourselves that the League for the Fourth International today continues the principled struggle for workers power. Our own desire to struggle for workers revolution, and the recognition that this requires the creation of vanguard parties around the world as part of the process of reforging the Fourth International, leads us to join forces with the IG, which today is carrying out this task. We therefore request membership in the Internationalist Group, U.S. section of the League for the Fourth International."

The origins of the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club go back to fall of 2000, when a young Puerto Rican Trotskyist began trying to establish a Marxist student group at Bronx Community College. Active in the fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal and other issues, he was at that time a sympathizer of the Spartacist League. The core of the RRC also includes comrades won to Bolshevism from the New York Zapatista group and through polemicizing against religious obscurantism and nationalism on campus.

Efforts to build the club received an enthusiastic response from students at Bronx Community College (BCC), an overwhelmingly black, Hispanic and immigrant campus of the City University of New York (CUNY) that was singled out by the *New York Times* as a hotbed of opposition to the war on Af-



Sue Kellogg

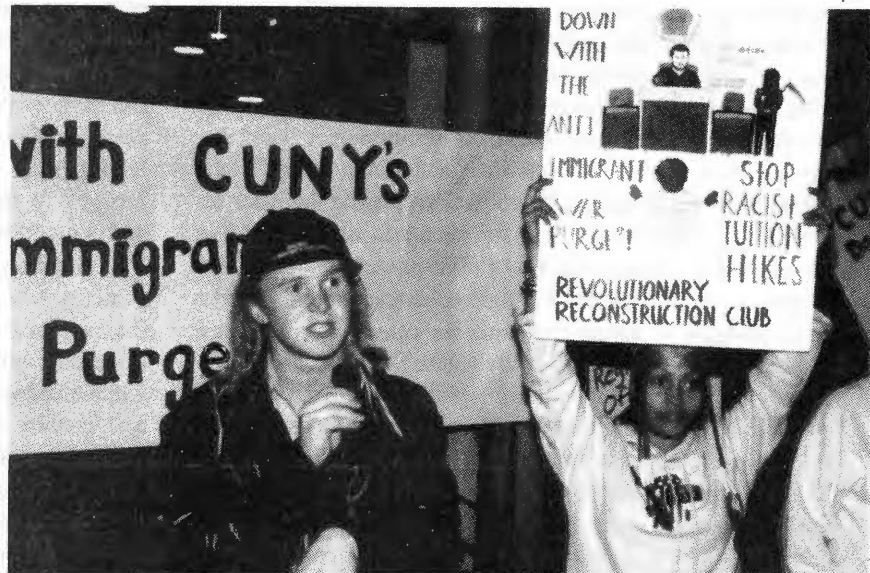
**Joint contingent of Revolutionary Reconstruction Club and IG marches across Brooklyn Bridge at demonstration protesting Israel's attack on West Bank, April 6.**

ghanistan. CUNY officials try to run campuses like BCC like a small police state. (At nearby Hostos Community College, CUNY is waging a repressive vendetta against student leaders for leading protests against cuts in bilingual and Spanish-language programs.) Putting up one obstacle after another, BCC functionaries even tried to censor the club from describing itself as Marxist in its statement of purpose!

The Revolutionary Reconstruction Club was formally established in spring 2001. The name was chosen for two reasons. In the historic context of the U.S., it reflects the point that the full liberation of black people from social oppression cannot be solved under the lordship of capital. The "Radical Reconstruction" carried out in the U.S. South after the Civil War ended in the betrayal by the northern bourgeoisie of hopes for black equality. This task would require a revolutionary reconstruction of society, possible only in the form of another social revolution, one led by the working class, and aimed directly at the bedrock of black oppression, U.S. capitalism.

Simultaneously, in a broader sense, the term "revolution-

Photos: Sue Keillogg



**Revolutionary Reconstruction Club speaker (left) at 28 November 2001 demonstration against CUNY's "war purge" of immigrant students. The RRC at Bronx Community College joined with Internationalist Group in building the protest.**

ary reconstruction" is borrowed from Marx and Engels, whose *Communist Manifesto* calls for the "revolutionary reconstitution of society" by means of a proletarian revolution.

The intention of those who formed the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club was to bring awareness of Marxist ideas and the many crucial struggles being waged across the world, while waging war against bourgeois liberalism, which saturates the outlook even of the so-called left in the United States. It sought to model itself after the Marxist study groups found in the early 1890s in Russia. The club was an idea born of the need to recruit fellow black, Latino and other poor students to the ranks of communist fighters, thinkers and militants. Until its inception the only recruiters at BCC were those of the U.S. military, who recruit cannon fodder on the basis of "economic conscription." The only political group on campus was NYPIRG (New York Political Interest Research Group), a student lobbying group and Democratic Party satellite based among student government bureaucrats.

There is considerable potential for winning youth to revolutionary Marxism at CUNY, the largest urban university in the United States with approximately 200,000 students at over a dozen colleges. Enrolled at CUNY are students from more than 115 countries, and according to its own statistics its student body is 32 percent black, 31 percent white, 21 percent Hispanic and 12 percent Asian; a large majority of these students are working-class. Yet obeying the dictates of capital, after putting an end to the open admissions won by student and labor struggles in 1969 the CUNY administration has been escalating attacks on educational access for the sons and daughters of New York City's proletariat.

Joint work with the Internationalist Group began at a November 2001 RRC meeting attended by a dozen people. An IG representative invited the club to join in building a united-front demonstration against the anti-immigrant war purge in

which CUNY sought to force thousands of "undocumented immigrants" out of school, through a discriminatory and exorbitant tuition hike, as part of the U.S. imperialists' "war on terrorism." The demonstration proposal was greeted enthusiastically (despite the lame attempts of a Spartacist League spokesman to convince the club not to endorse the rally), and a period of intensive work began. In the course of this work RRG activists extended their activity to several different campuses and went head to head against student reformists and bureaucrats. In the effort to take a real step in class struggle against the U.S. war, an important part of the 28 November 2001 demonstration was the presence of immigrant workers from union and solidarity groups.

The joining together of the RRG with the Internationalist Group is an example of the kind of revolutionary regroupment made possible on the basis of a class fight against imperialist war. For RRG members, intensive joint work provided an important on-the-ground lesson on the Marxist stance on wars. The understanding that the "war purge" at CUNY was but a manifestation of the very real global war provided a powerful weapon against those who sought to confine the struggle to "student issues."

Linking the defense of immigrants to the fight against imperialist war, the IG printed in pamphlet form Lenin's classic *Socialism and War*. Over the course of the next months the IG's position for the defeat of the U.S. imperialist attack and the defense of Afghanistan and Iraq proved to be the only one in accordance with the principles of the Bolshevik Party under the leadership of Lenin. The Spartacist League's abandonment of the Leninist fight for the defeat of "one's own" imperialist rulers in war dramatically brought home its step-by-step renunciation of key revolutionary principles. The comrades were particularly repelled by the SL's attempt to smear the IG with pandering to "anti-Americanism" for upholding Lenin's position.

Also important in the RRG activists' evolution has been



the ongoing and polarizing struggle against a wide range of opportunist positions pushed by reformists and campus bureaucrats who tail after the Democratic Party. RRG and IG comrades intervened together at a range of events to fight for “no discrimination” against the reformists’ promotion of “less” discrimination against immigrants via legislation to “allow” some and only some immigrants to go back to paying the prior tuition rate. We linked the fight for open admissions and free tuition to the broader program of class struggle and socialist revolution, and connected the fight to defeat specific attacks to the struggle to defeat the capitalist rulers’ war and their entire system of exploitation and racism.

Joint work continued with the publication of an IG/RRC leaflet for International Women’s Day and common contingents and sales teams at demonstrations in New York and Washington, D.C. in defense of the Palestinian people. The two organizations also had a joint presence in support of unionization drives among immigrant workers, at rallies by New York teachers and a strike by bus drivers in Queens. In this period comrades of the RRG saw the meaning of the IG’s commitment, in deeds and not merely words, to the tasks of bringing the Trotskyist program into the class struggle. An important part in this has been played by joint activity with worker cadres of the IG. Systematic Internationalist Group educationals, together with encouragement to present Marxist classes themselves, played a crucial part in the comrades’ development. This intensive course of study has included key works by Lenin and Trotsky, classes on revolutions of the 20th century, and a range of other subjects.

A central focus in these study classes has been the Marxist theory and analysis of the state, including the origin and history of bureaucratically deformed workers states such as Cuba and China, and the tasks of their defense in the period since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. Bringing the RRG comrades closer to the IG/LFI, this underscored the crucial tasks that Trotskyists are called upon to lead, in particular the fight for proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy whose betrayals open the way for capitalist restoration. Such a political revolution in China would immediately pose the task of extending the revolution worldwide, with enormous appeal to the workers and oppressed throughout the region and elsewhere.

Joint work and study led RRG comrades to take the measure of the opportunism of those who have fought bitterly against the IG’s Marxist politics, strengthening and deepening the comrades’ political and programmatic understanding. In coming closer to the Internationalist Group – and especially because the comrade who founded the RRC had been a sympathizer of the SL for most of his political life while others were subscribers to the SL’s press – the comrades carefully investigated the differences between both groups and came to the conclusion that the SL’s series of “new” positions add up to a fundamental break with Bolshevism, which the IG continues to uphold.

The Trotskyist program reflects the accumulation of crucial lessons drawn from past proletarian struggles and paid in blood. Yet the current leadership of the SL and International Communist League makes a mockery both of the program-

matic content and of more than a century of courageous struggles to implement this program in the “boiling water” of the class struggle, and the present fight to bring the Fourth Internationalist program into the struggles of the working class. RRG comrades came to compare the present ICL leadership’s attitude to the Marxist program with the outlook of “a spoiled rich kid who inherits a priceless asset and squanders it.”

Members of the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club repeatedly witnessed the inability of SL spokesmen to defend their organization’s abandonment of Leninism on a series of questions, among them the SL/ICL’s refusal to call for unconditional independence of the colonies, a question which Lenin and Trotsky rightly saw as a dividing line between communism and social democracy (and essential in the fight against all forms of nationalism), and its repudiation of the core of Trotsky’s Transitional Program, the understanding that the crisis of humanity is reduced to the crisis of revolutionary leadership. Instead of historically and theoretically-derived assessment, the SL/ICL is guided by temporary appearances, and shrouds its revisions in vague and evasive language. A crucial example is over the nature of fascist formations such as the National Front in France, just when it is most important to strive for the greatest clarity.

The comrades of the RRG join the Internationalist Group as full members, with the rights and responsibilities of Bolshevik militants. At the same time, they are youth whose ongoing training as professional revolutionaries will mean integrating the IG’s new opportunities for campus work into the overall fight to build a Leninist vanguard party. Needed is the kind of leadership training that can be acquired only in applying yesterday’s lessons to solve today’s problems on the burning terrain of the class struggle; the transformation of raw experience into conscious revolutionary lessons. That this can be achieved only in the fight to win new elements among the youth to the proletarian class struggle is a key lesson of another recent struggle in which LFI comrades fought for the Trotskyist program: the 10-month strike at the National University of Mexico (UNAM). The Revolutionary Reconstruction Club at Bronx Community College, together with the Internationalist Club at CUNY’s Hunter College, will continue to win students to Marxism and struggles such as the fight against militarism (such as the increasingly aggressive military and police recruiters) and imperialist war.

In *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky wrote that “every revolutionary party finds its chief support in the youngest generation of the rising class” while noting that “healthy young lungs find it intolerable to breathe in the atmosphere of hypocrisy.” In joining the Internationalist Group, the comrades of the Revolutionary Reconstruction Group join in the task of winning the next generation of young workers and intellectuals to the cause of the world proletariat and its vanguard party, which in Lenin’s words much serve as “tribune of the people,” mobilizing the power of the proletariat for the emancipation of all the oppressed and exploited throughout the world through victorious socialist revolution.

# Anti-Immigrant Discrimination Continues at CUNY

## Why Am I Still Being Charged the "Anti-Immigrant Tuition Hike?"

by an Immigrant Student

AUGUST 14 – Last Thanksgiving I got a letter from the Hunter registrar telling me that as an undocumented immigrant, my tuition would more than double, to \$6,800 a year. This was after a racist politician got on the war band-wagon and said it was bad for "national security" if "illegal aliens" get an education here. As everyone knows, we do a lot of the hardest work in this city. So I had to fight to try to stay in school. I got more jobs and worked more hours. Three of my cousins had to drop out of CUNY because of this anti-immigrant war purge. So did some of my friends, and others had to skip a semester or reduce their classes. A lot of damage was done to a lot of people by all this. We protested and rallied against this attack.

I recently read that Governor Pataki made a big deal out of signing a law which supposedly "allows" us (just *some* of us, actually) to go back to paying the in-state tuition rate. I saw on the Internet that a lot of people got their picture taken with him when he signed it. Politicians of the Demo-

cratic and Republican parties are trying to get votes with this. They signed it, but apparently they didn't get around to informing the school about it. We are *still* being charged the more-than-double, anti-immigrant, discriminatory rate. The bills keep coming with the unpayable tuition rate. Wednesday, August 14th is the most recent time I got a bill for this "out-of-state" rate (despite living in NYC for 12 years).

I have been to Hunter's Oasis registration center *four times* and they keep telling me "this is the amount you have to pay." When I mention the famous new law, they shake their heads and say "I don't know about that." And they look at me in a way which seems totally racist, like what am I doing there. They sent me to the admissions office, which has nothing to do with this. Everybody knows that Hunter is incredibly bureaucratic, but this goes way beyond that. Are they trying to get me to just give up and drop out, or just keep paying the ridiculous rate? And this is happening to *a lot* of other students at Hunter, so you know it's got to be going on at other campuses too. *We have to put a stop to this right now!*

## Statement by the Internationalist Group, Hunter Internationalist Club and Revolutionary Reconstruction Club:

Last fall the City University of New York launched an anti-immigrant "war purge," announcing that "undocumented immigrant" students would be charged the exorbitant out-of-state tuition of \$6,800 a year. Part of the racial profiling spurred by the U.S. rulers' imperialist war, this attack went hand in hand with the government's racist detention and deportation of thousands of people of Middle Eastern and South Asian descent and the onslaught against basic democratic rights and civil liberties – an onslaught which continues to intensify as the U.S. empire prepares a new war against Iraq.

CUNY's move to get in on the immigrant-bashing was the opening wedge for a series of cuts and hikes aimed at all students in the heavily working-class and minority CUNY system, together with blatant repression like the ongoing prosecution of Hostos Community College student leader Miguel Malo.

Against CUNY's attack, students, immigrant workers and others carried out a range of different protest actions, kicked off by the 28 November 2001 united-front rally at Hunter College initiated by the Internationalist Group. In the face of widespread anger at CUNY's version of ethnic cleansing, a number of Democratic and Republican politicians eventually decided

to make a show of "helping immigrants" – since they are trying to rope in the Hispanic vote and the immigrant vote in general.

After the usual horse-trading they put together legislation which Governor Pataki signed, with great hoopla, on August 9. According to his self-promoting press release ("Governor Helps Keep College Affordable for Immigrants"), the new law will "allow" immigrants to pay the in-state rate, as they did before, *if* they were enrolled at CUNY or SUNY in Fall 2001 and were "authorized to pay the resident tuition rate at that time"; or attended a New York State high school for at least two years and received a NY high-school diploma, or got a NY general equivalency diploma (GED), and applied to CUNY or SUNY within five years. Demanding students jump through more discriminatory hoops, it requires that they file "an affidavit with the college stating that he or she has applied to legalize his or her immigration status, if applicable, or will do so as soon as he or she is eligible." *Meanwhile at Hunter and other schools, campus officials are continuing to charge the anti-immigrant tuition rate and put one obstacle after another in the path of immigrant students, even those declared "eligible" by the new law – while those who don't meet the new "crite-*

*ria" are having the door slammed in their face.*

While the capitalist politicians and their followers pat themselves on the back and smile for the cameras, their new law is worse than the situation that existed before last fall. Thousands of students are to be "allowed" to go back to the already onerous \$3,200 a year tuition, *while thousands more will be excluded from CUNY and SUNY by the new selection procedure.* This includes many older students who got high-school (or higher) degrees in their countries of origin and do not have the means or time to go through the ridiculous and humiliating requirement that they do it all over again, as well as the many who simply cannot afford to go through this additional process. This exclusion is aimed not only at would-be students now, but many others in the future. It must be smashed!

Pataki's August 9 bill-signing ceremony was a photo-op love-in for politicians of both big capitalist parties. Joined by a retinue of student and community group leaders, they told each other how great they are, with Democrat Peter Rivera, chairman of the state assembly's Hispanic Task Force, gushing about "Governor Pataki's leadership on this important issue," "the fearlessness of true statesmen," "a testament to the greatness of our nation," and so on *ad nauseam*. Pataki just did a similar road show with health workers union leader Denis Rivera, in the interminable Dem/Rep shell game aimed at keeping workers and minorities subordinated to the capitalist system. Meanwhile this master budget-slasher, in his latest attack on education, just went to court to say New Yorkers don't have a right to anything more than an 8th-grade education! The "expert" who testified for him is a raving pro-segregation racist whose "work" is featured on the Web site of "Klan in a suit" fascist David Duke.

Hunter and other CUNY schools are notorious for their byzantine bureaucracy, but this is no normal bureaucratic snafu – what is happening here is blatant and persistent racist discrimination. After targeting, profiling, insulting and in many cases driving out immigrant students, campus officials are *still* forcing even "eligible" immigrants to fight like hell just to get what is supposedly their legal right, while hoping everyone will forget about the thousands being shut out completely.

Rather than "less" discrimination, we demand *NO discrimination*. We demand the complete elimination of all the obstacles to immigrants, minorities and working people getting an education. Tuition should be free like it used to be, and open admissions must be restored. We demand a state-paid living stipend for all students, abolition of the capitalists' Board of Trustees and CUNY administration, student/teacher/worker control of the universities. We demand to know which colleges and campuses have collaborated with the INS and FBI in their new witch hunts, we demand INS, FBI and CIA get out, together with *all* cops, and the increasingly aggressive military/police recruiters.

Students and workers cannot and must not sit by while CUNY officials perpetrate their latest racist outrage. We have stressed the need to mobilize workers power to sweep away the anti-immigrant war purge in its entirety and win full citizenship rights for all immigrants. (See our pamphlet *Defend Immigrant Students – Stop CUNY's "War Purge!"* and articles in the latest issue of *The Internationalist*.) Stop ALL discrimination against immigrant students now!

\* \* \* \* \*

Together with the continuing exclusion of thousands of immigrants who don't meet the new admissions criteria, this is a fresh lesson that we cannot rely on the laws or politicians of the ruling class. Instead students need to look to the power of the working class, which mobilized with a revolutionary program and leadership (a revolutionary workers party) has the power to change the world.

This is more urgent than ever, on the eve of a new war in which the crucial interest of the workers and oppressed is to fight to defeat the imperialists and defend those on the receiving end of their aggression (like Iraq abroad and those on Ashcroft's endless enemies list at home). As corporate scandals multiply (Enron, WorldCom, etc.), even the big-business press asks, "Is capitalism destroying itself?" What they want, of course, is only to spray some perfume on the overflowing cesspool. Yet quite a few young people are starting to question capitalism, which they were told had triumphed forever a decade ago in the counterrevolution that destroyed the Soviet Union. The real scandal is the capitalist system itself, a system of exploitation, racism and war. It will only be destroyed if we organize for socialist revolution and carry through this revolution of the workers and oppressed all around the world. That is what the revolutionary Marxists of the Internationalist Group and Revolutionary Reconstruction Club are fighting for.

– 15 August 2002

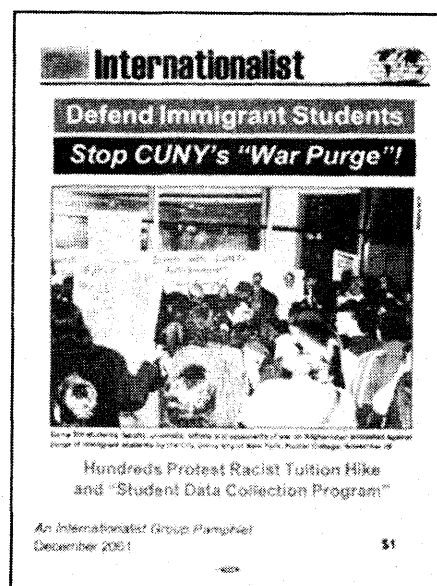
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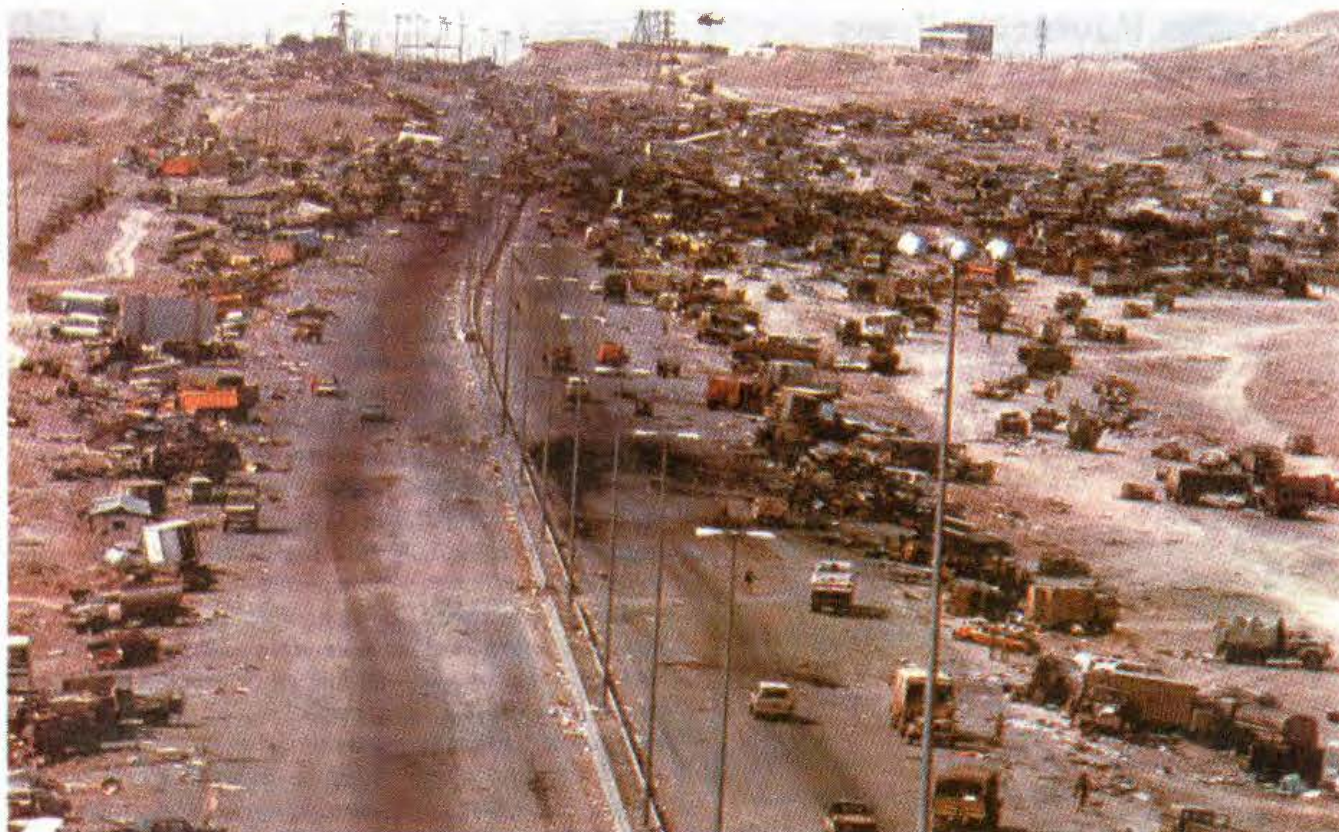
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E. Adams/Corbis Sygma

"Death Mile" on the highway from Kuwait City to Iraq. U.S. war planes and helicopters circled over this stretch of road for hours, destroying every vehicle, including ambulances, and killing thousands of fleeing Iraqis. This was not a battle but cold-blooded slaughter. (See box, next page.)

## Iraq: U.S. Prepares New Desert Slaughter

*We print below in slightly abbreviated form a talk by Jan Norden, editor of The Internationalist, at a forum of the Internationalist Club at Hunter College, City University of New York, on September 17.*

Last week was the anniversary of the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Within hours after that event, the United States government threatened to launch war on Afghanistan, accused of harboring their nemesis Osama bin Laden. Bush declared he wanted Bin Laden "dead or alive." Three weeks later the bombs started falling on Kabul, and by mid-November U.S. forces had entered the Afghan capital. Since then, they have imposed an imperialist protectorate on Afghanistan. Amid all their talk of "democracy," that Central Asian country is still ruled by warlords, just different warlords; while the imperialists mobilized Laura Bush and Democratic Party feminists to justify the bombing, the fact is

that Afghan women are still shrouded in the head-to-toe veil. And while the U.S. declared "war on terrorism," it has in fact been carrying out a terrorist war.

Just last month, *Newsweek* published a lengthy story about how the U.S.-backed forces had locked up Taliban prisoners in containers and then let them die of heat and suffocation. Hundreds of them. That news quickly disappeared from the scene. Meanwhile, the U.S. has locked up hundreds more prisoners of war in a prison camp at Guantánamo, a base it stole from Cuba, where they are being held indefinitely. The government quickly passed a "U.S.A. Patriot" act, which they are now using to jail hundreds of so-called "terrorist suspects," holding them incommunicado, refusing even to reveal their names, charging them with nothing. They now declare they have the right to hold secret trials, in which prisoners are not allowed to see the evidence against them, have no right to

**Defend Iraq! Defeat U.S. Imperialism!  
For International Socialist Revolution!**

## The Bourgeois Press Marches in Lock-Step to War

### "Bang-bang" and Protests Are Verboten Mankind's Oldest Profession, or the Second Oldest?

The photograph of a massacre during the 1991 Gulf War on page 17 is significant because it is one of the few pieces of visual evidence that escaped the military censors and the self-censorship of the imperialist media. During the war there were almost no photos of the destruction in Baghdad, and since then it is nearly impossible to find any. This is not accidental but a matter of policy.

The *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (May 1991) noted how the nightly TV spectacle of "surgical" strikes by high tech cruise missiles "created the impression that the war was a bloodless, push-button battle in which only military targets were destroyed." Actually no more than 7 percent of the tonnage were "smart" bombs, and a high percentage of them hit civilian targets, usually deliberately. Tens of thousands of Iraqis lost their homes.

The *Bulletin* noted that on 25 and 26 February 1991, aircraft, helicopters and ground forces attacked Iraqis fleeing on the highway from Kuwait to Basra. It was a genuine killing field, which the military call the "exploitation phase" of the war. The horrifying images of this carnage were one of the few glimpses afforded of the real nature of that war, with hundreds of charred and twisted bodies in the wreckage. The *Bulletin* summed up: "This was not a surgical war; it was a slaughter."

Ever since the Vietnam War, when scenes of U.S. troops burning villages, of napalmed children, of the Saigon police chief executing a Viet Cong prisoner, brought the horror of imperialism's dirty war home, the Pentagon has made the management (or, more specifically, the muzzling) of the press a top priority. Not that the hacks and spies and camp followers in the bourgeois media give them much trouble. A top priority is to keep nosy cameras away from the battlefield.

And now they're gearing up to do it again. A revealing episode on how the arbiters of "public opinion" decide what news is "fit to print" came in a memo from the managing editor of the *Wall Street Journal*, Paul Steiger, to his reporters. "We do not want close reporting of the bang-bang in any war zone.... We don't want close coverage of street demonstrations, whether that be in Jakarta, Bombay, Caracas, the West Bank – or Seattle" (reported in the *New York Observer*, 14 October).

Steiger said he had issued the memo at the beginning of the Afghanistan War last year and decided to reissue it because there had been a demonstration in Washington and things could "get terribly ugly." After all the pretense of "independence" and a "free press," these adjuncts of the imperialist war machine are well aware of their role in manufacturing "public opinion" for mass slaughter.

cross-examine accusers, have no right to a lawyer. The fact is that not a single person picked up in the sweeps last fall, in which several thousand mainly Arab men were arrested, none has ever been charged with anything to do with September 11. And Congress voted for the Patriot Act and the war budget almost unanimously, Democrats and Republicans marching in lock-step to imperialist war and police-state repression.

Now the war drums are beating again, only this time it's Iraq that has been declared the target. Saddam Hussein is now "Public Enemy No. 1." Perhaps they will soon put out "wanted" posters like they did with Bin Laden. The Pentagon has been busily leaking war plans, plan A involves 250,000 troops, plan B only 70,000, plus bombing the smithereens out of Baghdad in the hopes of assassinating Hussein in the process, and so on. President Bush Jr. seems determined to finish off the Iraqi ruler that his father, President Bush Sr., left in place following the bloody Persian Gulf War of 1990-91. So the whole apparatus of war propaganda is revved up. Since they haven't got any evidence whatsoever of Iraqi complicity in the September 11 attacks, now they have dug up the spectre of weapons of mass destruction. The bourgeois media dutifully proclaim that Saddam is preparing to send suitcase bombers to New York, that he once tested a "dirty bomb," that he "used gas on his own people," and so on and so forth.

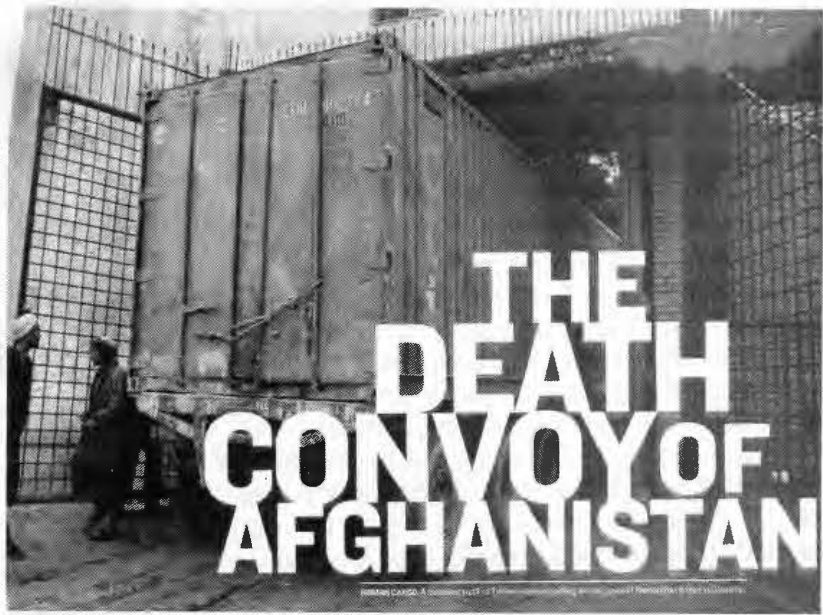
What they don't say is that the evidence of Iraqi nuclear research comes from 1987, when Iraq was a U.S. ally. They try to bury the fact that the Pentagon knew at the time that Iraqi troops used gas against Iranian troops in the late 1980s because there were U.S. military advisors accompanying those Iraqi troops, sending battle reports back to Washington reporting the events in detail, that the U.S. was sending satellite photos of the battlefield to Hussein so his army could wipe out the Iranians in the Basra peninsula. The *New York Times* briefly reported this last month, and within a day that news had disappeared. And what they particularly don't report is that the U.S. exported poison gas to Iraq to help them set up their chemical weapons program. In fact, absolutely everything they accuse the Iraqis of doing was done with U.S. complicity and foreknowledge. *These are crimes of U.S. imperialism.*

Immediately following the attack on the World Trade Center, we of the Internationalist Group and the League for the Fourth International declared that the U.S. war drive had nothing to do with retaliation for September 11. That was an indiscriminate terror attack on the general population, which Marxists reject and condemn. But we warn that the far greater threat to all the peoples of the world are the crimes of U.S. imperialism and imperialism in general.

What's going on here is that the United States government is carrying out a war plan that it had designed long before the attack on the World Trade Center. CBS News carried a report a week ago of notes taken by a note taker at the Pentagon on 11 September 2001. The notes report that at 2:40 that afternoon, U.S. secretary of war Rumsfeld ordered military intelligence to come up with enough evidence to go after Saddam Hussein as well as Osama bin Laden: "Judge whether got enough to hit S.H. at the same time. Not only UBL [Usama bin Laden]." "Go massive," he



Photos: Alan Chin/Gamma



**U.S. allies of the “Northern Alliance” in Afghanistan carried out mass murder of thousands of Taliban prisoners, locked in sealed container trucks and bombed in fort outside Mazar-i-Sharif. U.S. forces were present.**

ordered. “Sweep it all up. Things related and not.”

There is, of course, no indication at all that Hussein had anything to do with September 11 or that he has any of the kinds of weapons he is charged with. If the Iraqis did have nuclear weapons, that would tend to stay the hand of U.S. imperialism. In fact, it is the U.S. that has thousands of tons of chemical weapons stored in Utah and Alabama. Israeli butcher Ariel Sharon, the author of the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacre in Beirut, and of numerous other massacres before and after that, has been screaming that Iraq has chemical weapons. Yet Israel itself has a huge program producing chemical and biological weapons; they already have the arms that they complain that Hussein might some day get. How do we know? Because in the early '90s, an El Al plane crashed near Amsterdam in the Netherlands and contaminated a whole neighborhood. And in the investigation afterwards they uncovered the fact that Israel had a whole research and production installation in a Tel Aviv suburb.

They say that Hussein might some day get “the bomb.” But the United States has thousands of nuclear weapons, large and small, A-bombs, H-bombs, neutron bombs, cobalt bombs, you name it, they’ve got it. And the U.S. is the only country ever to use nuclear weapons in war time. On top of that, the U.S. military has “tactical” nuclear weapons that they are itching to try out in battlefield conditions. And according to the leaks from the Pentagon they are getting ready to do just that in Iraq. Perfect conditions — lots of desert, if the population gets wiped out, they’ll blame it on Hussein. Who is going to use nuclear weapons in this war that’s coming? It is the United States.

Moreover, Israel has a huge nuclear program, with hundreds of bombs, with long-range jets and medium- and long-range missiles to deliver the weapons to anywhere in the Near East. They have had these bombs since 1967, and everyone knows it. Furthermore, the Zionist madmen who run Israel are

certainly crazy enough to use those weapons of mass destruction.

The bottom line is that the biggest state terrorists, by far, are the people who run this country. U.S. imperialism is the biggest threat to the peoples of the world, eclipsing the havoc that tin-horn dictators like Hussein and Islamic fundamentalists like Bin Laden and the Taliban could accomplish. Moreover, it is striking that virtually all of the supposed “rogue regimes” that the U.S. has gone after recently are former U.S. allies. Bin Laden was a cog in the imperialist war machine against the Soviet Union and the Soviet-backed reform regime in Afghanistan during the 1980s.

We Trotskyists supported and hailed the Soviet intervention. At that time, the U.S. was backing the very people it is going after today. They called them “freedom fighters” against “Soviet imperialism.” This was echoed by various Stalinophobic groups on the left who claim that Afghanistan was a victim of “Soviet imperialism.” That’s false to the core.

We defended the Soviet intervention because it was the front line of the Cold War. This was the point of attack of imperialism that was trying to bring down the Soviet Union, which was a bureaucratically degenerated workers state. The deformed workers states, despite their bureaucratic regimes, represent a historic gain of mankind. We defend them at the same time as we fight for proletarian political revolution to overthrow those regimes which are in reality selling out those countries and paving the way to counterrevolution.

So in Afghanistan, the United States was supporting Bin Laden. At the same time, the U.S. put in Saddam Hussein in Iraq, in order to carry out a purge of the Iraqi communists, which he did with a vengeance. He executed hundreds of members of the Communist Party, as well as Kurds and Shi’ites, using lists supplied by the CIA and the Mossad, Israeli intelligence. So not only did the U.S. supply him with the poison



gas, and not only did they give him the military weaponry and battlefield reports for the war with Iran, he was actually installed by the U.S. Before them, Noriega in Panama was a long-time CIA "asset" involved in keeping track of the drug traffickers. These are the imperialists dogs of war who have slipped the leash, so now they must be put down.

But ultimately the real enemy Washington is gunning for is neither Osama bin Laden nor Saddam Hussein. We already noted that shortly after Bush took office, the U.S. issued a directive for a global "war on terrorism," and that this had been prepared already under the Clinton administration. Now there is new information about a blueprint for the war on Iraq that was prepared for Bush and his vice-president and chief operations officer, Dick Cheney, in September 2000, that is, even before the presidential election. It is a document called "Rebuilding America's Defenses" put out by the conservative think tank, Project for the New American Century. It says that the U.S. military must be the "cavalry on the new American frontier." It also makes it clear that the target is not just Hussein:

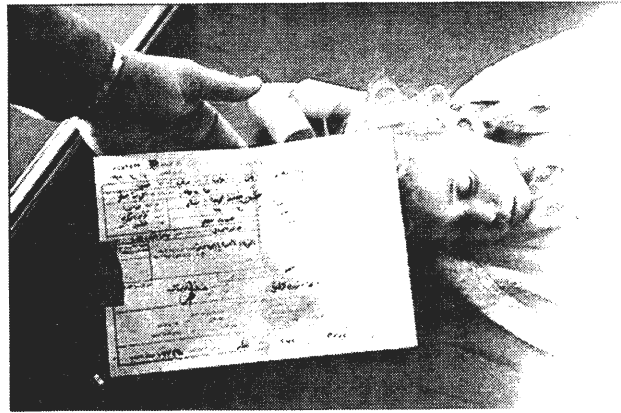
"The United States has for decades sought to play a more permanent role in Gulf regional security. While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein."

This document calls for a "blueprint for maintaining global US pre-eminence, precluding the rise of a great power rival, and shaping the international security order in line with American principles and interests." This is the same theme from a 1992 U.S. strategy document (written under Bush Sr. by none other than Rumsfeld and the guy who is now Cheney's chief of staff) which declared that the U.S. must "discourage advanced industrial nations from challenging our leadership or even aspiring to a larger regional or global role."

In fact, the ultimate target of the new Gulf War are the European and Japanese imperialists, the United States' allies and rivals. There is a lot of talk about this being a war for oil, which it is in part, but not in the simplistic way that some pseudo-leftists pretend. The oil that is pumped out of the Near East doesn't go to the U.S. It is bought by U.S. companies, to be sure, who used to be called the Seven Sisters, Texaco, Exxon, and so on. But the oil the U.S. imports comes mainly from the Western Hemisphere, as well as Angola and Nigeria. The Near East oil goes overwhelmingly to Japan and Europe. The reason the U.S. wants to have a presence in the Gulf is not in order to get that oil for itself, but in order to *control* the flow of oil to those imperialist rivals and allies to prevent them from ever being a "great power rival."

Now how do you fight against this war? Basically most of the left wants to pose it in purely democratic terms, in order to pull in support from the liberals. So they will say things like "no blood for oil." But what does that mean concretely? It means that if the U.S. could control the oil without war, they don't object. But we do, because we oppose imperialism. The reformists have a pacifist appeal, which accepts the framework of capitalism and imperialism.

The League for the Fourth International doesn't call for "beating swords into plowshares" or all of that pacifist imag-



Dan DeLong/Seattle Post-Intelligencer

**Iraqi mother shows death certificate of her 2-year-old daughter who had just died from meningitis for lack of a 50-cent tube, impossible to obtain because of murderous UN sanctions.**

ery. We say that the only way to fight imperialist war is with *class war*. That means concretely mobilizing the working class internationally against the imperialist war. It means striking in the face of war threats, calling for labor boycotts of war material and the like.

This may seem far-fetched in the climate of the United States today, but that climate can change. During the first Gulf War there were in fact strike actions by dock workers in France, in 1990-91, and most recently last fall there were strikes by teachers and others in Italy against the Afghanistan war. In the U.S. if you go back to the early stages of the Vietnam War, it might have seemed fantastical to call for labor strikes against the war. In the early years, construction workers in New York attacked a peace demonstration. But by 1970, workers in the U.S. were fed up with the war, the soldiers were rebelling in Vietnam — they were "fragging" officers (using fragmentation grenades to blow up their own officers in the U.S. Army). General Electric workers at plants producing jet engines for the military struck, and were backed up by hundreds of antiwar protesters. The postal workers struck against Nixon's government at the same time.

Our job as Marxist revolutionaries is not to follow after the present consciousness of the working class, but to state plainly what are the tasks facing working people worldwide, and that means to call to mobilize the proletariat around the globe to use its class power against the imperialists, who are the real warmongers.

As Lenin and Trotsky and the young Communist International proclaimed following the victorious Bolshevik Revolution, which took power in Russia in 1917 and created the first workers state in history, faced with a colonial war, the task of the workers in the imperialist countries is to *defend the enslaved colonial and semi-colonial peoples* as they fight against imperialism. As Lenin taught in World War I, it is necessary to stand for the *defeat of "one's own" imperialist bourgeoisie in an imperialist war*. This is the policy of the League for the Fourth International and its U.S. section, the Internationalist Group. It is the program of Lenin, it is the program of Trotsky, it is the program that we have defended over the past year working together with the comrades of the Revolutionary Reconstruction Group of Bronx

Community College who just recently joined the IG.

And we underline the point that you won't stop imperialist wars through so-called "antiwar" movements. We're talking about a system here, a system that systematically produces poverty, unemployment, racial oppression and war. It produces Enrons. It has wiped out billions of dollars of working people's retirement funds. It produces poverty in Honduras. It produces a total collapse of the economy in Argentina. And at the same time it produces war after war. There was the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the first Gulf War, the war on Yugoslavia, the war on Afghanistan, and now they are going to war against Iraq.

This is not about a particular war, what's involved here is the capitalist system that in order to survive must continually produce these wars. To stop the wars you have to overthrow capitalism through socialist revolution.

So we protest against all sorts of atrocities and oppression, from police brutality to the "war purge" of immigrants here at CUNY, a protest that we initiated last fall together with the RRC. We have marched repeatedly against the detention of Arab immigrants, and against the police state measures undertaken by the bourgeoisie. We mobilize, we intervene in struggles against police state repression, but always emphasizing that it will take international socialist revolution to put an end to racist oppression, imperialist war and capitalist exploitation.

We stress that the objective conditions for that revolution are more than ripe, they are even getting somewhat rotten, and that the key question is revolutionary leadership. It's not that capitalism is on an upward swing. It isn't. In this country, real wages have been falling since 1970. In other countries, the spread of industrial production throughout many of the so-called Third World countries has led to a drastic dropping of living standards. You have people living on pennies a day. The response of much of the left has been to have an "anti-globalization" campaign, as if it's this particular form of capitalism that's causing it. In the 1920s they didn't have "globalization," but they had mass misery in the United States. Honduran workers, weren't producing Nike shoes, they were producing bananas, and they were still living on pennies a day. It's not the particular form of capitalism, it's capitalism.

As Leon Trotsky wrote in the Transitional Program in 1938, in the imperialist epoch, the period of capitalism's decay, the historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of revolutionary leadership of the proletariat.

Coming back to the question of the war, most leftists have a very different policy, because they are basically looking to form an alliance, a "popular front" with some sector of the ruling class. That's what all these antiwar coalitions are about, and that's why they always have anemic pacifist slogans, like "Not in My Name," or "Don't Use Our Grief for War," and so on. This is what groups like the International Socialist Organization or the Workers World Party do with all their endless coalitions and front groups. They are basically pushing for a different foreign policy for U.S. imperialism, a more "people-friendly" or "multi-cultural" policy for U.S. imperialism. What this means is that they are desperately searching for imperialist "doves" among all the war hawks. So they end up tacitly or openly looking to the likes of Secretary of

State Powell, the same Powell who was the butcher who commanded the Desert Slaughter of Iraq from the Pentagon in the 1991 war. Some "dove"!

Another group that used to be Trotskyist, the Spartacist League, praised the example of a black Democratic congresswoman, Barbara Lee, for voting against the unanimous statement for war that passed the congress except for her vote. What they didn't say was that this same Barbara Lee in fact voted for the war appropriations. So it's not that here was some courageous bourgeois politician that was standing up there. This was someone basically appealing to a different constituency and trying to mislead them. A lot of black people and a lot of immigrants in this country are very skeptical and in fact oppose this war, and oppose the police state measures that it's meant at home. But instead of explaining what Barbara Lee was doing, they hailed her.

Many reformists and liberals look to the European imperialist powers, hoping they would perhaps resist. They've been saying there shouldn't be any war without UN sanction. What does that mean, if they can get the UN sanction then it's okay? In fact, that *is* what it means. Yesterday, Saddam Hussein's government said they're going to allow in the UN inspectors to Iraqi installations. We oppose demands for imperialist inspection. This is a form of imperialist domination. The UN is a den of imperialist thieves and their flunkies. Iraq has a right to get any kind of weapon system it can to defend itself.

So now the inspectors can come in. Now they'll have some kind of resolution in the United Nations. And they'll still have the war. Because this war is not about Saddam Hussein resisting the UN, it's not about international law, it's not about Iraq having weapons of mass destruction. It's about imperialist domination of the world and a struggle that's ultimately between the imperialist powers in which the U.S. is seeking to be top dog and impose its hegemony. And to fight this you can't ally with some other imperialists, with the Democratic Party, the UN. You have to fight against the capitalist system, which means organizing the working class internationally.

From the very beginning last fall, we said that it is necessary to defend Afghanistan and Iraq and to defeat imperialism, and that we fight on a class basis against the imperialist war. We fight for the Iraqi working class and toilers to topple Saddam Hussein. We fight for the working people throughout the Near East to overthrow their rulers, all of whom were allies of the U.S. at one time. We call in Israel and Palestine for an Arab-Hebrew workers revolution and a socialist federation of the Near East.

We fight in every part of the world for international socialist revolution. And that is why we seek to forge Trotskyist parties in the United States, in Latin America, throughout the world. The only real way to fight the capitalist-imperialist system that produces the war is to build parties based on the program of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. As Lenin said, the revolutionary party has to be a tribune of the people, and lead the working class and all the oppressed in a struggle for socialist revolution. That is how to fight against the war. That is the program of the Internationalist Group and the League for the Fourth International. ■

## South America in Crisis, Lula Acts as Fireman and Guarantor for the IMF

Declaration of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil  
(LQB) on the Brazilian Elections

# For Proletarian Opposition to the Popular Front! *For International Socialist Revolution!*

### Not One Vote for Any Candidate of the Class-Collaborationist Alliance

*The following article was published in Information Bulletin No. 14 (September 2002) of Vanguarda Operária, newspaper of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil.*

We are on the eve of one of the most important elections – for the presidency, Senate, state governments and federal and state deputies – to take place in Brazil since the end of the military dictatorship of 1964-85. The right-wing bourgeois press and the stock market speculators are presently trying to whip up panic over the “threat” of a victory at the ballot box by Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of the Workers Party (PT). At the same time, the leaders of the CUT labor federation have launched a frantic campaign to round up votes for Lula. They are sowing dangerous illusions. Lula has promised international capital that he will abide by the starvation policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and its demands for payment of the crushing interest on the foreign debt; he supported the U.S./NATO war on Afghanistan, and sealed his submission to “national” capital by choosing as his vice-presidential running mate a “neo-liberal” politician, the leader of the capitalist Liberal Party, known for his ferocious opposition to agrarian reform.

The Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (LQB), section of the League for the Fourth International, and the Class Struggle Caucus (CLC) fight for the revolutionary political independence of the working class against all bourgeois candidates, parties and alliances. We warn that the popular front led by the PT will act to discipline the working class for the benefit of the bankers and industrialists. We warn that the campaigns of the PSTU (Unified Socialist Workers Party) and PCO (Partido da Causa Operária – Workers Cause Party) do not represent a class-struggle opposition to the PT’s class collaboration. On the contrary, anxious to avoid being accused of causing another defeat for Lula, they are preparing to vote for the PT/PL in the second round of the elections. We Trotskyists call for a blank ballot (*voto nulo*) and for proletarian opposition to the

popular front. We emphasize that to achieve the most basic democratic rights, an agrarian revolution, freedom from the imperialist yoke, and the emancipation of all those exploited and oppressed by the poverty produced by the capitalist system requires international socialist revolution.

The Brazilian elections take place in an international conjuncture marked by the growing North American economic recession (combined with cascading accounting scandals in giant U.S. companies) and the *Argentinization* of South America’s Southern Cone. On the military plane, the govern-



Brazilian news magazine headlines, “Lula No Longer Scares People.”



**Members of the educational workers union of the state of Rio de Janeiro, SEPE, vote during 77-day strike. Lula's PT sold out the strike against PT governor Benedita da Silva with help from fake leftists.**

ment of Bush Jr., after viciously bombing and conquering Afghanistan to impose an imperialist protectorate, now seeks to use last year's indiscriminate September 11 attack to launch a new "Desert Slaughter" against Iraq. Under the rubric of a "war against terror," Washington is pursuing a terrorist war to ensure the untrammelled hegemony of U.S. imperialism, with the (sometimes unenthusiastic) support of the other imperialist powers. As in the case of Afghanistan, the world working class must fight against this war by means of class war to defend Iraq and defeat imperialism. We also defend North Korea, China, Cuba and Vietnam, bureaucratically deformed workers states which are the next targets of Bush's crusade against the "axis of evil."

As they intensify the war drive, the imperialist powers – both the United States and its European allies and rivals – are also worried about the political and economic situation in Latin America. South America is seething with agitation against privatizations and the extortionate imperialist debt, which has condemned the working masses to harrowing poverty. In Argentina, five governments in two weeks and default on the foreign debt marked the bankruptcy of capitalism on the Río de la Plata. After the bloodbath last December, in which more than 25 people were murdered by the police, the Peronist government of Eduardo Duhalde is now resorting to death squads to put down street protests. Paraguay has been shaken by protests against government economic policies, with a toll of two dead and dozens wounded. Next came a panic in Montevideo over a "bank holiday" and the free fall of the Uruguayan currency.

In the north of the continent, there is civil war in Colombia where the new president, Álvaro Uribe, is the political agent of

the rightist paramilitary gangs; immediately after this government "made in U.S.A." took office, it decreed a "state of internal commotion" (a state of siege). Next door in Venezuela, a civilian-military coup attempt (backed by Washington) sought to overthrow the populist military regime of Hugo Chávez last April, but was defeated by slum dwellers mobilizing in the streets and the opposition of a sector of the armed forces. Now there is the threat of a new pro-imperialist coup, which must be defeated by an independent class-struggle mobilization of the working people and the urban and rural poor, without giving any political support to the bourgeois Chávez government. In Ecuador, where two years ago an Indian uprising was led by an ill-fated alliance with "Bolivarian" sectors of the army, the sale of electrical power distributors has been

blocked by popular protests. In Peru, the government of former World Bank official Alejandro Toledo was forced to retreat from its plans to privatize power generating plants due to an uprising by the population of the region of Arequipa, fed up with mass layoffs. The raw material for a social upheaval is accumulating; what is lacking above all is a communist leadership to defeat nationalist populism and popular-frontism and lead the struggles toward an internationalist proletarian revolution.

From Wall Street, the White House and the Pentagon to the Palácio do Planalto (the presidential palace in Brasília), the imperialists and their junior partners fear another explosion of popular anger in Brazil over the economic disaster produced by the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso. For months, opinion polls have shown high levels of support for Lula. Cardoso and rightist sections of the bourgeoisie put forward a series of increasingly demagogic pseudo-populist candidates: Roseana Sarney declared herself to be a one-time admirer of the pro-Moscow Communist Party (PCB); she was followed by the ex-Maoist José Serra, now a government minister; then came the "populist" candidate Anthony Garotinho of the PSB (a bourgeois "socialist" party headed by the rancher Miguel Arraes), who ordered the brutal military occupation of the Rio de Janeiro slums; and finally a "Labor Front" (PPS, PDT, PTB) put forward Ciro Gomes, the former manager of the Real Plan (Cardoso's economic policy of halting runaway inflation by producing mass unemployment), who brags of being a "Harvard Boy." Always in the past the leading bourgeois sectors were able to come up with an "anti-Lula" candidate, but this time the strategy hasn't paid off, at least so far. There has





**Landless peasants of the MST arrested as they occupy estate of President Cardoso's children, 24 March 2002. Now Lula condemns land occupations.**

been a sharp fall in the São Paulo Stock Market (the Bovespa) due to "skepticism" about the "leftist" PT leader. Yet the chairman of the party, José Dirceu, explained that the PT "has become a party of the center-left." Its candidate now aspires to being a "reliable" administrator of the bourgeoisie's affairs.

Lula has bound the workers who vote for the PT, a reformist workers party, to supposed bourgeois allies through a popular front. This was a constant feature of Lula's three previous campaigns for the presidency. In the 1989 elections, there was the Frente Brasil Popular coalition; in 1994 and again in 1998, it was the União do Povo (Union of the People) with the political bosses Brizola (PDT) and large landowner Arraes (PSB). Today, Lula has pledged his allegiance to the bourgeoisie by choosing as his running mate José Alencar, the multimillionaire textile magnate from the state of Minas Gerais and leader of the Liberal Party, the political vehicle of the ultra-reactionary Universal Church of the Kingdom of God. The name and members of the coalition vary, but the essence remains the same: the popular front chains the exploited and oppressed to the class enemy through a class-collaborationist alliance. From Spain in the 1930s to Chile in the '70s, the lesson of history hits you between the eyes: by acting as a roadblock to revolutionary struggle and repressing the workers, opening the road to reaction, the popular front is paid for with workers' blood.

### **Lula Signs the IMF's "Aid" Pact Swindle**

In this case, the PT tops' betrayal of the workers they claim to represent is very concrete. Coinciding with the final lap of the presidential campaign, the IMF demanded of Cardoso that as the condition for a new "emergency" loan of US\$30 billion, he get all the main candidates to agree to "respect" (i.e., make the payments on) the agreement with this international bankers' cartel. In other words, as the price for supposedly heading off a massive flight of capital – which is already underway, despite the

IMF pact – and securing investors' "confidence," it demanded an explicit commitment by the "opposition" that it would pay off this blood money. And Lula, the real recipient of this demand by the imperialist creditors, gave the required approval. An official note from the PT (dated 8 August 2002), bearing the signature of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, declared: "We accept the pact that was signed as inevitable." Speaking to the press, Lula compared going to the IMF with "going to the dentist.... You only go when you have to" (*Jornal da Tarde*, 9 August). It would be more accurate to compare it with going to a medieval doctor who "cures" fever by putting leeches on the patient's body to suck out the blood.

We of the LQB and CLC warn that with this commitment to the

masters of the world capitalist markets, Lula, candidate of the popular front, is mortgaging a future PT/PL government, condemning the working people to suffer the consequences of the country's looting by the sharks of Wall Street and their partners in crime on the São Paulo stock exchange. This is the equivalent of the letter Salvador Allende signed in 1970 giving constitutional guarantees in the name of his Unidad Popular coalition, promising not to touch the army officer corps, which prepared the bloodbath that took place in Chile three years later. It means pledging loyalty and obedience to the capitalist system, even before the "decision" of the ballot boxes, which amounts to a death sentence for thousands of workers, peasants and students who live and work in conditions of horrendous poverty. And when the bourgeoisie no longer needs Lula's services, he will leave the working people defenseless in the face of the bloody reaction that will seek to "settle accounts" with the subjects of capitalist rule.

Lula's note came after a declaration of support for his candidacy by 100 Brazilian capitalists, led by the sugar and liquor magnate José Pessoa de Queiroz Bisneto. Lula says he is fighting for "a sovereign nation of justice and solidarity, which will only exist if we establish a new economic model in this country." This is also the siren song of the "anti-globalization" movement which at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre and around the globe proclaims that "another world is possible," and which is singing the praises of Lula's candidacy, promising a new dawn for the Brazilian people. What kind of other world or new economic model will it be when they are required to pay tens of billions of dollars every year in interest to the bankers, and profits to the imperialist investors? The PT leader has also committed himself to maintaining a "primary surplus" in the government budget equal to 4 percent of the Gross National Product (GNP). This surplus was extracted from the thousands of new schools

that were not built, tens of thousands of teachers who were not hired, housing that was not built for the homeless, and farmland that was not handed over to landless peasants in the hoax of "land reform."

Let's take a closer look at this supposed "aid." Of the US\$30 billion, US\$10 billion will never even leave the hands of the IMF, since Brazil will have to pay this very same amount to the Fund in 2003. Another US\$10 billion were never in the IMF's coffers in the first place, because they consist of an "authorization" for Brazil to use its own reserves. (The IMF "permitted" the government to lower the level of monetary reserves from US\$15 billion to US\$5 billion; at the beginning of the Real Plan, the reserves stood at US\$70 billion.) As for the "new money," properly speaking, only US\$6 billion will come in this year, which Cardoso will then drain off into financial speculation. Of course, this ridiculous sum cannot clean up Brazil's finances. The external deficit of the balance of payments, which in 1964 was US\$2.5 billion, and at the beginning of Cardoso's two terms of office in 1995 was US\$150 billion, is now hovering around US\$250 billion, making possible the bleeding of US\$30 billion a year in debt payments and profit transfers. (From 1995 to 2001, the Cardoso regime shipped out US\$310 billion!) While lavishing a feast on the imperialist bankers, this government imposed misery on the working class that is unparalleled in recent times. According to official figures, "extreme" poverty today besets 53 million Brazilians. According to the same government statistics, in 2000 unemployment, one of the worst scourges of the working class, affected 11.4 million people (in reality it was far more).

The imperialists threaten to strangle the country if it fails to follow IMF orders, at the same time as they fear an implosion of the Brazilian economy that could make the international financial structure totter and even collapse. To get an idea just how irrational these would-be masters of the globe are, consider the recent article by Constantine Menges, a former member of the U.S. president's National Security Council, which portrays a Lula government as part of a new "axis of evil":

"A new terrorist and nuclear weapons/ballistic missile

threat could be arising from an axis including Fidel Castro of Cuba, the Chávez regime in Venezuela, and a new radical president elected in Brazil, all tied to Iraq, Iran and China.... A Castro/Chávez/Da Silva axis would amount to uniting 43 years of political war against the U.S. by Castro with the oil wealth of Venezuela and the ballistic missiles, nuclear weapons and economic potential of Brazil."

—*Washington Times*, 7 August

This may seem extreme, but it represents the knee-jerk thought of some sectors which are not lacking in influence. Recall that the present drain of dollars from Brazil was provoked by a remark about "Swiss bank accounts" made by U.S. Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill. And let's not forget the famous phrase of Henry Kissinger, vowing to "make the [Chilean] economy scream" under Allende. This was "Track One" of U.S. policy against the Unidad Popular government; "Track Two" was to prepare the military coup.

As his competitors were falling by the wayside one by one, Lula devoted himself to reassuring the capitalists of his reliability. The PT's economic program promises to maintain Cardoso's privatizations, even after the bruising failure in the electrical industry, where massive power outages (blackouts affecting 100 million people) were accompanied by an explosion in electricity rates. (Now it is the "multinational" companies that are abandoning this sector, along with telecommunications, due to low profitability.) Lula has condemned land occupations by the Rural Landless Workers Movement (MST), including that of an estate owned by President Cardoso's children. He refused to participate in the campaign against the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA), a campaign promoted by the Catholic bishops' conference and popular-frontist left groups like the PSTU, although it consisted of no more than a harmless plebiscite (which Lula characterized as "fooling around" by the "infantile" left). Now he has extended his "arc of alliances" to include the likes of Leônidas Pires, a general who participated in the military dictatorship and was responsible, among other things, for the murder of three workers at the National Steel Company (CSN) during the 1988 Volta Redonda strike.



*Leia e assine*

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During the 77-day Rio education workers' strike this year, the PSTU acted as a transmission belt for the PT left, helping to sell out the strike. The pseudo-Trotskyist PSTU is now calling for votes for Lula, candidate of the popular front.

The "commitment" of a Lula government to the labor movement was indicated by his position toward the recent teachers' strike in the state of Rio de Janeiro. According to the theses of PSTU supporters in the union, the state education secretary said, "When Lula came to Rio during the strike he took the position that the government should deduct strike days from the pay of the strikers." Shortly afterwards, Rio's strikebreaking "comrade governor" Benedita da Silva, a member of the PT, called on the Military Police to protect her government residence, the Palácio Guanabara, from an occupation by the strikers. Her actions were nothing new for the PT. In the state of Rio Grande do Sul, two years ago the PT government of Olívio Dutra defeated a strike by teachers fighting against their starvation wages (US\$150 a month), as did PT mayor Marta Suplicy in São Paulo last year. And don't forget the viciousness with which the ex-PT ex-mayor of the city of São Paulo, Erundinha, repressed an important bus drivers' strike. All this is undeniable proof of the capitalist character of governments headed by the PT, whether or not they include direct representatives of the bourgeoisie. "Lula No Longer Scares People," announced the cover of the news magazine, *Istoé* (9 August). "Wall Street is no longer afraid of Lula's PT. Formerly viewed as an enemy of the market, the PT leader has changed his image," *O Globo* (11 August) reported. And not without reason.

### PSTU, PCO: The Tail of the Popular Front

In the face of the most recent moves by the PT's eternal candidate, the different varieties of the pseudo-socialist left have reacted in various ways. Within the PT, the O Trabalho (Labor) group, represented within the CUT leadership by Júlio Turra, launched a campaign to build committees on the slogan "Lula for President to Break with the IMF." These followers of the French pseudo-Trotskyist leader Pierre Lambert announced a "struggle

for the soul of the PT," calling for a return to the party's "historic" program. Yet this program (land reform, housing, more money for schools, etc.) was always reformist, never going beyond the bounds of capitalism, and has now been abandoned as superfluous adornment as PT leaders contemplate the delights of government office. Despite the refusal of the PT leadership to break with the IMF and the Liberal Party, the Lambertistes and other left currents in the PT who claim to be socialist (such as Articulação de Esquerda) go on campaigning for Lula, this time on the implicit program, "Without Fear of Being Happy with the Prerogatives of Power." (In his first try for the presidency, Lula's PT campaigned on the slogan, "Without Fear of Being Happy.")

Disillusioned with the "new Lula," many left-wing PTers and CUT members are now placing their hopes in Pedro Stédile, the main political leader of the MST landless peasant movement. To be sure, Stédile continues to use the "historic" discourse of struggle against injustice and for a society of "solidarity"; every once in a while the word "socialism" crosses his lips. In an interview with *O Globo*, another member of the MST leadership, Gilmar Mauro, said "we want to make a revolution, to redistribute income and put an end to poverty" (quoted in an article in *Rebelión*, 27 March, under the title "MST Still Determined to Go As Far as Agrarian Revolution"). It's necessary to recognize the great courage of the landless peasants and the high price the MST has paid in prison sentences (2,170 members jailed from 1989 to 2001) and murders of its members (125 *companheiros* assassinated by police, soldiers and *jagunços* [gun thugs] among more than 1,500 murders in the countryside over the past two decades). But redistributing income is far from constituting a "revolution," and the reality of the MST's actions is that they are aimed at pressuring the government to distribute land. José Rainha Jr., leader of the MST in the Pontal do Paranapanema area of the state of São Paulo, who was the target of an attempted assassination this past January, said that the land occupations "are our only means to exert pressure for a land reform to be carried out" (quoted by *Rebelión*).

In addition to the PT, two left organizations are putting forward candidates at the national level: the PSTU, followers of the late Argentine pseudo-Trotskyist *caudillo* Nahuel Moreno, and the PCO, prodigal sons of the likewise pseudo-Trotskyist Jorge Altamira, leader of the Argentine Partido Obrero (Workers Party).

The PSTU candidate, José Maria de Almeida, claims to oppose the popular-front policy of the PT and Lula. But the fact is that in 1989 the PSTU was part of the Frente Brasil Popular. In any case, its "opposition" to the popular-front candidate is only a

smokescreen. At the beginning of 2002, the PSTU offered to the PT that if the latter would join it in a "left front," it would withdraw its "pre-candidacy." Now the Morenoite paladins of a "democratic" (i.e., not socialist) revolution are getting ready to support Lula in the second round of the elections. Almeida stated this explicitly at the congress of the Rio health workers union (Sindisprev) in July, adding that if the PT would return to its original program the PSTU would give up its own campaign. The Morenoites' practice has always been to tag along at the tail of any popular "movement," trying to give it a more leftist look, rather than fighting for a Leninist vanguard based on the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution. The PSTU went along with Lula in all his maneuverings up to the point that the PT/PL alliance was so openly right-wing that it couldn't swallow it any more. It is incapable of presenting an opposition *on principle* to class collaboration, and its temporary, sham opposition will succumb to the pressure of the popular front at the decisive moment.

In the union of education workers of the state of Rio, the SEPE, the PSTU's supporters have acted as a transmission belt for left-wing sectors of the PT. After Benedita da Silva took office as governor and made it clear that she was not going to back the education workers' struggle, Lula supporters in the union sought to end the strike quickly. But faced with opposition from the ranks who had been energized by this powerful struggle, the leadership was forced to continue the strike for some time longer. In the final and decisive union assembly, after 77 days on strike, the Morenoite fraction threw in the towel: following the PT's lead, they abandoned the struggle and helped end the strike. In their theses for the SEPE's Tenth Congress in August, the PSTU supporters claim, "The balance sheet of this year's strike has to begin with the statement that we won a victory, although the gains are small"! Shameless! With such "victories," what would a defeat look like? But how could they say anything else — after all, they had to justify their own betrayal which helped bury the strike.

In reality, the PSTU is also a reformist party, as you can easily see by taking a look at their paper *Opinião Socialista* (29 August) where they talk *ad nauseam* about how "the population must control the police." These "socialists" want to "build a Unified Civil Police which defends the interests of the poor and the outlying barrios, and whose function is to protect the physical integrity of people and the possessions of the working people"! The idea that under a capitalist regime you can somehow have a police force which serves the working people and has "a democratic internal structure" and "elected officers" is a dangerous social-democratic fantasy. It propagates the deadly illusion that the working class can simply take the reins of the capitalist state and use it to defend its own interests.

We Trotskyists of the LQB/CLC stress that the police are the iron fist of the bourgeoisie, the machinery of repression against the workers and the urban and rural poor. Since they (together with the army) are the backbone of the capitalist state, they cannot be reformed into their opposite. We organized the struggle to throw the police out of the municipal workers union of Volta Redonda, for which we were repressed by the bourgeois courts, while the charlatans of the "LBI" (Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista) acted as advisors and

mouthpieces for the Zubatovists (police "unionists"). In 1997, when various sectors of the police clashed with their masters in the state governments, the PSTU hailed this "strike." The LQB/CLC, in contrast, warned against the ominous bonapartist character of this military revolt of the capitalist state's uniformed gun thugs (see "Brazil: Crisis of the Capitalist State," *The Internationalist* No. 3, September-October 1997 and "Latin America: Opportunist Left Embraces the Cops," *The Internationalist* No. 4, January-February 1998).

The Causa Operária (PCO) candidate, Rui Costa Pimenta, is practicing the same phony "leftist" demagoguery in a campaign that hardly differs from that of the PSTU. The PCO, which voted for Lula in 1989, 1994 (under pressure from its mentor Altamira) and again in 1998, is now getting ready to support the candidate of the popular front on the election's second round. That is what its members say, and the same can be deduced from the PCO candidate's speech this past May 31. Costa Pimenta revives the old slogan which Causa Operária supported in the PT, "*Quem bate cartão, não vota em patrão*" (Whoever punches a time card doesn't vote for the boss). It adds, "whoever punches a time card in the textile industry... cannot vote for an exploiter like José Alencar".... But for Lula, yes?

What is characteristic of the PCO campaign, like that of the PSTU (together with the propaganda of the overwhelming majority of the Brazilian left today), is that they present the struggle as eminently "democratic," which is to say, bourgeois, in its class character. Referring to the approval of the accord with the IMF by Lula and the PT leadership, the PCO states: "This is an elementary question of democracy, that is, of national sovereignty and the struggle of the countries oppressed by imperialism, as in the case of Brazil and all of Latin America." Nothing could be further from the truth. It is the ABC of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution that the struggle against the imperialist pillage of Brazil, as of all semi-colonial countries, cannot be won without overthrowing the capitalist regime and state. It is necessary to establish a workers and peasants government through workers revolution, backed up by an agrarian revolution of the poor peasants, which would expropriate the big landholders and capitalists, both imperialist and domestic, and, contrary to Third Worldist ideology, would extend to the proletariat of the imperialist centers.

The PCO and PSTU talk, for example, of non-payment of the foreign debt. But how can this be implemented under capitalist rule? The attempt to present the question as merely "democratic," nothing more than the defense of the "sovereignty" of the oppressed nation, deceives the workers. Do the pseudo-Trotskyist candidates think the imperialist bankers and governments will not react? Look at Argentina: the Argentine government decided to default on the foreign debt, and immediately the IMF condemned the country to drown in poverty. Even an isolated workers state would have a hard time resisting the economic pressure of imperialism.

We Trotskyists emphasize that in order to put an end to the imperialist debt it is necessary to expropriate all the capitalists, not only the banks (which could be a measure to aid capitalists facing bankruptcy, as was the case in Mexico in 1982), and not



Eraldo Peres/AP



**Most of the left opposes Free Trade Agreement of the Americas on nationalist basis, defending “sovereignty” rather than fighting imperialism. Right: MST leader Pedro Stédile with PT congressman Walter Pires.**

only foreign-owned companies. It is a task that can only be accomplished through *international* socialist revolution.

For example, in the plebiscite against the FTAA, there was much talk of saying “no to the domination of the United States.” Only the U.S.? What’s that supposed to mean? What about the domination of the European imperialists? This is not an abstract or rhetorical question. At the World Social Forum (in Porto Alegre last January), the tone was set by *bourgeois* “anti-globalization” tendencies such as the ATTAC group, based in France, together with social democrats who see a common market with the European Union as an alternative to the FTAA. Yet in Argentina, most of the collapsed banks were bought up several years ago by *European* banks. Many of the “hypermarkets” that were sacked by residents of poor districts belong to the Carrefour chain, a French company. The company which privatized water delivery in Tucumán was Vivendi, also French; Repsol, a Spanish enterprise, took over the bulk of the former state oil monopoly, the YPF. *Brazilian and Latin American working people will not be liberated by replacing the domination of Yankee imperialism with that of European imperialism.*

The second part of the plebiscite consisted of condemning the turnover of the Alcântara military base to the United States military. There was talk of defending the *sovereignty* of Brazil, against the Americans’ interest in the Amazon. The main slogan was, “Sovereignty, yes, FTAA no.” We Trotskyists also oppose the FTAA and the sale of the base to the Pentagon, but for a different reason: we want to strike a blow against imperialism. *Sovereignty* is the unrestricted control of a ruling class over a particular territory. If the Brazilian military had full sovereignty over Amazonia, what would they use it for? To smash leftist guerrillas as they did in the 1970s, to help the big landlords expel landless peasants, and now to attack members of the Colombian FARC. What do you suppose are the objectives of the “Amazon Basin Vigilance System” recently inaugurated by the Brazilian army? We Marxists defend the *independence* of the colonial and semi-colonial countries and fight for their liberation from the imperialist yoke; we fight against imperialist aggression, but we do not uphold the *sovereignty* under bourgeois rule of any capitalist country.

Renzo Gostoli/AP



### The Tail of the Tail of the Popular Front

Beyond the parties which are running candidates for president, there are a number of other groups and tendencies in Brazil which claim to be Trotskyist. The Partido Operário Revolucionário (POR), followers of the Bolivian pseudo-Trotskyist leader Guillermo Lora, announced on the front page of their paper, “Against the Bourgeois Parties and Conciliatory Reformism... For a Programmatic Blank Ballot” (*Massas*, 19-23 August). But upon opening the paper we find that the program to which they refer is the “anti-imperialist united front,” a variant of popular front adapted to semi-colonial countries. The “AUF” was the acronym for the betrayal by Lora’s POR in 1971, when it mortgaged the struggle of the heroic Bolivian miners to an illusory “alliance” with supposedly “anti-imperialist” officers of the bourgeois army.

A group which spun out of the Loraite orbit is the Fração Trotskyista, based in Fortaleza. On the cover of its newspaper, it also calls to “Cast a Blank Ballot on the First Round” (*Vanguarda Proletária*, May-June 2002). But on the inside it vituperates against the elementary demand to expel the police from the unions and against those who consider “the recent strike movements by police to be reactionary.”

Among the various fake-Trotskyist groups which have scandalously supported the presence of police in the workers movement there are the con-men of the LBI (Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista), which is also calling for the *voto nulo* in these elections. The LBI split from Causa Operária in 1994 without renouncing CO’s fundamental outlook. It continued to defend the position of voting for popular-front candidate Lula in 1989, with the nationalist argument that in that year the PT “only” aligned itself with representatives of the national bourgeoisie and not (supposedly) with the IMF. The LBI subsequently found its calling as a team of advisors for the group of Zubatovists (pro-cop “unionists”) that was imposed by the bourgeois courts against the municipal workers of Volta Redonda. The LBI thereby showed the real class content of *its* politics, exposing its occasional lying words against the cops as a failed attempt to cover its own tracks.

Now the LBI announces that “the PT is not a workers party” because it does not have “a socialist strategy” (*Luta Operária*, July 2002). Expressing the illusion that the reformists might at some point have had a socialist strategy, the claim by the LBI is significant as an example of the nostalgia of the entire opportunist left for the “original PT.” For genuine Marxists, the PT is an example of what Lenin called a “bourgeois workers party,” a party that grew out of and is based on the workers movement, but with a leadership and policy that serve the bourgeoisie. It is fundamentally different from a party that really serves the interests of the proletariat, a revolutionary workers party. Far from having a “socialist strategy,” reformist workers parties throughout the world are mortal enemies of socialism and proletarian revolution. At the same time, the PT and other bourgeois workers parties are not the same as purely capitalist parties such as the PSDB, PSB, PDT, etc., even when some of them use a “*trabalhista*” (laborite) discourse derived from the heritage of Getúlio Vargas and Vargasite populism in Brazil. The PT subordinates itself to “alliances” with the direct representatives of the bourgeoisie precisely in order to tie the working-class ranks openly to the ruling class.

The construction of the vanguard party requires drawing a sharp line between Leninist conceptions and the “crystallized confusion” spread by the centrists on this question, as on all others. Despite the dreams, illusions and sorrowful nostalgia of the centrists and reformists, there never was a golden era of the PT. The Workers Party grew out of the great workers struggles at the end of the 1970s and beginning of the ’80s, but its program and leadership were always reformist. Its increasingly rightward motion, its anti-communist purges in the ’90s, its “popular-democratic” politics, were the expression of this social-democratic character. As part of the struggle for the political independence of the working class, revolutionary Marxists could have considered giving critical support to some PT candidates in the early years when, despite their reformist program and strategy, these candidates ran against those of the bourgeois parties. But once the PT subordinated itself to bourgeois “allies” in a popular front from 1989 on, to vote for the candidates of the PT has meant supporting class collaboration. The popular front is a bourgeois entity against which the proletariat must draw an irreconcilable and intransigent class line.

### The Struggle for Authentic Trotskyism

Lula’s alliance with the Liberal Party has caused a lot of commotion on the Brazilian left. In some cases, even as they criticize the PT’s new turn to the right, leftist tendencies tail after the evolution of their maternal home. In the state of Rio de Janeiro, two years ago there was a split from the PSTU that gave rise to the Movimento de Luta Socialista (MLS – Socialist Struggle Movement). Last year the MLS won the leadership of the health workers union, Sindisprev. It declared (in its supporters’ theses for the Tenth Congress of the SEPE) that: “It is necessary and urgent for the workers, the organized left movement, the unions, the homeless and the landless to establish a huge bloc in order to build their own project, going beyond the bourgeois electoral framework, which will really consider the project of overthrowing capitalism and building socialism.” But this same year, in the

same month of August, in one of its rapid zig-zags, the MLS took the work “socialist” out of its name, rebaptising itself the Movimento Terra, Trabalho e Liberdade (MTL – Movement for Land, Labor and Liberty), in order to fit in better with Lula’s popular front. In reality, what the “new” MTL proposes is an extra-parliamentary popular front in the streets.

The struggle against class collaboration is not limited to the bourgeois electoral framework, it is a constant in any class struggle. In the case of Sindisprev, which was in the forefront of the hundred-day strike against the National Social Security Institute last year, it is necessary to mobilize all the public sector workers, in particular the most combative sectors, including the *matamosquitos* (mosquito sprayers). Thousands of these workers were fired by José Serra, then Cardoso’s minister of health and now candidate for the presidency, even though the epidemic of dengue fever continued, causing more than 100,000 to fall ill and killing dozens of victims. (Among the laid-off workers, Serra is now known as “presidengue” [the president of dengue fever].) But the leadership of the Sindisprev health workers – that is, the MTL together with the PSTU, the PCdoB and the PT – abandoned the fired workers. Recently, in collusion with PT governor Benedita da Silva, in a macabre auction they rehired barely 1,000 of the almost 6,000 fired workers on a temporary basis. Faced with the dengue fever crisis, what was called for was a fight for workers control of the health system, occupying the hospitals and forcing the rehiring of all the fired workers, with full rights, which was urgently needed to fight the epidemic.

In the range of left tendencies present in Rio, there are those (like Força Socialista) who continue to support the PT and even vote for the strikebreaker Benedita, despite the lessons of the SEPE strike. On the other hand, there are sectors which, protesting against the Lula-Alencar alliance, have been evolving to the left, albeit empirically. The Organização Marxista Proletária (OMP) recently announced its break from the PT, stating in its political declaration: “The PT is today a party of order, of the bourgeois order. Of conciliating labor with capital. Nothing more can be done inside the PT.” True, but hardly new. The OMP correctly cites the case of the SEPE strike: “What was the attitude of Benedita da Silva’s government during the last strike by educational workers in the state of Rio de Janeiro? Answer: repression of the movement along the same lines as the bourgeois governments, whether civilian or military, have treated workers throughout history.” Also correct. But with the PT’s social-democratic politics, the central thrust of each of Lula’s presidential campaigns has been to demonstrate that the PT is “a party of the bourgeois order.” The repression against teachers by Governor Dutra in Rio Grande do Sul, by the mayors Edmilson (Força Socialista) in Belém and Marta Suplicy in São Paulo, all of them heads of PT governments, continues to be a demonstration of the meaning of this order for the working people.

The OMP, which heads up the “United Camp of the CUT Left,” an amorphous trade-union grouping which is active in the Rio SEPE (and not all of whose supporters call for a blank ballot in the elections), was the only left tendency which voted together with the Class Struggle Caucus against the shameful abandonment of the 77-day strike. Its Declaration states: “the pro-

*continued on page 42*



## Class Struggle Caucus Theses at Rio Teachers Union Congress

### **“Votar Nulo!” – No Vote to Any Candidate of the Class-Collaborationist Alliance**

*The following theses were presented by the Class Struggle Caucus (CLC) to the 10th Congress of the Union of Education Workers of the state of Rio de Janeiro (SEPE-RJ), held this August, opposing the union bureaucrats' line of support to the popular-front candidacy of Workers Party (PT) leader Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in the presidential elections. The CLC was initiated by our comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (see “Brazil: Program of the Class Struggle Caucus,” The Internationalist No. 4, January-February 1998).*

The question of casting a “blank ballot” (*votar nulo*) intersects the central element of Marxist politics: the fight for the political independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie. It is also a subject of the utmost relevance in the face of the presidential elections scheduled to be held this year. The LQB and CLC are obviously opposed to voting for any of the bourgeois candidates, or to Lula, who is leading a “popular front,” having made an alliance with the Liberal Party. Since the presidential elections of 1989, when the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT – Workers Party) formed the Frente Brasil Popular, it has been a constant feature of the PT's politics always to seek a class-collaborationist alliance in order to appear reasonable to petty-bourgeois voters and the capitalists. Nullifying the class character of the PT's candidacy, they put forward a *bourgeois* coalition.

1. We of the LQB and CLC fight at all times for the revolutionary political independence of the proletariat from the class enemy. As Leninists, we do not reject participation in bourgeois elections; on the contrary, when possible we seek to intervene to use them as a platform to denounce the bourgeoisie and make propaganda for a revolutionary workers party. We can do this by putting forward our own candidates or by giving critical support to the candidate of a given workers party, as Lenin noted in his book *“Left-Wing” Communism – An Infantile Disorder* [1920].

2. Unlike the anarchists, we Marxists of the LQB and CLC do not hold that it is a principle to cast a blank ballot. Nor do we put an equal sign between the current Brazilian political regime and the 1964-85 military dictatorship. At that time it was correct to oppose participating in the electoral farce put on by the military rulers, which served only as a pseudo-democratic

façade for a regime maintained by bayonets. Given that in Brazil citizens are legally obligated to vote, this opposition took the form of the *voto nulo*, which even the Stalinists of the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) sometimes employed, at the same time as the PCB played the dictatorship's game by participating in the nefarious Brazilian Democratic Movement [the dictatorship's kept bourgeois “opposition”].

3. The present Brazilian political system is bourgeois “democracy” in the limited form this takes in capitalist countries of belated development, with all the corruption and brutal repression against the workers, peasants and urban and rural poor that this entails. It is correct to seek to intervene in such elections in order to unmask the “democratic” lies of the bourgeoisie. But this cannot be done by voting for a bourgeois alliance and candidacy.

4. Marxists, Leninists and Trotskyists always seek to draw a *class line* to separate the exploited and oppressed from the parties and political formations of the capitalist exploiters and oppressors. As Engels stated at the London Conference of the First International in 1871:

“We want the abolition of classes. What is the means of achieving it? The only means is political domination of the proletariat.... However, our politics must be working-class politics. The workers' party must never be the tagtail of any bourgeois party; it must be independent and have its goal and its own policy” [“Apropos of Working-Class Political Action,” September 1871].

This is the line of principle; any tactic must express this strategy.

5. Since the time workers parties were first established in Western Europe, attempts began to chain them to the bourgeoisie through class-collaborationist coalitions. The first, at the beginning of the 20th century, was that of Millerand in France, a response by the reformists within the social-democratic party to the upheaval among the workers caused by the Dreyfus *affaire*. In the 1920s the same tactic was called the “cartel of the left.” When the Communist International under Stalin adopted this policy in 1935, it was called the “People's Front.” Later in Allende's Chile it bore the name “Unidad Popular.” In Brazil it has been called the Frente Brasil Popular (Brazil Popular Front) in 1989 and the União do Povo (Union of the

People) in 1994. Whatever the name, they are all variants of the same popular-front policy.

6. In a letter on the events in Spain in 1936, when the Civil War broke out, Trotsky noted that the popular front “is the *main question of proletarian class strategy* for this epoch” [“The Dutch Section and the International,” 15-16 July 1936]. He also stressed that fascism and the popular front were the bourgeoisie’s last weapons for preventing workers revolution: the popular front served as a roadblock to divert the march of the workers, and then fascism served as an assassin to wipe out the disoriented workers movement.

7. There is a direct connection: the popular front paves the way for fascism and reaction. In France in the 1930s, the Popular Front led by the Socialist Blum (with the support of the Communist Party) led to the bonapartist dictatorship of Hitler’s ally Pétain. In Spain, the Stalinists’ sabotage of the Civil War in the name of the Popular Front closed the door to workers revolution and opened the door for Franco’s bloody dictatorship. In Indonesia, the Communist Party chained the oppressed to bourgeois nationalist president Sukarno, leading to the massacre of 1965 in which more than a million leftists, rebellious peasants, unionized workers and members of ethnic minorities were slaughtered. In Chile, Allende blocked the struggle of the copper miners and the workers of the *cordones industriales* around Santiago; the result was the victory of Pinochet. Errors on the question of the popular front are paid for with workers’ blood.

8. For some time now the left has been expressing criticisms of the line of Lula and his Articulação tendency of allying the PT with one or another bourgeois party and politician in order to reassure Wall Street and the São Paulo Stock Market (the Bovespa). After participating in the Frente Brasil Popular in 1989, the PSTU, followers of the late Nahuel Moreno of Argentina, decided to adopt a “critical” stance towards the União do Povo in ’94. As we wrote on the presidential elections of 1998, the supposed “alternative” put forward by the PSTU, PCO, and almost the entire Brazilian left “is one or another version of the popular front; in other words, a coalition which subordinates the working people to a supposed alliance with sectors of the exploiters. The ‘Union of the People’ promoted by the reformist Partido dos Trabalhadores (the Workers Party of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva), with its candidate Lula; the return to an earlier version of the popular front (Frente Brasil Popular) wished for and promoted by the PSTU (Partido Socialista dos Trabalhadores Unificado, followers of the late Nahuel Moreno); or more ‘radical’ versions of the same promoted by various left groups – in reality what we are seeing is a syphilitic chain of popular frontism. Against this, we of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil/League for the Fourth International call on the workers movement to break with the bourgeoisie! For class struggle, not class collaboration!” (see the LQB declaration “Against the Cardoso/IMF Onslaught: Fight for Workers Revolution!” in *The Internationalist* No. 6, November-December 1998).

9. We recently witnessed a characteristic example of the dire consequences of an incorrect line on the popular front. The PT left in the state of Rio de Janeiro originally did not want an

alliance with gubernatorial candidate Anthony Garotinho of the PDT (the bourgeois populist Democratic Labor Party), but eventually gave in to the pressure exerted by Lula & Co. The SEPE education workers union launched a strike in March 2000, when Governor Garotinho was still in office, living in the Guanabara Palace. While the strike’s demands were certainly just, it was conceived by the union bureaucracy – linked to the PT left and the PSTU – as a pressure tactic, a maneuver, in the framework of the presidential election campaign. When Garotinho resigned his post in order to pursue his presidential bid, vice-governor Benedita da Silva of the PT took over as governor. The union leadership and the PSTU and PT reformists believed the strike would then be victorious. But the opposite was the case: faithful to its commitments to the bourgeoisie, the new state government of the “PT alone” followed its popular-front policy without the presence of the PDT and PSB (a bourgeois “socialist” party headed by the rancher Miguel Arraes), and called the Military Police to repress the strike. Devoid of a perspective, the reformists of the PT left, PSTU and MLS (Socialist Struggle Movement, a split from the PSTU) abandoned the strike. The LQB, initiators of the Class Struggle Caucus, fought this back-stabbing against the education workers; other oppositionists in the SEPE also voted against the so-called “interruption” of the strike. But while they rejected the abandonment of the strike, these groups did not and still do not have a revolutionary perspective for victory, which requires a *political* battle to break the grip of reformism, which leads to popular frontism. It is necessary to break with the PT and the popular front!

10. The question of the popular front goes beyond purely trade-union struggles; it affects all struggles. For example, five years ago there was a supposed “strike” by police, led by the Military Police killers. With their class-collaborationist outlook, all the reformists, from Articulação, Democracia Socialista (Mandelites) and O Trabalho (Lambertistes) in the PT, to the PSTU and the Stalinist PCdoB, *all* supported the cop “strike.” A fake-Trotskyist centrist group, the Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista (LBI), made some criticisms of the police while trying to get as close as possible to the “strikers” in the name of the struggle against repression. Yet the clearest example of the LBI’s real politics was its role as brain trust to a certain Artur Fernandes, who acted as advocate for the police when we fought to expel all cops from the Volta Redonda municipal workers union (SFPMVR). This will go down in the history of this centrist group’s zigzags, while now in the year 2002, Artur’s Zubatovists (police “unionists”), with the collaboration of the PSTU, barely fought the turning over of the SFPMVR, Volta Redonda’s second largest “union,” to the rightist Força Sindical federation. So in a flash, the Zubatovists, former allies of the LBI and PSTU, took their leave of police-unionist politics as suddenly as they appeared. Going back to the fight we waged, we insist always that the police, as Engels noted, are the armed fist of the bourgeoisie, the backbone of the capitalist state, and not some kind of “workers in uniform” as the reformists pretend.

*continued on page 42*



## Trotskyist Steel Worker on Two Decades of Class Battles

# Workers Struggle vs. Popular Frontism in Brazil

As we go to press, opinion polls show Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva far ahead in the second round of presidential elections in Brazil. Long-time leader of the reformist Workers Party (PT), Lula heads a "popular front" of class collaboration with capitalist politicians. Our comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (LQB) have called for a "blank ballot" and for proletarian opposition to the bourgeois popular front, as explained in the accompanying articles from the Information Bulletin No. 14 (September 2002) of the LQB's newspaper Vanguarda Operária.

The history of workers' struggles in Brazil is rich with lessons for those who fight to build an international Leninist party to lead the working class to power in a socialist revolution. In particular, Brazil's "Steel City" of Volta Redonda – home of Latin America's largest steel plant, the Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional – has been the scene of convulsive labor struggles and a battleground between class-struggle militants and the popular front, which has long governed the city. Comrade Cerezo, a leading member of the LQB – founded in 1996 by the Luta Metalúrgica (Metal Workers Struggle) group in Volta Redonda – was an active participant in these battles over more than two decades.

After the Brazilian press revealed that Cerezo had been one of seven workers leaders put on an army death list for organizing a militant sitdown strike at CSN in 1990, The Internationalist conducted an extensive interview with him, which served as the basis for our article, "Military Scandal Reveals: Army Death List Targeted Brazilian Worker Militants" (The Internationalist No. 8, June 2000). The second half of the interview, printed here, focuses on the popular front, drawing crucial lessons for today as the alliance of the PT with leading capitalist forces is about to take office.

**The Internationalist:** Some of the most bitter class battles in modern Brazilian history occurred at the Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional (National Steel Company) in Volta Redonda. How was the CSN originally created?

**Cerezo:** CSN was established in Volta Redonda during the Second World War, in a deal between the U.S. government and Getúlio Vargas, the dictator who was president of Brazil at the time. Vargas used a bit of blackmail, since the German government had also offered him financing. But there was a lot of pressure since Nazi Germany was fighting the U.S. in the war. So Vargas wound up betting on the Americans, and succeeded in getting more than \$20 million to build the first blast furnace in Brazil – the basis for the first and biggest steel plant in Latin America. So the creation of CSN was directly linked to the Second World War, an imperialist war in which the attempt was



**Workers occupy National Steel Company (CSN) plant during 1988 strike.**

also made to destroy the Soviet Union.

In the process of building CSN, Getúlio Vargas said that for 50 years the company would furnish steel to subsidize the Brazilian bourgeoisie, as well as the imperialist companies. To help build up industry, the price of steel would be subsidized. Throughout CSN's existence, up until its privatization in 1993, the company sold steel far below market prices in order to benefit these companies. And coincidentally or not, around the time of its 50th anniversary CSN was privatized. It was a medium- to long-term





**Luta Metalúrgica banner in 1993 anti-privatization protest: "Reduce the work day to provide jobs for all. Stop racism. Unite laid-off workers, retirees, active workers and unemployed, no to privatization!"**

project of the Brazilian bourgeoisie initiated by Vargas, a state company of a national-bourgeois nature.

**The Internationalist:** When did you begin working at CSN?  
**Cerezo:** I started working there in 1977, in the midst of the military dictatorship (1964-85), in a period when the dictatorship had started talking about beginning what they called a slow, gradual and secure transition to civilian rule. I was a welder at CSN for 18 years. I was fired for the first time in 1987 after a general strike called by the CUT labor federation. The steel workers at CSN participated in the strike, so various of us were fired.

Later we carried out a movement for the reinstatement of the workers fired in the '87 strike. This culminated in the strike of 1988, which lasted 17 days and became widely known. Three steel workers were killed in that strike struggle when the army occupied the plant. It was a very radical strike, which ended in a partial victory. We were reinstated, and the workers won some of the other strike demands as well.

The second time I was fired, together with other activists, was after the 31-day strike of 1990. [See "LQB Spokesman Cerezo Fired for Leading Resistance—Brazilian Steel Company Assault on Six-Hour Day," *The Internationalist* No. 8, June 2000. Cerezo was briefly rehired in 2000, as a result of a court decision against CSN. He was fired a third time after just a month and a half, for leading a fight to defend the six-hour day won in the 1988 strike.]

**The Internationalist:** When you started working at the steel plant, did you have a political consciousness?

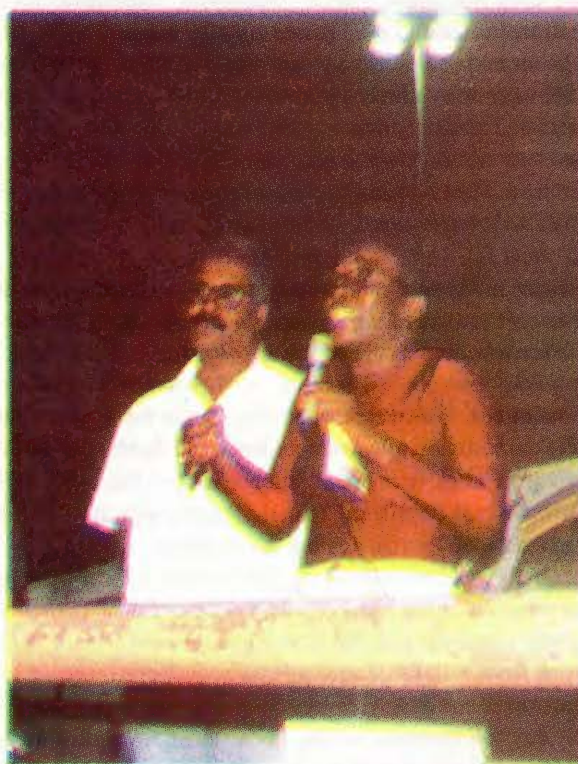
**Cerezo:** No, I wasn't political at all. What caused a real politicization and consciousness was a strike by construction workers, which took on the characteristics of a very bitter mutiny or revolt and caused a lot of discussion among the steel workers at CSN. After that, a "Union Opposition" was formed, which was also influenced by the metal workers strikes that were going on in São Bernardo do Campo and São Paulo. I was

a member of that opposition, which won after two votes and took over the leadership of the union. I was elected to the executive board and, together with other activists, helped organize the first strike in CSN's history: the five-day strike of 1984.

The construction workers' strike was in 1979. They were working on the expansion of CSN. These were migrant workers who came from other states; they were cheap labor, brutally exploited and working in terrible conditions. They lived in a housing unit on the edge of town. They revolted and demanded better working conditions. They were repressed violently by CSN's guards and the Military Police, and this had a big impact on the steel workers.

The '79 construction workers' strike started at lunch time. The food arrived late, it was rotten and tasted awful, and they rebelled. They threw the food on the floor, tossed the trays in the air, and then came bursting out of the lunchroom and stopped all the construction workers inside the plant from working. It was a very energetic, very militant action which was only stopped after a huge fight when the police and the CSN guards shot at them. Something like a thousand workers participated.

The CSN Property Guards were called out, but they didn't succeed in stopping these very militant strikers, so they called



Luta Metalúrgica

**Comrade Cerezo chairing August 1995 Volta Redonda rally to free Mumia Abu-Jamal called by Luta Metalúrgica.**





**Demonstrators at August 1995 Volta Redonda rally for Mumia. Signs read: "Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!" "Down with the Racist Death Penalty!" "Capitalism Means Oppression of Women."**

for reinforcements from the Military Police. They only managed to put down the rebellion after a long time and a lot of fighting. It went on for almost the whole day, with battles against these two police forces: the military cops and the CSN guards.

It's suspected that some workers were killed, but it was impossible to verify this because the dictatorship was in full force, and CSN was under military command. Volta Redonda was a "national security city." It was directly controlled by military officers, and couldn't even elect its own mayor. The managers at CSN were army officers, and those supervisors who weren't officers had insignia on their uniforms as if they were. The highest post was superintendent, and many of the superintendents were colonels. The president of the company was an army general.

**The Internationalist:** What impact did the '79 strike have on you?

**Cerezo:** In my particular case it made me question my religious phase. At the time I was having discussions with another steel worker who was in the Jehovah's Witnesses. He immediately opposed the strike, saying it was a riot organized by subversives. I answered him: "No, I was there, I saw the terrible exploitation they were facing, and I think your position is wrong." I stuck to my position, he stuck to his, and we kept at it for several days until I finally broke with him because it seemed to me he was against the workers.

This was a very decisive experience for me, I got a look at the combativity of the workers, the need for struggle in order to win victories, and the first impact on me was to make me break from religion. Later this was reinforced when I studied Marxism, Leninism, Trotskyism.

On the question of the cops: the CSN guard was very repressive, even in normal times. They would search the workers' bags and lunch boxes, and sometimes they resorted to blows. They patrolled through the workers' neighborhoods. The workers at the plant were constantly being humiliated.

Those who rose fastest in the hierarchy of the CSN guard were the ones who acted in the most humiliating and oppressive ways, including beating up workers.

It's significant that the majority of CSN workers were black, and so were most of the construction workers, who were mainly from other states, particularly in the Northeast. The army and Military Police carried out whatever tasks of repression the CSN guard did not fulfill. When we make the point that police are not part of the workers movement and are the armed fist of the bourgeoisie, this was shown during the whole time I worked at CSN. We saw this constant police repression in the daily life of the steel workers and construction workers.

**The Internationalist:** In the late 1970s and early '80s, when the PT and the Central Única dos Trabalhadores (CUT—the labor federation linked to the PT) began to be formed in the São Paulo region, what kind of

echo did this have in Volta Redonda?

**Cerezo:** The events in São Paulo had a big impact on the steel workers' struggle in Volta Redonda, but the Volta Redonda branch of the PT wasn't formed until later, after big struggles

## Two decades of class struggle

1977-79: Labor and student upsurge against the Brazilian military dictatorship installed in 1964.

October 1979, brutal repression of construction workers' strike at CSN steel plant in Volta Redonda.

1980: PT (Workers Party) formed under leadership of metal workers leader Lula.

1982: "Union Opposition" wins leadership of Volta Redonda steel workers.

1984: Mass illegal strike organized, first in CSN's history.

1985: Campaign for direct elections (*Diretas já*). Military dictatorship falls.

1987: CSN workers join general strike called by CUT; activists fired.

1988: Historic CSN strike and plant occupation wins 6-hour day. Army invades, kills three workers.

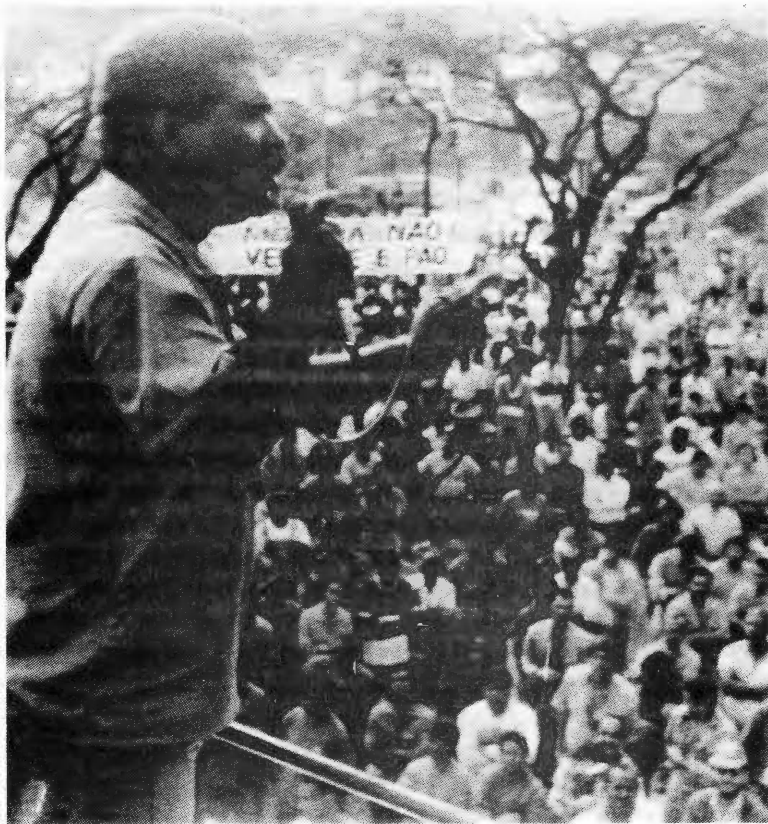
1989: PT forms popular front. Lula's first presidential campaign (runs again in '94, '98, '02).

1990: Strike and plant occupation at CSN; army issues death list against seven leaders.

1992: *Fora Collor* (Collor Out) protests against presidential corruption.

1993: CSN privatized, leading to mass layoffs.

1996: Luta Metalúrgica forms LQB, leads struggle to expel cops from municipal workers union.



Comrade Cerezo speaking to metal workers during 1990 strike.

by the steel workers and construction workers.

After we in the "Union Opposition" took over the steel workers union in Volta Redonda, it was one of the first unions to affiliate to the CUT, which was founded in 1983. This was related to the impact of the big strike carried out during that period by the metal workers in São Bernardo do Campo [part of the group of industrial suburbs of São Paulo known as "ABC"].

**The Internationalist:** Rio de Janeiro was the bastion of the PDT (Democratic Labor Party) of Leonel Brizola, right? [Editor's note: after the first round of voting, Brizola's bourgeois-populist PDT has now joined the popular front coalition led by Lula in the 2002 presidential elections.]

**Cerezo:** Yes, in 1982 Brizola, head of the PDT, was elected governor of the state of Rio de Janeiro for the first time, and this drew a certain amount of support away from the PT. In particular, the leader of the Volta Redonda steel workers union, José Juarez Antunes, went over to the PDT. So at that time, Brizola-style populism had a bigger impact than the PT in the state of Rio.

*Brizolismo* was the continuation of the populist political line which had controlled the Volta Redonda steel workers union for a certain period before the 1964-85 military dictatorship. In that previous period it was represented by the Brazilian "Labor" Party (PTB) led by Othon Reis. Later, it took on the name PDT.

**The Internationalist:** In your own case, when did you begin reading Marxist books, or radical literature in general?

**Cerezo:** Around 1982, when I read Frei Betto's *Batismo de sangue* (Baptism of Blood) and *Capitão Lamarca* [books on repression against the Brazilian guerrilla movement that were

among the most popular leftist texts in that period]. Later I read *On the Trade Unions* by Lenin. Those were the first three books that gave me some consciousness about the class struggle.

**The Internationalist:** You were talking about the formation of the Union Opposition. Who was the opposition against?

**Cerezo:** Against the *pelego* (government-installed "union" leader) of the steel workers, Waldemar Lustoza. The Opposition was formed to fight him. It was made up of Morenoites (followers of Argentine pseudo-Trotskyist Nahuel Moreno) and the Catholic left, which was called Catholic Workers Action. Later on, independent workers like myself joined it, people who were not members of any party or group. The Morenoites were from *Convergência Socialista*, a tendency inside the PT, and one of their spokesmen in Volta Redonda was named Braitto.

There were two union elections: one in 1980 and one in '82. I participated for the first time in 1982. In '82 there was a split in the Union Opposition, because the Morenoites wanted to put together a single slate with the Catholic left and the Mandelites, Democracia Socialista [another pseudo-Trotskyist tendency in the PT, made up of followers of Ernest Mandel]. But the upshot was a split, with the Catholic left and Mandelites on one side, while Braitto, the Morenoites, and independents like myself were on

the other side. The Morenoite line was to have a single slate, but Braitto and others did not accept this, since the Catholic left and the Mandelites were collaborating to some extent with CSN, they were moderate, they criticized the "excesses" of radicalism, and what they wanted was an "opposition-light."

**The Internationalist:** So *Convergência's* discipline was broken by its activists in the plant?

**Cerezo:** At that point Braitto broke *Convergência's* discipline and put together a more radical opposition, a more left-wing one, which various of us participated in. This opposition group, led by Juarez and Braitto, won the union elections in 1982. Juarez had previously voted for the PMDB (Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement), the dictatorship's bourgeois "opposition" party, but in 1982 Juarez was running for congress as a PT candidate, although he was not a member of any of the internal tendencies within the PT. Later, as I mentioned, he went over to Brizola's PDT. He gained a lot of prestige among the workers, and he defeated the Mandelite/Catholic left slate by a big majority. On the second round of the elections, the Mandelites and Catholic left gave their support to the Juarez slate.

There were a lot of physical fights, because the *pelego* installed by the dictatorship resisted; he had his followers take away the ballot boxes, beat workers up, and so on, and CSN management worked together with him. In all, three union elections were held, and it was only the third time around that the *pelego* was finally defeated. The Opposition actually won in 1980, but the *pelego* stole the election. He tried to do the same thing in '82 but he was defeated due to the energetic actions





Poster calls for no privatization of CSN, for workers control of production.

carried out by the workers: they occupied the streets, held marches, and carried out constant protests inside the plant itself. In the face of all this resistance the *pelego* finally turned over the union hall. The CUT also got a court order – the kind of thing the CUT still does to this day – but what defeated the *pelego* was not that but the actions of the workers themselves, with their protests and demonstrations.

It's important to stress that we of the LQB demand courts and cops of all kinds out of the unions. It is the workers themselves who must decide what goes on in their own organizations and clean their own house. We fight against intervention by the bourgeois state in the labor movement, and for the class independence of the proletariat. This means revolutionary politics and a revolutionary leadership.

When the Opposition won the union elections, it immediately began to prepare a strike. We carried out 120 meetings in the neighborhoods where the steel workers lived, and approximately 100 meetings inside the steel plant.

**The Internationalist:** What demands was the strike called for?

**Cerezo:** The first thing we did was hold meetings and talk to the workers, to find out the issues they were most concerned about. The main points were a more equal wage scale and demands having to do with working conditions, health and safety, better hygiene in the plant, eating areas and bathrooms. We got in contact with the steelworkers at the Cosipa company in the state of São Paulo, who were very militant. We brought workers from that factory to Volta Redonda to talk to the CSN workers, and workers from CSN traveled to Cosipa to talk with the workers there. This really energized the workers and helped strengthen the strike.

**The Internationalist:** When this first strike was organized, you were part of the union leadership?

**Cerezo:** Yes, I was one of the seven members of the Executive Committee.

The strike broke out in July of 1984 and lasted five days. It involved 23,000 CSN workers plus around 4,000 employees of contract firms. Sectoral assemblies were held in the different departments and on each of the shifts. At that time CSN had three shifts: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., 4 p.m. to midnight, and midnight to 8 a.m. We organized assemblies on each one, explaining the demands, discussing strike tactics, how to combine strike activities inside CSN and in the workers' neighborhoods. When it became clear that they were ready to strike, then we had the workers on each shift gather inside the plant. The workers who got out at 4 p.m. didn't go home, but stayed inside the plant; the same thing with the swing shift and the graveyard shift. At 8 in the morning everyone had stopped work.

A lot of pressure started to come down from CSN management, which had a big effect on the members of the Mandelite/Catholic left grouping led by Vagner Barcelos. They were the transmission belt for this pressure, and they started

saying that the army was going to invade, there could be a bloodbath – in effect they were threatening the workers. In a mass strike meeting we said this was a bunch of blackmail and that the workers had to fight. We pointed out that the strike was proceeding successfully with all the workers conscious of why they were striking, and we said they should not give in to this pressure.

In the end our position carried the day. In response, the Mandelites, the Catholic left and union leader Juarez began sabotaging the strike. On one of the local radio stations, they talked a whole hour about the threat of army intervention, and inside the CSN plant they came out with posters saying, "It's time for the strike to end," "Enough sleeping, let's produce" – completely pro-company slogans, and they kept pressuring until they finally succeeded in bringing the strike to an end. As if the workers were sleeping! It was a sit-down strike, a plant occupation, carried out under the military dictatorship and at the time of the mass demonstrations for "*Diretas já*" (direct elections now).

**The Internationalist:** These were demonstrations held across the country to demand the election of the president by direct popular vote, instead of the electoral college controlled by the military. Were there "*Diretas já*" protests in Volta Redonda as well?

**Cerezo:** Yes, a lot of them, with rallies of a thousand people and caravans to travel to the city of Rio. For example, I participated in the largest rally for direct elections: a million people in Rio de Janeiro.

**The Internationalist:** Today, how would you characterize the policy of the left regarding the "*Diretas já*"?

**Cerezo:** It was a "democratic" policy, getting together with the bourgeoisie to demand bourgeois democracy, and it was a betrayal of the masses, who believed their leaders were fighting to

really defeat and overthrow the dictatorship and the capitalists in general. But what the left wanted was to join the bourgeoisie on the reviewing stand. The PT and the rest of the left organizations subordinated themselves completely to the PMDB, the dictatorship's bourgeois "opposition" party, and specifically to "Mr. Direct Elections," Ulysses Guimarães of the PMDB.

**The Internationalist:** So this was the context in which the reformists betrayed the 1984 CSN strike. What happened next?

**Cerezo:** I was part of a new opposition group that formed. Juarez had reconciled with the Mandelites and the Catholic left, and together they carried out a whole campaign to get us expelled from the union and even thrown out of our jobs. The executive board was clearly not viable, we could no longer remain part of it, but Juarez & Co. were unable to organize any assemblies or any kind of vote to get us actually expelled from the union.

The military dictatorship fell in 1985, when the Electoral College made a deal to elect a PMDB member, Tancredo Neves, as president. When he died, José Sarney was put in to replace him. This involved major collaboration by the left, which accepted Sarney.

Sarney had supported the dictatorship throughout its existence, and had even been the head of the party of the dictatorship, ARENA. A year after he took office, there was an important example of how the dictatorship's repressive apparatus continued to function: during the CSN strike of 1986, the army occupied the plant (as would occur later in the historic strike of 1988). This was despite the fact that union leader Juarez had supported the Electoral College naming Tancredo Neves as president. Juarez also supported the candidate of the bourgeois populist PDT for mayor of Volta Redonda in 1985, after the city had formally ceased to be a "national security zone" and was allowed to elect its own mayor. For the workers, it was the same old repression. When they mobilized, the bourgeoisie got Sarney and the courts to send in the army.

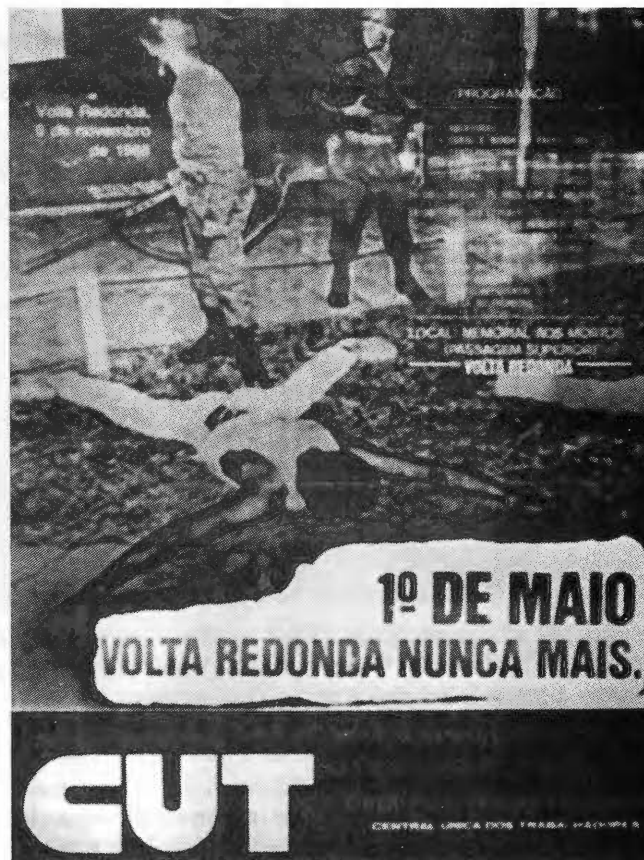
In 1987, the CUT labor federation called a general strike against Sarney's policies, for an across-the-board wage hike to make up for inflation. So steel workers in Volta Redonda organized to participate in the strike, which lasted one day. The army came in again, so did the Military Police, the CSN guard intervened, and after this strike union activists were fired, myself among them.

**The Internationalist:** You have stressed the role women played in this strike.

**Cerezo:** Yes. CSN workers' wives together with domestic workers, store clerks and other women played an enormously important role. They carried out marches through the city, helping shut down stores, demanding that everyone join the metal workers on strike. This also happened in 1984, 1988 and 1990—in all the most important strikes they had a strong presence.

**The Internationalist:** When were you elected vice president of the CIPA (Plant Safety Commission)?

**Cerezo:** In 1987. We went into the CIPA with the intention of organizing the workers, as we said in leaflets published at the time. Today, after the revolutionary political development we've undergone, we consider the CIPA a class-collaborationist body, since it included not only representatives of the workers but of



During 1988 strike, army invaded the plant, wounding 46 and killing William Fernandes Leite, 22, Valmir Freitas Monteiro, 27, and Carlos Augusto Barroso, 19, on 9 November 1988. Poster for 1989 CUT May Day demonstration says: "Volta Redonda, Never Again."

the company as well.

The bourgeoisie tries to prevent the workers from using their own power and building their own factory committees. We say there must be health and safety committees made up only of workers representatives, with the power to shut down production whenever the workers' interests are endangered.

**The Internationalist:** Leucopenia is a key issue.

**Cerezo:** That's right: leucopenia is a disease caused when workers are exposed to benzene gas. In the most cynical and racist way, CSN said this was a disease of black people. You can't fight that with a class-collaborationist institution like the CIPA (see "Brazilian Metal Workers Struggle Against Racism" in our dossier on *Class Struggle and Repression in Volta Redonda*). It's crucial for the workers to organize their own committees and fight the companies' racism.

**The Internationalist:** So you were fired in 1987, and you were elected president of the Volta Redonda PT after these firings.

**Cerezo:** Yes, we thought we were going to make the PT more militant. Comrade Celia [later one of the founders of the LQB] had first invited me to join the PT in 1982. Later on I was elected to the PT executive committee, and in May of 1987 as president of the local PT.

**The Internationalist:** In 1988 a historic strike occurred at



**Memorial to the workers killed in strike was the center of the 1989 May Day march. The next day army saboteurs blew it up. Workers put the blame squarely on the Sarney government.**

CSN. We've written about this strike a number of times, but can you comment on it briefly here?

**Cerezo:** The 1988 strike was called to demand the reinstatement of the workers fired the year before, as well as a 26 percent wage hike to make up for inflation. The 1988 strike lasted 17 days. From the beginning, the Military Police intervened to break up the workers' mass meetings. We reminded people of this in 1996, during the campaign to throw the municipal *guardas* (cops) out of the Volta Redonda municipal workers union, when the cops and courts carried out interventions against the workers' assemblies as well.

In 1988, the steel bosses used a huge truck to blockade the entrance to the plant, trying to stop the workers who were marching to occupy the CSN plant, which covers a large part of downtown Volta Redonda. The workers used their bare hands to move this enormous truck out of the way, clearing a path for them to pour in, occupy the plant and carry out a mass meeting inside. This had a big impact. The Military Police tried to intervene, there was a fight, the cops were defeated, and they were unable to stop the workers from entering CSN.

That was how the strike began. Then on the ninth day there was a clash between the workers and the army, and the troops murdered three strikers: William, Valmir and Barroso. But even after these killings, the workers stuck to the demands and the strike continued another eight days.

I was a member of the *comando de greve* (strike committee). We had a fired workers' committee, and it was this committee that actually called the strike, which the union executive board then adhered to. The union leadership constantly tried to isolate this committee, but we were able to speak at all the mass meetings.

The strike had an enormous impact throughout the country, unmasking the reality of the so-called "Brazilian democracy" established after the fall of the dictatorship. Then shortly afterwards, there was a very militant strike at General Motors

in São Paulo, which was brutally repressed by the police

**The Internationalist:** In 1989 the PT formed the Frente Brasil Popular together with the bourgeois politician José Paulo Bisol. Lula was the presidential candidate and Bisol ran for vice president. What was your reaction to the formation of this "popular front" alliance of class collaboration?

**Cerezo:** In June of '89, when our grouping in the PT found out about the proposal to establish a popular front, we organized to get delegates elected to the PT's national congress in São Paulo, to fight against this position. I was one of the delegates and put forward our opposition to the formation of the Frente Brasil Popular there at the congress.

**The Internationalist:** When you say "our grouping," what did that mean at that time?

**Cerezo:** Luta Metalúrgica and other comrades who were not steel workers, such as Celia, who was a long-time activist—we had a grouping which was actually victorious at the convention of the Volta Redonda branch of the PT. Our line was to oppose the formation of a front with the bourgeoisie. At the time we were not familiar with the term "popular front," so we just called it an alliance with bosses and members of the bourgeoisie. Later we learned that it had a name, that it was a political category in Marxist analysis, called the popular front.

At the PT's national congress we met Causa Operária [CO—Workers Cause, at that time a tendency within the PT, made up of followers of the Argentine pseudo-Trotskyist Jorge Altamira]. They had a pamphlet opposing the formation of this popular front. We made a bloc with Causa Operária and invited them to visit Volta Redonda. They explained their position, and we agreed to vote together against the formation of the Frente Brasil Popular.

I called a meeting of the executive committee of the Volta Redonda PT, which included our comrade Celia, Braitto, a union activist called "Boquinha," a fellow named Erasmo who was a member of the Morenoite PT tendency Convergência Socialista, and others. The idea was for the local PT to support the slogan "Break with the popular front and build independent committees," which was CO's slogan.

Members of Convergência tried to take over the meeting, and their main leader in Volta Redonda jumped up on the table screaming that we were carrying out a "coup." He refused to stop yelling and eventually had to be removed from the table. Our position against the popular front was carried. Then we held a plenary meeting of the whole PT branch, and out of the 290 people who attended, only 15 voted against our position.

The national PT leadership responded by putting out a bunch of documents against us, and then they called an "Ethics Commission" to pass judgment on our "crime" of not accepting an alliance with the capitalists. This PT Ethics Commission went



on for quite a while, about eight months, and wound up condemning our "attitude" and giving us an ultimatum that we had to abide by the policy of making an alliance with bourgeois politicians, which the national PT had decided on at its congress.

**The Internationalist:** Was this the point when you and others joined Causa Operária?

**Cerezo:** Yes, we joined Causa Operária thinking that it was really going to fight against the popular front. Later, we were the first people to be expelled from the PT in a whole series of red purges. The first one purged was Jorge. [Comrade Jorge of the LQB is a black steel worker who retired after 25 years at CSN.] The PT ordered our names removed from every list of members of the party and that all party rights be denied to us.

It's clear to us now what Causa Operária's real policy was. CO wanted to form these so-called "independent committees," but in reality they called for a vote to Lula and the "workers candidates" of the popular front. Instead of a break from the popular front, what this meant was adapting to and coexisting with the popular front.

**The Internationalist:** In 1992 the "Fora Collor" movement broke out. What did the different tendencies have to say?

**Cerezo:** Huge demonstrations were held against President Fernando Collor de Mello, because of his policies of corruption, repression against the labor movement, privatizations and the resulting mass layoffs. Masses of people came out in the streets to demand "Fora Collor" (Out with Collor).

The Morenoites put forward the slogan "For a Real CPI" (Parliamentary Inquiry Commission). In other words the

Morenoites wanted the members of the Brazilian Congress, who were just as corrupt as Collor or even more so, to carry out a parliamentary inquiry to judge the crimes of the bourgeoisie itself: criminal and corrupt bourgeois politicians judging other criminal and corrupt bourgeois politicians. This was absurd, a rotten parliamentarist outlook.

For its part, Causa Operária put forward the slogan of "General Elections," which meant giving back-handed support to the bourgeois politician Itamar Franco, the vice president, one of the people who led the privatization of CSN. So CO also had a parliamentarist viewpoint, for reconstructing the regime within the framework of the bourgeois institutions.

**The Internationalist:** So when addressing democratic questions, genuine Trotskyists don't limit themselves to a bourgeois democratic framework—that's a form of Menshevism, refusing to use the political crisis to fight for workers revolution.

**Cerezo:** Yes, it was just for general elections, that any worker be eligible for election, and so forth. But in reality it meant calling for Vice President Itamar Franco to take over, or in the best case him calling general elections. I criticized this line and carried out a political struggle against it inside CO, putting forward the call for a revolutionary workers party. I demanded a vote, my position was defeated, but I remained convinced that Causa Operária's position was wrong.

**The Internationalist:** In 1994, the Volta Redonda branch of CO went into opposition when the national leadership decided to support Lula in the 1994 presidential elections, correct?

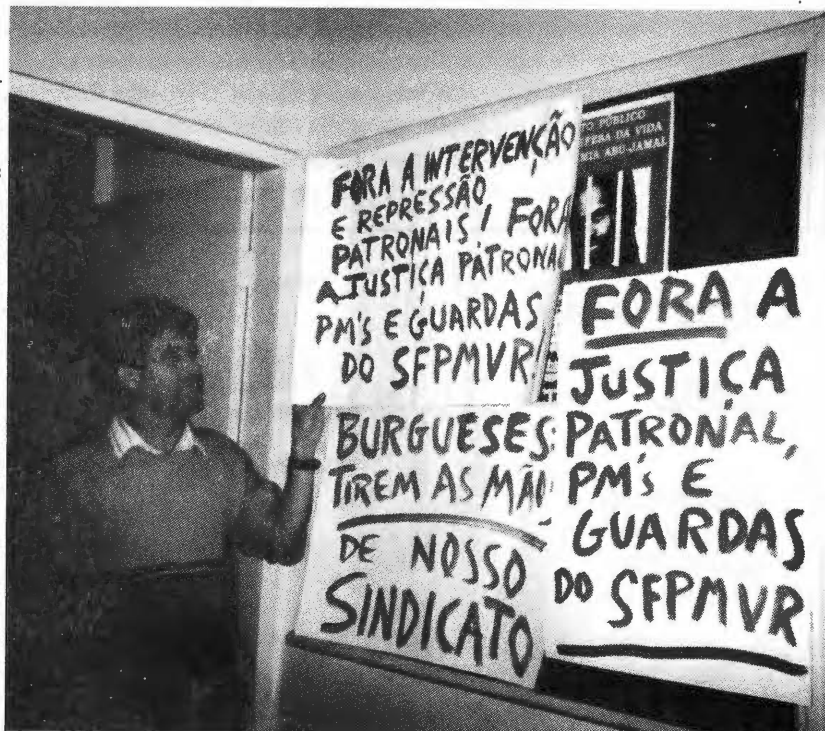
**Cerezo:** Right, we put forward documents in 1994 explaining that this was class collaboration, not Trotskyism, that this was not Marxism. So Causa Operária decided to go all-out against us because we did not accept their collaborationist policy and their line of adaptation to Lula and the PT.

A very different position from ours was put forward by the CO branch in Ceará, in the Northeast, which later went on to form the so-called Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista, the people who became advisors to the Zubatovist ("police unionism") group of Artur Fernandes in Volta Redonda. The Ceará branch criticized CO's line of voting for Lula in '94, but has continued to uphold voting for the popular front in 1989, with the nationalist argument that in '89 it was just an alliance with national capitalists and not with the International Monetary Fund.

**The Internationalist:** In 1964, the government overthrown by the military coup was also a popular front, wasn't it?

**Cerezo:** Yes, it was led by João Goulart of the PTB, a bourgeois populist party, and it was supported in the first place by the Brazilian Communist Party, the Stalinists. The end result was this bonapartist army coup which led to the country being submerged for more than two decades in a military dictatorship. That was a consequence of

Vanquarda Operária



Geraldo Ribeiro, elected president of Volta Redonda municipal workers union in November 1995, with signs demanding police and bourgeois courts hands off the union. In response to LQB's campaign to throw cops out of the union, Ribeiro was removed by the courts and hit with multiple court suits.





**Demonstration against privatization of CSN steel plant, Volta Redonda, 1993.**

this betrayal, which Trotsky characterized in his documents on the popular front in Spain, France and other countries.

On the subject of the popular front, it's important to note that the various leftists who were our opponents in the steel workers union were in the popular front, for example during the 1990 CSN strike. [This strike is discussed in "Army Death List Targeted Brazilian Worker Militants," *The Internationalist* No. 8, June 2000.] The Mandelites, who were leading the union at the time, called for a government of Lula and the bourgeois populist Brizola, in other words a "broader" government, an even more right-wing popular front than the one they had at the time, which included the bourgeois PSB (Brazilian Socialist Party) of the big landowner Miguel Arraes, but did not yet include Brizola's PDT.

**The Internationalist:** The struggle of Luta Metalúrgica against the popular front, and the strong criticisms that the comrades made of Causa Operária's politics, led in 1994 to the establishment of fraternal relations with the International Communist League and then the formation of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil in 1996.

**Cerezo:** In September 1994 we established fraternal relations with the ICL on the basis of the fight against the popular front, no vote to any candidate of any popular front; the Leninist policy on special oppression, such

as the oppression of blacks, women, Indians, homosexuals; the defense of Trotsky's line on the Russian Question; forging genuine Trotskyist parties as part of the struggle to reforge the Fourth International. [See "Declaration of Fraternal Relations Between Luta Metalúrgica (Brazil) and the International Communist League," *Spartacist* No. 52, Autumn 1995. This document has since been renounced by the ICL.]

Fraternal relations continued until June 1996, when the ICL betrayed us, abandoning us at the high point of the struggle to expel cops from the Volta Redonda municipal workers union. Initially the ICL had not only supported but encouraged this struggle, and put forward theoretical formulations on the need to carry it out. But when the struggle was actually being carried out, at a difficult point in the fight, which demanded firmness and mobilization – at this crucial moment they decided to abandon the struggle, and demanded that we abandon it too. When we said no to this, then one day before a crucial meeting of the union on June 19, 1996 – which was shut down by armed police bearing a court order – the ICL handed us a document breaking relations. They tried to deal a deep-going blow to our struggle, but fortunately they did not succeed.

We went forward, despite the many difficulties, and in the face of repression and threats we organized the union assembly of July 25, 1996, where the ranks voted the expulsion of the cops from the union. [See the Internationalist Group pamphlet *Class Struggle and Repression in Volta Redonda, Brazil: Cops, Courts Out of the Unions* (February 1997 and "Brazil: Context of a Betrayal," *The Internationalist* No. 2 (April-May 1997).]

We went forward with the fight, and with our development as Trotskyists. Luta Metalúrgica had formed the LQB earlier that year. We established relations with the cadres who were expelled from the ICL in the crisis and purge of 1996, who formed the Internationalist Group, and in 1998 the LQB was one of the founding sections of the League for the Fourth International.

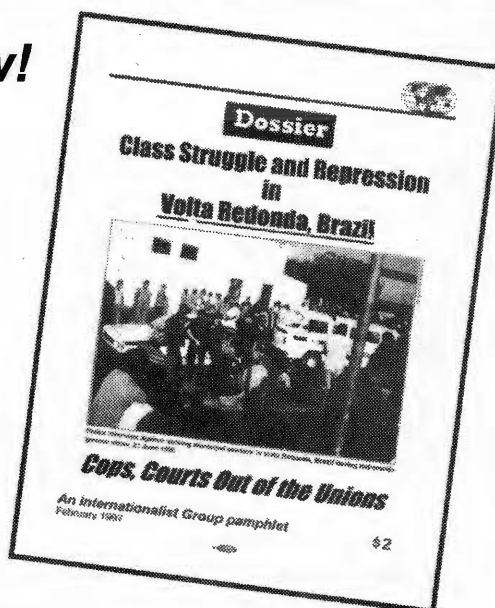
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## Brazilian Trotskyists:

# MOBILIZE WORKERS POWER TO FREE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL NOW

*Thesis presented by the Class Struggle Caucus (CLC) to the 10th Congress of the Rio de Janeiro state Union of Education Workers (SEPE-RJ), held this August. The Congress voted to stop work in the case of any action taken against Jamal.*

The case of the radical black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, victim of a police frame-up, is the focus of the struggle against the racist death penalty in the United States and internationally. Hundreds of thousands of people have come out in defense of this former member of the Black Panther Party, who has spent twenty years on Pennsylvania's death row. As in the cases of the anarchist workers Sacco and Vanzetti in the 1920s and the black youth in Scottsboro (U.S.) in the '30s, it is necessary around the world to organize powerful mobilizations of the power of the working class, together with blacks, students and others, to demand freedom for this courageous fighter for the cause of the oppressed who is threatened with death at the hands of the state murder machine.

*Such mobilizations are now more urgent than ever as the U.S. courts are deciding on Jamal's life or death. In December 2001 a federal judge accepted only one of the 29 points of Jamal's appeal, and ordered a judicial hearing to make a new decision on his sentence, which will be converted to a life sentence if the hearing is not held. The judge refused to hear Jamal's testimony and would not admit into evidence the confession of the man (Arnold Beverly) who admitted killing the police officer that Mumia was accused of killing, for which Mumia was sentenced to death. We workers of the entire world do not accept this outrage, and we must mobilize to demand immediate and unconditional freedom for our companheiro Mumia.*

At the Ninth Congress of the Rio state education workers union (SEPE) in February 1999, a motion was passed demanding Jamal's immediate freedom. In April of that year the union held work stoppages of one hour on each shift in the schools to demand freedom for Mumia. This action was carried out in conjunction with the work stoppage held in all the ports of the U.S. Pacific Coast by the longshore workers union. This was the first mobilization of workers action to wrest this courageous fighter against oppression away from the bosses' death machine of the bourgeois state. Later that year another SEPE work stoppage, a strike by Rio bank workers and a state-wide general strike of the CUT labor federation all included the demand to free Jamal.

Now it is urgent to take a step forward in this campaign and carry out union rallies and actions throughout Brazil for Mumia's freedom. *Giving continuity to the April 1999 SEPE-*

*RJ resolution that called work stoppages for Jamal's freedom, the Tenth Congress of the SEPE-RJ resolves to carry out work stoppages in all the schools of the state of Rio de Janeiro in April 2003 or at any time a death sentence is imposed on him, and this strike will be to demand freedom for Jamal and make his case more widely known.*

This mobilization for Jamal's freedom occurs in the context of the present international conjuncture, in the midst of the war launched against semi-colonial Afghanistan and a possible new imperialist attack on Iraq; in which police-state measures are being imposed (secret trials, heightened police spying) in the U.S. and other countries. Under U.S. president George Bush, known as "Governor Death" for the more than 150 executions carried out when he was governor of Texas, Jamal's life is in even greater danger. Despite support of the death penalty by both bourgeois parties, Democrats and Republicans, it faces growing rejection among the U.S. population as many people the courts condemned to death have been proven to be innocent.

**THEREFORE, THE TENTH SEPE CONGRESS RESOLVES:**

- 1) To demand immediate freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, an innocent man condemned to death by capitalism's racist justice system because of his revolutionary convictions.
- 2) To call on the unions and particularly the CUT labor federation to mobilize to put into practice international working-class solidarity in the form of work stoppages and strikes to save Jamal's life and win his unconditional freedom.
- 3) To carry out half-day work stoppages in the schools of the state of Rio de Janeiro to demand that Jamal be immediately set free. We must also call for the active participation of students, teachers and school employees in a mobilization to shut down the schools of this state on the above-mentioned date.

The death penalty is also a threat to the exploited and oppressed in Brazil. It was the keystone of the "justice" system under slavery, and executions were used against leftists, trade unionists, students and peasants during the military dictatorship. While the death penalty does not formally exist here at this time, the police continue to carry out executions in the streets, the *favelas* (slums), the countryside (Eldorado dos Carajás and many other places) and the prisons. Thus *it is imperative to unite the protest against Jamal's death sentence with protest against the murders carried out in Brazil by the police, armed fist of the capitalist state.*

This resolution must be sent to all units of the SEPE-RJ throughout the state, and each of these units must make a concrete plan of mobilization. The SEPE-RJ commits itself to preparing the propaganda materials necessary for this.

## Brazil Elections...

*continued from page 29*

gram of the OMP prohibits us from making any sort of alliance with the bourgeoisie." What is its alternative? It calls for the formation of a "Revolutionary Left Front." But were such a front to be formed, it would only be the entryway to another popular front, slightly more "leftist" than the current one. The response to the PT's popular-frontism is not another variant of "frontism" nor the formation of amorphous groups, but the construction of a genuinely internationalist communist party. The OMP's break with the PT is based on its direct experience, and the comrades who desire to be consistent in the commitment to fight against all political alliances with the bourgeoisie should investigate the historical basis of this struggle. It was the fight of Lenin's Bolsheviks against the Mensheviks, who in making a front with the bourgeois Kerensky opposed the October Revolution. Subsequently, it was Leon Trotsky and the Fourth International who fought against the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union and the nationalist-conservative dogma of building "socialism in one country," which finally led the Stalinists to embrace the bourgeoisie in the "popular front," repressing militant workers in the name of opposing the fascist danger.

From the 1930s on, it was the Trotskyists who insisted on the need for a proletarian *class* struggle against reaction and the bourgeoisie as a whole. This is the policy put forward today by the LQB/CLC in Brazil, in the struggle to reforge an authentically Trotskyist Fourth International. The background for this policy is laid out in the theses on the elections which were put forward by the CLC at the Tenth Congress of the SEPE and are reproduced in this publication. We warn here that a Lula-Alencar government, if elected, will repress the workers as much (or even more ferociously) as did the Garotinho-Benedita government in the state of Rio de Janeiro. It would carry out this dirty work following the demands of the bosses, in order to prove its reliability to the capitalists; this would be its function, and that is why it would be installed in the Palácio do Planalto. And then, after producing disillusionment among the combative workers, it would prepare the way for a new government of the ultra-reactionary right.

At bottom, the fundamental line which distinguishes the struggle of the Leninist-Trotskyists of the LQB/CLC from all the varieties of opportunists is that our politics are based on consistent Trotskyism, the Marxism of our time. When the PT's politics are exposed as openly rightist, as is the case today, many put forward fragments of apparent orthodoxy which in normal times they conveniently "forget." In reality, they all act as satellites of Lula's PT, and they are condemned to being the fifth wheel of the popular front. The academic Osvaldo Coggiola, a disciple of Jorge Altamira, publishes a small magazine in which he recently remarked: "The Brazilian left, which has grown up in the shadow of Lula and the PT, runs the risk today of participating in the October elections as TV spectators.... Putting forward a policy of breaking with the PT, of fighting for a revolutionary party and program, is the condition for survival of the left today" (*IV Internacional*, April 2002). It is hard to keep from laughing when



one considers that Altamira and Coggiola insisted in the past on voting for Lula and the PT, despite the popular front, even when their acolytes of the PCO hesitated. In any case, it is not a matter of proposing another policy for the Brazilian "left," which changes its program according to the political weather report, but of forging a genuinely revolutionary Trotskyist party.

The Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil and the Class Struggle Caucus insist once again that you cannot fight against capital with the popular front. In the face of the starvation onslaught of Cardoso and the IMF, we fight for workers revolution. As we wrote in our statement on the previous presidential election (*Vanguarda Operária* Boletim informativo No. 3, October 1998):

***For workers mobilization against the starvation and unemployment plans of Cardoso and the IMF!***

***For proletarian opposition to the popular front and class collaboration!***

***For a revolutionary workers party!***

***Reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution!***

## CLC Theses: Votar Nulo...

*continued from page 31*

11. The LQB and CLC underline that it is crucial to fight for the revolutionary political independence of the proletariat and to oppose popular frontism in all its varieties. As we wrote in 1998: "Our position is the most intransigent proletarian opposition to popular frontism. Not one vote to any candidate of the class-collaborationist alliance headed by Lula. Given the anti-democratic election laws and the absence of a genuine working-class alternative in these elections, our proletarian opposition to the bourgeoisie and class collaboration is expressed through a *voto nulo* (casting a blank ballot)." It is precisely our opposition to popular frontism which arms us to provide revolutionary leadership to the struggle, such as the fight to expel cops from the municipal workers union and our work in the recent 77-day Rio state teachers' strike.

12. An expression of the same internationalist position is the fight the LQB and CLC initiated for strike action for the freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the death row class-war prisoner in the United States. This was expressed in the work stoppages the Rio state SEPE held in 1999; and now, giving continuity to our campaign to mobilize workers power to free Jamal, the CLC succeeded in having the Tenth Congress of the union vote that if a new death sentence is signed against Jamal, the Rio state education workers union will immediately organize a strike for the lifting of this sentence and Mumia's immediate freedom. In addition, the recent congress of the health workers union voted to include freedom for Mumia as one of the demands of the Rio health workers' strike. The same principles guide our struggle for the defeat of the imperialist war against Afghanistan, a war which used the question of women as a battle cry against the Taliban reactionaries and resulted in their continued oppression under the new rulers in the imperialist protectorate now running Kabul.

## Brazil Workers Struggle...

*continued from page 40*

**The Internationalist:** You mentioned the fight against black oppression as one of the key points.

**Cerezo:** The fight over leucopenia is an example of the importance of the black question, which we have stressed is a basic, strategic question as part of the program of permanent revolution. We've put a lot of emphasis on the fight for black liberation through socialist revolution, including in our publications. Back in 1994 we translated a historical document called "Black and Red" ["Black and Red – Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom," *Spartacist* No. 10, May-June 1967]. In the same year our pamphlet "For Revolutionary Regroupment" dis-

cussed this question, among others. Later the LQB published a pamphlet of an annotated translation of "The Russian Revolution and the American Negro Movement" by James P. Cannon, the founder of Trotskyism in the U.S.

The fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal [the radical journalist and former Black Panther framed up and imprisoned for two decades in Pennsylvania] has focused a lot of these issues. We first brought this struggle to Brazil in 1994 as Luta Metalúrgica in conjunction at that time with the ICL. We held a rally in Volta Redonda for Mumia in August 1995. In 1999, our comrades in the Rio de Janeiro educational workers union, SEPE, sparked a statewide two-hour work stoppage and protest meetings demanding his freedom. This was done in coordination with a work stoppage by dock workers on the Pacific Coast of the United States, who shut down the ports for a day on the same demand. Two special issues of the education workers union newspaper were published on this. In November of that year, the CUT state labor federation in Rio raised the call "*Liberdade para Mumia Abu-Jamal*" as one of the demands of a day-long work stoppage of unions throughout the state. The demand was also raised in work stoppages by bank workers, and again in December as part of a SEPE strike.

These struggles continue: the fight against the popular front and populist-style nationalism, for revolutionary internationalism, against all forms of racist oppression, the fight to expel every kind of police from all the unions and the CUT labor federation, the fight for women's rights. This is all part of the struggle for world socialist revolution, which demands that we build a vanguard party, an international Trotskyist party. This is the task of the League for the Fourth International and its section in Brazil, the LQB. ■

## Trotskyism and the Popular Front in Latin America

*The "popular front" has a long history in Latin America, notably in Chile where the class-collaborationist coalition led to reaction not once but three times (1938-41, 1946-49, 1970-73). After the first Popular Front government took office in 1938, an article in the Trotskyist magazine Clave (January 1939) was titled "In Chile the Victory of the Popular Front Opens the Road to a New Dictatorship of General Ibáñez," excerpted below. It noted that the Stalinists had already formed a class-collaborationist alliance in Brazil:*

"The Popular Front which just won in Chile is not the first one formed in South America. The first was the one organized in Brazil in 1935 under the name National Liberation Alliance (ANL), headed by the Stalinist leader Luiz Carlos Prestes. The ANL was smashed [that year], giving rise to the current dictatorship of Getúlio Vargas. The Chilean experience, the second of its kind on this continent...can sooner or later lead to a new dictatorship, this time of General Carlos Ibáñez del Campo, the former tyrant who aspires to ruling his country once again.

"Is the victory of the popular front a left victory? That is what its sponsors say and its leaders demagogically proclaim. But if you carefully examine the history of its formation and the character of its components, it is totally clear that the victory of the Popular Front means the victory of reaction, despite all the vague verbiage its leaders use for the purpose of continuing to deceive the working masses so they will go on believing in the 'Socialist' and 'Communist' betrayers and lend themselves to machinations that will only wind up favoring their worst enemies...

"Considerable sectors of the Chilean bourgeoisie openly stated their fear that the long-suffering proletariat of that country could break the roadblock of its reactionary leaders and try to establish justice with its own hands. The winning candidate was therefore obliged to make repeated declarations reminding his supporters that he had no intention of going against order, the constitution, the law, family and property. He also said clearly that he would give benevolent treatment to foreign capital and praised U.S. president Franklin D. Roosevelt and his 'Good Neighbor' policy."



## Electoral Surge to the Right

# Imperialist War Fuels Racist Backlash in the Netherlands

### *Full Citizenship Rights for Immigrant Workers and Their Families!*

*In mid-October, the Dutch government fell for the second time this year. The right-wing coalition came apart due to in-fighting among the followers of Pim Fortuyn, who were elected after the killing of their notorious immigrant-bashing leader last May. While commentators were quick to consign the party to political oblivion, one noted that Fortuyn "left a lasting legacy," that "most parties have become quite tough on immigration and integration" (Guardian [London], 18 October).*

*We printed in our last issue a statement issued by the League for the Fourth International (LFI) denouncing this phenomenon ("Netherlands: Fortuyn Death Cements All-Party Anti-Immigrant Front," The Internationalist No. 13, May-June 2002). Below are two articles from the first issue of De Internationalist, Dutch language publication of the LFI, on the imperialist war and the lurch to the right it has produced across Europe.*

The contours of the expected "surge to the right" are now clear. The May 15 elections, dominated by the assassination of racist demagogue Pim Fortuyn nine days previously, were Fortuyn's posthumous victory. The parties of the social-democratic-led "Purple Coalition" suffered catastrophic losses, as did Green/Left, its loyal "left" flank. In particular the Labor Party (PvdA) lost almost half its seats. But the big winner was the Christian Democrats (CDA). The more experienced politicians of the CDA will supplement the now leaderless List Pim Fortuyn (LPF) slate.

Whatever coalition emerges, it will be committed to stepping up racist repression of the immigrant population. The week before the elections saw the Netherlands's own variant of the international "anti-terrorist" hysteria as the LPF made the far left, the left and the press morally responsible for Fortuyn's death. The "left" and "far left" were essentially paralysed by this intimidation campaign, all the more as the Purple Coalition's own racist policies had helped pave the way for Fortuyn's ascent. Only the reformist Socialist Party (a haven for ex-Maoists) escaped the rout, almost doubling its

score, by capitalizing on economic grievances against the Purple Coalition government while showing almost benevolent neutrality towards Fortuyn's racist demagoguery. And in an initial indication that it is ready to hop into bed with the CDA and LPF, SP leader Marijnissen "fear(s)" now "that the SP can not push the two big parties to the left" (ANP, 21 May).

Coming on the heels of the defeat of French social democrat Lionel Jospin's presidential bid and the gains by fascist Jean-Marie Le Pen, the results of the Dutch elections are part of a continent-wide trend. Across Europe the bourgeoisie has decreed that the issue is "security." This is the codeword for an anti-immigrant offensive, which in turn is the opening wedge for an assault on the gains of the working class. Coming amid the U.S./NATO war on Afghanistan and a decade of high unemployment, this ominous shift requires a revolutionary Trotskyist vanguard party to lead the hard class struggle needed to advance to socialist revolution throughout Europe.

In the days following the September 11 bombing of the World Trade Center in New York, the Netherlands was engulfed by a wave of racist terror, which the leading bourgeois daily *De Volkskrant* admitted was among the worst in Europe. Arsonists targetted mosques and Islamic schools in Nijmegen, The Hague, Zwolle, Venlo and other towns. More than 90 such attacks have been catalogued, including one in which two soldiers drove over a Turkish man, breaking his legs. Since then a press campaign has agonized about the presence of Islamic fundamentalism in "liberal," "tolerant" Netherlands. This is the ideological cover for an all-sided racist campaign that also targets black immigrants from Surinam and the Dutch West Indies as well as Indonesians. (Besides the mosques, the



Tonje van Rijnsteijn/Planet

**Fascists of the Netherlands People's Union demonstrate May 18 in Harderwijk calling for a "stop to asylum seekers." The "anti-fascist" groups call on the capitalist government to ban the fascists. Not looking to the bourgeois state but organizing workers' class power is key. For worker/immigrant mobilizations to smash the fascists!**

“anti-Muslim” racists also vandalized a Syrian Orthodox church in Rijssen.)

Six months later the country paid the electoral price, when racist demagogue Pim Fortuyn and his “Leefbaar (Liveable) Rotterdam” won half of the seats on the Rotterdam city council in the March 6 municipal elections. This ex-leftist and openly gay professor turned racist populist owed his political career to September 11. Fortuyn’s program was clear, not only denouncing Islam as a “backward culture,” but also calling for the abolition of Article One of the Constitution, which guarantees equal treatment of all citizens. Other anti-immigrant “Leefbaar” parties also won seats throughout the Netherlands although their gains were less spectacular.

Across the country the ruling coalition of the reformist PvdA plus the bourgeois parties VVD and D66 took a beating at the polls, although all mainstream parties tried to outbid Fortuyn in whipping up anti-immigrant hysteria about “insecurity.” Fortuyn’s conquest of Rotterdam, previously a social-democratic bastion, set the stage for the national elections.

After September 11, U.S. imperialism launched a global terror war to reassert its imperial dominance, bombarding Afghanistan and killing thousands in order to install a shaky puppet regime in Kabul. Its future targets range from the Philippines to the Horn of Africa to Iraq. The act of indiscriminate terror in New York served as an excuse to ram through police-state measures around the globe. The European bourgeoisies are participating in the “pacification” of Afghanistan in an attempt to secure their own spheres of influence in Central Asia and the Middle East. Nor have they been slow to whip up anti-Muslim hysteria in order to reinforce their racist “fortress Europe” against immigrants and refugees.

France’s participation in the imperialist war against Afghanistan has its domestic front – the mobilization of troops on the streets of Paris in “Operation Vigipirate” and an election campaign monopolized by “insecurity” which scapegoats immigrant youth. Le Pen was the spectacular beneficiary of this racist campaign. In the same way, Dutch imperialism’s more modest participation (including frigates in the Indian Ocean and “peacekeepers” in Kabul) in the imperialist war opened the door for Fortuyn. Even now the bourgeois press is running scare stories about “Al-Qaeda” infiltrating the Dutch army!

The French “Plural Left” alliance was the latest in a long series of popular fronts, that is, coalitions between reformist workers parties and bourgeois formations that provide an additional guarantee that such governments will serve the interests of capital. In its five years in office the “Plural Left” launched a series of attacks on the working class. Thus its much-vaunted reduction of the workweek to 35 hours brought not new jobs, but rather “flexibilisation,” i.e. increased speed-up. Thus the Socialist and Communist parties of the ruling coalition demoralized their own working-class base.

In the Netherlands, the Purple Coalition represents an even more rightist version of class collaboration, which has governed under the sign of the Wassenaar accords signed by Wim

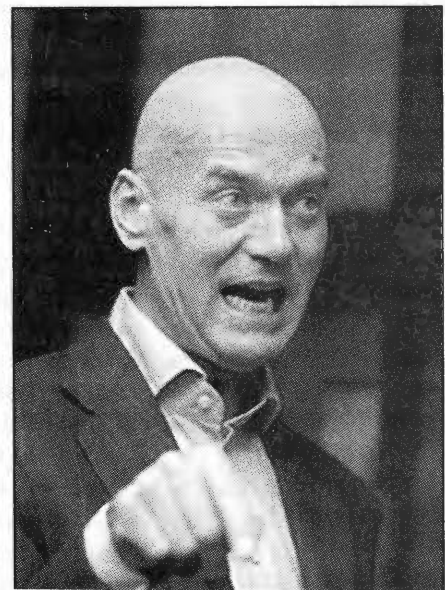
Kok (then chief trade-union bureaucrat) some 20 years ago. This accord meant “wage restraint” in the interests of Dutch capital’s trade surplus. As a result, labor costs have fallen by a third in the last decade. The Purple coalition also brought the deterioration of public transport and public health, and the multiplication of precarious part-time and temporary jobs. Here too, diffuse popular dissatisfaction has been channeled against immigrants as scapegoats.

A counter-offensive against these attacks demands overcoming the racial divisions that weaken the working class, and this means struggling against racist terror. To do this, it is necessary to forge a Trotskyist party worthy of the name, armed with a revolutionary class-struggle program. Fundamentally, the crisis of the proletariat is the crisis of its leadership.

### “Purple” Racism Spawned Fortuyn

Eight years ago, when the fascist “Center Democrats” (CD) made similar, if less dramatic gains in the municipal elections, this also triggered not only moves by the ruling coalition to choke off the number of refugees entering the country, but a deluge of racist demagoguery as well. The VVD’s Bolkenstein called for an outright ban on non-European refugees, Kok (then Finance Minister) demanded the immediate creation of a ministry to deal with immigrants and refugees, and PvdA state secretary for refugee questions Kosto fanned the flames by pretending that underage refugees were flocking to the Netherlands, as opposed to Germany or France. By 1998 the CD had disintegrated, but this only made room for Fortuyn.

In the last few years racist/populist mobilizations against refugee centers like that at Kollum have been paralleled by measures of state racism such as the restrictions on immigration of youth from the West Indies or the definitive expulsion of thousands of Iraqis to what is soon to become a war zone in northern Iraq. Already hundreds have been thrown out of the AZCs [refugee centers] and roam the streets penniless and stripped of their rights. Immigrants are being used to test police measures that will eventually be extended to the rest of the population. Thus the Interior



AFP

**After the assassination of racist right-wing demagogue Pim Fortuyn (above), surge to the right in the Netherlands escalated.**

Ministry announced last April that biometric data such as iris scans would be stored on chip cards for selected immigrants. Passport photos are not good enough, it seems, since to racist officialdom all dark-skinned people look alike!

On the eve of the elections with front-page articles in the bourgeois press about the "growing illegal problem" (accompanied by the deportation of Surinamese "illegals," one of whom had lived in the country for 24 years) there was also an outcry for reinforcing the bourgeois state's repressive apparatus. The *NRC Handelsblad* (16 January) complained that police were "unprepared" to deal with mass demonstrations, for example by Kurds, fantasized about rioters with firearms and demanded more and better-equipped mobile units. The PvdA mayor of Amsterdam then demanded 500 more cops, to be set up as a permanent flying squad in addition to the 8,000 additional police approved by the cabinet.

After the March municipal elections, the ruling coalition tried to take the wind out of Fortuyn's sails by, for example, forcing foreign partners (primarily Turks and Moroccans) of Dutch citizens to pay 3,300 euros for their "naturalization" courses and by quintupling the cost of residence permits.

Within this racist consensus, Fortuyn simply expresses openly, brutally and consistently the political and economic interests of the ruling class – dismantling the welfare state, depressing wages and creating a reserve army of labor from those presently on disability. The reason for the creation of this "welfare state" and the reason why it was maintained was that European imperialism needed to assure the support or at least the neutrality of the working classes in its Cold War against the Soviet Union. After the collapse of Soviet Stalinism and the alleged "death of communism," economic and political rivalry between the European, U.S. and Japanese imperialists is coming to the fore. In the preceding Cold War period, authentic Trotskyists defended the deformed workers states against imperialist attacks and internal counterrevolution, fighting for political revolution and the extension of the October Revolution internationally, as we defend China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam today.

Today the European bourgeoisies are cutting "superfluous" social expenses and seeking to maximize the rate of exploitation in the framework of accelerating competition with the United States and Japan. Anti-immigrant terror and demagoguery are used to divide and divert the working class from a united struggle against the current capitalist offensive.

In this context, the social democrats have adapted to this turn by their bourgeois masters, abandoning their "humanitarian" pretensions on the immigrant question and competing with the right wing in chauvinist demagoguery. The PvdA's response to the rise of Fortuyn is symbolized by an Amsterdam PvdA candidate's disgusting remark about "damned Moroccans." The struggle against anti-immigrant racism must not only be waged against the fascists and racist populists, but also on the political level against the treacherous reformist leaders of the workers movement.

## "Integration," Racist Oppression and Social-Chauvinism

Contrary to national mythology, outright pogroms have punctuated every decade since the massive importation of immigrant labor in the early '60s. And it began, not with "Muslim" workers from Turkey and Morocco, but with immigrant workers from Italy and Spain, who were victims of a racist riot in Twente in September 1961. But they weren't simply victims – these workers went on strike in Almelo, Hengelo, Enschede and Oldenzaal against racist attacks and open segregation. Since then: 1969, attacks on Moroccan hostels in The Hague; 1971, racist attacks in Rotterdam; August 1972, the so-called "Turkish nights" in Rotterdam; 1976, the Schiedam riots which lasted a week; 1981, Tilburg, a family of Surinamese origin was besieged by a mob; August 1983, the murder of Kerwin Duinmeijer; the wave of racist violence in 1992...

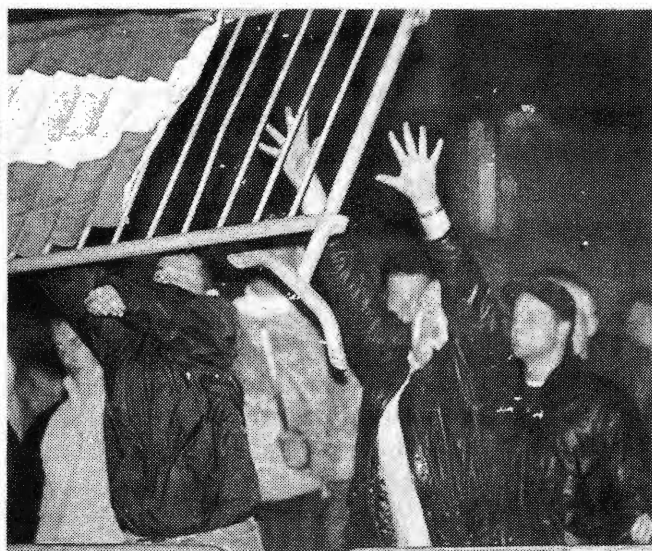
Whatever their national origins, imperialism is dependent on the importation of this immigrant labor, which ebbs and flows according to the business cycle. Immigrants are stripped of democratic rights, segregated at the bottom of society, poorly paid and poorly housed because of their role as a super-exploited "reserve army of labor" in the capitalist system. As a result, all the talk about "integration" is ultimately so much hot air. Thus, immigrants who are allowed to join their families, and those refugees who receive official status are supposed to learn how to answer the phone in the Dutch way and so on (just as Moluccans, in a display of remarkable paternalism, were first taught the "right way" to peel potatoes when they arrived in the '50s), but they are simultaneously supposed to take jobs at below minimum wage. The "citizenship courses," of course, doesn't give anyone citizenship rights...

Revolutionary Marxists hold that anybody that has reached Dutch soil has the right to stay, and that *all immigrant workers and their families should immediately be granted full citizenship rights*. This demand is a dividing line between reformist social-chauvinism and proletarian internationalism. In the concrete, it means organizing workers patrols against attacks on immigrant neighborhoods and refugee centers, and organizing to stop the deportation of refugees.

But the SP prates about "rights" and "responsibilities" in its action program instead of combating racist terror and superexploitation. In fact, its rhetoric about a more humane refugee policy is a thin cover for an openly social-chauvinist policy, since its program denounces the capitalists for the "short-sighted" importation of foreign labor and openly calls for the expulsion of illegal immigrants. But then, according to the SP program "First Road to the Left" (and in direct counterposition to the *Communist Manifesto*!) Dutch workers do have a "fatherland."

In 1983, in its Maoist days, the SP became infamous for its chauvinist brochure "Guest Workers and Capital" in which it demanded that immigrants "assimilate" into Dutch society, or else. Further, "Guest Workers and Capital" argued that immigrants from "Islamic" lands were in any case impossible to assimilate. And the SP has never really repudiated any of this!

Martin Meissner/AP



**Riots by Fortuyn supporters, including numerous skinheads, in The Hague in May.**

Thus when “Integration” Minister van Boxtel called for banning “special schools,” this in reality meant Islamic schools, and the SP found this an “interesting proposal” (*Trouw*, 8 April).

Nor are any of the organizations that falsely claim to be Trotskyist – the SAP, IS or Offensief – capable of fighting for full citizenship rights for immigrants. Offensief, for its part, is comfortably nesting inside the SP, where it poses as a left opposition. Offensief makes some mild criticisms of the SP’s line on the immigrant question, attributing this to its Maoist past (as if such social-chauvinism were not the precondition for “successful” social-democratic reformism!). But Offensief poses no real programmatic alternative. What’s worse, a recent SP Internet article on the municipal elections upholds its chapter in Breda, where one of its members was elected to the city council, as a model. The election program of the Breda SP contains no concrete anti-racist demands, and instead demands more police (and even propaganda for the cops in the schools so as to “increase contact” between the police and youth)! (“School projects can further contacts between youth and police and where necessary improve them.”)

This of course flows from the historic position of Offensief’s international organization, the Committee for a Workers International, for whom cops have always been “workers in uniform” and not the armed fist of the bourgeois state. Thus the Breda SP wants recruitment from ethnic minorities so that the police may better “reflect” society! (“The police apparatus must be more of a reflection of our community than it is now.”) This means spreading the deadly illusion that the police – whatever its ethnic origin – could be anything other than an instrument of racist terror. All this makes a mockery of Offensief’s pretense to be fighting racial oppression.

The SAP, on the other hand, criticizes both Green/Left and the SP in its recent manifesto “For a Multicultural, Solidary Society.” The SP is attacked for calling for more police on the streets and its opposition even to voting rights for immigrants; but Green/Left, an openly pro-war, pro-capitalist party,

receives better marks for its “anti-racism.” The SAP moans that just when Green/Left is “most needed,” it has become the “left wing” of the political establishment! But the SAP refuses to “write it off.”

The SAP can raise (in passing) demands like a general amnesty for illegal immigrants, calling for their right to stay in the country, but no one should take this too seriously. The SAP says at the very beginning of its manifesto that it “offers no program” since it only seeks to be part of a “broad movement” dedicated to changing cultural values. In other words, it is *superfluous*.

The hallmark of the particular brand of pseudo-Trotskyism represented by the SAP and the “International” of which it is part (the “United Secretariat” [USec]) has always been a reliance on an objective “dynamic” – a negation of the necessity for revolutionary leadership – even during its most “leftist” phase after 1968. Thus this current ended up capitulating to European social democracy and its Cold War anti-Soviet campaign in the ’80s, and has now collapsed into social-democratic reformism, content to mouth empty phrases about a multicultural society and the need for the “rich countries” to change their policies towards the Third World. And so the SAP ends up cynically urging a vote to Green/Left and the SP as the “best vote against the development of neo-liberal policies.”

### Fortuyn, the Dutch Haider?

No doubt about it, Pim Fortuyn was a dangerous racist demagogue. But was he a fascist?

De Winter’s Vlaams Blok (in Belgium), Haider’s FPÖ (in Austria), Le Pen’s National Front (in France) and Fini’s National Alliance (in Italy) are all fascist parties whose main public activity is electoral participation. But far from being mere parliamentary machines, they serve as a “respectable” cover for fascist terror squads. The Vlaams Blok, for example, was formed in 1978 with a core of former Waffen-SS members. By exploiting Flemish nationalism, it achieved an electoral breakthrough, and its leaders now posture as “moderates.” Its various satellite organisations like the Nationalistische Jongstudenten Verbond or the Vlaams Nationaal Jeugdverbond bring together skinheads and outright neo-Nazis with paramilitary trappings.

Naturally, the bourgeois media continually downplay fascist successes as simple “protest votes” and systematically blur the difference between racist populists and genuine fascists in order to calm the waters. For Marxists, fascism represents a deadly danger to the working class and all the oppressed. Fascism’s goal is the complete obliteration of the workers movement. To this end, it seeks to mobilize the enraged petty bourgeoisie and other declassed elements with a program of racism and chauvinism whose ultimate logic is genocide. This is its “pogrom essence,” as Trotsky put it, which combines the organization of armed bands with political agitation and even tactical parliamentary manoeuvring.

Fortuyn has most often been compared to the Austrian *Führer* Jörg Haider, who has been particularly successful at camouflaging his fascist aims behind the cover of parliamentary respectability. Nonetheless, as we wrote after Haider’s entry into the Austrian coalition government:



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"A relatively low level of class struggle has resulted in the fact that despite Haider's efforts, the FPÖ remains organizationally weak; its ties to the neo-Nazi grouplets who supply extra-parliamentary violence as enforcers of his fascist program are informal – but nonetheless very real. The FPÖ has absorbed into its apparatus and parliamentary fractions numerous ex-members of virtually the entire spectrum of banned Nazi groups, which always coordinated their bloody actions with Haider's 'legal' campaigns."

– *The Internationalist* No. 8, June 2000

Neither Leefbaar Nederland (of which Fortuyn was formerly a member) nor Fortuyn's own Lijst Pim Fortuyn has such organic connections, although a number of fascists in both the Netherlands and Belgium hailed its electoral success and are supporting it, as reported by the anti-fascist website "Kafka." As many observers have pointed out, at this point, Fortuyn's party barely exists as an organization at all. Whether or not its links to the fascists are consolidated, we may be sure that Fortuyn's electoral successes will embolden established fascist groupings like the NVU to new acts of terror, which must be stopped.

On the other hand, the Internationale Socialisten have repeatedly claimed that Fortuyn was the Dutch Haider. *De Socialist* editor Peter Storm has even been indicted by Fortuyn's lawyers for contributing to Fortuyn's death! Despite our political differences with the Internationale Socialisten we call for defending Storm. Drop the charges immediately!

In the wake of the assassination, I.S. spokesmen began drawing back, claiming that Fortuyn was a fascist, but not the LPF, or alternatively that parts of the LPF, but not Fortuyn himself, were fascist. But even before May 6, the I.S. was

obliged to admit: "But Fortuyn's fascism lacked an essential element that the pre-war fascists certainly had, as too to a lesser degree Le Pen and Dewinter. That component is: organisation, paramilitary groups, gangs. Fortuyn is a fascist without a fascist movement" (*De Socialist* No. 134, April 2002).

Thus the I.S. claim that Fortuyn is a fascist is essentially meaningless, and is parallel to the claim by its British co-thinkers that although Haider is a fascist, his party is not (*Socialist Worker*, 19 February 2000)! This bizarre claim simply ignored the history of the FPÖ, its program and Haider's undisputed control over it. It allowed the I.S.' Austrian co-thinkers to posture as the left wing in the mass mobilizations against Haider without having to politically confront their social-democratic leadership, since the Austrian social-democracy and most of the left was vehemently denying that Haider was a fascist.

In this case, the I.S. comparison of Fortuyn and Haider is just rhetoric. In the face of real fascist threats revolutionaries call for **mobilizing the power of the working class to smash the fascists in the streets**. Thus we called on workers, immigrants and youth in France to stop Le Pen from parading in Paris on the first of May. Worker/immigrant defense of all those targeted by the fascists in the Netherlands could look to the example of the mobile strike pickets in the wildcat dockers' strike in Rotterdam in 1979, the "clean-up squads" (*dweilploegen*).

The I.S. social democrats, of course, have no intention of fighting for such workers' mobilizations. In any case, their model of "anti-fascism" is the "Anti-Nazi League" (ANL) in Great Britain of the late '70s, which was formed as a "people's front," in an attempt to unite all opponents of fascism around a program acceptable to liberal Lords, trade-union bureaucrats and Labour politicians. The nature of the ANL was most graphically exposed by its Carnival 2 in the autumn of 1978. While the fascists of the National Front marched virtually unimpeded into the heavily immigrant East End of London, more than 60,000 people mobilized by the ANL were "rocking against racism" on the other side of the city in a conscious diversion from the necessary defense of Brick Lane in the East End.

In the Netherlands today the "anti-fascism" of the I.S. amounts to little more than cheering on the parliamentary opponents to Fortuyn. Thus the April issue of *De Socialist* rejoices that polemical attacks by Left/Green spokesman Rosenmöller in a debate sufficed to cause Fortuyn to slip in the opinion polls. "To stop Fortuyn something more is needed: a clear left tone against the established politics," concludes *De Socialist*. For whom is this advice intended? Not only for Green/Left and the SP (up to now, according to the I.S., they have stuck their heads in the sand), but even for the PvdA, which, *De Socialist* approvingly notes, has learned something from its defeat and has adopted more leftist language!

### We Need a Revolutionary Workers Party!

The whole opportunist left enthusiastically built the May 11 demonstration "against racism" called by the coalition Nederland Bekent Kleur (Netherlands Recognizes Its Colors). Behind the vague program for a multicultural Netherlands, a humane refugee policy and defense of the welfare state, the concrete axis of the demonstration was the call not to vote for racism ("Geefracisme

geen stem!" And this meant Fortuyn and only Fortuyn. In other words, it was a call to vote Green/Left, SP or even the parties of the Purple Coalition. This was rendered even more explicit by Nederland Bekent Kleur's call for a "cordon sanitaire," which could only mean a plea to the bourgeois CDA or VVD not to have anything to do with this racist demagogue. It is the Dutch parallel to the marches in France that mobilize hundreds of thousands only to lead them to the voting booths to cast their vote for the right-wing Chirac as an illusory barrier to the fascist Le Pen.

The fact that this demonstration was called off in the wake of the killing of Fortuyn is proof that it was *not* a serious fight against racist attacks but a parliamentary pressure tactic. A genuine mobilization against racist oppression in the Netherlands would mean organizing contingents of workers out of their workplaces, with or without the consent of the trade-union tops; it would take a clear stand not only against the demagogue Fortuyn, but also against the racist consensus represented by the Purple Coalition, and would be forthrightly in favor of full citizenship rights for immigrants—legal, "semi-legal" and illegal. This is the road of class struggle, against class collaboration.

And the conditions for an upsurge in the class struggle exist. During the recent Phillips strike the *Algemeen Dagblad* (29 March) reported: "According to the unions seldom have there been such massive strikes in the Netherlands." The unrest continues in the construction sector, in which immigrants are a key component, and where the workers have had to make concessions on the key issue of travel costs. The working class and its living standards have been ground down, little by little by the Purple Coalition and the so-called "polder system" (of cozy consensus politics) over the last decade. Against the background of imperialist war and sharpened imperialist rivalry, the stage is set for even more massive attacks by the ruling class. The response of the workers cannot be simply wage demands, or the defense of existing concessions granted decades ago by the bourgeoisie and which are being eroded, but rather a counteroffensive ultimately leading to the expropriation of this bourgeoisie.

mately leading to the expropriation of this bourgeoisie.

We are not talking here about a struggle limited to the Netherlands, which is after all a rather small country, but the perspective of a *socialist united states of Europe*, linking up with the workers and oppressed who are confronted with fascists like Le Pen, Fini and Haider, but also with "left" governments like those of Schröder and Blair which are no less committed to capitalist austerity. At the same time, the immigrant component of the European proletariat constitutes a living bridge to the colonial and semi-colonial countries pillaged by imperialism.

There is no possible compromise between, on the one hand, the internationalist program which the proletariat needs to fight for power, including carrying out defensive struggles in the imperialist epoch, and on the other, acceptance of the poison of racism which divides the working class and only serves the bourgeois exploiters. Only a revolutionary leadership—a Trotskyist workers party—can unify the working class against the class enemy and its racist system by serving as a Leninist "tribune of the people," championing the cause of all the oppressed and drawing them to the side of the proletariat.

The League for the Fourth International is fighting to build such an authentic Trotskyist party, irreconcilably opposed to class collaboration, imperialist war and racial oppression, in stark contrast to the currents represented by the SAP, the I.S. and Offensief, which since their origin have only sought to play the role of left pressure groups on the reformist bourgeois workers parties. As the Transitional Program, the founding document of the Fourth International, states:

"The Fourth International does not search after and does not invent panaceas. It takes its stand completely on Marxism as the only revolutionary doctrine that enables one to understand reality, unearth the causes behind the defeats, and consciously prepare for victory. The Fourth International continues the tradition of Bolshevism, which first showed the proletariat how to conquer power." ■

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# The Left and the Imperialist War

In the Netherlands, as across Europe, the left has mobilized against "Bush's war." But in joining the war against Afghanistan, the European bourgeoisies are pursuing their own interests, which, as the tariff war over steel shows us, are ultimately counterposed to those of U.S. imperialism. To be sure, even taken all together, the military means of the European imperialists are more limited than those of the Americans. But they are attempting to remedy this. The European Union's war ministers met in Brussels in October and decided to organize a "credible rapid intervention force." In this competition with U.S. imperialism we must say, in the words of Karl Liebknecht, "the main enemy is at home." We of the League for the Fourth International are for the defeat of *all* imperialists in Afghanistan including the Dutch.

We must unmask the social-democratic mythology that European capital is somehow more "social," more peace loving, than the American cowboys. Limiting ourselves here to "peaceful," "social" Dutch capital we can mention Royal Dutch Shell's complicity in the genocidal terror against the Ogoni people in Nigeria, Phillips Electronics' merciless exploitation of Mexican labor in the maquiladoras, or Unilever's exploitation of Indian plantation labor!

The last war, the war against Yugoslavia in 1999, was a war made in Europe, a war resulting in particular from German imperialism's drive to dominate the Balkans, beginning by creating client states in Slovenia and Croatia, followed by the creation of NATO protectorates in Bosnia and Kosovo. Those on the left who refuse to call for the defeat of imperialism in Afghanistan are the same who yesterday followed the lead of their own bourgeoisies in declaring that the main task was not to oppose the imperialist war drive, but to "save" the Kosovars.

The so-called "left" opposition parties are not fundamentally opposed to Dutch imperialism's participation in this war. Green/Left is openly in favor, and pleaded only for a bombing pause during Ramadan. As for the Socialistische Partij (SP), its leader Jan Marijnissen declared himself in favor of sending elite imperialist troops to "arrest" Bin Laden: "The sending of special forces in such a special case would be an operation which could reckon with the support of the SP" (*Volkskrant*, 18 October 2001).

In this friendly debate with Green/Left, Marijnissen went out of his way to point out that the SP is not always against troops: "Troops from the Netherlands have been in Kosovo for years in order to protect the people that live there from each other. They are there with the warm support and sympathy of the SP." But as part of the occupation of Kosovo, the Dutch have overseen the expulsion of Serbs, Jews and Gypsies by the imperialist auxiliaries of the Albanian nationalist UCK! In fact, the SP mainly objects on tactical grounds to U.S. imperialism's terror bomb-

ing as "counterproductive," and the initial October 8 [2001] declaration of its parliamentary deputies was indignant that Bush had not bothered to consult Kok beforehand.

Similarly, the campaign against the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) was conducted mainly on the basis that it would be bought from the U.S. firm Lockheed at a cost of 7 billion euros. While some opposed the JSF on more general pacifist grounds, the SP carefully explained that it was against "extra" armament for Dutch imperialism, while the campaign had no problem winning support from Green/Left and sections of the Labor Party (PvdA). These are war parties! Van den Berg (chairman of the PvdA deputies in the European Parliament) was quite explicit: he accused the government of being the "military poodle" of the U.S. This kind of anti-Americanism is not any kind of anti-imperialism but rather support to European imperialism.

The social-patriotic front includes all of the organizations that falsely claim to be Trotskyist – the Socialistische Arbeiders Partij (SAP), Internationale Socialisten (I.S.) or Offensief – none of whom call for the defeat of the imperialists or raise the revolutionary slogan of not one man and not one cent for the imperialist army, Dutch or "European." On the contrary, the newspaper of the SAP (*Grenzeloos*, April-May 2002) ran an article on European-U.S. rivalries under a headline denouncing "The U.S.-World Protectorate". Moreover, the United Secretariat, of which the SAP is the Dutch section, has repeatedly called for the intervention of European, as opposed to U.S., troops in the Balkans and the Near East.

The SAP, I.S. and Offensief (like the SP and the two "communist" parties, NCP and VCP) all signed the "Manifesto against the New War" – asking "our consitutional state" not to scapegoat immigrants, complaining that NATO ally Netherlands would be dragged into an American war and joining the imperialist-orchestrated hysteria about "terrorism," pleading only that the "international community" not take part in "a military campaign of revenge."

Our call for defeat of the imperialists means class struggle at home, political class struggle unmasking the imperialist drive which cynically exploits the attack on the World Trade Center. And it means calling for concrete acts by the working class against the war drive. This is not utopian: last fall there were protest strikes in Italy. With Berlusconi and Fini's fascists organizing counter-demonstrations to peace marches, any serious workers action would have meant an all-out confrontation with the government. In December dock workers at Sasebo port in the Nagasaki region refused to load armaments and military supplies onto Japanese navy ships headed to South Asia to assist the imperialist attack on Afghanistan. These examples only underline the need for revolutionary leadership and political struggle against the bourgeoisie and their labor lieutenants, even in "comfortable" Holland! ■

## Revisionist Minds Think Alike

# Pseudo-Trotskyist Lullabies

Is the National Front fascist? Is the Pope Catholic? Various opportunist leftists are desperately trying to explain away the recent sharp political shift to the right in France and across Europe by redefining dyed-in-the-wool fascists into plain old vote-hustlers. But this ominous development cannot be disappeared by sleight of hand. Even if they're currently wearing sheep's clothing, dressed in fashionable double-breasted suits and ties instead of black or brown shirts, they're still fascist wolves.

We have exposed how the International Communist League (ICL) echoes the bourgeoisie in claiming that Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front in France, Gianfranco Fini's National Alliance in Italy and Jörg Haider's Freedom Party in Austria are no longer fascist but merely "electoral parties." But the left-centrist ICL is not alone. These fairy tales are also spread by the reformist tendencies led by Ted Grant and Peter Taaffe, the remnants of the pseudo-Trotskyist Militant tendency that for decades was buried in the British Labour Party.

It is striking how identical arguments are repeated, often word for word, by centrists and reformists. Where the ICL says Le Pen/Fini/Haider may have fascist origins and ideology but their parties are merely vote-collecting machines, Taaffe's Committee for a Workers International (CWI) writes:

"Despite the neo-fascist antecedents of many of the leaders of the far-right parties, these formations are not fascist-type parties with their own para-military forces (apart from small groups of thugs that still shelter within them).

"Leaders like Le Pen and Haider have past links with neo-Nazi organizations and there are still elements of racist authoritarian ideology in their politics. But they have grown on an electoral level, presenting a respectable face, distancing themselves from the tiny neo-fascist groups on the fringes of far-right politics....

"The far-right parties have grown as an electoral phenomenon, not as paramilitary forces on the lines of the fascist militias of Hitler and Mussolini."

—*Socialism Today*, June 2002

The same soothing arguments come from the international grouping around Grant's Socialist Appeal outfit in Britain. An article titled "Is There a Threat of Fascism in Europe?" by their spokesman Alan Woods states:

"In fact, Le Pen is not a fascist, but a reactionary racist and a pacemaker for fascism. If he had been elected, he would have behaved in the same way as Fini, the leader of the Italian neo-fascist party the National Alliance, which has become just another right-wing conservative party....

"We must, of course, combat reaction and racism at all times. [Of course!] But it is a serious mistake to sound the alarm bells and start shouting about fascism every time some reactionary demagogue gets an increase in votes.

"At this moment in time the real fascist organizations have been reduced everywhere to virulent sects.... The ruling class does not need these elements at the present time."

How terribly reassuring.

Attempts by opportunists to revise the communism of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky invariably reflect a loss of confidence in the revolutionary capacity of the proletariat and adaptation to the pressures of the bourgeoisie. Thus the ICL pretends that these parties are not fascist because the bourgeoisie doesn't need fascism today, due to a "qualitative" regression in the consciousness of the proletariat following the destruction of the Soviet Union. Similarly, the CWI asserts:

"Despite the swing to the right electorally, the balance of social forces does not favour a resurgence of fascist reaction.... A major factor has been the setback to class consciousness following the collapse of Stalinism after 1989."

Taaffe & Co. harp on this theme, arguing:

"There was a profound setback to working-class consciousness as a result of the collapse of the Stalinist regimes.... Even the politically advanced layers of workers were disoriented and confused. There have been massive industrial struggles and protest movements throughout Europe during the 1990s and more recently. These struggles, however, lacked cohesion and clear political direction."

This same line was taken by the new ICL leadership in a January 1996 perspectives document, which declared:

"Across West Europe, the working class has engaged in some of the largest and most militant battles in years, yet for the first time since the Paris Commune, the masses of workers in struggle do not identify their immediate felt needs with the ideals of socialism or program of socialist revolution."

This was the first expression of the ICL's new line, codified in a new declaration of principles two years later, that the world situation was dominated by a great leap backwards in workers' consciousness.

This is not a new line-up. We noted in *The Internationalist* No. 8 (June 2000) that in Austria the ICL, Taaffeites and Grantites gave a *Persilschein* (a kind of Good Housekeeping seal of certification) to Haider's electoralist-not-fascist credentials. But while the left-centrist ICL gets a little queasy when it comes to dotting the i's and crossing the t's about where this all leads, its reformist cousins are quite explicit:

"The noisy propaganda about the 'risk of fascism' in Europe is entirely false. The bourgeois in Europe burnt their fingers badly with fascism in the past, and are not likely to hand power again to fascist madmen like Hitler and Mussolini." (Grantites)

"The bourgeoisie burned its fingers with fascism in the inter-war period, or rather burned its arms and legs.... The bourgeoisie will not make the same mistake again." (Taaffeites)

So it turns out that bourgeois support to the German Nazis and Italian fascists was all a "mistake" which won't happen again. We have Grant's and Taaffe's word on it. To be sure, Alan Woods argues that "every move towards reaction will



only prepare even bigger swings to the left." This tick-tock conception of the class struggle can only serve to lull the workers into passivity when it is vital to crush the fascists now, *before* they are a mass movement.

What is the programmatic conclusion of the opportunists' latest discovery? Taaffe & Co. call for "the formation of broad, democratic workers' parties, on the basis of an anti-capitalist programme." In other words, they want to recreate the Old Labour Party so they can bury themselves in it again. Lutte Ouvrière (LO) in France likewise envisages a new "party of the working people." The ICL uses the same arguments to justify its desertion from the class struggle, since workers' struggles supposedly no longer have anything to do with socialism, and the fascists supposedly are no longer fascist.

In France this spring, tens of thousands of youth streamed into the streets to protest against the fascist National Front. Mainstream reformists sought to divert this justified anger into the safe channels of an electoral popular front that ended up channeling votes to the arch-reactionary Chirac. For their part, various pseudo-Trotskyists like Taaffe, Grant, LO and the

ICL deny that the FN is fascist and pooh-pooh all talk of a danger of fascist reaction. Whatever tomorrow may bring, Woods preaches, "At the present time there is no danger of fascism or even Bonapartist reaction in any developed capitalist country." Amen, say the ICL and CWI.

The League for the Fourth International has uniquely warned that the very real danger represented by the fascists in Europe is that they are on the cutting edge of a drive toward bonapartist and semi-bonapartist regimes. Their central aims are to go after immigrants, rip up workers' gains and break the power of labor. We have underlined that bourgeois conservatives and liberals as well as reformist workers parties have joined in this drive, voting for police-state measures in the name of fighting "terrorism" and "crime."

The way to combat this is not by chaining the workers to the class enemy through "popular fronts" or by lulling them to sleep by pretending that fascism is dead and gone. It's necessary to build genuine Trotskyist parties that warn of the danger to the workers and oppressed of a capitalist "strong state" and put forward a program to mobilize the working class to sweep away this deadly threat through socialist revolution. ■

### Lenin and Trotsky Against the "Narcotic and Debilitating Illusions of Pacifism"

*Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V.I. Lenin of the October 1917 Russian Revolution, stressed that "the struggle against the narcotic and debilitating illusions of pacifism enters as the most important element into Lenin's doctrine" on the fight against imperialist war ("Lenin and Imperialist War," December 1938). Defending the Bolshevik-Leninist program against Stalinists, Social Democrats and assorted centrists, he underlined that revolutionaries fight for the defeat of the imperialist powers and the defense of semi-colonial countries in wars such as that between imperialist Japan and semi-colonial China in the 1930s. The following is from his September 1937 article "Pacifism and China":*

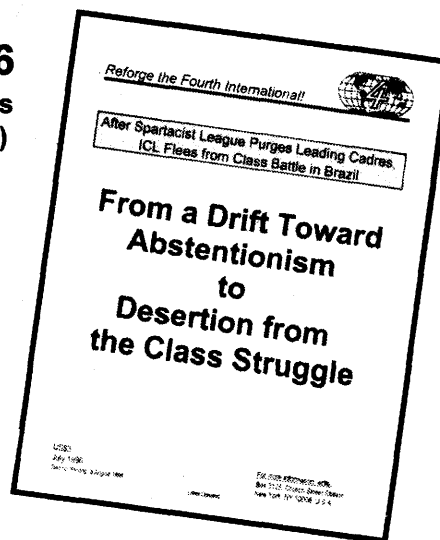
"The so-called peace organizations, including the working class organizations, do not in the least constitute an obstacle to the war. The numerous peace conferences, organized mainly by the Comintern, are purely theatrical enterprises without the least effectiveness; in time of war all these peace leaders, all these pious and humanitarian ladies and gentlemen, will return to their governments to support them in the war as they did in 1914-18....

"At the same time we must carefully distinguish between the imperialist countries and the backward countries, colonial and semicolonial. The attitude of the working class organizations in and toward these two groupings cannot be the same. The present war between China and Japan is a classic example. It is absolutely indisputable that, on the part of Japan, it is a war of rapine and that, on the part of China, it is a war of national defense....

"That is why we can only feel pity or hatred for those who in the face of the Sino-Japanese War declare they are opposed to all wars, to wars altogether.... The working class movement cannot remain neutral in a struggle between those who enslave and those who are enslaved."

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## Scab-Herders Nearly Kill Striker

# Ontario Navistar Strike Shows: *Picket Lines Mean Don't Cross!*

*The following leaflet was issued on June 28 and updated July 7. The Canadian Auto Workers bureaucracy subsequently ended the Navistar strike on July 15 with a contract accepting major speed-up and ongoing job cuts. In Quebec, a bitter strike at Vidéotron continues, underlining the need for a class-struggle internationalist leadership.*

On June 24, three strikers at the Navistar truck plant in Chatham, Ontario were injured when a professional strike-breaker smashed a van into the picket line. One of the picketers, Don Milner, spent hours in surgery for critical internal injuries. This attack, perpetrated by the bosses and their hired thugs from the notorious London Protection International, was carried out to clear the way for what the capitalist media calls "replacement workers" – scabs – at the Navistar Plant, whose 650 workers are members of Canadian Auto Workers Local 127. It follows an injunction from the bosses' courts seeking to cripple the effectiveness of picket lines in this hard-fought strike.

The potentially deadly attack shows the meaning of the anti-labor campaign waged by the Tory (Conservative) Harris government, which has been emboldened by decades of class-collaboration and sellouts from the labor bureaucracy and the reformist NDP. The government onslaught has included officially lifting the supposed ban on using scabs in unionized workplaces – a direct assault on the power of the picket line.

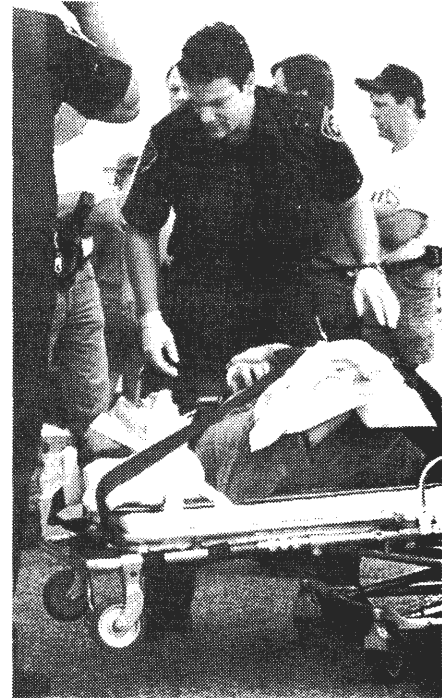
The courageous Navistar strikers have now shed their blood in defense of the elementary working-class principle:

*Picket lines mean don't cross!* While the bosses and their reformist hangers-on preach the lie of class peace, Navistar shows yet again that the interests of labor and capital are irreconcilably opposed. They will be at war until the working class defeats and expropriates the bourgeoisie. The picket line is the battle line in the class war.

As workers express outrage at the bloody strike-breaking attack, CAW president Buzz Hargrove

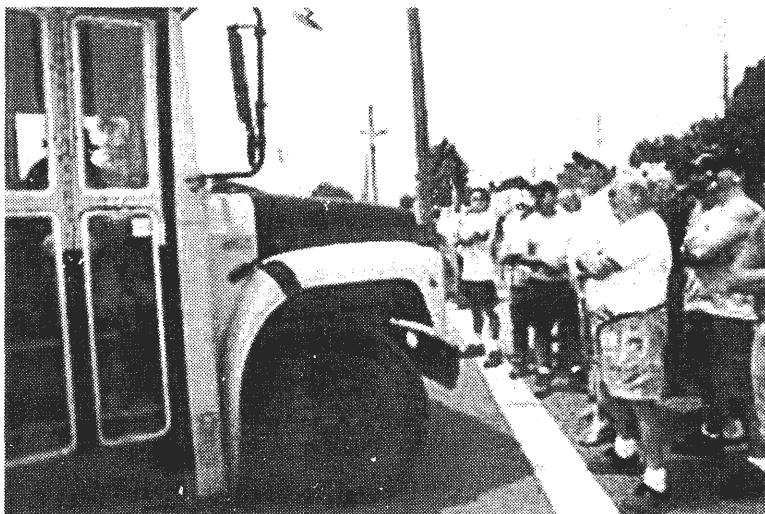
has made noises about shutting down other auto and aerospace plants and bringing out some of the 130,000 CAW members in Ontario. The working class has tremendous potential power, waiting to be unchained. But words won't win this fight. *A massive, militant mobilization of workers power is required NOW to smash the Navistar bosses' murderous strikebreaking and win victory for the Chatham strikers*, who are resisting an employer offensive that includes the demand for a wage cut of \$6 an hour. Yet Hargrove asks for "assistance" in preventing further violence from the Labor Minister of the same Ontario government which has unleashed an onslaught against labor and specifically against the picket line. With its long history of using troops against strikers, and the 1970 occupation of Quebec, the Canadian capitalist state exists to serve the exploiters against the exploited and oppressed.

The Navistar strike is a clear example of the need for workers internationalism. The plant is an hour's



Photos: Derek Rutan/London Free Press

**Navistar striker Don Milner after he was struck by scabherders' van that drove into picket line, Chatham, Ontario, June 24.**



**Pickers of Canadian Auto Workers Union block bus carrying management scabs at struck Navistar truck manufacturing plant in Chatham, June 24.**

*continued on page 63*

# Southern Miners Urgently Need International Workers Solidarity

SEPTEMBER 20—A group of black and white miners in the American South urgently need the support of the international workers movement. These workers are facing a hysterical anti-union campaign and the threat of layoffs over their 33-month struggle for the elemental right to have a union. The bosses' onslaught has come to a head recently whipping up hysteria against "reds" in the worst style of McCarthyite witchhunting, in an effort to crush and wipe out the union.

The workers of the Kentucky-Tennessee Clay company are employed in a mine and industrial clay processing plant in the town of Langley, South Carolina. "K-T Clay," as the company is known, is a subsidiary of the huge Belgian-French conglomerate Imerys, one of the principal mineral producers internationally. Imerys has operations in Brazil, South Africa, Australia, Ukraine, Germany, France, Italy and numerous other countries.

Fed up with dangerous working conditions and wage-slashing, firings and constant harassment, the workers decided to organize a union. Defying the anti-union campaign of the company, in March 2000 they voted to establish the union, Local D-598 of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers. Confronting the deep-seated racism in this region, they elected black and white leaders who have fought against racial discrimination. They also have participated in the campaign to free black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, who has been imprisoned for the last two decades on Pennsylvania's death row.

Attempting to crush the workers' struggle, the company used the courts against the union and launched a new barrage of threats and pressures. It refused to recognize the miners' representatives, refused to negotiate a contract and refused to improve working conditions that have caused increasing numbers of accidents. Finally, K-T Clay got a court to "annul" the workers' vote that established the union. As a result, a new vote was scheduled for 12 September 2002.

The bosses were desperate to prevent the union from again winning the vote. So the company decided to use the oldest union-busting tactic in the books, creating a climate of intimidation and fear by use of red-baiting. On the day of the vote, the company put out a hysterical bulletin accusing the leaders of the union of having "something in common" with communism because an article about the struggle of the K-T Clay workers was published in *The Internationalist* (see "South Carolina Clay Miners Appeal for Solidarity," *The Internationalist* No. 12, Fall 2001).

The McCarthyite flyer was posted next to the official notice of the vote, clearly violating even the laws of the bosses' government. In this region which is infamous for right-wing politics, racism and lynching, the company's mud-slinging tactic managed to intimidate some workers. The company is now proclaiming that the union was "defeated" in the vote and should cease to exist. But faced with the threats of firings, the union leaders and activists have refused to be intimidated and are intensifying their class struggle. They are appealing for

international solidarity against the bosses' offensive.

The state of South Carolina is the heart of the old Confederacy of Southern slavery in the U.S. The state capitol still flies the flag of the slave-owners in the American civil war, the hated symbol of racism and the Ku Klux Klan. Traditionally, racism and anti-communist hysteria together with so-called "right-to-work" laws have been used by the employers to keep the area "free" of unions. In a letter appealing for solidarity with the K-T Clay workers, Donna Dewitt, president of the South Carolina state AFL-CIO union federation, wrote:

"It is the corporate mentality of South Carolina to intimidate workers into believing that the destiny of our brothers and sisters at K-T Clay would be no different from those of the seven textile workers shot in the back in the uprising of 1934 at the mill where they were protesting in Honea Path, South Carolina. However, the silence of the South Carolina workers and their struggles has been broken with the outcry for justice in the Charleston 5 victory. Now I appeal to you, once again, to join me in demanding justice for the workers at K-T Clay."

In a message of support to the K-T Clay workers, the president of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) union in Charleston, Ken Riley, cites other union-busting attacks. Last year, the South Carolina state attorney general said that workers who were participating in a defense meeting for the "Charleston Five" were an outside group of union sympathizers and "comrades." Brother Riley writes:

"It is this type of red-baiting by government officials that has set the tone for attacks on all of organized labor in our state including most recently the attack on the unionists at the Kentucky-Tennessee Clay Company in Langley, South Carolina.... Labor must now rally together to end such vicious practices on the part of government and corporations."

An injury to one is an injury to all. The attempt to crush the unions in South Carolina goes together with the open intervention of the federal government against the West Coast dock workers in the U.S., the same workers who in 1999 carried out a work stoppage to demand freedom for Mumia. The attack on the right to organize unions comes amidst an escalating onslaught against blacks, immigrants and the working class in the present war climate.

**The K-T Clay workers urgently need statements of support and solidarity actions from the international workers movement.** Write your statement of solidarity, demanding immediate recognition of the K-T Clay workers union, an end to the threats, McCarthyite tactics and attempts to intimidate union activists, and for satisfaction of the workers' demands. Send your statement by fax to 212-614-8711. In those areas where Imerys has operations, unions and workers should carry out actions demanding an end to the union-busting campaign against K-T Clay workers.





## Mobilize Labor to Defend ILWU...

*continued from page 64*

the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, 10,500 of whose members are locked out in 29 ports from Seattle to San Diego. *But far more is needed.*

Longshoremen from Liverpool to Australia to Charleston, South Carolina have also faced vicious government/employer union-busting. Where they have stood alone, the price has been bitter defeat. Brazilian dockers in the port of Santos in April 2001 fought bloody battles with the military police in defense of the union hiring hall, a key issue in the present West Coast lockout. But standing together as a class, the workers have the power to defeat the bosses' drive. Labor action by other transport workers is crucial, particularly the International Longshoremen's Association on the East Coast. The Internationalist Group has also urged maritime and waterfront unions internationally to carry out *walkouts in solidarity with their U.S. fellow workers.*

The ILWU is facing not only the union-bashing PMA bosses but a regime in Washington that is hell-bent on bombing the world into submission: yesterday Kabul, tomorrow Baghdad. The fact is, the new terror war on Iraq is also a capitalist war on working people and minorities in the U.S. And the attack on the ILWU is part and parcel of that war. What's needed above all is *powerful internationalist working-class action to defeat the bosses' war, "at home" and abroad!*

The importers are screaming for blood. By Thursday night, more than 150 ships were sitting at docks or anchored at sea up and down the West Coast. Fruit and vegetables are rotting; the New United Motor Manufacturing (NUMMI) plant in Fremont has shut down production; and numerous companies and trade associations are calling for President Bush to use the Taft-Hartley slave labor law to force longshore workers back to work under the government's iron heel.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* reports today that employers are undertaking a "frantic" search for alternative routes – from Mexico and Panama to the Suez Canal – for their imports and exports. *Transport workers everywhere must "hot cargo" (refuse to touch) diverted shipments.* Let them rot and rust in the harbors and on the high seas!

Yesterday close to a hundred ILWU members, joined by a hefty contingent from the Marine Engineers, massed at the APL (American President Lines) terminal here, determined to stop shameful scabbing by Machinists union members who have violated longshore picket lines. A union picket boat patrolled the waters near the terminal. Mass pickets are key to drive home the lesson that *picket lines mean don't cross!*

Union bashers pushing to "Taft-Hartley" the ILWU say it would give Bush a "PATCO spike" in the opinion polls. They're referring to Reagan's crushing of the air controllers in 1981, who were left dangling by the AFL-CIO officialdom. We say, *labor must act as one solid fist to make sure there will be no more PATCOs!*

Everyone had better understand that this is a knock-down, drag-out fight. Labor-hating bigmouth Joseph Miniace, chief of the PMA, was brought in a few years back to spearhead a "severe and strategic" plan for what the *Chronicle* (3 October) describes as attacking "the cost of longshore labor...and what [the employers] see as the union's unreasonable control over the flow of work on the docks." Management's contempt for safety has led to the death of five workers in the last seven months alone.

Some of the loudest voices calling on Bush to carry out union-busting action come from Democratic Party politicians, headed up by California Senator Dianne Feinstein. "I believe the president should invoke Taft-Hartley to require an 80-day cooling-off period and a return to work" if the situation is not resolved by the end of this week, said Feinstein, adding that "our nation" cannot afford this dispute when it is "at the brink of war."

Oakland Democratic "dove" Congresswoman Barbara Lee, far from opposing government intervention outright, said only that "talk of Taft-Hartley is premature" (*Oakland Tribune*, October 3). Lee was officially congratulated last fall by ILWU Local 10, and hailed by virtually the entire American left, for dissenting from the vote of war powers for Bush. However, Lee then turned around and voted tens of billions for the U.S. terrorist "war on terrorism."

The *Wall Street Journal* today reported on its front page that "Use of Taft-Hartley Often Gives Poor Result." They're worried that out of the 35 times that the "emergency" provisions of this union-busting law have been invoked since it was enacted in 1947, in the ten cases where Taft-Hartley led to a bitter strike, "most involved longshore workers." The voice of the stock market cautioned that the ILWU "is no pushover."

Labor has the power to *bust the union-busters* and their anti-labor laws. Faced with repeated government strike-breaking during World War II, the coal miners said, "You can't mine coal with bayonets." The last time Taft-Hartley was invoked – when Democratic president Jimmy Carter tried to break the 110-day coal strike of 1977-78 – the miners burned the injunctions. Well, you can't load ships and operate those giant cranes with bayonets either.

Some of Bush's advisors fear that if he imposes Taft-Hartley it could backfire and "energize" the labor movement. This fear could be turned into reality – *if labor mobilizes now and meets government intervention with strike action by strategic sectors of organized labor.*

This perspective is counterposed to the absurd call for a consumer boycott being put forward by groups like the Workers World Party who are part of a Bay Area Port Solidarity Committee. Instead of a fight to mobilize workers power, these reformists have called for atomized consumers to stop buying Payless shoes and other products – goods which were already unloaded by the longshore workers!

Consumer boycotts are at best an impotent measure, often called by bureaucrats to cover up their sellout of a strike, and can even hurt the very workers they are supposed to be supporting. What's necessary is to mobilize *working-class*

power, especially when employer associations willing to spend billions of dollars on union-busting are geared up for war on labor with the backing of the government.

If "patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel," as the old saying goes, it is a favorite weapon of labor-hating scoundrels. Up until now there have been strikingly few patriotic slogans on the picket lines in the Bay Area. However, official signs designed to chime in with the bosses' war fever and jingoism are now making their appearance, signs like "America Held Hostage by Corporate Greed," and "Fight Terrorists Not American Workers." This comes on the heels of union president Jim Spinosa's acceptance of federal "mediation," and is accompanied by attempts by a number of union leaders to redbait anyone who brings "outside causes, campaigns, or issues" to the picket lines (*ILWU Local 10 Longshore Bulletin*, 3 October).

An older ILWU member who spoke on the picket lines with a reporter for *The Internationalist* recalled how Tom Ridge used "national security" in an attempt to intimidate the union, calling Bush's "homeland security" czar "the head of our American Gestapo." For decades, the ILWU was accused of "anti-Americanism." Recall when the House Un-American Activities Committee came to SF in 1959-60, and longshoremen joined with students in driving the HUAC witchhunters out of town.

The fact is that a raft of "anti-terrorist" measures are aimed straight at destroying hard-won union gains, part of an assault on the most fundamental democratic rights and civil liberties. Particularly targeted are immigrant workers like the largely Latino independent port truckers, who have been the object of chauvinist attacks by the ILWU tops. The "Maritime Security Act" provides for a broad witchhunt against labor, blacks and immigrants.

As Bush prepares to rain death on the Iraqi people, the ILWU bureaucracy has agreed to load military cargo. Spinosa declared that the union has "told the military that our obligation to this country and to our military effort is one that we will not move away from." Incredibly, after quoting this, the response of the International Socialist Organization's *Socialist Worker* (4 October) is to claim, "In fact, the military isn't part of the PMA and is unaffected by the lockout." Oh really? In fact, the *Oakland Tribune* (3 October) reports, the PMA and the ILWU leaders "reached an agreement over allowing longshoremen into a terminal at the Port of Oakland to unload military cargo."

The Internationalist Group has called for international working-class action against the war on Iraq and in defense of the countries targeted by U.S. rulers' aggression, including strikes, labor boycotts and protests. Those who glory in being allowed to help the bosses' government prepare an imperialist war will never stand up to that same government when it uses the military or National Guard to enforce union-busting.



**In 1978 coal miners defied Taft-Hartley injunction. Dock workers should refuse to work under slave-labor conditions.**

There is widespread opposition among working people to a war on Iraq. In the Bay Area, the San Francisco Labor Council passed a motion on August 26 accusing the Bush government of trying to use its "endless war" as a weapon against the ILWU and "as an opening wedge against the entire labor movement by threatening government intervention on the West Coast docks under the guise of 'Homeland Security'." The resolution ended: "No New War Against Iraq – Keep the Government Off the Docks!" But in complaining that the U.S. was "wasting billions of dollars on the Iraq war build-up" instead of social programs, the motion is at bottom social-chauvinist in character, reducing imperialist mass murder to a matter of budget priorities.

It is necessary to mobilize working-class opposition to the imperialist war on an internationalist basis of class struggle, rather than bourgeois liberal/reformist pressure politics. To fight against the war and keep the government off the docks, shut the ports down tight – *no exceptions* – and no military cargo moves.

That means fighting for a nationwide dock strike, for a political break with the capitalist parties, and for a class-struggle leadership of the workers movement. Bush and Ridge want workers to bow down to their "fatherland" of profits, racism and war. But Karl Marx had it right when he said "The workers have no fatherland... Workers of all countries, unite!" This is the program of international socialist revolution continued by Lenin and Trotsky.

Today genuine working-class internationalism is more crucial than ever in the defense of *all* the working people against the capitalist labor-haters who seek to bust unions and militarize the docks. This means breaking from the Democrats (and their shills like the Green Party), and forging a workers party to lead the working class in establishing a workers government that will take the docks, ships, factories and all the wealth created by labor away from the exploiters, and put them in the service of the workers and oppressed. Then we can *lock out the bosses* once and for all. ■

# Report from the Longshore Picket Lines

OAKLAND, October 1—Longshore workers are voicing determination to defend hard-won union gains in the face of the indefinite lockout declared last weekend by the bosses' Pacific Maritime Association. With ports from Seattle to San Diego at a virtual standstill, huge container ships lie idle in Oakland's harbor, the area's largest. The port's enormous cranes are silent and cargo trains are backed up all the way to the Nevada border.

As a black woman worker with 13 years in the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) told reporters for *The Internationalist*, "We're ready to do whatever is necessary to hold on to what we have through our union. These are the things our brothers died for in 1934," in the historic strike in San Francisco that established the union hiring hall and laid the basis for crucial union gains.

One of the workers' key concerns is that the PMA wants to impose port-by-port bargaining in order to cripple the union, eliminating the coastwise bargaining won after the '34 strike.

ILWU members, who have thrown up picket lines at the cargo terminals and docks, express a keen awareness that the PMA's lockout is a union-busting assault. "The PMA is playing hardball," one picketer told us. Today the head of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services (FMCS) showed up for a meeting with representatives of the employers and the union. When ILWU leaders arrived at the FMCS office in Oakland, they were met by gun-toting "security" guards hired by the PMA. The union representatives walked out, denouncing the employers' new attempt at intimidation.

In fact, federal "mediation" is just the softer face of government intervention. Earlier, Bush's homeland "security" czar Tom Ridge attempted to cow the union into submission.

Workers' determination was clear this morning at 7 a.m. in front of the Matson Lines terminal, where a solid group of longshoremen linked arms to defend the principle that ***picket lines mean don't cross***.

Scandalously, International Association of Machinists (IAM) union officials have been trying to herd their members across ILWU lines. Some machinists are reportedly taking water taxis in order to slip into terminals from the back!

ILWU picketers voiced their resolve to make sure this kind of back-stabbing stops and that their lines—in a fight that affects all of labor in the clearest way—will be respected.

Shipping worth as much as \$1 billion a day is being held up as the maritime bosses seek to provoke direct intervention from the federal government. "Export Industry Fears Disaster," headlined today's *San Francisco Chronicle*. It reports that companies from J.C. Penney to the New United Motor Manufacturing (NUMMI) plant in Fremont are crying bloody murder "as their precious cargo remained logjammed along 29 West Coast ports."

If U.S. seamen's unions walked off ships in response to the lockout, this would be the first time since the '34 strike that this



ILWU picketers at the Oakland docks, October 1.

Peter da Silva/New York Times

kind of joint struggle with the longshore workers took place.

Longshore workers face the danger that Bush will use the slave-labor Taft-Hartley law against the union. Veteran unionists remember Reagan's busting of the PATCO air-traffic controllers' union, which could have been defeated if machinists, Teamsters and other key unionists had shut down the airports. There must be no new PATCOs!

The PMA's lockout is an attack on all labor, and the entire workers movement must mobilize in militant action against any government strike-breaking. In particular, the employers' attack is a gun held to the head of all transport workers, including the East Coast International Longshoremen's Association. The ILA should take action now in defense of the ILWU. The Internationalist Group has also urged maritime and waterfront unions internationally to take solidarity action in support of the West Coast U.S. longshore workers.

"Bush Hands Off" reads a large sign at one of the picket sites. Facing a government of arrogant plutocrats who are pumped up to unleash a new "Desert Slaughter" against Iraq, unionists face powerful enemies. Union bureaucrats seek to keep a lid on militancy while pushing illusions in the capitalist Democratic Party. Meanwhile, the Democrats are demanding that Congress push through even more draconian "security" measures on the docks. This is aimed straight at the labor movement. Waving the flag, the bureaucrats chain workers to the bosses' parties when what is urgently needed is a genuinely internationalist workers party.

The fight won't be won by playing by the bosses' rules, or letting the employers keep the initiative in this high-stakes face-off. It is only by mobilizing the class power of all labor, fighting for a class-struggle program and leadership at the head of all the oppressed, that the capitalists' onslaught can be defeated. Longshore workers are standing today on the front lines of the defense of the entire working class. ■



## As "Homeland Security" Czar Tries to Strong-Arm Longshoremen, Labor Tops Bow to Washington's Threats

# Strike Now to Defend ILWU Union Gains Under Government/Employer Attack!

### Maritime Security Act – Witchhunting on the Waterfront

*Months before George W. Bush used Taft-Hartley against West Coast longshore workers, the White House was already intervening in the name of "national security." The following statement by the Internationalist Group was issued on July 7.*

As West Coast port and shipping tycoons push to take away union gains – including the union hiring hall won in the historic 1934 San Francisco general strike – the government is ominously threatening to stop a walkout. Leaders of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) were the recipients of a heavy-handed attempt at intervention from George W. Bush's "Fatherland Security" chief, Tom Ridge. Former Pennsylvania governor Ridge, notorious for signing two death warrants against radical black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, recently called up union president Jim Spinosa to tell him a strike by the 10,500 West Coast longshore workers would not be in the "national interest."

The message pushed by the bosses' Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) is plain enough: the "war on terror" is good for profits, a strike is not good for "national security" (that is, profits). The threat is clear: strikers will be branded as "terrorists." The response of the union tops has been to issue a gag order, keeping the membership in the dark about the negotiations and threatening sanctions against Local 10 business agent Jack Heyman for revealing and denouncing Ridge's threatening call. Meanwhile, the ILWU misleaders disavow any talk of a strike or even a work-to-rule job action. ILWU militants must say: *The hell with that – strike to win!* As the PMA declares the negotiations a "watershed" for labor, it is necessary to mobilize union power in a *joint transport/waterfront strike*. Against threats to call out the National Guard, we say: bring out the Teamsters, the railroad unions and the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) on the East and Gulf Coasts to *shut down U.S. ports as tight as a drum*. There should be solidarity walkouts in ports around the world.

The longshore contract expired July 1st. But rather than "No contract, no work," the union tops are saying, "No contract, so what?" They're keeping the docks running as they extend the previous contract day by day. Union spokesman Steve Stallone told the *Journal of Commerce* (1 July) that a strike authorization vote has not even been held, there are no plans at this time to hold one, and "we haven't even designed the ballot." This can only embolden the PMA, which is hard-

lining its demands. Backed up by a coalition of corporate giants like Wal-Mart and Nike, the employers' group has threatened a lockout in the event of labor slowdowns. Meanwhile, industry analysts predict that a walkout would be met with federal strikebreaking using the Taft-Hartley slave-labor law.

West Coast ports are expected to double the amount of cargo they handle over the next decade – but the maritime bosses want this work to be done by *less* longshoremen. They seek to update and push to the limit the job-slashing trend enshrined four decades ago in the "Modernization and Mechanization" (M&M) agreement worked out by longtime ILWU leader Harry Bridges. This new phase would place computers in cargo-moving equipment and scanners at the terminal gate. This attempt to impose speed-up, eliminate jobs and slash costs (including for medical coverage in this accident-rife industry) in the name of technological modernization must be fought with demands for a *six-hour day at no loss in pay*, which would require the addition of another shift of longshore workers.

*Meanwhile, the bosses are about to impose government blacklisting in the form of a draconian "Maritime Security Act." This McCarthyite legislation, co-sponsored by Democrats and Republicans, would gut the union hiring hall, fire militants and militarize the waterfront.*

This is the culmination of the anti-labor crusade that has brought union-busting to the docks from Australia to Liverpool over the last decade. In 1997, the PMA attempted to railroad Oakland longshoremen who, in solidarity with the Liverpool dockers, refused to work the Neptune Jade after it was loaded by union-busters (see "McCarthyite Witchhunt Against Bay Area Labor Activists," *The Internationalist* No. 4 [January-February 1998]). Earlier this year, employers and Confederate flag-waving state officials in South Carolina were defeated in their attempt to railroad Charleston ILA longshoremen to prison in a racist, union-busting frame-up (see "Defend the Charleston Five! Key Battle for Labor Rights and Black Freedom!" *The Internationalist* No. 10, June 2001). Smarting from this setback and using the imperialist "war on terrorism" as a ruse, the maritime bosses are out for blood. But they can be stopped.

The raw power of the longshore unions has the capitalists worried. The *New York Times* (21 June) published a major article ("Fear for Jobs Could Bring Shutdown of West Coast Ports") reporting that a three-week strike would cost the U.S. economy almost \$50 billion. Fear of a dock strike is being cited as a major reason for the current stock market jitters on Wall Street. The bourgeoisie has good reason to be nervous. The ILWU has historically been one of the most left-wing unions in

Ben Margot/AP



ILWU Solidarity rally in Oakland, June 27.

the country. In April 1999, longshoremen shut down all West Coast docks for ten hours to demand freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal (see "ILWU West Coast Port Shutdown Showed Labor's Power in Fight to Free Mumia," *The Internationalist* No. 8 [June 2000]). Dock workers know how to use their power: the key obstacle is the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy that hamstringing their militancy and chains them to the bosses' parties.

Today, the shipping bosses yell that "workplace disruptions" would interfere with "the nation's defense efforts" (PMA statement, 11 March). The capitalist rulers of the United States see the Pacific Rim as increasingly important to the economic and military/strategic running of their empire. Pacific trade means mega-profits, and overthrowing "Red China" – which U.S. imperialism "lost" in the 1949 revolution that established a bureaucratically deformed workers state – is high on their global agenda. The drive for more labor "efficiency" (exploitation) also reflects competition with imperialist rivals, some of which have introduced wide-ranging computerization and robotization of their ports. The attack on longshore labor is inseparable from these broad political issues; defeating it requires intransigent opposition to the imperialist rulers and a fight to mobilize labor's power on an international scale.

*The answer to the global capitalist offensive against labor is not the protectionism (open or disguised) and defense of national sovereignty pushed by the "anti-globalization" movement – which at most seeks to "reform" capitalism – but a fight for world socialist revolution.*

#### **"Maritime Security Act":**

#### **Assault on Labor, Blacks, Immigrants – Brought to You by the Democratic Party**

As the ILWU tops bow to national-unity "jawboning" from Tom Ridge, reportedly joined by war secretary Rumsfeld,

dock workers are under the gun. Imperialist war abroad has heightened attacks on labor, minorities and democratic rights "at home." With the drive for police-state repression embodied in the "USA Patriot Act," last December the U.S. Senate unanimously passed the "Port and Maritime Security Act of 2001" (S. 1214). A similar bill has been passed by the House of Representatives and they only need to be harmonized before being enacted and signed by Bush.

While several dozen Democratic Senators and Congressmen led by Ted Kennedy recently issued a statement against White House interference in the ILWU talks, the Maritime Security Act is a *brainchild of the Democratic Party*. This union-busting legislation exposes one again the lie

pushed by the labor tops that these capitalist politicians are some kind of "friends of labor." The Democratic Policy Committee's Web site includes S. 1214 in a list of "Senate Achievements Under Democratic Leadership," together with the USA Patriot Act, approval of \$8.3 billion for "homeland defense," and the approval of the Afghanistan war. Indeed, the Maritime Security Act stems from a seaport policy review ordered by the Clinton administration. A first version of the bill passed the Senate in August 2001 as an "anti-crime" measure. After the September 11 indiscriminate attack on the World Trade Center, the capitalist rulers used the patriotic war frenzy to repackage and give a new justification to their plans to militarize the docks.

The Act is a high-caliber weapon in the hands of the bosses, aimed at union militants and sectors of the working class which are the favored targets for racist repression. Declaring U.S. ports "particularly vulnerable" to "illegal alien smuggling," drugs and contraband, it calls for screening and background checks to eliminate workers who have been convicted within the past seven years, or released from prison within the past five, for a list of 16 offenses including "willful destruction of property," "a felony involving a threat," drug felonies, "conspiracy" and "sedition." It is no accident that the bill was introduced by South Carolina Democrat Fritz Hollings, as the Charleston Five longshoremen were accused precisely of threats, violence and conspiracy as they defended their union against an army of riot cops, armored cars, helicopters and police boats. And South Carolina attorney general Charles Condon compared the Five to the authors of the September 11 attack.

These are many of the frame-up charges traditionally used against labor activists. The IWW syndicalists were routinely framed up on sedition charges. ILWU members remember that Australian-born union founder Bridges was for years the target



**Longshoremen surround scab produce truck during 1934 San Francisco general strike. Shut it down!**

of McCarthyite witchhunting as a supposedly seditious, undesirable alien (despite the fact that he was a self-proclaimed champion of class collaboration). As for the “war on drugs” – which put dock workers in the government’s crosshairs back in the Reagan years – this is a centerpiece of the racist war on black ghettos and Latin barrios in which huge numbers of youth, poor and working people have been incarcerated and disenfranchised. As if this weren’t enough, the Act also says a worker can be excluded if “the individual does not meet other criteria established” by Bush’s Secretary of Transportation, Democrat Norman Mineta. This is a blatant recipe for racial profiling and union-busting on the docks. They want to bring back the “fink book,” with the government instead of the union controlling hiring.

Especially endangered are the port truckers who are hired by non-union contractors and are largely immigrants from Latin America, Asia and Arab countries. These truckers have repeatedly waged militant strikes and job actions, including for union recognition. Yet their struggle has been stabbed in the back by ILWU and Teamsters union bureaucrats, who not only would sell them down the river but seek to take their jobs. In a vicious attack, ILWU head Spinosa tried to turn the bosses’ “security” crusade against these workers, writing: “Why are hard-working, productive longshore workers being targeted for extensive security clearance when unknown truck drivers are being allowed free access to our work environment?” (*Dispatcher*, September 2001).

This rank chauvinism fits right in with the union leadership’s constant social-patriotic appeals to protect “American workers” against “foreign” companies and competition. Yet the fact that “the workers have no fatherland,” as Karl Marx pointed out, is particularly clear in an international industry like shipping. The attack on immigrants is the cutting edge of the onslaught against all workers and against the most basic democratic rights. The ILWU grew strong in the first place by fighting favoritism and

racist discrimination on the docks. The union hiring hall was particularly crucial in these fights. Yet the union leadership under Bridges eventually institutionalized a second-class category of “B-men” for workers who were deprived of many union rights, while “casuals” have none at all.

What’s needed is a fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, unionizing the port truckers with full rights, making “B-men” and casuals full members with full rights, forging a *single industrial union of waterfront and maritime workers*, and mobilizing the power of all transport workers – like UPS Teamsters whose contract expires soon – in common struggle against the bosses’ attacks. In the face of new technology there must be a fight to *shorten the workday with no loss in pay* (a sliding scale of hours), to divide up the work among all hands in a fight against unemployment, while aggressively recruiting minorities and women through the union hiring hall. These basic measures are fundamentally counterposed to the program of class collaboration of the union tops, whose decades of support to the Democratic Party are bringing bitter fruits for longshoremen and the working class as a whole. A new, class-struggle leadership must be built in the fight to forge an internationalist, revolutionary workers party.

### **For Internationalist Class Struggle, Not Flag-Waving Sellouts**

Far from leading a struggle against the bosses’ flag-waving attack on all port workers, the ILWU tops figure if they salute vigorously enough a few crumbs will come their way. The Maritime Security Act calls for including “labor organizations” together with the “private sector,” “law enforcement” and federal, state and local governments in new Local Port Security Committees. Defense of longshoremen against the “security” witchhunt demands a categorical refusal by all union representatives to



participate in these committees and a head-on fight against this anti-labor, racist attack. Yet when Local 10 brought a motion to the ILWU's January Caucus to "Oppose the Port Security Act," the International tops changed it to say "Improve" the Act!

On June 27, a "Port Workers' Solidarity Rally" was held near the Oakland docks, organized by Local 10, a largely black local whose leadership includes many dissidents, "progressives" and supporters of social-democratic former ILWU president Brian McWilliams. Among the speakers was California Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante (another Democrat), who is notorious for having used a racist slur in a speech to a labor group celebrating Black History Month last year! He used the June 27 rally as an opportunity to join the "pledge of allegiance" hysteria being whipped up by bourgeois politicians across the country, telling workers to stand up and pledge allegiance to the same government that uses "national unity" propaganda for union-busting and racist repression. (Some Local 10 officers reportedly walked off the stage at this point, but the fact that Bustamante was allowed on in the first place is a scandal.)

Current ILWU president Spinoso hails from San Pedro, and stands in the tradition of local bureaucrats there who refused to unload a Soviet ship in 1983 at the time Ronald Reagan and the South Korean government staged their Korean Air Lines Flight 007 provocation. (Historically, the ILWU refused to join Cold War anti-Soviet stunts like the 1980 boycott of grain shipments staged by the ILA.) Spinoso's predecessor McWilliams authorized union protests such as the Liverpool solidarity boycott. But calling for "fair trade" lent the ILWU's "progressive" image to the AFL-CIO's demands for protectionism – including counterrevolutionary agitation against China – at the April 2000 Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization. Both wings of the ILWU bureaucracy have proven time and again that their fundamental loyalty lies with the American capitalists, not the world's workers.

Against the flag-waving bureaucrats, longshore workers should take inspiration from the tradition of longshoremen who fought for revolutionary working-class internationalism in October 1919. Shortly after a general strike shut Seattle down for five days, that city's longshoremen discovered that crates marked "sewing machines" were actually filled with Remington rifles headed for Vladivostok to arm White Guards in the Russian Civil War. With direct backing from "expeditionary" forces sent by the U.S., Britain and other capitalist powers, the counterrevolutionary army sought to strangle the new Soviet republic of Lenin and Trotsky. Longshoremen in Seattle and San Francisco refused to load the shipment; scabs recruited to replace them got a well-deserved thrashing instead. The ships were eventually loaded, but by the time they reached the Russian Pacific port of Vladivostok it was in the hands of the Red Army, and the arms ironically aided the workers revolution.

Union "leaders" who go along with government attempts to intimidate the ranks, who help the capitalists set

one group of workers against another, who keep unionists working after contracts expire so as to avoid "disrupting" profits – these labor fakers chain the workers' enormous potential power. Unchaining this power and wielding it in defense of the vital interests of labor and all the oppressed, on an international scale, is the task of a leadership committed to doing away with the capitalist system of exploitation, racism and war.

A real fight by West Coast longshore workers could evoke widespread support from workers everywhere – including dockers around the world – and serve as a rallying point for the struggle against the repressive onslaught pushed by the war-crazed ruling class. *Longshoremen: strike to win! Down with the Maritime Security Act, mobilize labor and the oppressed against government strikebreaking! Not flag-waving class collaboration but internationalist class struggle! Break with the Democrats, dump the sellout bureaucrats – Forge a revolutionary workers party!*

## Navistar Strike...

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drive from Detroit. Mobilizing active support from the strikers' class brothers and sisters in the U.S. (as well as Mexico and Brazil, where the company has operations) is clearly called for. Our opposition to NAFTA is based on international solidarity with Mexican workers. And a mobilization of powerful contingents from Quebec labor would be crucial.

Yet this cuts directly against the craven nationalist appeals which are the stock in trade of the CAW tops, and the rank Ca-nadian chauvinism of the New Democratic Party. CAW head Hargrove is a mainstay of the NDP. The fact that this party is firmly committed to serving the capitalist class was made clear as day by Bob Rae's vicious attacks on social programs during the NDP years in Ontario. It was Rae and his NDP that paved the way for Harris' massive cuts. The social democrats – with their record of opposition to Quebec independence, of serving the capitalist state which imposes brutal racist oppression of Native peoples and immigrants – help divide the working class in the face of the class enemy.

Navistar's attack is part of a broader international offensive against the working class. Imperialist war abroad means war "at home" against the workers and all the oppressed. The vicious Bill C-36 (the maple-leaf imperialist version of the USA Patriot Act) puts basic democratic rights under the gun. In the U.S., homeland security top cop Ridge seeks to intimidate the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, warning that a strike would affect the bosses' "national security" (read: profits).

The crucial need is for a new, class-struggle leadership, which can only be built in a thorough break from the NDP, in the struggle to forge a *revolutionary workers party*. The Internationalist Group fights to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution, to lead the workers to power and defeat the capitalist system on an international scale.

*Defend the picket line! Mobilize workers power now for VICTORY TO THE NAVISTAR STRIKE!*

## As Part of Iraq War Build-Up

# Bush Uses Slave Labor Law Against West Coast Dock Workers

On October 8 President Bush declared war on the entire working class by using the Taft-Hartley "slave labor" law to order International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) members back to work at West Coast ports. This was just what the employers were angling for with the lockout they had imposed ten days before. Bush's order said opening the docks was crucial for the war effort. The battle is far from over. *The labor movement, both in the U.S. and internationally – particularly transport workers – must use its muscle in defense of the West Coast longshore workers, with work stoppages and strikes against this union-busting onslaught.* Bowing to slave-labor decrees only paves the way for even more savage union-busting, as shown by the bitter experience of what happened after 1981 when the labor tops sat by as Reagan smashed the PATCO air traffic controllers.

Labor leaders, from AFL-CIO chief Richard Trumka on

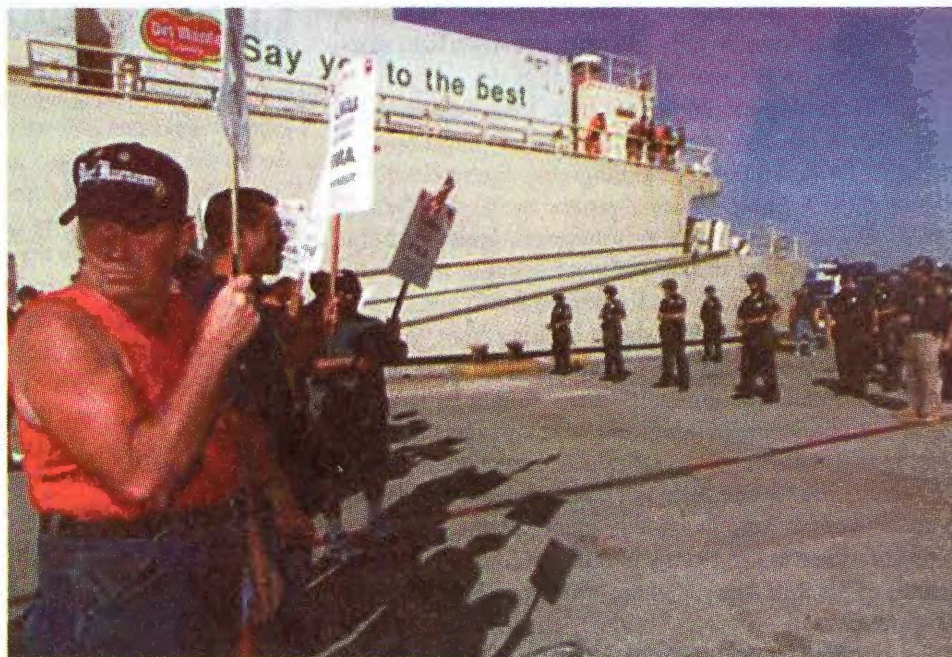
down, uttered words of criticism of Bush's action while doing nothing. After already telling union members to load military cargo and goods to Hawaii and Alaska, the ILWU leaders bowed to Bush and ordered the workers back. Days before Bush's *diktat*, an Oakland rally heard area union officialdom thunder about shutting San Francisco down for a few hours or closing the bridges in the face of Taft-Hartley. Workers chanted "Shut it down!" and "Picket lines mean don't cross," and many voiced opposition to the Iraq war. What the longshore battle requires is not hot air from pro-Democratic Party union bureaucrats but a class-struggle leadership to take on the war-crazed exploiters. Backed by the power of the whole working class, longshore workers can give the lead for defeating Taft-Hartley and opening the way for the class-struggle offensive that is key to defeating the bosses' war on the working people abroad and "at home."

## Mobilize International Labor Action to Defend the ILWU!

### Report from the Picket Lines

OAKLAND, October 4—As the threat of federal intervention looms, West Coast longshore workers are hanging tough against the lockout imposed last weekend by the employers' Pacific Maritime Association. The urgent need of the hour is solidarity *action* by the rest of labor in the U.S. and internationally.

The longshore workers have called a labor solidarity rally on Saturday (October 5) in the Port of Oakland. Teamster truckers say they will bring their big rigs in a show of support to their brothers and sisters in



Peter da Silva/New York Times

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ILWU picketers block banana boat at Port Hueneme, outside L.A., October 2.