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Internationalist



Rebellion Against Colonial Rule in Iraq



AFP

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The Hideous Face of U.S. Imperialism

Torture, American Style

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Front page top photo: Rebel fighters in
Falluja, Iraq, April 10, celebrate successful
attack against occupation forces convoy.

Subscription blank graphic based on a
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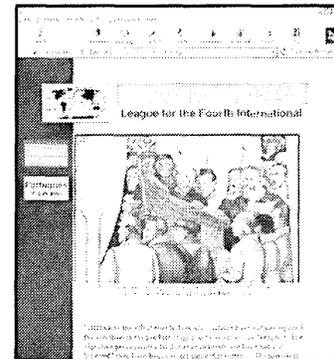
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May 2004

The Hideous Face of U.S. Imperialism in Iraq

TORTURE AMERICAN-STYLE

Morry Gash/AP

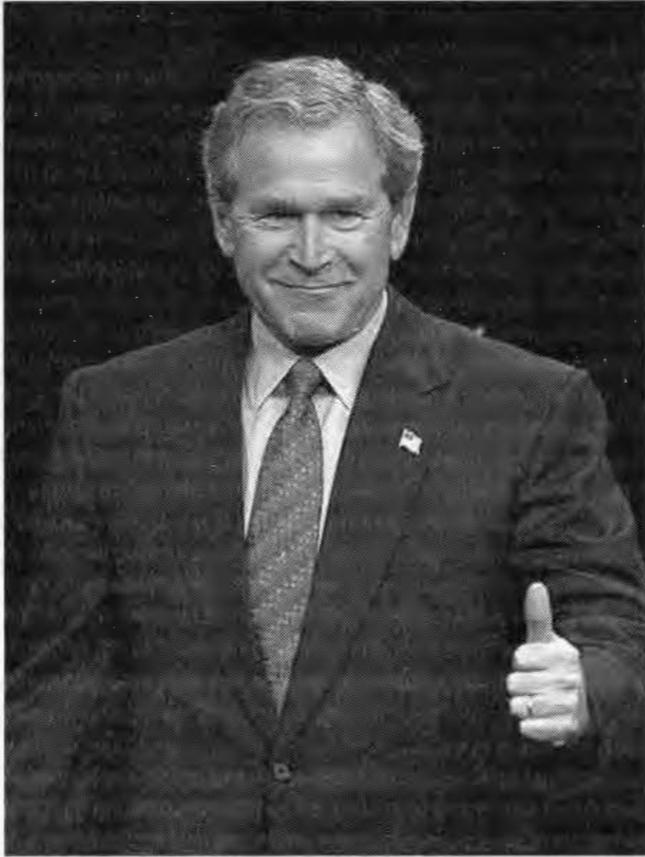


Photo courtesy of The New Yorker

George Bush: Governor Death now the Torture President. Photo (right) has become the harrowing symbol of imperialist occupation of Iraq. The prisoner at the U.S.' Abu Ghraib concentration camp is being subjected to sleep deprivation torture, threatened with electrocution if he falls off the box.

MAY 10 – It was the photos that got them. The pervasive torture, the humiliation, dehumanization and sexual degradation of prisoners, the gratuitous beatings, the rapes, the outright murders, dozens of them, that took place at U.S. prisons in Iraq didn't faze the Pentagon or the White House. War secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of State Colin Powell, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice and President George Bush had stacks of reports about the systematic, brutal abuse being carried out against Iraqi prisoners while these imperialist mass murderers were pontificating about "democracy" and "human rights." In fact, from Guantánamo to Baghdad, the use of "aggressive" interrogations was approved right up the chain of command to the very top. The torture techniques used are the very same ones that have been used in Afghanistan. And now there are photos of U.S. prison guards with German shepherd attack dogs snarling at Iraqi prisoners like in some Gestapo jail.

They also knew the photographs were explosive, irrefutable evidence of the depravity of the U.S. colonial masters toward the Iraqi people they had subjugated. It wasn't that

they didn't know of or hadn't seen the photos of the wanton cruelty at the Abu Ghraib prison hell, but they thought they had them locked up. Lt. Gen. Lance Smith, deputy commander of U.S. forces in the region, testified before Congress May 7, "It was a surprise that it got out." The brass knew of two disks with photos, he said. "That was the limit of the pictures, and we thought we had them all" (*New York Times*, 8 May). But it turns there are over 1,000 such incriminating photos as well as videos of a "sadistic, cruel and inhuman" nature, according to Rumsfeld himself, who complained to Congress that "people are running around with digital cameras and taking these unbelievable photographs and then passing them off, against the law, to the media, to our surprise, when they had not even arrived in the Pentagon."

These proofs of the vile and blatantly racist terror inflicted by the American conquerors against the Arab people of Iraq have inflamed the Near East, enraging millions, and sent shock waves through the U.S. The American government has from the beginning sought to visually clean up the war on Iraq,

even banning photos of flag-draped coffins flown back to Dover AFB in order to hide the number of U.S. deaths. No body bags of U.S. soldiers, no dead Iraqis was the rule, and the “embedded” bourgeois press in bed with the Pentagon dutifully obeyed. Now, as the U.S. faces widespread revolt against the occupation in Iraq, it suddenly has to figure out how to get around photographic evidence of disgusting cruelty, torture and murder by its own forces. While sinking into a quagmire on the battlefield, they are in a quandary about how to put a positive spin on it. Now the Pentagon wants to limit showing the photos to Congressmen in a “secure” location! The *New York Times* (10 May) writes that “U.S. Must Find a Way to Move Past Images of Prison Abuse” and “Officials Grapple With How and When to Release Images.”

First they wanted to sanitize the war, now they are doing damage control. And for that purpose the press and politicians have adopted a posture of phony outrage over the torture (which they downgrade to abuse), when like Rumsfeld what’s really got them worried is that evidence of it got out. Republicans and Democrats are worried that it could hurt the “war effort.” Good! Former Democratic primary candidate, ex-general Wesley Clark (the “butcher of Belgrade” who deliberately bombed maternity hospitals in the Yugoslav capital in 1999) worries “the Iraqi people are likely – due to these abuses and other problems – to force a ‘catastrophic early end to this mission’” (*Washington Post*, 10 May). Even better. A former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations under Clinton, Richard Holbrooke, declared, “This is the most serious setback for the American military since Vietnam.... We now have to admit that the American position is untenable.”

A mood of bourgeois defeatism is surfacing in Washington, even among top generals, but what the working class and all those who have suffered under the boot of these strutting war criminals need is to *defeat U.S. imperialism* on every front, including the “home front.” *The hideous pictures of torture at Abu Ghraib prison ought to be shown and the videos played on national TV, over and over, to break through the government/media censorship and so everyone can get a good, long, nauseating look at the grotesque reality of U.S. imperialism.* And not just photos of mistreating prisoners, but also the ones the media are still censoring, in particular of the children pulverized by U.S. cluster bombs, their faces mangled, limbs torn off, of the women shot down by trigger-happy U.S. troops at checkpoints, of the mutilated bodies of those who heroically fought to defend their semi-colonial country against imperialist invaders and then became trophies for the victors.

Accompanying these graphic photos and videotapes there should be clips of Bush whipping up hysteria against Iraqi “evil-doers,” proclaiming “how good we are” and calling for a “crusade” against terrorism, of Rumsfeld declaring that the Geneva



Photo courtesy of The New Yorker

Nazi Gestapo or American MPs? Iraqi prisoner being threatened by U.S. military attack dogs at Abu Ghraib. Subsequent photos reportedly show him with bloody wounds after being bitten by dogs.

conventions (against cruel treatment) don’t apply to prisoners held by the U.S. The press is shedding crocodile tears about the poor soldiers of the 320th Military Police Battalion and 800th Military Police Brigade (“Ill-Prepared, Overwhelmed G.I.’s,” said a *New York Times* headline). But the barbaric behavior at Abu Ghraib was not some back-of-the-Appalachians soldiers run amok – it was instigated and encouraged from the top. And along with a satanically grinning Rumsfeld and cynically sneering Bush on the screen, let’s see Democratic virtual nominee John Kerry vowing to “stay the course” in Iraq. Using the identical soft-soaping words as Bush and British prime minister Blair, Kerry called the heinous torture at Abu Ghraib “unacceptable,” as if this was a petty diplomatic embarrassment.

The invasion and occupation of Iraq is, after all, a “bipartisan” enterprise of the Democratic and Republican parties of American capitalism, and the torture atrocity is the product of that war. Not only the generals and war hawks at the Pentagon but all the bourgeois politicians have their hands drenched in Iraqi and Afghan blood. And anyone who thinks that the brutality at Abu Ghraib is an exception should see the video of the killing field at Mazaar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan, where in November 2001 U.S. bombers slaughtered hundreds of Taliban prisoners. Everyone in the United States should come face to face with the viciousness of their rulers. Such a display would vividly show the actions of the U.S. imperialist would-be masters of the universe as akin to Hitler’s Nazis, the Southern slave masters and the medieval Inquisition – which is, of course, why you won’t see it in the censored and self-censored U.S. bourgeois media.



Initial photos of abuse focused on sexual humiliation of prisoners. As Pentagon tried to suppress hundreds of photos, new pictures leaking out show violence (above), rape and murder.

The U.S. imperialists set out to enslave Iraq. So after slaughtering thousands with the Pentagon's high-tech weaponry they grind it in by stripping Iraqis naked, abusing them sexually, putting them on dog chains and photographing their humiliation. Searing the pictures of Abu Ghraib into their collective consciousness can have a tremendous effect in bringing workers, minorities and all the oppressed to understand and hate the capitalist system which produces such horrors. These must become indelible images of the brutal exploitation and oppression that the ruling class enforces. This is torture, American-style. And it is the American working people above all who must put an end to it, by striking at its roots.

Standard Interrogation Practice, From Iraq to U.S.

The photos show acts of almost indescribable sadism: a prisoner, his head covered by what looks like a Ku Klux Klan hood, with electrical wires attached to his hands and penis; naked, hooded prisoners heaped on top of each other like a pile of garbage, with grinning guards giving a "thumbs up" sign; a male guard sitting atop an Iraqi; a female guard leering at the sexual organs of naked, hooded Iraqi men with her fingers cocked like a pistol; the same guard, dragging a grimacing Iraqi on the floor by a leash; a prisoner handcuffed to a bed, arms splayed so wide that his back is arched, his face covered by women's underpants; the face of a dead prisoner with a huge hole in his forehead; the body of a prisoner killed during interrogation, wrapped in plastic and put on ice, to be disposed of without ever recording his presence there. Other photos, still being kept from the public, reportedly show an elderly Iraqi woman, stripped naked and being ridden like a donkey.

From the cheery expressions on the faces of the American soldiers, it's clear they are not worried that they are doing anything they could get in trouble for. But a courageous soldier,

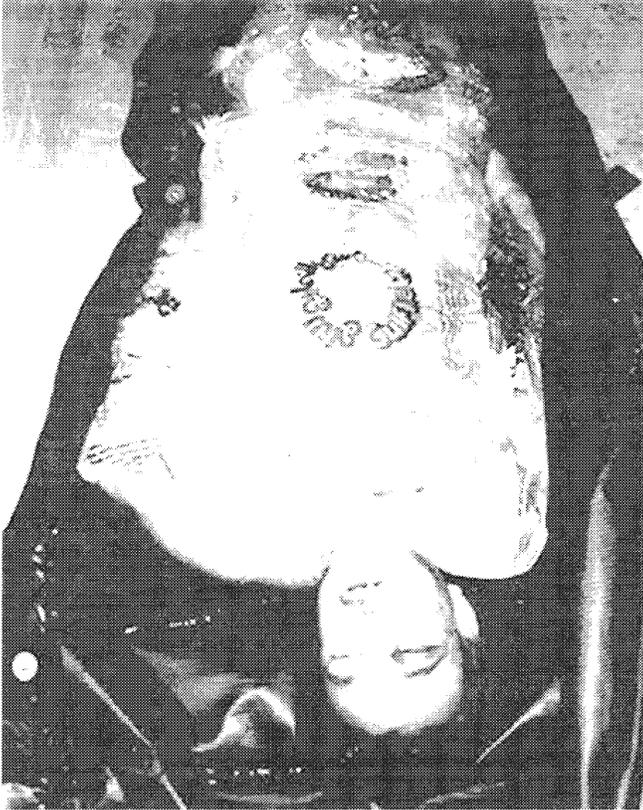
Spec. Joseph Darby, was revolted by the photos and turned them in. In fact, the army investigation of Abu Ghraib prison, carried out by Maj. Gen. Antonio Taguba, found that "numerous incidents of sadistic, blatant, and wanton criminal abuses were inflicted on several detainees. This systemic and illegal abuse of detainees was intentionally perpetrated by several members of the military police guard force" ("Article 15-6 Investigation of the 800th Military Police Brigade," March 2004). The report documents the shooting of more than two dozen inmates during prison rebellions and the use of unmuzzled dogs which bit the prisoners. Gen. Taguba held the prison authorities responsible for the horrific conditions, and found that "Army intelligence officers, C.I.A. agents, and private contractors 'actively requested that MP guards set physical and mental conditions for favorable interrogation of witnesses'."

Taguba's report was leaked to CBS-TV's *60 Minutes* show, which first broadcast the photos, and to investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, whose article "Torture at Abu Ghraib"

(*New Yorker*, 10 May) broke the story. Even before then, the abuses were known outside the military. The International Committee of the Red Cross wrote to the Pentagon in February of prisoners being "subjected to a variety of harsh treatments ranging from insults, threats and humiliations to both physical and psychological coercion, which in some cases was tantamount to torture" (*Wall Street Journal*, 7 May). "We were dealing here with a broad pattern, not individual acts. There was a pattern and a system," said ICRC operations director Pierre Kraehenbuel. Press reports last fall "told of detainees punished by hours lying bound in the sun; being attacked by dogs; being deprived of sufficient water; spending days with hoods over their heads" (AP, 8 May). The reports were all ignored ... until the photos and the Army report were leaked.

The commandant in charge of U.S. concentration camps in Iraq, Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Miller, is now on the defensive for having urged in a report last August that "the guard force be actively engaged in setting the conditions for successful exploitation of the internees" (*Los Angeles Times*, 9 May). His purpose, he said, was to make detentions and interrogations "more effective and more efficient." Putting hoods on the prisoners was routine, but sleep deprivation and forcing prisoners into "stress positions" (handcuffing them for hours in ways to induce unbearable pain) was not done "unless that was approved." The techniques used by his "Tiger Teams" were "standard interrogation practice." Outside "contractors" (mercenaries) were used in these "aggressive conversations," but they were "doing work up to standard" (*New York Times*, 5 May).

The horrendous abuse of Iraqi prisoners that caused revulsion and fury throughout the Near East and the entire world, including the United States, was "an aberrant thing," said Gen. Miller, adding, incredibly, "Trust us." Only a few "rotten apples," "not our instructions," the military intones. But this was standard operating procedure, and the imperialists are only upset



Body of Manadel Jamadi, who received head wounds in custody of Navy SEAL special forces and died after interrogation by CIA. Jamadi was one of “ghost prisoners” brought to Abu Ghraib but never registered. Photos showed smiling MPs giving “thumbs up” posing over his dead body packed in ice.

because the evidence got out. On the May 1 anniversary of his “mission accomplished” speech, Bush claimed that, “As a result [of the U.S. invasion], there are no longer torture chambers or rape rooms or mass graves in Iraq.” Yet here are the U.S. occupiers torturing, raping and murdering in the same prison where Hussein’s jailers did their dirty work, and in the Falluja stadium there are mass graves of hundreds of Iraqis killed by U.S. gun ships and missiles last month. “This is freedom?” a prisoner at Abu Ghraib shouted at journalists when they were bused in for a tour. The reporters were quickly bundled back aboard the buses.

The fairy tale that this is just a bunch of low-level soldiers’ sick idea of fun and games is belied by the fact that the identical techniques have been used by the U.S. spy agencies and military intelligence worldwide in recent years. In the wake of the invasion of Afghanistan, the *Washington Post* (26 December 2001) published a lengthy exposé on the use of such methods at the Bagram air base north of Kabul: “Those who refuse to cooperate inside this secret CIA interrogation center are sometimes kept standing or kneeling for hours, in black hoods or spray-painted goggles.... At times they are held in awkward, painful positions and deprived of sleep with a 24-hour bombardment of lights – subject to what are known as ‘stress and duress’ techniques.” “If you don’t violate someone’s human rights some of the time, you probably aren’t doing your job,” the article quoted one offi-

cial who supervised the capture and transfer of accused terrorists. Refusing to tolerate such violations “was the whole problem for a long time with the CIA,” the official said. The Bush administration justified the adoption of torture to a compliant Congress shortly after the 11 September 2001 attacks:

“At a Sept. 26 [2001] joint hearing of the House and Senate intelligence committees, Cofer Black, then head of the CIA Counterterrorist Center, spoke cryptically about the agency’s new forms of ‘operational flexibility’ in dealing with suspected terrorists. ‘This is a very highly classified area, but I have to say that all you need to know: There was a before 9/11, and there was an after 9/11,’ Black said. ‘After 9/11 the gloves come off’.”

And this brutality is “S.O.P.” not only in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantánamo Bay. As U.S. generals in Iraq were claiming that the torture, beating and abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib was “aberrant,” newspapers reported a new lawsuit on behalf of Muslim detainees at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn where they were held without charges for months in the hysteria following the 11 September 2001 attacks. “The lawsuit charges that the men were repeatedly slammed into walls and dragged across the floor while shackled and manacled, kicked and punched until they bled, cursed as ‘terrorists’ and ‘Muslim bastards,’ and subjected to multiple unnecessary body-cavity searches, including one during which correction officers inserted a flashlight into [a detainee’s] rectum, making him bleed” (*New York Times*, 5 May).

Another article, “Mistreatment of Prisoners Called Routine in U.S.” (*New York Times*, 8 May), reported: “Physical and sexual abuse of prisoners, similar to what has been uncovered in Iraq, takes place in American prisons with little public knowledge or concern, according to corrections officials, inmates and human rights advocates.” Around the country, inmates are routinely stripped; in Phoenix, Arizona, male inmates in the county jail “are made to wear women’s pink underwear as a form of humiliation”; in Virginia’s Wallens Ridge maximum security prison, new inmates have black hoods placed over their heads. The Abu Ghraib prison was inaugurated by Lane McCotter, former head of Texas, New Mexico and Utah state prison systems who later became a top executive of a private prison company. And one of the main torturers at the Iraqi prison works as a guard at the notoriously racist Pennsylvania state prison where death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal is held (see article, page 11).

Operation Condor: U.S. Torture Inc. in Latin America

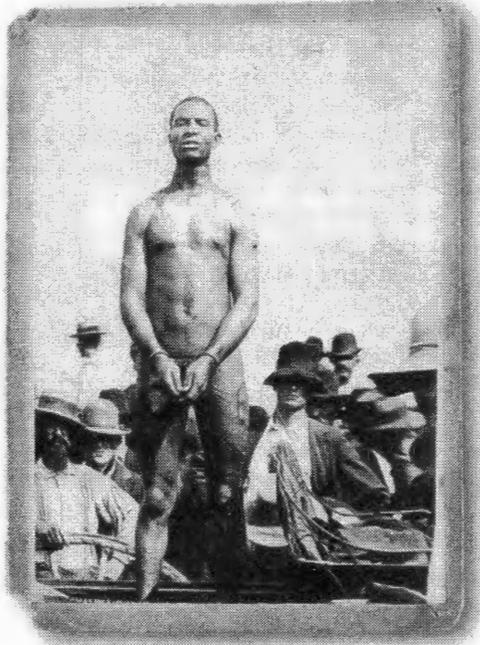
In fact, such torture techniques intended to break prisoners’ will to resist and to dehumanize them are taught by the U.S. military, and have been for years. Latin American army death squad chiefs got their basic training at the School of the Americas at Fort Gulick in the Panama Canal Zone, now moved to special forces headquarters at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Navy SEALs ran torture camps in northwest Maine and near San Diego; cop torturers were trained at the International Police Academy in Washington. Latin American juntas had long practiced torture, of course. What the U.S. did was make it more “scientific,” calibrating just how much pain prisoners

Legacy of Slavery: Lynching, Torture and Racist Death Penalty

A historian of photography, Luc Sante, wrote in the *New York Times* (11 May) about the torture photos from Iraq: "There was something familiar about that jaunty insouciance, that unabashed triumph at having inflicted misery upon other humans. And then I remembered: the last time I had seen that conjunction of elements was in photographs of lynchings."

"In photographs that were taken and often printed as postcards in the American heartland in the first four decades of the 20th century, black men are shown hanging from trees or light fixtures or maybe being burned alive, while below them white people are laughing and pointing for the benefit of the camera."

Sante noted that, in lynching photos as in the torture photos from Iraq, "the mood is giddy, often verging on hysterical, with a distinct sexual undercurrent." Reproduced here are two postcard photos of the lynching of Frank Embree, in July 1899, in Fayette, Missouri. They are taken from a collection of photographs of the barbaric practice collected by James E. Allen and John Littlefield, held by the Special Collections Department of Emory University in



Atlanta, Georgia. The connection between U.S. officially sanctioned racist torture in Iraq, lynching, the racist death penalty and the heritage of slavery is unmistakable.

It will take workers revolution to wipe out this legacy of horror that has accompanied capitalism since its birth, "dripping blood and dirt from every pore," with the "enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population" of the Americas and "the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins" (Karl Marx, *Capital*).

could stand, when to apply it, etc. Nazi SS men added their expertise: Walter Rauff played a key role in setting up General Augusto Pinochet's secret police in Chile, the infamous DINA; Klaus Barbie provided similar services for Bolivian dictators. These fascist torturers and butchers were brought by the CIA's "rat line" (in cooperation with the Vatican) to Latin America, where their services were enlisted in the "war on communism."

This cooperation between the police agencies of Yankee imperialism and the dictatorships of the "Southern Cone" of South America (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay) sharply expanded following the September 1973 CIA-instigated coup that overthrew the popular-front government of Salvador Allende in Chile, and was formalized in 1975 with the inauguration of "Operation Condor." This agreement among the spy agencies facilitated a wave of assassinations across the continent and the murder of former Allende minister Orlando Letelier in Washington, D.C., in 1975. Torture against leftist militants was used on an industrial scale. An account by Brazilian journalist Nilson Cezar Mariano, *Operación Condor: Terrorismo de estado en el Cono Sur* (Buenos Aires: Lohlé-Lumen, 1998) describes the conditions in Chile:

"The variety of tortures seemed inexhaustible. The executioners also got vicious dogs riled up and set them on the

prisoners; they put acid in their eyes; they ran over their hands and feet with the wheels of vehicles, causing multiple microfractures; they pulled out their teeth and fingernails.... In short, they set up a branch office of hell in Chile."

Harking back to Nazi Germany, the DINA took to disposing of the bodies of the torture victims (officially listed as "disappeared") in lime ovens. Of course, the methods reported in Iraq don't include pulling out teeth and finger nails. Their "stealth torture" techniques don't leave marks. But the torturers weren't counting on the photos.

The quintessential U.S. torture trainer in Latin America was Dan Mitrione, the police advisor from Indiana who was kidnapped in 1970 by the Tupamaros. The Uruguayan urban guerrillas demanded the freeing of 150 prisoners in exchange for his release, and then executed him when their demand was refused. This was dramatized in the film *State of Siege* (1973) by Greek director Constantin Costa Gavras. The movie portrays Mitrione training police recruits in torture. An American liberal, A.J. Langguth, wrote a book on the affair, *Hidden Terrors* (1978), that bends over backwards to be "fair" to Mitrione. But even he admits that as head of the Office of Public Safety mission in Montevideo, Mitrione set up programs to teach police torture methods, and helped form police death squads in Brazil after the 1964 coup and

in the Dominican Republic after the 1965 U.S. invasion. Langguth quotes from a conversation with Cuban double agent, Manuel Hevia, who Mittrione thought was working for him:

“Mittrione considered interrogation an art, he told Manuel. First, there is a time of softening up the prisoner. The object is to humiliate him, to make him understand that he is completely helpless and to isolate him from the reality outside this cell. No questions, just blows and insults. Then blows in total silence. After all that, the interrogation begins.”

This is what the torturers at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq were doing, “softening up” the prisoners, with one difference: instead of torturing individual “suspects,” they were humiliating their Iraqi prisoners as a group. This underlines the racist nature of their abuse, recalling Nazi treatment of Jews. Their defense, the classic Eichmann refrain that they were “only following orders,” is no excuse at all – although it is certainly true. Whatever they were before, they had become sociopathic monsters. But the undeniable guilt of these cogs in the machinery of imperialist repression is vastly surpassed by that of the far greater monsters who issued the orders, from the CIA and military intelligence operatives, mercenaries and prison officials on the spot to the head of the occupation government, the military commanders and right up the line to the Pentagon and White House. They are imperialist war criminals one and all, who richly deserve to be subjected to revolutionary justice, tried by a jury of their victims and sentenced under the severest wartime laws.

But to mete out comprehensive revolutionary justice, we must first make the revolution.

From Vietnam to Iraq: Abu Ghraib and My Lai

For millions of people around the world, the ghastly torture and sexual abuse at Abu Ghraib have come to symbolize the horror of U.S. occupation of Iraq. But Iraq is not an isolated instance. Now that (some of) their dirty secrets have been aired, the military are investigating numerous deaths under interrogation or in U.S.-controlled prisons in Iraq and at Baghram in Afghanistan. The same interrogation methods were used at the U.S. prison camp at Guantánamo, whose former commandant is now in charge of Iraqi prisons. The army investigator said that “GT [Guantánamo] methods” were introduced last fall at Abu Ghraib, and the former prison chief said that Miller vowed to “‘Gitmoize’ the detention process.” Those methods, including sleep deprivation and other torture techniques, were explicitly approved by the Pentagon in April 2003, according to the *Washington Post*, 9 May. In fact, the torture techniques that were taught by Dan Mittrione and which, with some refinement, are still in use today were based on the U.S.’ “Operation Phoenix” in Vietnam which “exterminated” more than 30,000 “subversives” after keeping many Viet Cong locked up in tiny “Tiger Cages” for years.

Last month, as a rebellion against the colonial occupiers broke out across central and southern Iraq, the media was sud-



Ronald L. Haebler/Life Magazine

My Lai massacre in Vietnam, March 1968, more than 300 dead, some of them raped and tortured before being killed. Sec. of State Colin Powell, then a U.S. Army major, helped cover up abuses by Americal Division that carried out this atrocity.

denly full of stories about how “Iraq is not Vietnam.” Now that the torture scandal has shocked the world, the refrain is “Abu Ghraib is not My Lai.” The comparison is inevitable: Seymour Hersh, the journalist whose *New Yorker* article first reported the Iraq torture story, also broke the story of the My Lai massacre in Vietnam, where in 1968 U.S. troops gunned down more than 300 unarmed civilians. Secretary of State Colin Powell on the TV talk show *Larry King Live* brought up My Lai. Powell knows that case well, as he was a key part of the official cover-up of atrocities by the army division responsible for that outrage in Vietnam.

As a rising officer Powell worked in the headquarters of the Americal division, where one of his first jobs was to refute a letter by a soldier, Spec. 4th Class Tom Glen, who wrote that U.S. troops “for mere pleasure, fire indiscriminately into Vietnamese homes and without provocation or justification shoot at the people themselves.” Glen reported that “soldiers commonly ‘interrogate’ by means of torture that has been presented as the particular habit of the enemy. Severe beatings and torture at knife point are usual means of questioning captives or of convincing a suspect that he is, indeed, a Viet Cong.” The response written in December 1968 by Major Colin Powell asserted that U.S. troops treated Vietnamese “courteously and respectfully,” and while “there may be isolated cases of mistreatment of civilians and POWs...this by no means reflects the general attitude throughout the Division.” “In direct refutation of this portrayal” in the soldier’s letter, Powell wrote, “is the fact that relations between Americal soldiers and the Vietnamese people are excellent”!

The truth about My Lai was finally revealed by a courageous soldier who dared to contradict the brass. But in his autobiography, *My American Journey* (1995), after mentioning the My Lai massacre, Powell gave a chilling justification for the routine murder of unarmed young Vietnamese men: “Brutal? Maybe so The kill-or-be-killed nature of combat tends to dull fine perceptions of right and wrong.” The murder of hundreds of Vietnamese women and children at My Lai and the torture and

degradation of thousands of defenseless Iraqi prisoners hardly count as “kill-or-be-killed” combat, but they do provide a measure of the finely dulled perceptions of the certified *war criminals* who are carrying out the U.S. occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan. As a major in Vietnam, as head of the military high command in the 1991 Persian Gulf war (“Desert Slaughter”) where Iraqi soldiers were deliberately buried alive, and now as secretary of state peddling lies about non-existent “weapons of mass destruction” in order to sell the imperialist invasion and colonial occupation of Iraq, Powell is well practiced in doing the dirty work for the U.S. ruling class, of which he is a millionaire member.

In response to pleas from the liberals, the U.S. president finally managed to lip-synch the word “sorry.” Powell and Rumsfeld followed suit. But calling on George Bush (known as “Governor Death” in Texas, where he executed more inmates than any other U.S. state) to apologize for torture in Iraq is like calling on Hitler to apologize for the Kristallnacht pogrom against Jews in Germany. No phony apologies can wipe out the fact that Abu Ghraib is the hideous face of U.S. imperialism in Iraq.

Torture and Counterrevolution

What lessons are to be drawn from this outrage? What is to be done? In another imperialist war, that of the French colonialists in Algeria in the 1950s, revelations that the French forces (under a Socialist government) routinely engaged in torture served to galvanize opposition among intellectuals, leftists and many others to the *sale guerre* (dirty war) being carried out against an entire population. The book *La Question* (1958) by Henri Alleg, a leader of the Algerian Communist Party and editor of the daily *Alger Républicain* (which was banned by the colonial authorities), recounting the torments he was subjected to by torturers of the French army, was sold in clandestine editions of tens of thousands of copies. This slim volume played an enormous role in building opposition to the war in France, and in educating a new generation of youth about the brutal realities of French imperialist “democracy,” contributing to the radicalization that along with outrage over the Vietnam War led to the potentially revolutionary upheaval of May 1968.

It’s also significant that the brutal interrogation methods used on colonial subjects in Algeria soon showed up in metropolitan France as well. They were pioneered by Maurice Papon, the police chief of Bordeaux who shipped thousands of Jews to death camps under the Nazi-collaborationist Vichy regime during World War II, and who went on to become police chief of Paris in the republic (see “France: Racist State Terror From World War II to Today,” *The Internationalist* No. 5, April-May 1998). The



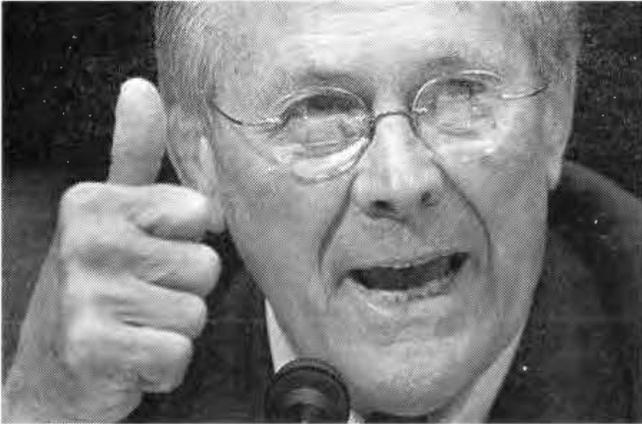
Jean-Claude Labbé/Gamma

To mete out revolutionary justice, first we have to make the revolution. Defeat of U.S. imperialism by Viet Cong in 1975 (above) aided struggles around the world.

victims of torture in France put together accounts of their torture in the book *La Gangrène* (which like Alleg’s book was banned). Pierre Vidal-Naquet in his book *La torture dans la République* (1972) notes that “what is striking in reading these reports is less the barbarism of the methods used than the tranquil assurance of the cops, the certainty they had of their impunity.” It is this same tranquil assurance that one sees in the demonic (or moronic) faces of the MPs at Abu Ghraib.

As occurred in France, the use of such methods in Iraq and Afghanistan will be reflected in the United States as well, particularly with the drive toward a full-fledged police state under the auspices of John Ashcroft’s Injustice Department, Tom Ridge’s Fatherland Security Department and the U.S.A. Patriot Act. (See box with excerpted article by Darius Rejali, “Forced to Stand: An Expert Torture.”) Moreover, some of those who become expert in such racist torture and murder in the Near East will eventually be found in the ranks of fascist killers in the U.S. It’s worth recalling that Timothy McVeigh, who together with a band of nativist fascists still at large bombed the Oklahoma City federal building in 1995, was a soldier in the 1991 Desert Slaughter in which he drove a bulldozer that buried Iraqi soldiers alive.

Liberals and pacifists will ascribe the torture in Iraq to the inevitable terrors of war. Conservatives will argue that the scenes of humiliation pale in comparison to the killing of four “contractors” in Falluja on March 30. Of course, the rocket attack on a carload of mercenary killers, the “dogs of war,” was then followed by the U.S. onslaught that killed up to a thousand in Falluja, rivaling the Nazis in “collective punishment.” But torture is not just another military tactic. It is the use of wanton and excruciating violence against those who are already under the complete control of the captor. (It is also notoriously not very effective in obtaining accurate information, although it does usually get the victim to say what he or she thinks the torturer wants to hear.) Torturers don’t just torture



Photos: (above) Ron Edmonds/AP, (right) courtesy of The New Yorker

Above: U.S. war secretary testifying to Congress, May 7. He's only "sorry" the photos got out. Right: two of main torturers at Abu Ghraib prison give "thumbs up" sign as they humiliate naked Iraqi prisoners.



because they are barbarous brutes, but because they are aware of their isolation from a hostile populace and believe they cannot get what they want by "softer" methods. When used on a large scale or against groups of people, as in Iraq, it is intended to terrorize an entire population.

It is no accident, therefore, that torture is above all characteristic of counterrevolutionary regimes. Systematic torture harks back to the Holy Inquisition, with which the Catholic hierarchy sought to extirpate the spreading religious "heresy" of the Reformation which accompanied the rise of the urban bourgeoisie, threatening the tottering institutions of decaying feudalism, notably the Church hierarchy shot through with corruption. The church men and women who wrote the book *Brasil: Nunca mais* [Brazil: Never Again] (1985), documenting the widespread use of torture under the military dictatorship of 1964 to 1985, included lengthy excerpts from Nicolau Emérico's 14th century *Manual of the Inquisitors*, showing that this classic torture manual of the medieval Catholic Church could have been written by the 20th-century military rulers under the doctrine of national security.

In the modern imperialist era, the Russian tsarist Okhrana, the German Nazi Gestapo, the French colonialist army, the Cold Warriors of the American CIA and Latin American death squad regimes all made ample use of torture. What these different bourgeois regimes have in common is fear of Communism and Bolshevism, that is the spectre of revolution. The Russian Bolsheviks, who carried out the first workers revolution in history in an isolated, economically backward country, forced into a bloody Civil War by tsarist armies and the invading forces of 21 imperialist/capitalist powers, could not renounce red terror in the face of counterrevolutionary white terror. But the Bolsheviks did ban torture. Leon Trotsky, founder of the Red Army, issued a decree (24 October 1919) proclaiming, "Woe to the unworthy soldier who sticks a knife into an unarmed prisoner" (*The Military Writings and Speeches of Leon Trotsky*, Vol. 2 [1979]). The Cheka (Special Committee for Com-

bating Counterrevolution and Sabotage) prohibited physical pressure in interrogations and even shut down its weekly paper when an editorial advocated use of torture for extracting information from prisoners. While there were abuses of this rule, Lenin and Trotsky insisted on revolutionary legality.

As a result of the isolation of Soviet Russia and the failure of attempted workers revolutions in the West, following Lenin's death an ascendant bureaucracy under the leadership of Stalin seized political power in 1923 and rejected the revolutionary internationalism of Lenin and Trotsky in favor of the anti-Marxist dogma of building "socialism in one country." As the Communist International slid from centrism into outright reformism, Stalin's repression in the Soviet Union against the genuine communists of Trotsky's Left Opposition intensified, reaching its culmination in the Moscow Purge Trials of 1937. It was precisely at this time that Stalin legalized the use of torture by his secret police (the GPU) against the Trotskyists, although it had long been used "informally" against them. Stalinist agents also used torture heavily in repressing leftists in Republican Spain. While the bureaucratically deformed Soviet Union still preserved the property forms of proletarian rule, Stalin's usurpation of power constituted a political counterrevolution, and thus the recourse to torture was entirely predictable.

Today, liberals demanded "apologies" from Bush and Rumsfeld for the abuse of prisoners in Iraq. Some (including the conservative London *Economist*) have called for Rumsfeld's resignation. Now these warmongers and torturers-in-chief have grudgingly made their cynical apologies, but neither that nor a personnel change at the helm of the Pentagon (or the White House) will alter basic facts. U.S. colonial occupation is now seen as an oppressive regime by all sectors in Iraq. A CNN/USA Today poll reports that a majority want U.S. troops to leave the country immediately. Fearing "chaos," liberals and reformists will call on the United Nations and human rights organizations (from Yugoslavia to Afghanistan, the handmaidens of imperialist war) and appeal to the hoax of

“international law” to pull the U.S.’ chestnuts out of the fire. But the Iraqi masses, who starved for years under U.N. sanctions, won’t likely be fooled. The U.N. didn’t explicitly authorize the war on Iraq, although it did pass the resolution Bush used as a pretext. But it did formally endorse U.S. occupation, as it also did with Afghanistan.

The rebellion against colonial rule that has spread through central and southern Iraq has shaken the Pentagon. Liberals and reformists quibble over U.S. foreign policy, calling at most to “bring the troops home.” Their proposals amount to cleaning up Washington’s act to make it more “democratic.” Proletarian revolutionaries, in contrast, respond to this atrocity by fighting to bring down the *imperialist system*, which from one dirty war to the next routinely uses torture and indiscriminate terror to grind down subject peoples while seeking to annihilate those who fight back. We stand on the side of the semi-colonial peoples fighting to throw off the yoke of colonial occupiers. And we insist that the downtrodden Iraqi people must not fight alone. Iraqi insurgents can land telling blows, and the Pentagon will occasionally shoot itself in the foot. But

ultimately we must look to the power of the workers of the world, which is vastly greater than that of the bloody-minded capitalist militarists who today hold them in bondage.

Working people and all opponents of imperialism in the U.S. and around the world must demand the immediate release of all of the thousands of Iraqi prisoners being held in the U.S.’ concentration camps. *Shut the prisons down, let the inmates go – and return Guantánamo to Cuba!* We must organize powerful working-class action to defeat the imperialist war on Iraq and Afghanistan, which is intimately linked to the bosses’ war on working people, minorities and immigrants in the imperialist countries. A revolutionary workers party must be built in struggle against all the capitalist parties and politicians, not only the Republican Bush and his Dr. Strangelove war secretary Rumsfeld, but also “me-too” Democrat Kerry who voted for the war. The entire U.S. bourgeoisie, along with their semicolonial puppets and their imperialist allies/rivals, are responsible for the sadistic slaughter in the Near East. Ultimately, it will take international socialist revolution to smash imperialism and get rid of the torturers and war criminals forever. ■

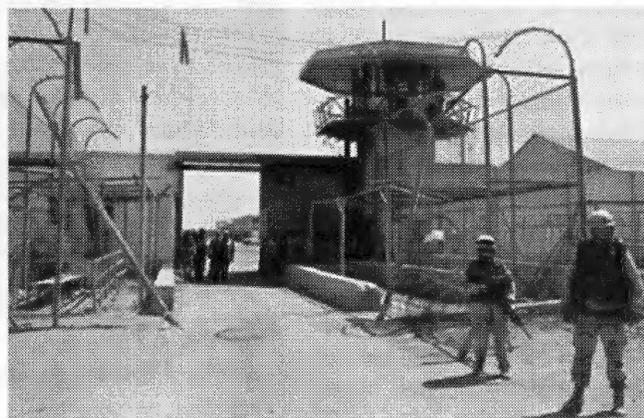
Torturer Is Guard at Prison Where Mumia Abu-Jamal Held



From SCI Greene, Pennsylvania...

MAY 6 – Today it was revealed that one of the main torturers at the Iraqi prison of Abu Ghraib, Spec. Charles Graner, is a reservist who works as a guard at the State Correctional Institution Greene in southwestern Pennsylvania, the high security prison where death row political prisoner and renowned black radical writer Mumia Abu-Jamal has been jailed for decades. The grinning Graner of the Iraq torture photos was in the Marines from 1988 to 1996. He turns out to be a sociopath who brutalized and threatened his wife. But more important than this warped individual are the conditions which shaped him. SCI Greene is notorious for the racist abuse routinely dispensed by guards like Graner. In 1998, there was an uproar over abuse of prisoners, who complained that guards “prison routinely beat and humiliated prisoners, including through a sadistic game of Simon Says in which guards struck prisoners who failed to comply with barked instructions” (*New York Times*, 6 May).

In the spring of 1998, two to three dozen inmates of the “restricted housing unit” (known as “the Hole”) where the abuse



to Abu Ghraib, Iraq

was centered, including Jamal, went on hunger strike over the confiscation of their legal papers by prison authorities. This drew attention to the widespread brutalization of prisoners there, including “guards beating prisoners and then writing KKK (i.e. Ku Klux Klan) with the inmates’ blood; the ‘working over’ (beating) of certain prisoners by guards upon the instruction of superior officers to ‘adjust their attitudes’; and guards spitting tobacco juice into inmates’ food” (Amnesty International, “USA: A Life in the Balance – The Case of Mumia Abu-Jamal,” February 2000). To avert the glare of media attention, four guards were fired and another 21 were demoted, suspended or reprimanded. But the system is intact, and now it is being reproduced in Iraq.

It is necessary to mobilize workers’ power to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, and to demand freedom for the tens of thousands imprisoned in U.S. imperialism’s Iraqi and Afghan concentration camps, the hundreds of inmates of the Guantánamo prison camp, and the unknown numbers still being detained in the United States.

Rebellion Against Colonial Occupation of Iraq

Mobilize the Workers of the World to Throw the Imperialists Out of Iraq!

Since the beginning of April, Iraq has been convulsed by a rebellion that has extended to practically all the cities in the center and south of the country. Initially, the imperialist troops were thrown of Fallujah, Ramadi, Najaf, Kut., Nasiriya and the huge Al-Sadr City in Baghdad itself. There were attacks against police stations in Basra in the far south and Mosul in the north. Overcoming historic divisions which had been fanned by the imperialists since the time of British colonial rule, Muslims of both Sunni and Shiite rites drew closer to fight against a common enemy: the invaders headed by the United States, along with its second- and third-rate imperialist allies (Britain, Spain, Italy, Netherlands) and various servile regimes dependant on Washington. While the U.S. has loudly proclaimed its intention of handing "limited sovereignty" over to an Iraqi "government" by June 30, it has yet to announce who that government will be (leaving the decision up to a United Nations envoy). And among the Pentagon brass, the conviction is spreading that in its present contours the ongoing war in Iraq is "unwinnable."

This is quite a turnaround for U.S. president George Bush, who a year ago proclaimed the end of "major combat" in Iraq under a banner reading "Mission Accomplished." During the last two months, almost 200 U.S. soldiers have been killed along with dozens of its "private" mercenaries, causing a lot of anxiety in Washington. After a month of surrounding the Sunni city of Fallujah in central Iraq, a hotbed of resistance for the last year which threw back every U.S. incursion, at the beginning of May the U.S. command decided to turn the city over to the former Ba'ath rulers, bringing in one of Saddam Hussein's generals to take command of an instantly formed local "army" (consisting mostly of former Iraqi army men). In the south, U.S. troops continue to encircle Najaf and Fallujah, but after two months trying to root out the militia led by the junior Shiite cleric Moktar al-Sadr without success, the Pentagon has apparently decided to inte-



AFP

Fighters in Fallujah rush into the streets May 5 on hearing news that U.S. troops had lifted the siege and were pulling back.

grate Shiite militiamen into its puppet "Iraqi army" and leave them in control locally. Meanwhile, in the north the armed forces consist of "former" Kurdish *peşmêrga* (guerrillas) with new shoulder patches sewn onto their uniforms.

Unable to secure the country, the U.S. is carving it up into three distinct sectors, each dominated by rival religious/ethnic forces, hoping to play one off against the other in classic imperialist "divide and rule" fashion. In the meantime, however, the haughty imperialist rulers have managed to provoke a rebellion against colonial occupation in most of the country. On top of this, fury and outrage have swept the country and the whole of the Near East over the hideous torture of Iraqi prisoners being carried out at the Abu Ghraib and other U.S. jails around Iraq (see "Torture, American-Style" on page 3). Even many of the minority who welcomed the U.S. invasion are now convinced that the U.S., Britain and its allies have got to go. Back in Washington, a half dozen Congressional committees are investigating "what went wrong in Iraq," with U.S. war secretary Donald Rumsfeld and his deputies on a merry-go-round of hearings, rushing from Senate to House and back. And with the administration reeling, the top U.S. commander in Iraq,

Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, who reportedly was present during some of the torture sessions, is now being yanked.

The League for the Fourth International has called since before the beginning of the imperialist invasion for the defense of Iraq and the defeat of the occupation forces, as we did in Afghanistan as well, the previous target of the U.S.' terrorist "war on terror." The LFI has insisted that *every blow by the Iraqi people landed against its bloody colonial rulers and the occupation armies is a blow on behalf of the exploited and oppressed the world over* (see "Sink U.S. Imperialism in the Quicksands of the Near East!" in *The Internationalist* No. 17, October-November 2003). At the same time, we have emphasized that the struggle against the invaders must not be limited to the immediate targets of the aggression, but instead it is the duty of class-conscious workers and opponents of imperialism throughout the world to mobilize their power to bring the U.S. war machine to a grinding halt. We call on workers to refuse to handle war material, and fight for strikes and work stoppages against the war and occupation. The exploited and oppressed everywhere are under attack – to defeat the imperialist war, it's necessary to unleash a powerful international class war.

The rebellion underway against the occupation of Iraq can only encourage struggles against the bosses, against racial oppression, against escalating police-state measures and against imperialist domination around the globe. We salute those who have courageously fought the U.S. army in the martyr city of Falluja, braving unparalleled firepower and defying the imperialist commanders who imitate the Nazis with their indiscriminate criminal massacres.

The rulers in Washington and the tame U.S. bourgeois media claimed to be horrified by the scene of some of their mercenary killers being killed on the outskirts of Falluja. But they show no revulsion at the sight of little girls killed in their bedrooms by U.S. missiles in Falluja. Behind their feigned shock is the fear that the American population and the rest of the world could see with their own eyes the cruelty of the dirty war which the U.S. is waging against the Iraqi people. They even banned photos of the caskets of soldiers arriving at Dover AFB covered with the U.S. flag, because they seek to hide the cost in lives of their invasion and colonial occupation. Of the thousands upon thousands of Iraqis murdered by the invaders, not one image is shown.

At the same time as we express our deep hatred for the imperialist crimes, proletarian revolutionaries must also correctly analyze the nature of the fight in order to defeat an unscrupulous enemy which seeks to subject the world to its diktat. Many on the opportunist left have made simplistic analyses, claiming that the invasion of Iraq is simply a "war for oil." They are seeking to respond to the cynical and changing arguments of the architects of the war (invented connection with the terrorists who carried out the 11 September 2001 attacks, a search for non-existent "weapons of mass destruction," and finally a phony struggle to free the Iraqi people from the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, the CIA's former hit-man against Communists in Baghdad and one-time U.S. ally against Iran), by underlining the base motives of the warmongers. But this isn't just a war for profit. The LFI has explained that the inter-

est of U.S. imperialism for the "black gold," which is real, is not that it wants to import Iraqi oil, which it gets from Venezuela, Mexico, Nigeria and Angola, but rather that it wants to have its hand on the oil tap, so that it can turn on or off the supplies of this vital resource to its imperialist "allies" and rivals in Europe and Japan. We have pointed out that the "war without end" currently being waged against Afghanistan and Iraq is a precursor to a new inter-imperialist world war.

Looking for the support of the French and German imperialists who didn't want to endorse the invasion (but do want to participate in the looting of Iraq) is imitating the liberals and reformists who in the 1930s called for the intervention of the "democratic" imperialists in the wars in Spain and Ethiopia. It is right to direct the main political fire against the dominant Yankee imperialism, but at the same time it is necessary to oppose the European imperialists as well, who participated in the two wars against Yugoslavia (1995 over Bosnia, 1999 over Kosovo) and who today are patrolling Afghanistan. To take a noteworthy example: the bombing of a suburban commuter train full of Spanish and immigrant workers in Madrid on March 11 led to the election victory of the Spanish Socialist Party, particularly when it was shown that the government of the "ex"-Francoist José María Aznar lied as it tried to blame the Basque nationalists of ETA for the criminal attack. The new Socialist prime minister, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero ordered the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq. But Rodríguez Zapatero, now head of the Spanish imperialist state, has promised to increase Spanish participation in the occupation of Afghanistan, while continuing the war against the Basque nationalists who are demanding the elementary right to self-determination.

In the United States, opposition to the war is being channeled into the Democratic Party and its virtual presidential candidate, John Kerry. That is the meaning of all the references to "Bush's war." In fact, the majority of the Democratic members of Congress voted for the war, and during the primary elections none of them called to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq. At the most they are calling for the aid of the United Nations to replace U.S. troops. But now that the U.S. expeditionary force is bogged down, even Bush is asking for U.N. intervention to decide on the nature of a "provisional government" to which it can hand over a fictitious "sovereignty" (while more than 150,000 imperialist troops and mercenaries continue to run the country). And Democrat Kerry, who as a young officer in the U.S. Army in Vietnam came to oppose that war (after committing "atrocities," as he admitted then but denies today), voted in favor of the invasion of Iraq and vows to "stay the course," even increasing the number of American troops there.

One of the spurious arguments that U.S. rulers use to beat down internal opposition to the war is that, whether or not the invasion was justified, if the United States pulls out now it will unleash a civil war between Sunnis and Shiites. It is a myth that the two main branches of Islam have been continuously at each other's throats in Iraq. In fact, the Shiites in the south were some of the most prominent Iraqi nationalists who led the resistance to British colonial occupation in the 1920s. As the Iraqi Marxist historian Hanna Batatu wrote of the 1920 rebellion:

“What more than anything else helped the progress of the new sentiment was the English invasion of 1914-1918, or rather the resistance that it stirred and that reached its climactic point in the armed uprising of 1920. For the first time in many centuries, Shi’is joined politically with Sunnis, and townsmen from Baghdad and tribesmen from the Euphrates made common cause. Unprecedented joint Shi’i-Sunni celebrations, ostensibly religious but in reality political, were held in all the Shi’i and Sunni mosques in turn ... Indeed, it would not be going too far to say that with the events of 1919-20, and more particularly with the bond, however tender, that was created between Sunnis and Shi’is, a new process set in: the painful, now gradual, now spasmodic growth of an Iraqi national community.”

—*The Old Social Classes and Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (Princeton University Press, 1978)

While noting that “the armed outbreak that this agitation precipitated could not be said to have been truly nationalist either in its temper or its hopes,” being initially a tribal affair, it set the basis for the growth of opposition to colonial rule. The British imposition of a puppet government (the Hashemite monarchy) while British troops and air forces controlled “security,” along with the increasing class polarization of Iraqi society led to the growth of a Communist groups with roots among all ethnic and religious communities (Sunnis, Shi’ites, Kurds, Turkomans, Christians) that became stronger in Iraq than anywhere else in the Near East.

Today, when U.S. troops launched an attack against Al-Sadr City in Baghdad, a center of the impoverished Shiite population, there were reports of Sunnis from Falluja distributing leaflets saying, “We support you, our brothers, in your struggle.” When the onslaught against Falluja began a few days later and Arabic-language TV showed scenes of the slaughter there, hundreds of Shiites went to Red Crescent Society (equivalent of the Red Cross) centers to donate blood. Joint caravans of Sunnis and Shiites traveled from Baghdad to Falluja to take food and medicine to the embattled rebels and Shiite fighters joined the struggle there. Well-known British journalist Robert Fisk commented ironically, “The British took three years to turn both the Sunnis and the Shias into their enemies in 1920. The Americans are achieving it in just under a year” (*Independent* [London], 6 April). Precisely on the first anniversary of the entry of the imperialist troops into the Iraqi capital, April 9, some 200,000 Muslims, many of them Shiites, attended the main Sunni mosque in Baghdad in an impressive display of unity in opposition to the occupation.

Among the “mainstream” imperialist politicians in the U.S., we are now hearing voices pronouncing the dreaded “Q-word,” *quagmire*, and even in Congress Democratic senators Kennedy, Byrd and Biden, and even the Republican McCain, are comparing the war in Iraq with the Vietnam War. The Bush administration vehemently denies that “Iraq is Bush’s Vietnam,” as Kennedy declared, not mentioning that his brother John launched the war on Vietnam. Some Zionist commentators are saying that Iraq has nothing to do with Vietnam, but it is very similar to the situation in Lebanon following Israel’s 1982 invasion. Even though Israel had overwhelming military superiority, after driving out the Palestine Liberation Organization it couldn’t extract itself from the

swamp of feuding and communal strife between the various Lebanese communities (Sunni and Shiite Muslims, Druzes, Greek Orthodox and Maronite Christians, Alawites, etc., in addition to Palestinian refugees), and a decade later Israel had to withdraw. Others, such as Democratic president Jimmy Carter’s former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski argue that the war in Iraq is more like the Algerian war of independence against French colonialism. (Top Pentagon officers last fall were avidly viewing the film, *Battle of Algiers*.)

Obviously there are notable differences between all these wars. In the case of Vietnam, in addition to a struggle for national liberation there was a social revolution underway that freed the peasants and workers from the capitalist yoke, leading to the establishment of a workers state, although bureaucratically deformed under the Stalinist regime of Ho Chi Minh and his successors. This gave the Viet Cong fighters a spirit of solidarity and common struggle that is inconceivable in a capitalist army. There was also a fully formed nation, in contrast to the fragmented Iraqi state, as well as the significant (albeit limited) military support of the Soviet Union. But Vietnam, Lebanon and Algeria have an important point in common, namely that in all three cases a people that was vastly weaker militarily than the imperialist or Zionist forces was nevertheless able to win. But precisely because of their military weakness, the ultimate defeat of the occupation forces was in large part due to the international extension of the struggle. In the case of Iraq, while the fighters in Falluja could inspire resistance elsewhere as well, a final showdown with the imperialist forces will have to be waged in all the big cities, above all in the capital, Baghdad, where it would have to take the form of a mass insurrection. The key question, then, is what character such an insurrection would have.

There has been much talk recently of a joint uprising by Sunnis and Shiites. Yet what has taken place until now is more of a rebellion by distinct resistance forces with broad popular sympathy, giving rise to a tendency for previously dispersed and even hostile communities to draw together in struggle against a common enemy. It could result in a national struggle, as in the 1920s, or not, as the case may be. But in any case, proletarian revolutionaries must be clearly aware that all these forces are hostile to the liberation of the workers and oppressed sectors. The Shiite Islamic fundamentalists have attacked Christian liquor store owners in the south. Above all, women have been the targets of harassment and deadly attacks if they dare to walk in the streets without the Islamic veil. Clearly, in fighting against the occupation forces, Iraqi workers will necessarily have to coordinate with other forces their blows against the invaders. But in this case, the political independence of the working class is a life-or-death question: it is necessary to organize independently of the religious fanatics on both sides, and to be ready to defend the working people, women and minorities against them. The working class must use the power derived from its economic strength and from the fact that it is the only integrated social force including all the ethnic/religious communities in the country.

With a revolutionary internationalist leadership, the workers could be to pole around which a truly anti-colonial and anti-

imperialist struggle would develop. That is quite distinct, however, from the policy today of the main Iraqi parties that claim to be communist. The Communist Party of Iraq even sits in the "Governing Council" which serves as a front for the U.S. and British colonialists. These are genuine puppets, like the *quislings* of Europe who collaborated with the Nazi occupation regimes in World War II. The Worker-Communist Party of Iraq (WCPI) has a slightly different position: it criticizes the occupation forces and calls for their withdrawal (but only to be replaced by UN forces). However, in the face of the current rebellion, the WCPI has taken the shameful position of not taking sides, calling for a mythical "third camp." In reality, no such camp exists in the middle of a war, and in Nasiriya in the south, when a fight broke out against the Italian troops, the WCPI called on the anti-colonial fighters to withdraw from a factory and even called on the colonial authorities to protect it (*Forward*, 15 April)!

Outside Iraq, particularly in Latin America, among "Third World" nationalist forces claiming to be Marxists and even Trotskyists, there is uncritical enthusiasm for what they portray as an uprising by the whole country against the occupation powers. This is the case of the Argentine PTS (Partido de Trabajadores por el Socialismo – Socialist Workers Party) and its international grouping, the Fracción Trotskista, which sees in the present struggle "a leap involving a growing insurgency, combining guerrilla actions and popular uprisings," which supposedly lay the bases for unity among the various communities on the basis of armed struggle. But while the PTS/FT talks of Sunni-Shiite unity it makes only the barest reference to the working class, limiting itself to repeating eternal truths without providing any sense of an independent intervention by the working class, either in Iraq or elsewhere in the world, of proletarian action against imperialism.

In the U.S., opportunist leftist groups such as the Workers World Party and International Socialist Organization engage in uncritical cheerleading for the Iraqi insurgents, while building popular-front "peace" marches to channel votes to the imperialist Democrats in November. They keep repeating "bring the troops home," in the hopes that the capitalist politicians will take up their call (as they did over the Vietnam war). In contrast to these "social-patriotic" calls, as Lenin termed their counterparts in World War I, the Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International call forthrightly for the *defeat* of the U.S.-led occupation forces and for *international workers mobilization to drive the imperialists out of Iraq*. On the other hand, a tendency which for several decades represented the continuity of revolutionary Trotskyism, the International Communist League and its leading section, the Spartacist League in the United States, has not only abandoned the demand but also the policy of revolutionary defeatism toward the imperialists in a colonial war.

While repeating the reformists' cry of "U.S. Out Now," the SL/U.S. has turned its back on the fundamental call for the defeat of "its own" imperialist bourgeoisie in the war on Iraq, as it did previously in the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan. Indeed, it scandalously accuses the IG and LFI of pandering to the "anti-Americanism" of the Islamic fundamentalists and nationalists precisely

because we continue today the revolutionary program of Lenin and Trotsky in the middle of an imperialist war. Today, as a tumultuous rebellion is raging against colonial rule in Iraq, the SL talks only of the massacre in Falluja. While it makes a pious gesture in the direction of the blows struck against the imperialists, it treats the Iraqi working masses as if they were nothing but a hodge-podge of Islamic tribalists. Then, in a sentences that is the height of cynicism, they proclaim:

"Marxists seek to mobilize the oppressed masses behind the power of the proletariat in struggle against colonial occupations, using workers mobilizations (strikes, hot-cargoing of military goods and troop transports) in the service of a revolutionary perspective against both the imperialist occupying forces and the domestic bourgeoisie."

—*Workers Vanguard*, 16 April

All that one can say to this dishonest statement is that this does not represent, in any way, the real politics of the ICL and the SL. Neither in the United States or elsewhere has the ICL called for strikes or workers boycotts of military cargo or troops transport, much less attempted to initiate such action during the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. In fact, the SL *abandoned* its earlier calls for hot-cargoing military shipments exactly at the point, in October 2002, when the West Coast U.S. dock workers union (the International Longshore and Warehouse Union) as fighting against a management lockout and was threatened by (and ultimately hit with) a federal injunction by the Bush administration which feared an interruption

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League for the Fourth International

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Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti: Defeat U.S. Imperialism!

Democrats, Republicans War Makers, Strikebreakers

The following article is reprinted from the special issue of The Internationalist of 15 March 2004. More than 500 copies were sold at demonstrations on March 20 in New York City and the San Francisco Bay Area.

It's the first anniversary of the United States' imperialist war on Iraq, and the one-year mark in the ongoing colonial occupation of the pivotal Near Eastern country. The pretexts for the war put forward by U.S. president George Bush and his sidekick, British prime minister Tony Blair – supposed stockpiles of “weapons of mass destruction,” alleged ties with “Al Qaeda” terrorists – have long since been revealed as blatant lies. Of course, it was obvious at the time that if the Pentagon and CIA seriously thought that Saddam Hussein's Iraq had atomic, biological or chemical weapons the U.S. would have hesitated a long time before invading. Instead, each new leaked document and memoir from a former government official confirms that the Bush gang was intent on seizing Iraq from the moment they seized the White House. As for “Al Qaeda,” the Islamic fundamentalists' antipathy toward the erstwhile secular nationalist Hussein was well-known.

The Internationalist Group exposed “The Great Chemical Weapons Hoax – Pretext for Imperialist War” in a May 2003 pamphlet. But while the vast majority of the left adopted the language of liberal “doves,” calling to “bring the troops home” while the liberals declared “peace is patriotic” on red-white-and-blue signs, the IG marched under red flags, calling “For Class War Against the Imperialist War.” As communists and defenders of the Bolshevik program of Lenin and Trotsky, we didn't just oppose this war but the whole imperialist system. We stand on the side of the semicolonial countries under attack and seek to organize working-class action against the imperialist war machine. Our banners



Sue Kelllogg

Internationalist Group contingent of two dozen marching in March 20 antiwar protest in New York. IG signs in English, Spanish and French called to mobilize workers' power to defeat U.S. imperialism, from Iraq to Haiti and the U.S.

proclaimed “Defeat U.S. Imperialism, Defend Iraq!” as we campaigned for workers' strikes against the war and for transport workers to refuse to handle war materiel. And while reformist pseudo-socialists declared this to be “Bush's war,” fomenting dangerous illusions in the Democrats, we called to build a revolutionary workers party.

Washington's fallback excuse, that the invasion was justified because Hussein was a dictator and butcher of minorities and the U.S. was bringing “democracy” to the Near East, is just as threadbare. After killing between 10,000 and 15,000 Iraqis, and perhaps more, the imperialist occupation forces in Iraq number well over 100,000 and are increasing. Attempts to cobble together a constitution and form a government to which the “Coalition Provisional Authority” can hand over “sovereignty” by June 30 are nothing but a game of smoke and mirrors. The Shiite clerics vote for the piece of paper vowing to “amend” it to establish a unitary Islamic republic the first chance they get; the Kurds

continued on page 63

**Break with All the Capitalist Parties –
Build a Revolutionary Workers Party!**

U.S.-Backed Candidate Arroyo Leads, 120 Killed

Philippines Elections: Bread and Circuses, Minus the Bread

On May 10, voters in the Philippines trooped to the polls in a “democratic” ritual that supposedly picks the president and legislators who are to govern the country. In fact, the issue has already been largely decided by the amount of dollars (Philippine and American) that have been funneled into the campaigns of the competing bourgeois politicians. And in case the voters get it wrong, the capitalists and their armed forces can mount a “people’s power” charade to oust the incumbent and install their preferred choice. This time around, the “exit polls” and “quick counts” announced that incumbent president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (GMA, as she is referred to in newspaper headlines) was the winner over her closest contender, movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. (FPJ). Although it will take several weeks for the official results to ratify the verdict of the bourgeois media, the decision is in. Meanwhile, more than 120 have been killed in election violence, many of them leftists gunned down by police, paramilitary and military assassins.

In this case, it was not only or even mainly the Filipino money men and army chiefs who decided the outcome. Their imperialist masters in Washington have made all fundamental decisions about the Philippines since the United States seized it from Spain in 1898, at the dawn of the imperialist age. The U.S. then defeated the Katipunan nationalist uprising in an extremely bloody war, turning the archipelago into an American colony. Sham independence was granted in 1946, whereupon General MacArthur installed Manuel Roxas as president. He was followed by a succession of U.S. puppet strong men, from Ramon Magsaysay who presided over the suppression of the Hukbalahap insurgency in the late 1940s, to Ferdinand Marcos, who beat down (but did not wipe out) Maoist guerrillas in the 1980s. As popular discontent mounted, the mass protests (EDSA-1) were manipulated by Jaime Cardinal Sin and army chief of staff Fidel Ramos to install Cory Aquino as president in 1986, giving a “democratic” façade to the rule of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Pentagon.

Arroyo came to power by the same route, as local capitalists in Manila’s Makati business district and their imperial overlords grew concerned about the “corrupt” (!) government of Joseph Estrada. On 20 January 2001, just as George Bush was being sworn in as U.S. president by vote of the Supreme Court,

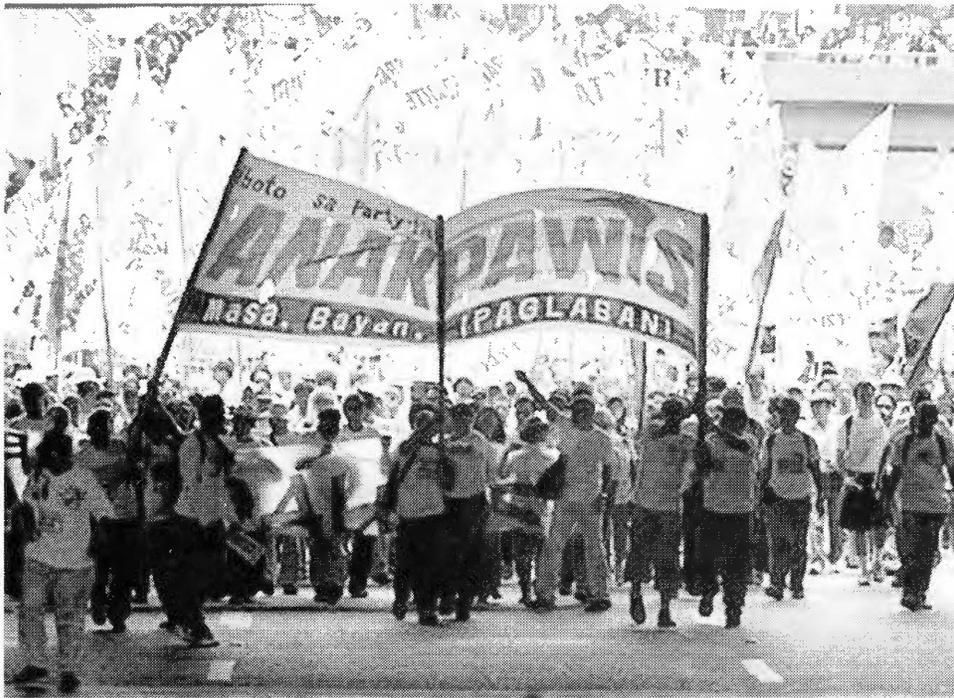


Aaron Favila/AP

Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, candidate of the army and the imperialists, reviews troops, May 4.

Estrada was forced by new protests (EDSA-2) to resign and was replaced by his vice president, “GMA.” Since then, Arroyo has unreservedly supported Washington’s foreign policy, quickly signing on to the U.S.’ terrorist “war on terror” and dispatching a squad of AFP troops to Iraq (under Polish command) along with several thousand Filipino contract workers on U.S. army bases where they are now the targets of the anti-colonial revolt. During his visit to the Philippines last October, Bush reportedly urged Arroyo to run for president. Also encouraged by Cardinal Sin, Arroyo traveled to the Vatican to get the Pope’s blessing.

Philippines elections have always had a gaudy show-biz quality to them, more entertainment than a serious contest. Ousted movie star Estrada got his pal, matinee idol Poe, known as “Da King,” to run as a stand-in to get back at Arroyo. FPJ, a high school dropout, refused to debate the Harvard-educated economist Arroyo or spell out his policies. Instead, his election rallies featured the gyrating Sex Bomb Dancers. Arroyo countered with the scantily clad Viva Hot Babes and signed on popular TV news anchor Noli De Castro as her vice presidential candidate. Running in third place was former police chief Panfilo “Ping” Lacson, who urged his followers to “bring eight-by-eights” (wooden beams) to prevent cheating



May Day marchers in Manila. Reformists are channeling working-class discontent into popular-front “party lists,” such as Anakpawis (shown here). What’s urgently needed is to build a revolutionary workers party.

at the ballot box. Also running was Eduardo Villanueva, “Brother Eddie,” a televangelist faith healer who drew hundreds of thousands to his Manila rally. Arroyo responded by obtaining the endorsement of the evangelical Iglesia Ni Cristo (Church of Christ), which ordered its millions of followers to vote for the current occupant of the Malacañang presidential palace.

In turning elections into a spectacle, Filipino politicians were only elaborating on the script of their U.S. model, where actors Ronald Reagan and Arnold Schwarzenegger are transmogrified into “credible” candidates. As in the days of the decaying Roman Republic, the rulers of the Philippines seek to buy the quiescence of the masses with “bread and circuses,” as the poet Juvenal bitterly remarked. Only here they have cut out the bread. Even massive vote buying won’t make a dent in the pervasive poverty. According to the World Bank, over half the Philippines population of 84 million lives in dire poverty, earning less than \$2 a day. Spokesmen for international capital insist that everything depends on persuading international investors to return (foreign investment last year was down to \$319 million from \$1.8 billion the year before, mainly due to worries about security). The problem, according to the *Asian Wall Street Journal* (10 May): “The Philippines has relatively high wage costs compared to China and India.”

Since 1999, unions have campaigned for a 125 peso increase (US\$2.25) in the daily minimum wage, currently 280 pesos (about US\$5) in Metro Manila. But seven American dollars a day is still a starvation wage. During the recent election campaign, the popular-front Sanlakas party list reduced this even further, calling on the government to implement a 65 peso wage hike and price

controls. Such sub-reformist demands come down to pathetically begging the capitalist state for crumbs. A class-struggle fight over the poverty-level wages would take aim at the *superexploitation* of Filipino workers, pointing out that even *tripling the minimum wage* would hardly pay for basic necessities. But this is impossible under present circumstances, the government, employers and pseudo-leftists respond in unison, as the Philippines seeks to use its “competitive advantage” of low labor costs to compete with even lower-wage countries for “outsourcing” jobs. But that is precisely the point, the revolutionaries respond: as long as the capitalist framework is accepted, the working people are condemned to a miserable existence, and thus any serious battle against poverty must aim at expropriating the capitalists through workers revolution.

An important element in the current Philippines elections is the participation of a large number of “party lists” of “progressive” candidates. The largest of these is the Bayan Muna (People First) slate headed by Congressman Satur Ocampo. Arroyo’s witch-hunting national security advisor Norberto Gonzales earlier sought to have the party lists banned as “fronts” for the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), accusing Bayan Muna of siphoning funds to the CPP-led New People’s Army (NPA). Trotskyists join in vigorously protesting any attempts to exclude leftists from the ballot. At the same time, we stress that the reformists of various hues seek to tie the workers to the ruling class by running “popular front” campaigns on a bourgeois program in alliance with bourgeois politicians. Thus most of them include “Bayan” (people) in their names, leading to endless confusion in addition to misleading the workers. This reached the point of absurdity when the youth party Anak ng Bayan accused another list, Akbayan, of stealing their votes because of the similarity of their names, while Akbayan wrote to the election council saying that votes for “Anakbayan,” “Akbay,” “Bayan” and “Akbayan Muna” should be credited to them!

More seriously, the rampant violence that accompanied the campaign was especially directed against the “progressive” party lists, whose activists are prominent among the 120 documented election-related murders. A church-sponsored human rights group documented dozens of attacks against Bayan Muna, Anakpawis, Anak ng Bayan, Gabriela Women’s Party, Suara Bangsamoro, Migrante Sectoral Party and similar groups. Six members of Bayan Muna were killed during the campaign, bringing the number of their martyrs to 41. Even bourgeois candidates complained that this wholesale slaugh-

ter was undercutting the effort to entice erstwhile leftists into the electoral game of capitalist “democracy.” Genuine communists, following the program of Lenin and Trotsky, warn against the trap of bourgeois electoralism and in contrast to the petty-bourgeois nationalists and popular-frontists seek to build a revolutionary workers party.

Trotskyists do not refuse to participate in capitalist elections and parliaments on principle, as we seek to make use of every potential platform to put forward their revolutionary program, as Lenin’s Bolsheviks did under the tsarist autocracy. But the Philippines elections are essentially a counterinsurgency tactic, similar to the “demonstration elections” in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic in the 1960s and El Salvador in the 1980s. They serve as a cover for the murderous repression of the AFP in its “Balikatan” joint campaigns

with the more than 1,200 U.S. military advisors currently in the country on a “training” mission. Proletarian revolutionaries fight to defeat the imperialist intervention, from Iraq and Afghanistan to the Philippines, through mobilizing workers action. At the present stage, the struggle in the Philippines must focus on cohering a Trotskyist propaganda group that through polemics against the reformist fake communists and active intervention in the class struggle can build the nucleus of a Bolshevik party as part of a reformed Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution.

We print below an excerpted statement on the May 10 Philippines elections by the Rebolusyonyong Grupo ng mga Komunista (RGK – Revolutionary Communist Group), which sympathizes with the League for the Fourth International.

The Bourgeois Elections Of May 10: A Proletarian Call

Statement of the
Rebolusyonyong Grupo ng mga
Komunista of the Philippines

The Rebolusyonyong Grupo ng mga Komunista (RGK) and the League for the Fourth International (LFI) call on the Filipino working masses **not to support any of the bourgeois parties on the coming elections** on May 10.

While the whole Philippines is in the middle of an electoral campaign, prices of gasoline, electricity and basic commodities continue to increase, nailing down the pauper-like living conditions of the Filipino working masses. And while the bourgeois state has not approved an across-the-board wage hike for workers, the bourgeoisie has already spent billions of pesos to fool and “convince” the working masses of its “right” to continue for another six years their class dictatorship (the bourgeoisie as the ruling class through so-called democratic elections). Moreover, while the working masses are being “entertained” by singing and dancing out-of-tune and out-of-sync politicians, the local bourgeoisie is dead set on “helping” its U.S. imperialist masters in the rape and destruction of Iraq, now at the first anniversary of its occupation.

Already, there are about six parties/factions vying for various positions. The main faction is [Gloria Macapagal] Arroyo’s coalition, the so-called K4. After three years of continued attacks on working class, urban poor and Moro communities, after numerous corruption scandals like the Jose Pidal case, after several secret deals just to get the support of big foreign and local capitalists like the Maynilad deal, and after implementing to the letter the commands of its U.S. imperialist boss to fight “terrorism,” Arroyo still has the audacity to face the working masses and ask for its votes! This is the faction that approved sending military troops and civilian personnel to

help in the colonial war of the U.S. in Iraq which has already claimed several Filipino workers’ lives. The victory of Arroyo’s faction means another six years of class war against workers organizations, the Moro peoples and all the oppressed, including the left.

On the other hand, the so-called opposition – including the majority faction of “Ang Panday” (The Blacksmith) Fernando Poe Jr., and the minority faction of “Kamay na Bakal” (The Iron Fist) Panfilo Lacson – while posturing as being for the masses, is no different than Arroyo. Its main bone of contention is just how fast or slow should be the pace of the bourgeoisie’s class war on the working class and all oppressed Filipinos. The “pro-masses” posture of Poe is just a trick. This is the faction that ruled during Estrada’s regime, the faction that launched all-out war on the Moro people from 1998 to 2000, the faction that orchestrated the attacks on the PALEA union. As for Lacson, his name is synonymous with the killings and salvagings (summary executions) of suspected criminals.

Raul Roco and Eddie Villanueva, who offer a “Third Way” (primarily appealing to students, intellectuals, the middle class, “moralists” and so-called civil society), are singing another tune. Under his calls to “end corruption” and for “free education,” Roco, the former secretary of education and his party, Alyansa ng Pag-asa (Alliance of Hope), seek to attract the “intelligentsia vote.” On the face of it, free education is an attractive program, especially given the pauperization of the working masses. But aside from his two vague slogans, Roco has no program whatsoever for the working-class, meaning that he is no different from the other bourgeois factions. And as long as the mode of production is capitalist and is oriented to producing for profit, all programs for free education and to end corruption will come to naught.

On the other hand, Villanueva’s group and its Bangon Pilipinas (Rise Philippines) Party is appealing to Christian fundamentalists, as Villanueva is also the leader of the Jesus is



Bourgeois politicians push religious reaction. Election rally and evangelical revival of Eddie Villanueva in Rizal Park, Manila, May 6.

Lord movement – an anti-communist “born again” group that calls communism (including workers’ struggle to form unions) satanism! Roco and Villanueva’s factions represent the elitist, conservative and so-called “civil society” interests. They are no different than the other bourgeois factions/parties. Roco and Villanueva stand out only because they have a “pro-god” platform that essentially means a more conservative “religious” bourgeois state!

It is clear that the working people, on the one hand, and the different bourgeois factions and parties on the other, have no common interests. Instead, the interests of the factions of Arroyo, Poe, Lacson, Roco and Villanueva and the whole bourgeoisie run counter to the interest of the working class, women, youth and all the oppressed. The bourgeoisie’s interest is to maintain its class rule, nothing else. All the bourgeois parties are for maintaining and continuing the capitalist exploitation and oppression of the whole of the working masses. And the only ones who have the same interests as the Filipino bourgeoisie and its factions and parties are the U.S. imperialists. The number one terrorist force in the world will ensure that its interests are protected, especially the strategic use of the Philippines for launching aggression in Southeast Asia.

Whatever the results of May 10, it will be for the interests of the U.S. imperialists. No matter who wins, they will be for the “continuation of support” for the U.S.’ colonial war in Iraq, its aggression in Southeast Asia and continued counterrevolutionary pressure on China and North Korea. We say: Defeat the Colonial War in Iraq and Afghanistan! Defeat Counterrevolutionary Efforts in the Remaining Deformed Workers States! For Class War Against the Imperialist War! For International Socialist Revolution to End the Imperialist War!

The Left and the Elections

Meanwhile, as the bourgeois electoral machinery goes into full swing, so-called left groups have espoused different positions on this. From outright non-participation in elections to openly endorsing “progressive” candidates, these “mainstream”

left groups all adhere to the deadly popular-front program of class-collaboration.

First up is the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, or Bayan. This group has been the “most mainstream” of all the so-called left and has been around since the Marcos dictatorship. The Bayan group – a “multi-sectoral organization” composed mainly of “national democratic groups and organizations” – is fielding five party-list groups this coming election. These include: Bayan Muna (People First), Anakpawis (Toiling Masses), the Anak ng Bayan (Sons of the People) Youth Party, Gabriela Women’s Party, and the Migrante (Migrant) Party of Overseas Filipino Workers. Bayan’s “strategy” is to put forward many party-list organizations in order to be able to send as many representative as possible to Congress – as if they can garner enough votes in the bourgeois Congress to pass a resolu-

tion to change the capitalist system into a “national democratic” never-never land and then into a “socialist society.” Even if the Bayan group gets all 50 seats allotted to party-list representative (with every two percent of the party-list vote, one representative is elected to Congress), it cannot transform the Congress dominated by 250 representatives of the capitalists and landlords, much less the capitalist system!

With this “strategy,” the Bayan group only fosters dangerous illusions in the working masses that the bourgeois state can be “pressured” or “pushed” to institute reforms. Yet these reforms basically aim at consolidating the bourgeois state and providing the working masses an outlet for venting its hatred and anger over the bourgeois state and the capitalist system of exploitation. Worse, the Bayan group through its party-lists has endorsed several bourgeois politicians, further buttressing the reformist illusions among the working masses! By endorsing bourgeois politicians, Bayan have projected these trapos (dirty rags, referring to the bourgeois politicians), as “pro-people who should be elected”!

Bayan and the “nat-dems” (as they call themselves), while claiming to be leftists, do not recognize the power of the working class and are bent on having the working-class struggle be dissolved into a so-called people’s struggle. Proof of this is their continued adherence ever since the Marcos dictatorship to the popular-front program – that is, building broad coalitions of “nationalist opposition” against the ruling bourgeois bloc including rebel military groups and bourgeois politicians who are labeled “progressives.” This is the essence of class collaboration. Their so-called “national-democracy with a socialist perspective” will ultimately lead to a coalition government of the bourgeoisie that includes the nat-dems managing a bourgeois state and suppressing the workers and all of the oppressed!

Next up is the Sanlakas/Partido ng Manggagawa (PM – Labor Party) group. This group [founded by Ka Popoy Lagman, who split from the Communist Party of the Philippines of Jose Maria Sison in 1991, and who was assassinated in 2001] broke

away from Bayan in 1993 and promised an alternative to the nat-dems. But if we look at what this group has practiced for the last ten years or so, it has the same “strategy” as the nat-dems. Sanlakas may have a different term to describe the characteristics of Philippine society, etc., but it has the same purpose as Bayan since it was built within the framework of a broad coalition of so-called middle forces, “progressive politicians” and the urban poor. Thus Sanlakas is just another form of popular front, another kind of recipe for defeat for the working class!

As for PM, it is mainly a group that only “champions the plight of the workers” and nothing more. The PM does not and will not contend for power as a genuine revolutionary party of the working class and make the working class the ruling class since it limits itself to being an electoral party-list group. Like Bayan and Sanlakas, PM also tails after forces alien to the working class and is also bent on implementing the treacherous popular-front program. This was shown last July at the time of Arroyo’s State of the Nation Address, when PM/Sanlakas indirectly supported the Magdalo Group, a nationalist-posturing anti-communist/anti-Moro rebel group that took over Oakwood Hotel in Makati [see “Soap Opera ‘Coup Attempt’ in the Philippines: Perplexities of the July 27 Incident,” in *The Internationalist* No. 17, October-November 2003]. They did likewise in their recent “workers” forum on April 30 which sought to get the bourgeois politicians’ commitment to increase the minimum wage by 65 pesos. The ultimate aim of this group is the same as Bayan’s: to be part of a “left”/labor coalition government that includes the liberal bourgeoisie managing the bourgeois state – in essence, a variant of class collaboration.

Third is the Akbayan, or Citizen’s Action Party. This group is a member of the social-democratic Second International, and is an openly reformist outfit which only calls for a struggle to fight abuse in the government; in other words, to reform the bourgeois state. By enlisting their trade-union organizations in this “multi-sectoral” party, Akbayan has the same “strategy” as the Bayan group – of dissolving the workers struggles into people’s struggles. In fact, one of its programs is to build “people’s unions” that incorporate the urban poor and workers organizations into one, instead of building unions as the defensive organization of workers inside factories aside from the unemployed and the urban poor. The only notable difference between Bayan and Akbayan is that Akbayan takes its model from the European “left” movement of a parliamentary road to socialism. This comes down to a reformist road of social-democratic management of the bourgeois state and the capitalist system! The bourgeois state cannot reform itself to serve the interest of the majority of society – the working class. It must be brought down through a workers revolution.

Other smaller “left” groups such as the Alab Katipunan, the Alyansa ng Sambayanan para sa Pagbabago or ASAP (People’s Alliance for Change), the Alliance for Nationalism and Democracy (AND), and the Democratic Alliance (DA) which for the first



Pat Roques/AP

Satur Ocampo, former guerrilla and lead candidate of the Bayan Muna popular-front party-list, speaking at Quezon City, March 27. Rather than such class-collaborationist electoral politics, what’s needed is a proletarian fight for power.

time are participating in the party-list elections have one thing in common with the main left groups such as Bayan, Sanlakas and Akbayan: that is, forming broad popular fronts that include “liberal/progressive” bourgeois politicians and other forces, in pursuance of their appetite for class collaboration with a faction of the bourgeoisie. There is even a group that treats the party-list elections as a sort of a project to get money from the state, by being elected as party-line representatives to “advance the organizing efforts of the workers”! There is no other term for this but opportunism to the core! If so-called left groups use this election to get money from the state (which they claim should be brought down through a revolution), then they do not deserve to be called leftists at all but instead opportunists and collaborationists through and through!

As for the labor groups and trade union federations, they too are riding the bandwagon of participation under a collaborationist program. From the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), whose main leader Herrera is running for senator on Poe’s KNP slate, to the labor federations that are part of the various “multi-sectoral” coalitions (Bayan: Kilusang Mayo Uno [KMU] or May First Movement; Sanlakas /PM: Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino [BMP] or Solidarity of Filipino Workers, etc.). These labor centers become the “labor bloc” in their respective “coalitions.” Even the smaller trade union federations have begun endorsing certain bourgeois politicians for just promising to be “pro-labor.” The National Confederation of Labor (NCL) and its allied organization even made a “covenant” with politicians, particularly the opposition blocks of Poe and Roco. The problem is the same in these labor groups: by pursuing popular frontism (as do the BMP, KMP, SIGLO and the rest) just as their “broad coalitions” pursue, they have essentially given up the fight for proletarian power.

What is needed is to mobilize the power of the working

class contending for political power against the bourgeoisie, rather than following a recipe for defeat, popular frontism and class-collaboration. Key to this is the leadership of genuine revolutionary party of the working class. Break with the treacherous popular front of the "mainstream left"! Mobilize workers power to fight for proletarian state power!

On the other end of the spectrum of the Philippine left there are groups who call a different tune and claim to be revolutionaries. The Rebolusyong Partido ng Manggagawa-Pilipinas (RPMP) along with its armed wing the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB), which claim to have ties with United Secretariat of the late Ernest Mandel, are calling for clean elections. It has threatened that those who cheat in the local and national elections will answer to the RPA-ABB! In the first place, the bourgeoisie will do anything to win in their own elections. It should be crystal clear for a revolutionary proletarian party that its participation in the bourgeois election is to be able to disseminate its program and platform to the most number of workers and oppressed, nothing else. The RPM's call in this election actually serves the interest of the bourgeoisie, as the bourgeoisie would want to have a clean election in order to have a "credible" dictatorship for another six years. Interestingly, Arroyo's faction is also calling for a clean, credible election, so the RPM is actually serving Arroyo's interest in their calls.

If it is serving the interest and plans of one of the bourgeois factions, then the RPM cannot claim to lead the working class any more than the Maoist/Stalinist Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the Stalinist Partido ng Manggagawang Pilipino or PMP (Filipino Workers Party). On the other hand, the Partido Marxista-Leninista ng Pilipinas (PMLP) and its armed wing, Partisano (Partisan), calls vaguely for "No Illusions in Elections!" The problem with the PMLP's call now and in the past is that it is so abstract that one can have many "interpretations" and justifications once it is analyzed and criticized.

The so-called mainstream left only serves as a left cover for the bourgeoisie in fooling the working masses to participate in consolidating the bourgeois state that maintains their pauperized conditions and exploits and oppresses them. The "mainstream left" will never serve as the leading force of the working class. As long as the working class and the oppressed are led by these so-called left groups, they will only serve as the working carabao (water buffalo) of the bourgeoisie in the recurring struggle for power between the different factions of the bourgeoisie (such as occurred in EDSA 1 and EDSA 2).

The problem confronting the working class and all of the oppressed is the absence of a genuine revolutionary party in the Philippines. With all of the so-called left groups and workers centers and organizations pursuing their own brand of popular frontism and class-collaboration, the only road for the class-conscious workers, women and youth is to build a revolutionary workers party. A party with a program of permanent revolution as put forward by Trotsky and Lenin and which was given life by the Russian working class in October 1917, through the seizure of power by the working class from the Russian bourgeoisie. A program of permanent revolution that can open the possibility of

extending the revolution to other countries especially in the imperialist centers. Only with the victory of workers revolution under the program of permanent revolution, and not through the program of class-collaboration and popular front, can the Filipino workers and the international working class truly free themselves from the rule and dictatorship of the bourgeoisie!

The RGK and the LFI call on class-conscious revolutionary workers, women, youth and oppressed peoples to participate in the struggle to build a revolutionary-internationalist party of the working class, which the entire Philippine left has failed to do. Instead of campaigning for bourgeois politicians or for popular-front party-list representatives, we should *build a genuine revolutionary workers party that will struggle until the working class is placed in power as the ruling class and undertakes the expropriation of the bourgeoisie as the ruling class, fighting for the victory of the international workers revolution.* This is the direction of the struggle and what the RGK and LFI are fighting for. Join us in this fight! Join the RGK!

***Not an iota of support to any bourgeois parties!
Break with the opportunist program of class-collaboration
of the fake left!***

***No reformist illusions in the fake left and trade-union
bureaucracies!***

***Build a genuine revolutionary-internationalist party of
the working class!***

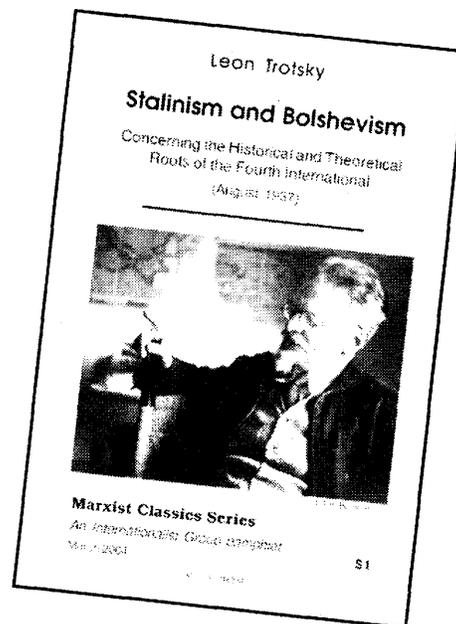
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6 May 2004

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the Maghreb (Northwest Africa)!**

Parallel to the colonial occupation of Iraq, approved after the fact by the United Nations, the imperialists also intend to “pacify” various “hot spots” in Africa (such as the Sudan and Congo), including “settling” the question of Western Sahara. The Saharan people (the Sahrawis), who have fought for more than 40 years for their independence, first against the French and Spanish colonialists and then, after 1975, against the Moroccan occupation army, is threatened with extinction. Its right to existence as a nation, which has been asserted in various U.N. resolutions, is buried under an American plan which projects a phony “autonomy” under the boot of the Moroccan monarchy. U.N. secretary general Kofi Annan has requested an answer to the proposal from Morocco before April 30 (*Le Matin* [Algiers], 24 January).*

The Saharan independence movement (the Polisario Front) already gave its approval to this suicidal resolution. Why? Under the supervision of the Algerian regime, the Polisario long ago entangled the Saharan struggle with the squabbling between the two bourgeois states of the Maghreb (Northwest Africa). Today, following the collapse of Third World “left” nationalism, as we see Qaddafi crawling before the U.S. and renouncing “weapons of mass destruction” that he doesn’t even possess, the Algerian regime is sidling up to the United States. Without breaking with their traditional sponsors in the Elysée Palace in Paris, all the regimes of the western Maghreb – including the Polisario’s Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) – are tripping over each other as they seek to win the favor of the White House.

For Washington, Morocco is the cornerstone of its growing ascendancy, both political and military, in West Africa. According to the *Wall Street Journal* (29 January 2004), the monarchy of King Mohammed VI is intended to be an “experiment in Arab democracy” – under close supervision – for semi-colonial countries. At the same time, the geopolitical strategists of U.S. imperialism want to improve Algerian-Mo-

*In a letter dated April 9, the Moroccan government formally rejected the U.S./UN plan.

roccan relations and build unity in North Africa, under its domination, on the southern flank of NATO. French imperialism casts a jaundiced eye on this poaching on its private hunting ground and is encouraging the Moroccan monarchy in its hesitations over the new American projects, without opposing them outright.

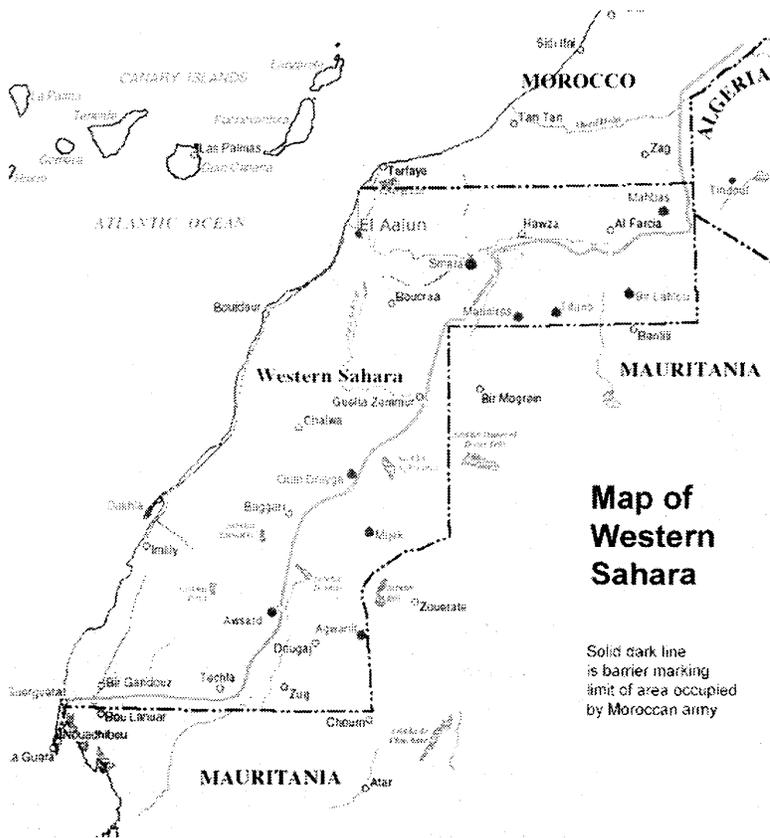


Polisario Front guerrilla

The Baker

Plan II, which was approved by the U.N. in July 2003, seeks to legitimize Morocco’s annexation of the Western Sahara. Today, that is the aim of the U.N. mission to Western Sahara, the MINURSO. The outcome of this attempt to throw sand in the eyes is to abandon the approximately 200,000 Sahrawis locked up in the refugee camps near Tindouf, Algeria. They will either be condemned to life imprisonment in the desert, or forced to submit to the occupation of their country by 160,000 troops (and even more Moroccan colonists), or obliged to emigrate to a neighboring country like Mauritania, where slavery is still practiced. In the face of these imperialist machinations to “softly” annex Western Sahara to the Moroccan monarchy, the Trotskyists say: “Down with the Baker Plan!”

Opposed to all national oppression, the League for the Fourth International calls for *immediate and unconditional independence for Western Sahara* from Morocco. And the prior condition today to independence for Western Sahara is the immediate withdrawal of all imperialist and Moroccan troops stationed on its territory. It is also necessary to fight for the freedom of all Saharan prisoners who have fallen victim to the monarchical national oppression. And while the nationalists can only seek to accommodate the bourgeois regimes of the



**Map of
Western
Sahara**

Solid dark line
is barrier marking
limit of area occupied
by Moroccan army

region and their imperialist patrons, proletarian revolutionaries fight for workers revolution *to overthrow them and for a socialist federation of the Maghreb.*

"Baker Plan II"

Already in 1997, Kofi Annan made James Baker (former Treasury Secretary of Ronald Reagan and former Secretary of State of George Bush I) his special envoy to find a "solution" to the Western Sahara question. Baker, like the current U.S. ambassador to Morocco, has close ties to the U.S. energy conglomerate Kerr McGee, which signed an agreement with Morocco in 2001 to prospect for oil in the territorial waters that country claims. The role of the U.N. as a fig leaf couldn't be clearer.

Despite its name, this new Baker plan for "the self-determination of the Western Saharan people" is nothing but an updated version of the Moroccan proposal for a "framework agreement" that Baker already put forward and which is opposed to genuine independence for the Sahrawi people. This plan proposes, once again, to decide on the status of Western Sahara by means of a referendum, but this time after a period of artificial autonomy under a Western Sahara Authority (WSA) controlled by Morocco. Moreover, there is the stumbling block of who gets to vote. The plan calls for including all those who have lived in the territory since 1999, which accepts the massive immigration organized by Rabat, the Moroccan capital. (In any case, James Baker is an expert in rigged referendums, having been put in charge of the "recount war" over Florida ballots by George W. Bush, which won the latter the presidency.)

The plan calls for an agreement between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Polisario Front, which would be joined by Al-

geria and Mauritania as neighboring countries. According to the statutes of the WSA, this "Authority" would be responsible for the areas of local administration and the territorial budget, while the *makhzen* (the Moroccan central government) will retain "national security" (including determining land and sea frontiers, and their protection by "appropriate means"). In addition, it will be in charge of the production, sale, possession and use of firearms or explosives, as well as of defense of "the territorial integrity of Western Sahara" against any "secessionist" attempt.

This means, quite simply, the end of the SADR. Part of the Polisario, after being dropped by the Algerian regime, would join the rest of the corrupt and impotent Moroccan "opposition" underwritten by the *makhzen*. Genuine national autonomy is unthinkable not only under this monarchy, where no democratic right is guaranteed, but more generally in the imperialist epoch, and above all in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. Lacking the economic basis for a genuine integration, these countries can only maintain "national unity" with an iron-fisted regime (the alternative being, under capitalism, fratricidal ethnic war). No North African bourgeois state can permit itself that "luxury" and none grants real rights to its *amazigh* (Berber-speaking) populations.

The French energy trust TotalFinaElf also signed a contract for oil exploration along the coast of Western Sahara. The name "TotalFinaElf" is synonymous with corruption and plundering in "*Françafrique*" (the conglomeration of former French colonies still integrated into a French sphere of influence in Africa) as a "secular arm of the state," as *Le Monde* (13 November 2003) put it. Its overlapping with French intelligence agencies, the military and mercenaries is notorious. Thus [French president Jacques] Chirac launched new colonial expeditions in black Africa (lately in the Ivory Coast) and visited Morocco in October 2003 (accompanied by the upper crust of French capitalism) to assure King Mohammed VI of his "unreserved" support. Beyond the personal ties of Chirac with Mohammed's father, Hassan II, and the close collaboration between the *barbouzes* (secret agents) of the DGSE (French foreign intelligence agency) and the Moroccan secret service formalized in the cooperation agreements known under grotesque names such as "Safari Club" or "Club Méditerranée," French imperialism desperately hangs onto this pillar of its African policy by making use of these ties and encouraging Moroccan reluctance to accept even a phony referendum on Western Sahara.

The Impasse of the Polisario

As far back as 1965, the Spanish colonial authorities were asked by the U.N. to organize a referendum to allow the Sahrawi people to freely exercise their right to self-determination. Nevertheless, Madrid didn't decide right away to let go of its colony, since the territory of Western Sahara is not simply a pile of sand. The country contains important resources: it has one of the largest deposits of phosphate in the world, its subsoil also contains copper, iron, uranium and even petroleum, and its



Refugee camp near Tindouf, Algeria for Sahrawi pushed out by Moroccan army.

150,000 km² coastal waters harbor important fishing banks.

Between 1953 and 1956, thousands of Sahrawis fought against French colonialism in Morocco. After Moroccan independence was won, they continued fighting in the south to throw Spanish colonialism out of the territories of Ifni, Tarfaya and the Sahara. King Hassan (although he laid claim not only to Western Sahara but also to Mauritania) stabbed them in the back, as recounted by Gilles Perrault in his book, *Notre ami le roi* (Our Friend the King) (Gallimard, 1990):

“In January 1958, the French and Spanish, in complete accord with the Moroccan authorities, put together Operation Hurricane, of which the French part was called Brush. The next month, 15,000 men, backed up by a hundred planes, combed the desert. The Sahrawi tribes, their flocks mowed down, were forced into an exodus. The fighters were crushed, surrendered, and for the most part joined the [Moroccan] Royal Army or returned home.”

As in the case of the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in northern Morocco, and in the case of Mauritania (which was granted formal independence under French neocolonial guidance), the pretensions of the Moroccan monarchy only affected the indigenous populations, not the former colonial masters!

On June 11, 1970, a peaceful mass demonstration in El-Ayoun again demanded independence for Western Sahara. The colonial forces responded straight away with repression and terror. On May 10, 1973, former members of the Sahrawi liberation movement and students together formed the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra et Rio de Oro (Polisario). The armed struggle revived.

A year later, Madrid gave in and promised a referendum on self-determination. But Morocco and Mauritania opposed independence and so, in January 1975, the Spanish colonialists decided to put off the referendum date. Polisario and its military wing, the Sahrawi People's Liberation Army (ALPS), intensified their attacks on the Spanish garrison.

In 1975, these actions opened the way to negotiations

which culminated, on May 14 of that year, in the announcement made by General Gomez de Salazar (governor of Western Sahara) of a plan to pull out of the territory. However, also in 1975, Madrid secretly concluded an agreement with Morocco and Mauritania to divide up territory in exchange for an economic and territorial counterpart preserving the Spanish foothold in northern Morocco.

Hassan II proclaimed his intention to organize a “Green March” to recover “his” provinces. In October 1975 Morocco announced its military invasion and 35,000 Moroccans waving the Koran and portraits of the king set out on their march. The idea was to whip up a hysterical atmosphere of “sacred union” which soon included not only the “opposition” of the USFP (Socialist Union of Progressive Forces – a “left-wing” bourgeois nationalist party) but also the moth-eaten Stalinists of the Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS). The pro-Moscow, but above all pro-Hassan PPS was rewarded with a daily newspaper so that they could vituperate against the “mercenaries” of the Polisario.

This was the beginning of a long war between the Polisario Front and Hassan II's Royal Armed Forces. The Front, which was based on the refugees installed in camps in Western Sahara and around Tindouf in southwestern Algeria, had to simultaneously confront the Moroccan army and the Mauritanian armed forces (although the latter soon abandoned the battlefield). At the beginning of 1976, the Moroccan air force attacked Sahrawi civilians at Oum Dreiga, Tifarite, Amgala and Guelta, bombing them with napalm.

The Polisario was increasingly dependant on the Algerian government of Houari Boumediene, and was financed by money from Libya's Qaddafi. The Algerian support of the Sahrawi cause is not, as the blood-soaked bourgeois-nationalist Algerian claims, a defense of the rights of peoples in struggle. The dream of North African unity, upheld by two generations of anti-colonial nationalists, was shattered by these two bourgeois states, one a pseudo-socialist military dictatorship and the other a reactionary monarchy, who are contesting for hegemony in the Maghreb:

"In both countries, exploiting nationalism has become a political resource in the competition for power, hence the difficulties in finding a solution to the Western Sahara conflict. For the monarchy, loss of the Sahara would mean the fall of the throne; as a result, King Hassan II was ready to fight for the former Spanish colony down to the last Moroccan. For the Algerian generals, nationalist on-upmanship is an element of their power, and the first one among them who shows signs of moderation would be disqualified."

—Lahouari Addi, "Impossible Reconciliation Between Algiers and Rabat," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, December 1999

In an open war between Algeria and Morocco, the Sahrawi struggle would have been subordinated to a sordid struggle between two bourgeois client states of imperialism in which revolutionary Marxists have no side. At the time of the 1963 "war of the sands" between Morocco and Algeria, the opportunists of the United Secretariat (USec)—who claimed to see in Ben Bella's Algeria a "workers and peasants government" breaking with capitalism—lined up behind Ben Bella. Genuine Trotskyists, in contrast, took a position of revolutionary defeatism on both sides.

From November 1977 on, imperialist France took the side of the Moroccan military and bombed units of the ALPS with napalm, using Jaguar and Breguet-Atlantic planes. After having killed and tortured more than two million Algerians during the war of Algerian independence, French imperialism once more showed its true face. The support for Rabat can be explained by its longstanding ties with the monarchy and by the interests of French capital in the kingdom.

The 160,000 soldiers of the Royal Armed Forces were not able to subdue the Sahrawi resistance (which was later the subject of a study by the Pentagon). Orders were given to the Moroccan army to abandon part of the territory and to limit their presence to the areas considered useful, surrounding them with mine fields, barbed wire and defensive walls. Morocco adapted its armed forces to those of the ALPS, opted for counterinsurgency and set up rapid-reaction detachments.

On the military level there was a deadlock. The guerrillas were unable to drive out the Moroccan army, the cost of the war also weighed heavily on the Moroccan monarchy. In 1981, there were spontaneous popular risings in the cities against inflation. Nevertheless, thanks to a system of large-scale repression, and thanks to the support of the bourgeois nationalist parties and the Stalinists of the PPS, the monarchy managed to stabilize the "internal front" when the interests of the oppressed masses would have been well-served by the defeat of the monarchy. At the time, only some Maoist elements called for self-determination or even independence from the Western Sahara.

These would-be "Marxist-Leninists" were dismantled by arrests and torture, on top of which, the Maoists put forward a program of revolution "in stages" in total contradiction with Marx and Lenin and no less Stalinist than that of the PPS, despite their more "leftist" language. This program of class collaboration stood in the way of mobilizing the Moroccan proletariat and all the oppressed in a revolutionary struggle

against the monarchy, imperialism and capitalism itself. Most of them ended up today in the Gauche Socialiste Unifiée (GSU – United Socialist Left) which gave "critical support" to the Moroccan government of Abderrahmane El Yousseoufi (1998-2002) of the USFP and advocates a "parliamentary monarchy" (Houria Chérif Haouat, member of the central committee, in *L'Humanité*, 30 September 2002). The GSU, for its part, also calls for "autonomy" for the Sahara.

In 1981, Hassan II nevertheless had to make some new promises to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) of a referendum on the Sahara (all the time pursuing his dirty war and erecting walls in the occupation territories around strategic sites). Not until 1990 was a plan for a settlement published by the U.N./OAU foreseeing a referendum to be held in June 1992, based on the Spanish colonial census of 1974. But the Polisario questioned the colonial census. The battle over the criteria for deciding the electoral body is at the heart of the dispute. The U.N. wants to play the card of compromise, forcing the Polisario to make concessions. In 1997, Morocco and the Polisario signed the Houston Accords calling for a ballot at the end of 1998. These accords are based on a new compromise, identifying 150,000 people presented by Morocco. A few weeks later, Rabat violated one of the clauses of these agreements. But these decades of struggle show that the Saharan population has already made its choice, whatever the settlement imposed by the imperialists.

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**Against All the Bourgeois Clans –
Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!**

Algeria: Rigged Elections and Workers Resistance to the Capitalist Offensive



Anti-riot police in Tizi Ouzou, main city of Kabylie, March 31.

The following article is translated from L'Internationaliste No. 5 (May 2004), the French-language publication of the League for the Fourth International.

I. The Electoral Farce

APRIL 7 – With the approach of presidential elections on April 8, the Algerian head of state Abdelaziz Bouteflika took his campaign for reelection to Kabylie, the minority region that has been in revolt and subjected to bloody repression since the spring of 2001. On Monday, March 30, the incumbent president was booed at Béjaïa, while the city was occupied by anti-riot police. Hundreds of people shouted the slogans, “Bouteflika assassin!” and “Ulac smah ulac!” (No pardon). Following a sparsely attended meeting, with an audience limited to those bearing a printed invitation, the presidential entourage left the site “in a whirlwind,” according to the Algiers daily *Le Matin*

(31 March). “It’s an executioner campaigning in front of his victims. We will not be silent,” said a member of the Citizens Movement. A general strike and mass protest rally were called for the next day in Tizi Ouzou, the main city of the Berber region.

On March 31 at Tizi, the president-candidate received an even more “heated” reception, and not exactly a warm one. The presence of the hated chief of state, whose hands are covered with the blood of 125 martyrs of Kabylie’s “black spring,” provoked a semi-insurrection, with around a hundred arrests and dozens wounded by the “forces of law and order.” Tizi Ouzou looked like a police barracks, one journalist commented, with the deployment of more than 4,000 gendarmes and CNS riot cops in uniform, plus another 800 plainclothesmen. After a tense

face-off and some pushing and shoving, the riot broke out: the demonstrators responded to the cops’ tear gas grenades by throwing stones. After clearing a path with the help of snow plows, Bouteflika made a strange speech to the invited notables. “Lynch me, lynch me,” he blurted out for the benefit of the rebels, posing as the man of “national reconciliation.” He then left the hall by the emergency exit and fled the city under a hail of stones, as he did in the last campaign in 1999.

The Algerian presidential elections are taking place in an explosive international and regional context. In Iraq, where the imperialist invasion a year ago caused at least 15,000 deaths, a revolt has broken out against the colonial occupation. Throughout the southern and central areas of the Mesopotamian country, the triumphalist “victors” of yesterday are simultaneously under fire from Sunni and Shiite insurgents. At the same time, the Zionists militarists are carrying out ever more provocative assas-



Abdelaziz Bouteflika addressing election rally. Algerian president was backed by France, U.S., NATO and IMF.

sinations in the hope of breaking the second Palestinian *intifada* (uprising) which has lasted since September 2001. In the Maghreb (North Africa), the Salafist Islamic fundamentalists launched a bloody bomb attack in Casablanca, targeting Jewish institutions and locales frequented by Europeans. They are also implicated in the recent train bombing in Madrid, where the victims (over 190 dead) were overwhelmingly Spanish and immigrant workers. So for the “decision-makers” in Algiers and their imperialist patrons, what’s at stake in this election is above all maintaining “stability” in the North African country – i.e., ensuring the conditions for exploiting its riches...and its workers.

The regime and the bourgeois media are cheering the return, if not of peace then at least of “calm” in Algeria. They have proclaimed the defeat of the armed Islamic fundamentalists in a civil war that over the course of a decade took the lives of some 150,000 people. The 900 dead in 2003, victims of attacks by the Islamists and even more by the “forces of order,” hardly count. The regime and its cheerleaders declare that the flames of the uprising in the spring of 2001 by Kabyle youth (and thousands of adults) against humiliation and poverty have been extinguished. But Algeria remains a powder keg. At the time of the flooding in November 2001, which produced more than a thousand deaths, “Boutef” was chased out of Bab el Oued (a predominantly Arab poor neighborhood) in Algiers to cries of “Government murderers!” A year and a half later, at the time of the May 2003 earthquake in Kabylia, in which up to 3,000 people were killed, the government showed its total disdain for the disaster victims, who yelled at the president when he showed his face in Boumerdes.

Like an oilfield fire that they try to bring under control by keeping it underground, the revolt against unemployment, poverty and privatization, against the bureaucratic arbitrariness and police violence of an arrogant and murderous regime, continues

below the surface and could break out above ground at any moment. For now, there is the distraction of a presidential election between candidates who represent different factions of the semi-bonapartist regime based on the army. President Bouteflika’s main opponent is his former prime minister Ali Benflis, followed by Saïd Sadi of the RCD (Union for Culture and Democracy), a party that had ministers in Bouteflika’s first cabinet, up until the “black spring” of 2001 when they were forced to resign to save themselves from the contempt of the population. But after tomorrow, whether the head of the bourgeois bureaucracy comes out ahead with a crushing and phony “victory,” or if his rivals have enough support to force a second round of the elections, the social struggles will erupt

once more. It is necessary above all to forge a *revolutionary workers party* to see the class struggle against the bourgeoisie through to the end.

In the election campaign, Bouteflika has posed as the conciliator, boasting of his January 2000 law for “civil concord” which got several thousand fighters of the AIS (Islamic Salvation Army), the military arm of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), to come down out of the mountains. In reality, he seeks to “reconcile” militarism and Islamic fundamentalism. The “moderate” Islamists of the MSP (Social Movement for Peace) are present in the cabinet and are supporting his reelection. In Bouteflika’s closing campaign rally, there was a noteworthy presence of veiled women on the stage in order to underline this support. The president has also set himself up as the champion of unbridled austerity and privatization. Bouteflika is the International Monetary Fund’s favorite for having made Algeria, with its oil wealth, into a country where at the same time there are billions of hard-currency reserves and millions of unemployed (much more than the official statistic of 30 percent of the labor force). He enjoys the support not only of French imperialism, which was expressed in the support of his counterpart Chirac a year ago, but also of the Americans, who are looking for naval bases as part of their plans for a “Greater Near East.”

Bouteflika clings to power with the support of the “party” of the followers of the president, the RND (National Democratic Union), the equivalent of Chirac’s Union of the Presidential Majority (UMP) in France. But he is threatened by the candidacy of Benflis of the National Liberation Front (FLN). Both came out of the former one-party regime, but today the FLN is forced by Bouteflika’s repression to hold their party congress clandestinely! (The special congress of the FLN to formalize Benflis’ nomination was banned, but was finally held at the beginning of October; later, the courts banned him from

using the name or symbols of the FLN.) Benflis proposes at most a “soft-line” austerity. But although there is a consensus in the Algerian bourgeoisie on the need to bleed the masses white in the interest of the imperialists, Benflis poses as the spokesmen for those sectors of the military who control nationalized industry and who see their sinecures threatened by Bouteflika’s privatization plans.

The string of calamities that have beset Algeria in recent times (floods, earthquakes, the crash of an Air Algérie passenger plane, the explosion in the port of Skikda, the crash of the financial empire of Khalifa...) has produced a feeling that the country is plagued. Behind the “natural” catastrophes there are to be found the crimes of the capitalist regime (blocking the storm sewers in Bab el Oued as a counterinsurgency measure, substandard construction of apartment buildings by private contractors, neglecting maintenance as privatization looms, etc.). Nevertheless, this has fueled the growth of Islamic fundamentalism. The military harass the guerrillas of the former GIA (Armed Islamic Group) and its successor, the GSPC (Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat). But they tolerate an Islamist candidate like Abdallah Djaballah of El Islah (National Reform Movement) who knows perfectly well the rules of the game: in his speeches, he sharply attacks President Bouteflika, but never the army. The spokesman in exile for the (dissolved) FIS, Rabah Kébir, called to vote for Bouteflika.

The fight against Islamic fundamentalism is still on the agenda, but it must be waged on a revolutionary socialist program if one is to put an end to this scourge rather than playing into the hands of the regime with empty calls for “democracy.” The “republicans” and “eradicators” like Saïd Sadi’s RCD seek to channel rejection of the fundamentalist barbarism into support for the no less bloody military, always ready to strike a deal with the Islamists to suppress the oppressed and murder leftist militants. The struggle against religious reaction is a task which falls upon the working class mobilized in its own class interests, independently of any bourgeois force. And one of its prime tasks is the struggle for abolition of the infamous Family Code which relegates women to the status of permanent minors. The struggle for the emancipation of women, in particular against the veil and for free abortion on demand, is strategic for the Algerian proletariat.

With the approach of the presidential elections, there has been a whole host of arbitrary and repressive measures against the opposition (mobs to sow chaos and prevent election meetings, breaking into and burning down party offices, beatings of opposition militants by thugs and cops). In much of the country, there will no doubt be high levels of abstention due to the sense that the game has been fixed from the start. In other areas, the administrative machinery will function with uncommon perfection to round up votes for the official candidate. But in Kabylie, there is a vigorous campaign to boycott the election. The *âarouchs* (village councils) which have been the center of the Kabyle revolt since 2001 have called for boycotting the vote, as has Aït Hocine Ahmed’s Socialist Forces Front (FFS). On the other hand, other sectors of the “Citizens Movement” have called for a vote of Berber solidarity either

for Benflis, a Chaoui (Berbers from the Aurès mountains near Tunisia) or for Sadi, whose party (the RCD) is based in Kabylie.

An active boycott, which seeks to prevent a phony election from taking place, can be a militant combat tactic in a situation of generalized struggle. But in this case, we must point out that among those calling for a boycott, many (but not all) participated in earlier attempts at “dialogue” with Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia. They were sucked into the game of Bouteflika, who seeks to break the protest movement with formal concessions on giving tamazight (the Berber language) official recognition and vague talk of “revising” the Family Code. In this particular case, the boycott is instead a bargaining chip: since the dialogue collapsed, they want to “punish” the government. In any case, also for the youth who confine themselves to dreams of Berber autonomy, and whose spokesman is the Movement for Kabyle Autonomy (MAK), this tactic is part of a perspective bourgeois pressure politics. For communist revolutionaries, in contrast, our refusal *on principle* to vote for any bourgeois grouping is part of a struggle to build a genuine communist workers party.

Among the six candidates for the Algerian presidency is Louisa Hanoune, leader of the Parti des Travailleurs (PT – Workers Party), which is customarily described as “Trotskyist.” The Algerian PT, which is affiliated with the pseudo-Trotskyist tendency led by Pierre Lambert of the French PT, was able to elect 21 deputies to the National Popular Assembly (APN) in 2002. But far from representing a marked shift to the left, the votes for the PT represented support for Bouteflika’s policy of “national reconciliation.” Genuine Trotskyism is based on the internationalist program of *permanent revolution*, which holds that in the imperialist epoch, in order to obtain and complete basic democratic tasks, the seizure of power by the proletariat is necessary – a workers revolution with the support of the poor peasantry, which will proceed forthwith to measures of a socialist character and the international extension of the revolution. In contrast, Hanoune participated in the Sant’Egidio negotiations (1995) and signed a common platform together with the FLN, Ennahda (the “moderate” Islamist party), Aït Ahmed of the FFS, and Kébir of the FIS [the hard-line Islamic Salvation Front]!

In spite of its name, the reformist PT is entirely dependant on the Bouteflika regime; its seats in the APN are a token of its obedience to the government line. On March 29, Hanoune was booed by youth supporters of the *âarouchs* at her election rally in Tizi Ouzou. Still, the working-class veneer of her talk of supporting the working people could win her some support among the impoverished masses. But this would be support for a policy of class collaboration with the worst enemies of the working class and women, with the “free market” privatizers who want to starve the Algerian population, a political project of “reconciliation” and national unity with the anti-communist executioners who have killed hundreds of trade-unionists, leftist militants and women who refused to wear the veil. The League for the Fourth International, which fights for the continuity of Trotsky’s program, responds to this betrayal of Bolshevik principles: *Never!*

A second Algerian pseudo-Trotskyist group, the Parti Socialiste des Travailleurs (PST – Socialist Workers Party), has played a leading role in the struggles in Kabylia, both at the level of the trade unions (where it has influence among the teachers) and in the Berberist movement. The PST, which “sympathizes” with the United Secretariat (USec of the late Ernest Mandel), calls for the complete acceptance of the “El Kseur Platform,” the program of the Citizens Movement which it co-authored. In reality, the adoption of the Platform in 2001 marked the resumption of control over the rebels by the Kabyle notables, among them the FFS and RCD, bourgeois parties which had been greatly discredited by their collaboration with the regime. This ascendancy of the reactionary forces was underlined by the elimination of the clause in the Platform which called for abrogation of the Family Code! From that to the interminable discussions between the âarouchs and the government over amnesty and recognition of the Berber language is only a step.

Without overthrowing the central bourgeois power which stands for forced Arabization (which requires a common struggle by the oppressed Arabic- and Berber-speaking oppressed masses against the bourgeois state and for a workers and peasants government), there can never be any serious guarantees for Berber linguistic or cultural rights, or for the minority populations in the south. At the time of the 2001 Kabyle revolt, we stressed that despite the protest strikes, the power of the working class was submerged in the mass of villagers and “citizens,” in large part due to the PST. In contrast to the pseudo-Trotskyists of the Mandelite or Lamberist varieties, the League for the Fourth International fights against Berber regionalism and Arab nationalism, two variants of bourgeois tailist politics, and for proletarian revolutionary internationalism. As we wrote almost three years ago:

“If the result of this rebellion is not to be a strengthening of Berber nationalism or mere resignation towards the dictatorship, or even a foothold for Islamic reaction in Kabylia, it is necessary to fight for a *proletarian, communist and internationalist* leadership, without which the revolt will necessarily be led into the labyrinths of bourgeois politics.”

–“Algeria: Kabylia in Revolt,” *The Internationalist* No. 11, Summer 2001

II. New Working-Class Struggles

While all the media attention is focused on the presidential vote, with twin candidates who come out of the same parent organization, the FLN, the truth is that the elections won't solve any major social or political issue. To be sure, the Bouteflika regime will use every trick in its police toolkit to demolish the opposition. But Benflis did the same when he had his hands on the levers of power. And, of course, all the candidates position themselves on the terrain of capitalism, of the continuation of the system of exploitation and its national framework, which is at the origin of the poverty and suffering endured by the working people in this country of fabulous riches.

Today among Kabyle youth bitterness and despair predominate, above all because of the failure of their political project. But the class struggle continues, and divisions within the bourgeoisie are exacerbated by fears of a new social explosion. For more than a year now, there have been a number of struggles by various sectors of the working people – strikes, demonstrations and riots expressing a generalized discontent and protest on the social front. While the approach of the presidential elections stokes the squabbling within the bourgeoisie, workers' strike movements continue to break out. To take just the first two weeks of March:

- March 1: Workers at SNTA (the nationalized tobacco and match company) continue their indefinite strike.
- March 4: Seven hundred workers in the city of Béjaïa strike for one day.
- March 5: Fourth day of strike for the temporary dock workers at Skikda who are demanding contracts as steady men.
- March 7: The day laborers at Skikda continue their protest movement while workers at EMAG (the state-owned mineral water company) in the wilaya (district) of Tizi Ouzou hold a sit-in to denounce the policy of privatization and selling off the company for a pittance.
- March 8: The municipal workers union of El Eulma (in the region of Sétif) holds a sit-in.
- March 9: Union workers of the ENIE (state-owned electronics company) at Sidi Bel Abbes strike against arbitrary firings.
- March 15: Workers at ENPC (state-owned plastics and rubber factory) walk out demanding payment of three months of back wages.

What all these struggles require is a revolutionary leadership which knows how to struggle against all the bourgeois factions. What's at stake in the presidential elections is the survival of the regime. But while the reformists of the PST call to “reconquer our democratic space and extend it,” over and above their appeals for “building a vast anti-liberal democratic political movement,” even an “anti-capitalist” one (Declaration of the PST, in *El Khatwa*, November 2003), authentic Trotskyists underline the urgency of going beyond these deceptive “democratic” politics to build a revolutionary workers party, which would replace the struggle between bourgeois clans with the class struggle against the bourgeoisie.

Thus *Le Matin* (2-3 January 2004) speaks of wage increases as “the only way to improve the living standards of the 17 million poor people in this country.” Like the other “independent” newspapers who are pushing Benflis' candidacy, it wants to make Bouteflika alone responsible for the misery of the masses. Not only is it the entire Algerian bourgeoisie and its imperialist masters (via the IMF) who are starving the Algerians, but wage hikes, by themselves, can only slow down the pauperization of the working people. To break the bourgeois offensive what's needed is a combative counterattack by all the workers in struggle to establish their own class power.

Last fall was marked by a whole wave of protests, to the point that the magazine *L'Expression* (29 September 2003) wrote: "No layer of the population and no profession are spared, whether it is the teachers, the rural population, the high school students, the college students, the unemployed or the workers threatened with unemployment, disillusioned Algerians only have one means of making themselves heard: to go into the streets and put up barricades." An article in *Courrier International* (5 November 2003) adds: "Indeed, hardly a day goes by that some town or some neighborhood in the country isn't prey to a violent demonstration or simply a march for water, work or housing."

Some of these struggles have achieved relative success. On 14 October 2003, a workers collective of the National Railroad Transport Company (SNTF) launched an unlimited strike, paralyzing all the rail infrastructure in the country. After a test of strength lasting six days, the company management finally agreed to the rail workers wage demands. At the beginning of the walkout, the SNTF introduced a court suit and geared up the "justice" system on the grounds that proper strike procedure was not followed – the strike didn't come from the General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA), the "union federation" which serves as a transmission belt for the bourgeois state. But the railroad workers determination (with the support of dock workers) and their economic power extracted a wage increase of 1,500 Algerian dinars (about US\$20 a month) rather than the 800 DA initially offered by management.

A month later, on November 15, the workers of the National Industrial Vehicles Company (SNVI – manufacturer of trucks and buses) at Rouiba, outside the capital, launched a strike rejecting the miserable pay hike negotiated by the UGTA. The company's workers spontaneously stopped work without the official notification, and without notifying the "union" that they accused of not defending their interests. In the face of the refusal of the workers, after several days on strike, the SNVI management had to grant an increase that was double that it previously agreed to (1,200 DA instead of 620). Due to the strategic role of the Rouiba workers who were the catalyst for the October 1988 revolt (see *The Internationalist* No. 11, Summer 2001), the government preferred to give in quickly to avoid the danger of an intersection between the metal workers protest and that of other sectors in struggle.

Their worry concerned the most important strike at the time, that of the teachers in secondary and technical schools. Responding to the appeal of the CLA (Council of Algiers High Schools, which organized the *lycées* in the capital) and the CNAPEST (National Council of Secondary and Technical School Teachers) – two autonomous unions that are not recognized by the government – the 50,000 teachers called a national strike in this sector that lasted more than two months. It was one of the longest strikes in the history of independent Algeria. (The strike



Le Matin

Police confront striking Algerian high school teachers, November 2003.

by the university professors of the CNES, another autonomous union, in 1998-99 lasted four months.) Although it was called for basic job-related demands – doubling the starvation wages (presently around US\$240 a month), lowering the retirement age to 25 years of service, and developing a legal framework for secondary school teachers – the strike began in a climate of generalized repression and quickly became a question of union independence from the bourgeois state.

In mid-September, 22 teachers were arrested at a sit-in at an Algiers high school. That same day, the editor of the newspaper *Le Soir d'Algérie* was detained because of articles that were considered an "offense to the chief of state." A few days earlier, the editors of *Le Matin* and *Liberté* had already been arrested. When the spokesman for the Kabyle village committees (the *ârouchs*), Belaid Abrika, showed up on the following day to show solidarity with the journalists, he was beat and arrested outside the court. The next day, it was the turn of the disaster victims of the earthquake, still living in tents at Boumerdes: a dozen youth were arrested for protesting against their living conditions. The secondary school parents association put out a communiqué in which they commented that these arrests "give the impression of a plot to create chaos" (*Le Matin*, 20 September 2003).

On the 27th, the first day of the school year, the strike broke out at virtually all the secondary school establishments in the capital. At the outset, the CLA leadership led by Ousman Radouane (a supporter of the PST) didn't try to form a union, but only a coordinating committee of the different sectors. However, the government didn't respond to their demands, nor did it recognize their coordinating committee. In the face of the Education Ministry authorities' refusal to negotiate, teachers joined the strike in force, from Oran in the west to Annaba in the east. The head of state characterized the teachers' demands as "demagogic, populist and with a political ulterior motive." But after several weeks of the strike, Primer Minister Ouyahia appealed to the head of the UGTA, Abdelmadjid Sidi



Algiers cops crack down on striking teachers, 4 October 2003.

Saïd, to come to his rescue.

The FNTE (the National Educational Workers Federation, affiliated to the UGTA), for its part, refused to call a strike to win the demands. Moreover, Sidi Saïd denounced the strikers for having launched a "suicidal act," and declared that their "bitter-endism doesn't help anyone" (*Quotidien d'Oran*, 30 October 2003). After the meeting of the head of government with the "union" boss, negotiations with the UGTA were announced, the FNTE put in a notification of a (one-day) strike ... and the CNAPEST's request for legal registration was formally denied. Among other things, the Labor Ministry wanted to take out the word "strike" from the union's statutes! "Trade-Union Pluralism Put Into Question by the Regime," headlined *Le Matin* (10 November 2003), adding: "Autonomous Unions Undesirable." Logically, on the eve of the fictitious strike of the FNTE, a bonus of 5,000 DA (US\$70) was announced for secondary school teachers and roughly half that for primary school teachers.

After receiving the teachers' demands with disdain, the government and the minister of education, Benbouzid, went over to repression: court summons, legal complaints and suspension of striking teachers from their jobs (more than 350 teachers were notified) along with the use of scabs to replace the strikers. The teachers did not back down – they continued their strike, fighting for an autonomous union which they want to be democratic and to fight for their demands. The regime tried to set the parents and the students against the teachers, but without success. At the beginning of December, the large-scale beatings began, leading to an explosion of anger. It was only in mid-December that the teachers decided to suspend their strike, in exchange for a promise that the charges against the 22 teachers arrested in September would be dropped, which was finally done in February.

Even though they eventually had to yield, the teachers carried out a mobilization that is rich in lessons for the class struggle. To begin with, it is obvious that the famous Law 90-02 does not at all guarantee the right of workers to go on strike, and the government is planning to restrict this further. Moreover, its obstinate refusal to recognize the two union organizations which

were leading the strike shows to what extent the teachers' strike threw the UGTA into crisis. Bouteflika was not about to risk the existence of this corporatist institution which ever since independence has furnished the bonapartist regime with a docile partner and a straitjacket to subjugate the Algerian proletariat. Without the UGTA's help, the "liberal" reforms and pauperization of the Algerian workers would have provoked huge workers struggles. But as this project advances, the UGTA has become increasingly weakened.

The Trotskyists fight for the unity and independence of the working class *on a revolutionary program*. In order to confront a bourgeois government determined to crush any movement aimed at achieving the class independence of the working people, class-conscious workers must foresee a struggle which goes beyond purely profes-

sional or reformist demands, the trade-union "rules of the game" imposed by capitalism to keep its adversaries divided. It is necessary to struggle to impose a *sliding scale of wages* (with increases as prices rise) *and hours* (dividing up available work among all existing workers). *No layoffs!* To counter the use of scabs to break strikes and to defend against police batons and the murderous Islamist attacks, it is necessary to organize *workers self-defense groups*. In a sector with a majority of women, as is the case with teachers, it is particularly important to undertake measures to defend women who don't wear the veil or the *hijab* (Islamic scarf) against the threats of the Islamic reactionaries.

It is also necessary to win the support of the mass of the unemployed, in particular the youth, and all those who survive through picking up "little jobs." A policy of large-scale public works under workers control is called for. Such a mobilization could include construction of hundreds of thousands of apartments, making up the huge housing deficit while also attacking the stratospheric unemployment. But such a program can only be carried out by a workers and peasants government, based on the revolutionary workers organizations, that begins the socialist revolution. Thus workers must arm themselves with organs of their own power: workers committees and councils. A first step would be to free themselves of the shackles of the UGTA, this organization of police control over the proletariat. Already, the current workers' struggles express a strong spontaneous opposition to what many call the "general union of *trabendos* (black marketers)."

But here also, what's needed is a revolutionary leadership to make this opposition conscious of its strategic class interests. Purely trade-union struggles are doomed to failure. *Workers' struggles* must be led in a highly political manner, with the perspective of proletarian revolution supported by all the oppressed. And it imperatively requires the building of a revolutionary vanguard party, a "tribune of the people" armed with the Trotskyist program.

III. The Obstacle of the UGTA

Algeria under Bouteflika and his predecessors has been a favorite pupil of the imperialist international agencies. Since 1994-95, it has rigorously applied the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) of the International Monetary Fund, which together with the increase in oil prices has resulted in a spectacular improvement of governmental finances, and an appalling deterioration of the living standards of the Algerian working people.

According to a February 2004 report of the IMF, Algeria's international reserves increased from around US\$2 billion in 1995 to US\$32 billion last year. There is a government budget surplus, a surplus in the balance of trade of exports over imports, and a remarkable increase in bank liquidity. At the same time, social expenses have dramatically fallen, the per capita gross national product (GNP) has declined inexorably from US\$2,300 in 1980 to US\$1,540 in 1999, real wages lost 35 percent of their value between 1993 and 1996, a quarter of the population is living in poverty, while unemployment has "stabilized" at 30 percent according to official statistics (50 percent among youth) and is likely to rise due to layoffs following privatizations.

The predictable result has been a growth of social tensions which exploded at the time of the Kabyle revolt of 2001 and which could break out again at any time. The Issad Commission named by Bouteflika to investigate the "troubles" came to a severe conclusion: "The causes of the Kabyle uprising are the result of endemic unemployment, a glaring lack of housing...difficulties which unfortunately are not limited to a specific locality but are a worrisome problem nationally. The wildfire began in Kabylia, but it can break out elsewhere," as the president of the commission remarked in an interview with *Le Monde* (9 August 2001).

In this context of obscene luxury for the bankers and misery for the mass of working people and unemployed, how do the official "unions" act? The secretary general of the UGTA, Abdelmadjid Sidi Saïd admitted: "It's true that the UGTA shares part of the responsibility for this stagnation.... We attempted, due to the grave economic and social conditions as well as terrorism, not to aggravate the situation." Flaunting his deter-



Le Matin

Leaders of the UGTA "labor" federation (Sidi Saïd in the center) declare their support for the presidential candidacy of Bouteflika (picture on wall), March 2. The UGTA is not a workers union but a cog in the corporatist state machinery for the suppression of the workers.

mination to suffocate any struggles, he concluded: "The role of a fireman is a noble role" (*Quotidien d'Oran*, 11 July 2002). In another interview, Sidi Saïd admitted that the UGTA "supported quite a bit...all the reforms that have been applied these last few years," whose price has included "the elimination of more than 400,000 jobs" (*Quotidien d'Oran*, 22 July 2002). Indeed, the UGTA, far from being an organization of self-defense of the work-

ers, is a bourgeois mechanism for government control of the Algerian proletariat, an obstacle to prevent workers resistance against impoverishment.

Of course, as a "fireman" for the ruling class, the UGTA has sometimes had to simulate the class struggle. This was the case on 25/26 February 2003, when it called a national general strike (the third time it has done this, after 1991 and 1995). The response of the workers to this was overwhelming. Urban mass transit, railroads, airports and ports were stopped, schools and universities closed, hospitals reduced to minimum services, most of the big state-owned enterprises ceased activity, as did some prominent private companies such as Coca-Cola and the steel works of El Hadjar (formerly a crown jewel of state industry, today in the hands of Indian investors). At Rouiba, the 8,000 workers at the SNVI plant (bus and truck manufacturing) occupied National Highway 5 and threatened to march on Algiers.

But even though it played the strike card, the UGTA did everything it could to prevent things "getting out of control." No demonstration was planned. Sidi Saïd himself rushed to Rouiba to block any movement of the workers toward the capital. "The serenity with which the strike has taken place must be respected. It is taking place in the plants, not in the streets," he preached to the workers. And while he claimed to "say no to the selling off of the national productive apparatus," the boss of the UGTA made clear: "We are not against privatization." As *Le Monde* (27 February 2003) wrote:

"Unemployment, extremely high and not falling; stagnation of the purchasing power of most wages; the destitute poverty of retirees...could have been part of the slogans put forward by the federation. That was not the case. The



Michael von Grafenreid

Algerian oil worker at Hassi Messaoud field. Fight against privatization of Sonatrach must be through independent mobilization for workers control, not maneuvering between the “clans” of the regime.

fight of the moment is against privatizations. Not that the UGTA, with its 1.4 million members (out of roughly 5 million wage earners in the formal economy), is opposed to them. It admits they are necessary and even brags of having helped carry out the privatization of El Hadjar (the steel plant at Skikda).

“We held 650 general assemblies to get the workers to agree to it,” recalls Sidi Saïd.”

For the main organizer of the strike, the real stakes were the disputes among the bourgeois “decision makers” over the conditions of privatization. The UGTA leader principally opposed the minister in charge of privatization, Abdelhamid Temmar, and the plan of Chakib Khelil, the minister of mines and energy, to privatize Sonatrach, the state-owned petroleum company which produces 35 percent of Algeria’s gross domestic product (GDP), 65 percent of its government income and 97 percent of exports. The ultra-liberal ministers wanted to hand over the jewels of Algerian capitalism’s “patrimony” to the imperialists, while the “union” chiefs and their allies within the armed forces wanted to profit from privatization by reinforcing the fragile Algerian bourgeoisie. The suspension of Khelil’s plan, which took place a few days before the strike, and the dismissal of Temmar shortly afterwards were the desired result of the battle between the clans within the ruling class.

Conceived as a pressure tactic – a real general strike would have meant a direct confrontation with the bourgeois state, posing the question of power – the UGTA’s action sought to keep control over the workers’ anger, to channel it. That didn’t mean that the strike should have been boycotted. On the contrary, the task of the hour was to use these divisions in the ranks of the class enemy to advance the interests of the proletariat. That was also the view of trade unionists at the time: “Whether it’s for or against Bouteflika, we don’t give a damn. It’s necessary to profit from all the openings, to use every platform to improve our situation. It’s because we tackle the problem separately that we never get anything,” said a group of teachers at the Ibnou-Nass junior college, quoted in *Le Matin* (26 February 2003). The anger against this government of hunger meant that there was huge participation in the strike

throughout the country, proving that it’s not militancy that is lacking, but rather a revolutionary leadership.

That leadership must first of all have a clear understanding of the nature of the UGTA itself. This organization is not a workers union, the product of working-class struggles but today in the hands of a reformist bureaucracy, as is a “typical” case of contemporary trade unions. Although in the imperialist epoch all these pro-capitalist bureaucracies tend toward integration into the bourgeois state, one has to recognize that the UGTA is itself an integral part of the machinery of the Algerian state.

To understand the *bourgeois corporatist character* of the federation, we have to take a look at its history. From its birth in 1956, the UGTA was an off-shoot of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalists of the National Liberation Front (FLN), and its purpose was to support the military struggle for independence. Its very creation was the result of the betrayal of the Algerian workers by the French Communist Party (PCF) and the General Labor Federation (CGT) that it led. It was on the orders of the PCF aviation minister, Charles Tillon, that French planes bombed Sétif in 1945, killing 45,000 Algerians. Two years after the Sétif massacre, the head of the CGT praised colonialism, speaking of “the civilizing work of France”! Even though they ultimately yielded to the inevitable separation of Algeria (as General de Gaulle also had to accept), the Stalinist reformists – “social-imperialists,” according to Lenin’s characterization – did not fight for the independence of the colonies from the yoke of “their own” imperialism.

In the first issue of *L’Ouvrier Algérien* (17 August 1962) published in Algiers following independence, the FLN cadres who published it explained that the task of their “union” federation *would not be* defense of the interests of the working class, but rather it would be an instrument of the nationalist movement which was in the process of transforming itself into a new ruling class: “For us, the working people, the UGTA is not a means of social improvement, but a means of social transformation.” “The UGTA’s aim is not essentially the defense of professional interests, but rather it seeks to develop the country,” it declared, adding that what was involved was “passing from the stage of raising demands to that of taking up duties.” For some months,

the divisions within the FLN and the weakness of its apparatus allowed the UGTA some maneuvering room. This “autonomy” didn’t last. At its first congress, in February 1963, the police entered the premises where the meeting was being held, symbolizing the placing of the federation under the tutelage of the state.

While during its early years, the UGTA supported measures like the “self-management” (*autogestion*) of the estates abandoned by the *colons* (colonists), the Ben Bella government’s taking in hand of this movement demonstrated that this was a measure of “developing the country” rather than workers control. Already in 1963, Ben Bella attacked “workerism” and insisted that any “political autonomy” of the UGTA would be “in contradiction with the Tripoli Program” of the FLN. At the time of the workers strikes of December 1964 (of the dock workers, oil workers, Peugeot and Michelin workers), the government suppressed the UGTA’s national council and called a second congress to purge the union “left wing.” Within this “left,” the pseudo-Trotskyist partisans of Michel Pablo (who at the time was a member of the Algerian government in charge of self-management) put forward a program of “trade unionism of managing” (*syndicalisme gestionnaire*) as opposed to the “trade unionism of demands” (*syndicalisme revendicatif*). And what Ben Bella with his socialistic rhetoric was unable to achieve was accomplished with the coming to power of Houari Boumediene: at its third congress in 1969, the UGTA officially became a “mass organization” of the FLN.

Henceforth, the members of its leadership were named by the FLN, which could also call an emergency conference of the UGTA. According to its political resolution, the federation “is duty bound to contribute to the realization of the objectives of production above and beyond any protest which would be the negation of the responsible management role of the Algerian unions.” To underscore this, the criminal code was modified to ban strikes (“a concerted work stoppage with the aim of forcing the raising or lowering [!] of wages, or of undermining the free exercise of industry or labor”).

The decline of the FLN after 1989 opened a new period of “autonomy,” in which the corporatist system became more flexible but was not abolished. At first, even if Law 90-14 purported to guarantee “the right to join in autonomous trade-union organizations,” this was simply window-dressing. Later, there were attempts by the SATEF (Autonomous Union of Education and Training Workers) and the SNAPAP (Autonomous National Union of the Personnel of Public Administration) to form union federations, but they were systematically blocked. At the same time, according to a report of the International Federation of Leagues of the Rights of Man:

“According to the SNAPAP, the UGTA enjoys the benefit of a thousand offices, equipped and granted free of charge by the state as well as a fleet of vehicles, whereas the autonomous unions are forced to buy their own properties or rent their offices. Moreover, the UGTA receives a colossal secret subsidy from the state budget, while very little is assigned to the autonomous unions.”

–FIELDH, “Algérie: Mission d’enquête sur les libertés syndicales” (December 2002)

In addition, the UGTA is integrated into the state apparatus through various “social” councils and committees of participation in the management of state enterprises. But, beware, the “autonomous” unions are not complaining because of the existence of state subsidies whose purpose is to control the unions, but *because they didn’t receive any themselves*.

Beyond its total financial dependence on the bourgeois state, today the UGTA is in the hands of a cartel of bourgeois tendencies coming out of the former single party, the rump FLN and the RND, which is acting as Bouteflika’s electoral apparatus. It’s not just that the UGTA’s leaders support one or another capitalist party, but rather that the “union” federation is itself the organizational framework for the internecine struggles within the regime. Even if today there is an appearance of parliamentary struggle, the “*Pouvoir*” (as the regime is generally known) remains a corporatist system which is not limited to the party in government but encompasses a number of sectors, notably the army, state industry and the UGTA. Within this state apparatus, there are constant tensions between the supporters of the various “clans” in the different state entities. There is also a circulation of cadres, so that today’s union leader may tomorrow be (and often is) the boss of the nationalized company. Outside of this apparatus, there is total exclusion and ferocious repression. The parties, the armed forces and the official “unions” operate on different terrains, but they are part and parcel of an apparatus of a regime which seeks to incorporate the whole of society within one structure.

The reason for being of this distinctive regime is the inability of the bourgeoisies of countries with belated capitalist development to permit themselves more than a pretense of bourgeois democracy, due to the extreme weakness of their bourgeoisie in the face of millions of workers and peasants, on the one hand, and imperialism on the other. In the 1930s, Leon Trotsky analyzed the Mexican regime of Lázaro Cárdenas under the guidance of the PRM (later the PRI, Institutional Revolutionary Party) as a “bonapartism sui generis” (of a unique sort), which pretends to raise itself above the classes, to balance between different forces:

“Actually, it can govern either by making itself the instrument of foreign capitalism and holding the proletariat in the chains of a police dictatorship, or by maneuvering with the proletariat and even going so far as to make concessions to it, thus gaining the possibility of a certain freedom toward the foreign capitalists.”

–Leon Trotsky, “Nationalized Industry and Workers Management” (May 1940)

At the time, Trotsky viewed the Cárdenas regime as an example of the second variant; obviously the present-day Algerian regime is of the first type. But whatever its political orientation, it is important to understand that the nationalized industries and the corporatist “unions” are part of one and the same structure. As such, it is not reformable, and it is necessary to break with this yoke of state control over the working class. The alternative is not a bourgeois democracy that is impossible in the semi-colonial countries, but a struggle for workers revolution at the head of all the oppressed, the only outcome that offers to the working people the possibility of escape from their hellish poverty and repression.

IV. It Is Necessary to Forge a Genuine Trotskyist Party

APRIL 11 – After the elections and the announcement of the victory of Abdelaziz Bouteflika – with 83,49 (!) percent of the votes, according to the official figures – comes the dismay. In the streets of Algiers, an attempt to rally protest against these highly dubious results was violently prevented by anti-riot cops. The police baton answered the cries of “fraud.” While the U.S., France and NATO congratulated the president and the



Le Matin

Riot police suppress protest against vote fraud on the night of the presidential election, April 8.

“Bouteflika II” administration is being mapped out, the response of the bourgeois opposition is an impotent appeal to continue the “democratic struggle.” The same goes for the pseudo-socialist reformists. But after three years of crisis, it is more than obvious to the exploited and oppressed that fighting on the capitalist terrain only leads to a dead-end. It is more urgent than ever to undertake the formation of a genuine Bolshevik vanguard party that seeks to bring together those who fight for the cause of the oppressed on a program of *permanent revolution*. To the petty-bourgeois nationalism of the opportunist left, such a party would counterpose proletarian internationalism, fighting for workers revolution which would extend throughout the Maghreb and into the heart of the imperialist centers.

This struggle must be waged at the programmatic level and by intervention in the struggles of the working people, who have demonstrated considerable combativeness even though they lack a revolutionary leadership that is up to the tasks that are posed. Within the UGTA, the PST (Socialist Workers Party) acts as a “left” valet for the dominant bourgeois forces (mainly the FLN and RND). We have already noted how the PST found its niche in the official “union” federation after Soumia Salhi was named to the national executive commission. In exchange, this spokesman for the PST spread illusions on the possibility of a “leftward” evolution of the UGTA. Today, the PST claims that “only our vigilant mobilization could prevent the return to anti-social projects after the presidential elections” (*El Khatwa*, November 2003).

In fact, the UGTA supported Bouteflika’s candidacy in the elections, and the “vigilant” mobilization of the PST only serves to deceive the workers about the possibility of reforming this state apparatus. It is noteworthy that the very moment when the autonomous unions like the CLA and the CNAPEST in the education sector, where PST supporters play a leading

role, are the targets of attacks by the UGTA (acting as the spearhead for the government), their comrades are part of the leadership of the federation. Hardly surprising, however: contradictory postures are in the very nature of opportunism, whose tailist politics require it to adapt to diverse anti-proletarian forces. Nor is it anything original for this fake Trotskyist current. In the 1970s, even at the time of FLN one-party rule,

the Groupe Communiste Révolutionnaire (GCR, predecessor of the PST) claimed that the UGTA could have a “class-struggle leadership.” Prior to that, the International Secretariat of Michel Pablo (predecessor of the United Secretariat with which the PST sympathizes) supported Ben Bella and claimed that his bourgeois government with its pretensions of an Arab-Islamic “socialism” was a “workers and peasants government.”

Currently, various bourgeois analysts see in the UGTA a structure that has outlived its purpose. They speak of “trade-union pluralism,” taking up the terminology of the International Labour Organisation, an agency of the United Nations, which historically served as a battering ram against the Soviet bloc countries. While talking of “free trade unions,” it sought to install “free market” capitalism. We Trotskyists, in contrast, defend the gains of the working class, including the deformed workers states which still exist today (China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba) against imperialism and against the Stalinist bureaucracies themselves, which open the door to counter-revolution. The liberal analysts denounce the “overpoliticization” of the UGTA (see “Le syndicalisme entre surpolitisation et désire d’autonomie” by Abdenasser Djabi, on the Internet site of Algeria Interface), whereas it is the *bourgeois* politics and state character of the UGTA which harms the working people. The Trotskyists fight not for a “trade union pluralism” which could be used by the privatizers, but for a revolutionary leadership of the unions and working-class unity *against capital*.

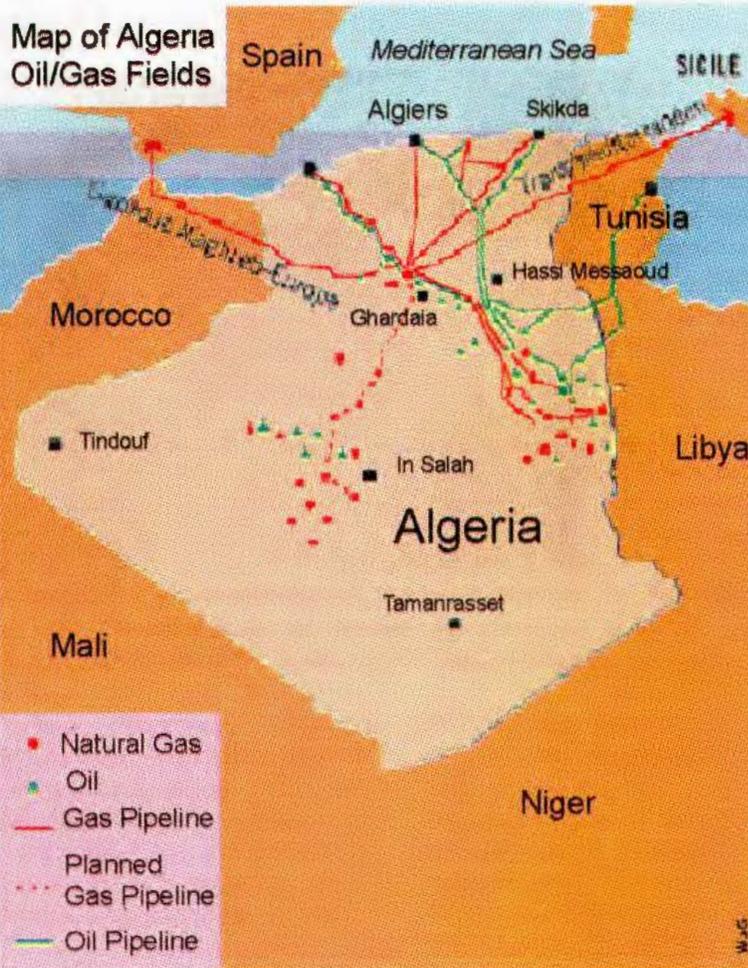
At a moment when the Algerian working class is beginning to raise its head in order to confront the disastrous consequences of decaying capitalism – the application of IMF austerity plans, the accelerating dismantling of the public sector, the shutting down of companies – it is more than ever necessary to put forward the principles of the *complete and unconditional independence of the trade-unions from the state*. As Trotsky explained in his unfinished essay, “Trade

Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay” (1940), what’s needed is “a struggle to turn the trade union into the organs of the broad exploited masses and not the organs of a labor aristocracy.” “The trade unions of our time,” he wrote, can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat.”

This is not only a historical observation or an abstract principle. The “autonomous” trade-union organizations which have arisen in Algeria only act as a circumstantial response to the obstacle of the UGTA. Even more so as leaderships like that of

the SNAPAP are asking for state subsidies, with which they too would be chained to the bourgeois state. Other tendencies such as the PADS (Algerian Party for Democracy and Socialism, former pro-Moscow Stalinists) have abandoned their unconditional support for the UGTA to become agnostic: “If the workers, whether teachers or not, don’t want the UGTA and reject the actions of the federation, that is entirely within their rights,” we read in the PADS organ in exile, *Le Lien* (No. 77 [November 2003]), concerning the teachers strike. But the question of independence from the bourgeois state is not simply a circumstantial or tactical question, but a political and not simply organizational principle. As Trotsky stressed, “in the epoch of imperialist decay the trade unions can really be independent only to the extent that they are conscious of being, in action, the organs of proletarian revolution.”

In Algeria, in addition to the PST, the PT (Parti des Travailleurs – Workers Party) of Louisa Hanoune is identified by the press as Trotskyist. The PT itself is rather reticent with references to Trotsky, and for good reason: its reformist policies have nothing to do with revolutionary Trotskyism. While the PST habitually swims in the waters of the Berberist movement, the PT



poses as Algerian nationalists. It thus plays the game of the regime which has murdered hundreds of leftist militants, and advocates reaching an understanding with the Islamic assassins, whose preferred victims are unveiled women, trade-unionists and left militants. During the election campaign, Hanoune spoke of abolishing the Family Code, giving official status to the Berber language and refusing to join the World Trade Organization, but the axis of her campaign was to create “harmony...which would put an end to all sorts of separatisms based on differences of language, regional identification” – what she is talking about here is Bouteflika’s “national reconciliation,” which includes Muslim fundamentalists and represses the Kabyles.

After the elections, in which her party’s votes shrank to 118,000 votes (less than half its score in the 2002 legislative elections), Hanoune said that “the people cast a useful vote” (roughly, voted for the lesser evil) “against regionalism and tribalism,” that it showed its attachment to “unity and frater-



Le Matin

Louisa Hanoune, candidate of pseudo-Trotskyist PT, praised by Bouteflika, calls for “harmony” with Islamic fundamentalists.

nity, to the Republic, one and indivisible,” and that there is no evidence of large-scale fraud. It’s no accident, in these circumstances, that Bouteflika wrote a letter praising Hanoune, assuring her of his “admiration” for her personal qualities of “elegance and distinction, of commitment and eloquence,” praising her “clean and dignified election campaign,” congratulating her for being “a symbol of encouragement” for women as “the first Algerian woman to run for the highest office,” and “thank[ing] you because you do honor to all Algerians concerned for the future of their country” (*La Tribune*, 10 April). Hanoune expressed her appreciation for the compliments of the head of state, of whom she and her party are clearly loyal followers.

As for the PST, it “distances itself from the five liberal candidates,” but it “doesn’t put on the same level the candidacy of Louisa, whose eloquent democratic and anti-liberal statements are sincere, although inconsistent.” “We would have liked to call to vote” for her, it says, but “her campaign of national unity verging on chauvinism, her indulgence toward Bouteflika and Zerhouni’s authoritarianism, her distance from the desperate explosions of the youth and her lukewarm attitude toward social struggles oblige us to point out these differences” (motion of the PST leadership on the elections, March 26). This is all true, to be sure. And yet the PST criticizes “Louisa” in a friendly manner not because she doesn’t draw a class line against the bourgeois regime, but simply because she doesn’t attack the government. In truth, the Pabloists of the PST sidle up to Hanoune because they want to tail after the masses who tail after her. The PST’s own formulation – “a conscious and organized popular mobilization which will make it possible to conquer lost democratic spaces” – takes its stand on the same *bourgeois democratic* plane as the PT.

In France, among the tendencies claiming to be Trotskyist, Lutte Ouvrière (LO) is content, as usual, to report a few “miscellaneous news items” on strikes in Algeria without going out of its way to provide a political line for workers outside the *hexagone* (France). And this despite the obvious links between the class struggle in Algeria and France and the key role played by immigrant workers – particularly Algerians – in France. At the same time, LO joins the chauvinist campaign of state repression against Muslim high school and junior college women students who wear the Islamic scarf. Genuine Trotskyists oppose the use of the Islamic hijab and veil which, as well as being symbols of religious obscurantism, stand for subjugation of women. During the 1990s, the refusal by thousands of Algerian women to wear the scarf was (and still is) a courageous act of resistance against oppression. It is also necessary to defend young women in the housing projects and neighborhoods of the suburbs in France who have been



Le Main

Striking teachers, 25 November 2003. Unions must defend women who refuse to wear the veil. Mobilize workers power to abolish the reactionary Family Code. For women’s liberation through socialist revolution!

harassed and persecuted – and at least one of them, burned alive – for defying the retrograde Muslim authorities and practices. But in the French context, excluding young women who wear the scarf from public education and imposing legal sanctions against them necessarily have the character of anti-immigrant segregation. The “socialist” defenders of this campaign of racist exclusion like LO must be unambiguously condemned as social-chauvinists.

The minority faction of LO (who also calls on the racist bourgeois state to “combat” Islamic fundamentalists) last year published an article in which it stated that “the only force that can put a stop to this programmed social regression is the working class,” at the same time as it described the UGTA as a “rampart against popular discontent” (*Convergences Révolutionnaires* No. 27, May-June 2003). But its conclusion – “what’s needed is an organization representing the workers, independent of the regime and all factions of the ruling class,” an organization “which is yet to be built” – means what, exactly? A revolutionary workers party, a centrist party, an “autonomous” union, or even a reformed UGTA which is more to the “left”? We are not told. In any case, *Convergences Révolutionnaires* is careful to avoid criticizing the integration of the PST into the UGTA bureaucracy. As its name indicates, this minority is in favor of the unity of all the pseudo-Trotskyists!

The case of the centrists of the International Communist League (ICL) and its French affiliate, the Ligue Trotskyste de France (LTF), is more bizarre. In our article in *L’Internationaliste* of June 2001, we emphasized that at the time of single-party rule, “the UGTA was a corporatist apparatus, a transmission belt for the bourgeois single party” and that “following the decomposition and dismissal of the FLN from office, this close relation became distended.” With the mixture of dishonesty and stupidity which characterizes it, the ICL/LTF pretends that

the LFI thereby “makes the UGTA out to be better than it is”; then their article quotes us saying: “Today the leadership of the union federation has established ties with several bourgeois parties, mainly the RND, the FLN and the RCD.” So where then is the capitulation before the UGTA? About our calls for the formation of strike committees, workers councils, workers militias, our criticism of the PST for spreading illusions in the bureaucracy, not a word. “And the UGTA, is it or has it been a ‘direct instrument of the bourgeois state’?” the ICL rhetorically asks (*Le Bolchévik* No. 157, Autumn 2001). We have explained in detail that it is and it has been. But instead one should turn the question around – what does the ICL say to this? In its article, it carefully avoids any characterization of the UGTA as such, speaking only of its “corporatist leadership.”

In reality, the ICL claims that the corporatist apparatuses, both in Mexico and in Algeria, can be transformed into organs of proletarian struggle. This cynical position, which at bottom renounces the struggle against the regimentation of the workers by the bourgeois state, was put forward after its shameful flight from the struggle by revolutionary workers in Volta Redonda, Brazil to chase the cops out of their municipal workers union in 1996. To justify its desertion from the class struggle, the ICL subsequently repeated lies coming from the popular front which dragged the Brazilian Trotskyists into the courts (nine times!), sent its police armed with shotguns to shut down union meetings, ordered the seizure of their leaflets and demanded the names of their members. The ICL’s abandonment of their fraternal comrades – who later became the Brazilian section of the League for the Fourth International – is only one aspect of its abandonment of any concrete perspective for the colonial and semi-colonial countries. At the same time, it abandoned the “Iskra” perspective of building the nucleus of an Algerian Trotskyist party, as Lenin and the Bolsheviks did with the publication of their newspaper in exile, *Iskra* (The Spark). More recently, the ICL has refused to call for the defeat of the imperialists in the war against Iraq.

The League for the Fourth International emphasizes the need for all the struggles of the exploited and oppressed to be led toward the goal of international socialist revolution. But while we do not reject working inside the UGTA (for example, in the industrial areas where it is still dominant), this work must be undertaken with the perspective of throwing off the shackles of state control. To fight the privatization plans of Bouteflika and his imperialist bosses, rather than complaining about the presence of this or that minister in the cabinet, it is necessary to mobilize workers’ power in the streets and in the plants. If they attempt to sell off the SNVI factory at Rouiba – which has already been threatened – the UGTA will put pressure on the workers to accept this attack on their rights and their jobs, as it already did with the El Hadjar steel workers in Skikda. In this situation, workers



Ben Bella (left) and Boumediene at soccer match, 18 June 1965. That night Boumediene seized power in a coup. But despite “socialist” rhetoric, FLN leader Ben Bella sought to straitjacket workers in the corporatist UGTA, sending police against strikers. Under Boumediene, UGTA officially became part of FLN.

should form workers control committees to occupy the plant and extend the struggle to other related sectors.

The struggle against the regime cannot be limited to industrial disputes or job conflicts, which would amount to the reformist economism that the Bolsheviks had to combat. Thus the workers must be mobilized to demand an end to all linguistic discrimination – *For equal rights for all languages* in common usage (in this case, Berber, Arabic and French)! There must be a struggle to win key sectors of the working class to demand the total elimination of the Family Code. This abominable piece of legislation, which was approved by the FLN in 1984, which deprives women of elementary democratic rights, subjugating them to their fathers or husbands, will have been in force for 20 years as of June 9. Numerous feminist groups are campaigning against the Code with the slogan “20 years *barakat* [that’s enough].” Revolutionaries must seek to mobilize unions such as the CNES, the CLA or SNAPAP to demand abolition of this law which has made Algeria the most retrograde country in North Africa as far as women’s rights are concerned.

The struggle against the *Pouvoir*, that is the regime based on the military, must be directed simultaneously against the government and its imperialist bosses. During the U.S./British invasion of Iraq in March-April 2003, the UGTA and the bourgeois parties (FLN, RND, RCD, FFS) kept a complicit silence, doing nothing to aid the Iraqi people facing the imperialist bombs. There are even some illusions in the imperialist “protectors” like Chirac and Bush, including among many Kabyles, for whom the occupation of Iraq by U.S. imperialism is a purely “Arab” affair. Bouteflika even banned a march against the war on Iraq on March 21. Rather than denouncing the imperialists and their Algerian accomplices, the response of at least a part of the left was to *call on the president* to oppose the war! The

PADS, for example, wrote: "The working people, progressive forces, true democrats... must demand of the Algerian *Pouvoir* and Bouteflika... a different attitude toward the pending war" (*Le Lien* No. 73, March 2003). On the contrary, it's necessary to mobilize not only independently of the regime, but also to fight for workers actions to impede the imperialist war, for example by refusing to load oil tankers headed to the U.S., Britain, Spain, Italy and any other country that participated in the invasion of Iraq.

Today the imperialists are on the offensive, profiting from the collapse of bourgeois nationalism in the colonial and semi-colonial countries as well as the disintegration of Soviet Stalinism. The so-called "war on terrorism" is a cover for the colonial occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan and reinforces anti-immigrant terror in the imperialist countries. What's needed is a struggle not only against U.S. imperialism but also against French imperialism, beginning with President Chirac, which claims to oppose the war although in reality it only wants to share in the spoils of the looting. Today as well it is necessary to call on the workers to go into action to block the establishment of a NATO naval base, to impede the installation of a listening post of the American electronic espionage agency (NSA) in the south of Algeria, near Tamanrasset (which was negotiated last September by the head of the Algerian general staff, General Mohammed Lamari, and General Charles Wald, deputy commander of U.S. forces in Europe).

A socialist revolution in Algeria must necessarily be extended throughout North Africa, with the perspective of a socialist federation of the Maghreb. Thus it is necessary to support Tunisian and Moroccan workers against repression, and to fight for independence for Western Sahara in the face of the occupation by Morocco, backed by the U.N. and U.S. (read our article, "The Saharan People Under the Boot of the 'New World Order'," page 23). Revolution in Algeria must also be intimately linked to the workers' struggle in the former colonial power. In France it is crucial to combat divisions in the working class and to struggle against racist government and fascist terror, for full rights of citizenship for all immigrants and their families. The perspective of revolutionary unity between the French and Algerian workers is decisive for the future of the class struggle in both countries.

Algeria's experience under the FLN and its continuation under the present semi-bonapartist regime, which has neither broken the imperialist vise nor carried out real economic development, nor achieved democratic gains for the women and other oppressed sectors, confirm in the negative Trotsky's theory and program of permanent revolution. This drew the lessons of the Russian Revolution of October 1917: in the colonial and neocolonial countries, only the working class led by a Bolshevik party can, despite its numerical weakness, place itself at the head of all the oppressed and accomplish democratic tasks by installing the dictatorship of the proletariat, which will straight away proceed to undertake socialist tasks.

Today, the pseudo-Trotskyists of the PST and PT join hands in calling for a constituent assembly as the crowning piece of their platforms for democratic struggle. In a country

like Algeria, with large peasant layers and which has been dominated for decades by an authoritarian regime which considers itself unmovable, one cannot exclude the possibility of calling a constituent assembly in response to the thirst for democracy of the working masses. But for this to have a revolutionary content, it is necessary to first establish the revolutionary power of the working people. The perspective of the reformists is quite different. According to *Le Matin* (10 April), "Ms. Hanoune [of the PT] issued a call on the president to organize an Algerian national congress in which all political and civil parties of the nation would take part, and out of which would come a Constituent Assembly, replacing the present Popular Assembly." To call on Bouteflika, the chief repressor and enforcer of starvation policies, to organize a national congress to form a constituent assembly – this is a caricature of utopian and reactionary reformism.

Can a "democratic" assembly under bourgeois domination resolve the burning linguistic and regional issues that have shaken Algeria or crush the Islamic fundamentalist reactionaries? Impossible! It is a criminal illusion to imagine that a stable parliamentary democracy can be established in a country like Algeria, where a tiny layer of rich capitalists and corrupt bureaucrats, supported by the army, exercises its domination over the pauperized masses on behalf of imperialism. The army won't be kicked out of power by an impotent "democratic" assembly; to accomplish a working-class counter-power must be organized, based on councils of workers and peasants, soviets, with their own workers militias – and then the armed forces that defend capital will begin to come apart. The proletariat must fight, with independent class struggle, for the broadest democratic rights as an integral part of the fight for proletarian power, and not in an illusory attempt to achieve "democracy" without overthrowing the capitalist state.

The plebiscite of the Algerian presidential elections, fraudulent as always, can serve to blow away many illusions among the victims of this regime. But for that, what's needed is above all a fight to forge an Algerian Trotskyist party. This struggle must be international from head to toe. The origin of the Communist Party's capitulation to colonialism in France and Algeria was in Moscow rather than Paris or Algiers. It was Stalin who decreed the policy of the popular front, of class collaboration with the "democratic" imperialist bourgeoisies. The capitulation of the pseudo-Trotskyists before the nationalism of Ben Bella's FLN (in the case of Michel Pablo and his successor, Ernest Mandel) or of the PPA (Party of the Algerian People) of Messali Hadj (in the case of Pierre Lambert, Hanoune's patron) was due to the abandonment of a revolutionary proletarian perspective by their respective international tendencies. What the Pabloists and Lambertists are doing today is simply continuing their opportunist traditions. The struggle for authentic Trotskyism must be waged internationally, in a struggle against imperialist wars, against popular fronts, to defend the workers' gains against the counterrevolutionary threat – that is, in an intransigent struggle for Bolshevik internationalism, which will take form in a reformed Fourth International.

Saharan People...

continued from page 26

For a Socialist Federation of the Maghreb Against Imperialist Recolonization

Today Algeria's kept press cries victory, seeking to cover up the abandonment of the Sahrawi to Morocco. "How Algiers Trapped Rabat," is the headline of the *Quotidien d'Oran* (16 July 2003), which revels in the good relations between Algiers and the U.S. White House, to the disadvantage of Morocco. In addition, the *Quotidien d'Oran* announces: "At the same time, President Mohamed Abdelaziz [of the RASD] is flying this morning of July 15 toward... Washington. Invited by U.S. Republican Party Congressmen and committees for independence, the Sahrawi president's position has been strengthened." They hope in vain.

For its part, Morocco's kept press delights in the Polisario's abandonment of its "revolutionary" language of old and alludes to the subsidies given to the Polisario by Boeing (what hypocrisy!). The Polisario, like the other petty-bourgeois nationalists, has long since thrown its "left-wing" rhetoric to the wind and seeks to erect a bourgeois client state of imperialism. At the Polisario's last congress, a degree of discontent was expressed on the question of a ceasefire, but the Algerian bourgeoisie is ready to suppress any rebellion. Simply returning to the "good old days" of the armed struggle is, moreover, impossible. More than ever, the fate of the Saharan people is closely linked to the struggle to mobilize the Algerian and Moroccan proletariats against their respective neocolonial capitalist governments.

As the military collaboration between Algeria and NATO develops, the U.S. has also decided to quadruple its "non-military (i.e., police) assistance" to Morocco (US\$40 million beginning in 2004) in order to "fight terrorism." American military aid to the kingdom will be doubled and raised to US\$20 million. So it is not a matter of an Algerian-American bloc against Morocco, but of a struggle for influence between U.S. and French imperialists in Morocco and Algeria. In view of the increasing ties between the U.S. and Morocco, it is more than likely that the Moroccan reluctance toward the Baker Plan II (with its vague reference to eventual "independence" for Western Sahara) will disappear, despite all the efforts of Chirac. Moreover, even while condemning the contract awarded to TotalFinaElf, [Sahrawi Republic president] Abdelaziz promises to open Western Sahara to "French capital" if French imperialism distances itself from the Moroccan monarchy.

It is profoundly true that an independent Western Sahara, despite its natural riches, will remain a poor country looted by imperialism. Geography demands imperatively a rational economic collaboration among the countries of the Maghreb (for example, a planned pipeline for Algerian gas crossing Morocco to reach Europe). But all attempts at North African economic integration have been stillborn, or have intensified the plundering of these countries by U.S. imperialism or its European rivals. Moroccan domination over Western Sahara rests on the support of the U.S. and European imperialist criminals who today pose as the guarantors of self-determination for the Sahrawi people – the same

imperialists who are organizing the colonial occupation of Iraq!

The Sahrawi people has been reduced to a phantom existence. An entire generation of youth only knows life in the refugee camps of Tindouf, where they have lived during the past 20 years. A tiny people, it cannot with its own forces win the battle against the enormous Moroccan war machine. Obligated to seek the support of more powerful forces, the leaders of the Polisario Front became clients of the bloody Algerian regime, while appealing to the European and American imperialists. They perhaps dream that Western Sahara could follow the path of East Timor, an independent country without industry where the population lives in abject poverty, living in shacks while the former leaders of the FRETILIN liberation movement occupy the buildings of the former Indonesian governor. In any case, this is very unlikely in the present context, where independence fighters are treated as "terrorists." But the Sahrawis are not condemned to an eternal search for an imperialist sponsor. Their destiny need not be that of a martyred people. They can in fact play a central role in awakening the powerful North African proletariat, in bringing it to class consciousness in a bitter fight against nationalism which has divided it and chained it to its exploiters.

The national emancipation of the Saharan people is only possible in a struggle against imperialism and "national" reaction. Sahrawi women who have widely participated in the struggle for national independence are threatened, as are their Moroccan and Algerian sisters, by the Islamists, the Moroccan monarchy and the nationalist executioners who hold power in Algiers. The struggle for their liberation must be an integral part of a revolutionary struggle for the emancipation of the working people, of the struggle of the exploited and oppressed against their exploiters and oppressors. The inhabitants of the refugee camps in the Saharan desert along with the inhabitants of the slums around Casablanca and other large cities urgently need the leadership of a working class guided by the program of *permanent revolution* extending into the hear of the imperialist powers. A class struggle of American, British, Spanish and Italian workers against the imperialist war in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as the struggles of the French workers against their own bourgeoisie will be decisive in deciding the fate of the starved and wretched of the North African earth.

The League for the Fourth International insists that it is above all the Moroccan proletariat, together with its Algerian, Tunisian and Libyan brothers, that is the ally of the Sahrawi people. As Morocco and all the countries of the Maghreb are bourgeois countries of belated economic development, a complete and genuine resolution of their democratic demands and their national liberation from the yoke of imperialism can only come about through the dictatorship of the proletariat at the head of the oppressed nation, above all the peasant masses, in a *socialist federation of the Maghreb*. For that it is necessary to build revolutionary parties of the Bolshevik type to install and consolidate a proletarian regime in North Africa, and to help light the revolutionary spark within the colonizing countries, old and new. In the face of imperialism, there must be an international struggle for socialist revolution, particularly in France and the United States. ■

Break with the PT/PL Popular Front! For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

Brazil: Lula Government, Putting Out Fires for the IMF

The following article was translated from *Vanguarda Operária* No. 7 (January-February 2003), published by our comrades of the *Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil*.

The day that Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was sworn in as president of Brazil, more than 150,000 people celebrated in the capital, Brasília. Hundreds of buses arrived from the main cities around the country, contingents of native Indians came from the farthest reaches of the Amazon. "They came to celebrate the victory of their president, of the president who for the first time represents the people," commented the *Tribuna da Imprensa* (2 January 2003). In contrast with the string of corrupt politicians who have occupied the Palácio do Planalto (seat of Brazil's presidency) since the fall of the military regime (in 1985), there was a feeling that Lula is "one of us."

But despite the popular euphoria, the hard reality is that the former trade-unionist and head of the social-democratic Workers Party (PT – Partido dos Trabalhadores), who was elected together with his vice president, the industrialist José Alencar of the rightist Liberal Party (PL), will preside over a bourgeois regime that will govern the country not in the interests of the "people" but in favor of the profits of the São Paulo stock exchange (Bovespa) and Wall Street. He has trumpeted his welfare program of "Zero Hunger," but he will implement the starvation policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The owners of Brazil have conferred on Lula the task of getting the working masses to swallow the anti-working-class "reforms" that his rightist predecessors were unable to foist on them.

Lula was chosen for head of state this time around, in his fourth presidential bid, primarily due to the generalized economic crisis which encompasses most of the countries of Latin America, due to his "moderate" program and due to the fact that the working people who voted for him would be firmly chained to their class enemies. As in his previous campaigns, the PT formed a class-collaborationist "popular front" coalition as a guarantee of



O Globo

The George and Lula show. The Brazilian president extends his hand to his master, imperialist chief Bush.

its "good intentions" toward capital. But this time, the capitalist "ally" was even more right-wing than in the past: Mr. Alencar is the T-shirt king who pays starvation wages to produce for Wal-Mart, and head of a church created to empty the pockets of the poor.

At the continental level, Lula will carry out the requirements of the imperialist masters in Washington. After a visit with the U.S. president, Lula declared that he would return to Brazil "convinced that I will have an important ally in President Bush" (*O Globo*, 11 December 2002). As his first assignment, even before taking office, the president-elect intervened in the Venezuelan crisis. At the same time as Fernando Henrique Cardoso, his predecessor, sent a tanker to replace the oil lost due to the bosses' lockout, Lula sent an emissary to Caracas who counseled President Hugo Chávez to reach a deal with the rightist opposition. It won't be long before we can expect the Brazilian president to give lessons in "responsible" economic policies to the Argentine government of President Duhalde, considered a "bad boy" by the IMF due to the spendthrift ways of the Peronist state governors. This is how Lula fills his role as Latin American fireman for the international bankers' cartel.

Prior to taking office, the head of the PT had declared that the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) would be “equivalent to the annexation of Brazil by the United States.” This was one of the points that pleased the “anti-globalizers” of the World Social Forum most. In the past, Lula was one of the “stars” of the WSF. Now, however, in the audience granted him by the chief of Yankee imperialism, the Brazilian president-elect declared that “the FTAA can mean the opening of the U.S. and Canadian markets” to Brazilian products, “above all in the agricultural sector.” So to pay back the support which his presidential campaign received from capitalists like Ademerval Garcia of the Brazilian Association of Orange Exporters, Brazil will become an “orange juice republic.” But that certainly won’t dampen the enthusiasm for the new government among the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois popular-frontists who meet every year in Porto Alegre.

On the national level, the Lula government is going to impose the “pension reform” which the Cardoso government failed to implement. Lula is now proposing a cap of 2,200 reals, or about US\$700 a month. And this is not an isolated case. Little more than a month after he was elected, Lula invited hundreds of trade-unionists to the Sheraton Hotel in São Paulo to announce that “from now on, there will be an end to feebleness” (no more Mr. Nice Guy). In the same speech, he announced that “if conditions aren’t ripe,” he won’t even pay the ridiculous minimum wage that the PT called for during the campaign (*O Globo*, 27 November 2002). Later he announced that in place of the promised 240 reals, it would only be 210 reals (US\$65) a month!

All this puts the “PT left” in a bind. When Henrique Meirelles, a member of Cardoso’s Brazilian Social-Democratic Party (a bourgeois “free market” liberal party), was named Lula’s head of the Central Bank, Heloísa Helena, the PT senator from Alagoas and spokesman for the Socialist Democracy (DS) caucus inside the PT, exclaimed: “I’m sad!” Meirelles, who was formerly head of the Bank of Boston’s operations in Brazil, has to “be working in the interests of finance capital,” she said (*O Globo*, 23 December 2002). What a surprise! Another star of the DS, Raul Pont, the former mayor of Porto Alegre, complained: “I didn’t comprehend a thing.” The senator from Alagoas refused to run for state governor because she didn’t want to share the slate with longstanding enemies, such as the traditional “colonels” (large landowners) who long dominated the northern state. But the sadness and incomprehension of the domesticated PT left doesn’t go beyond a few tears. They themselves have provided ample services to capital.

Thus the government of Olivio Dutra in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, where the PT left had a considerable presence, responded to a teachers strike [in 2002] with an iron fist, refusing to give an inch to the educators who receive some of the lowest wages in the country. As mayor of Rio Grande do Sul’s capital, Raul Pont made a great deal of the “participatory democracy” of his “people’s budget.” But the hard truth is that they held mass hearings to approve a program of cuts in municipal social services. And in any case, these “leftists” loyally went along with Lula’s popular-frontism which defined the PT’s election campaigns, from the city halls of Porto Alegre, São Paulo and Belém to the statehouses of Rio Grande do Sul, Rio de Janeiro, Acre and Mato Grosso do Sul.



O Globo

No more Mr. Nice Guy: Lula reads the riot act to union leaders at the São Paulo Hilton, 26 November 2002.

The Pseudo-Trotskyist Left Tails Lula

On the eve of the presidential elections, the bourgeois press pretended to be scandalized by the presence of “radicals” in the Workers Party, noting that as many as 26 of the 91 deputies of the PT parliamentary fraction considered themselves leftists (see “What Do the PT Radicals Want?” *Veja*, 23 October 2002). It “discovered” that the DS claims to be Trotskyist, that they are supporters of the United Secretariat (USec) of the late Ernest Mandel. They calculated the DS’ support at about 10 percent of the PT membership, but in the PT bureaucracy it is even more numerous, making up a large part of the apparatus for the majority caucus, Articulação, of Lula, José Genoíno and José Dirceu. Another component of the left fringe of the party, O Trabalho (Labor), follows the line of the international tendency led by the French pseudo-Trotskyist Pierre Lambert. A third grouping [in the PT], Força Socialista, which is relatively strong in the state of Rio de Janeiro, comes from a Stalinist background.

While the Brazilian bourgeois media seems to want to imitate their British colleagues in raising a hullabaloo over “reds under the bed,” the fact is that these reputed leftists are a pallid bunch of parlor pinks. Genuine Trotskyism insists on the need for an independent revolutionary leadership like the Bolshevik Party led by Lenin and Trotsky, which took power in the Russian empire in the 1917 October Revolution, giving rise to the first workers state in history. The policy of these impostors, in contrast, is one of tailing after larger reformist forces, like the Brazilian PT or the Socialist Party in France, rather than building a Leninist-Trotsky workers party.

If the fate of the various left-wing tendencies in the PT is rather sad, the prospects for its pseudo-Trotskyist “external” *companheiros* isn’t any more promising. While Lula won 56 million votes, the two main groups of the “far left,” the PSTU (Partido Socialista dos Trabalhadores Unificado – United Socialist Workers Party) and the PCO (Partido Causa Operária – Workers Cause Party) ran candidates for president who received 400,000 votes (José Maria Almeida) and 40,000 votes (Rui Costa Pimenta), respectively, on the first round of the



Strike by public employees against Lula's pension "reform" dictated by the International Monetary Fund.

elections. The larger of the two, the PSTU, called for voting for Lula on the second round, even while admitting that it "doesn't believe that a potential Lula government will improve the life of the people." Why, then, support his candidacy? The PSTU's response sums up the common outlook of all these opportunists who abuse the name of the Fourth International: "Since the workers believe in Lula and, above all, they want to defeat Serra [candidate of Cardoso's PSDB] in the elections, the PSTU will join the working class and help call for a vote to Lula and to elect him," declared a PSTU leaflet. Here you have a chemically pure expression of tailism as a program.

The PSTU follows the line of the late Argentine pseudo-Trotskyist leader Nahuel Moreno, who had rather indiscriminate tastes when it came to the forces he tailed after: first Peronism, followed by Castroism, Maoism, Guevarism, a social-democratic episode under the second Perón government, followed by a guerrilla adventure with the Nicaraguan Sandinistas and a book praising the Iranian mullahs, finally becoming the champion of a supposed "democratic revolution" (which was also Ronald Reagan's slogan), whose concrete expression was in the Morenoites' support for the anti-Soviet Polish nationalists of Solidarnosc and Afghan *mujahedin* ("holy warriors"). After Moreno's death in 1986, the Morenoites of the PSTU praised Yeltsin's seizure of power in August 1991 as a "Second Russian Revolution." For the reformists who joined in the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, a historic defeat for the world proletariat, voting for Lula's popular front is just another betrayal.

The PCO, followers of the Argentine centrist Jorge Altamira, finally decided to call for a "*voto nulo*" (no vote, or blank ballot) on the second round, due to the "deceitful policy of the Popular Front led by the PT," and because Lula's candidacy "is not a workers candidacy, or even of the left, but a bosses' candidacy" (decision of the 12th conference of the PCO, *Causa Operária*, 2 November 2002). And how does the PCO justify its calls to vote for Lula, the "workers candidate" according to them, in the elections of 1989, 1994 and 1998?

Perhaps the Frente Brasil Popular (1989) and the Union of the People in the later elections weren't popular fronts? For the PCO, a popular front is not defined by Marxist class criteria – as a class-collaborationist alliance which subordinates the working people to capitalist sectors by means of a coalition with bourgeois parties – but rather according to the criteria of bourgeois politics on a scale of left to right. So since the alliance of Lula with Alencar was more to the right, one couldn't vote for Lula as they did before. The PCO's policy is that of disappointed popular-frontists, who yearned for Lula to make a slightly more left-wing alliance.

The same criteria concerning the popular front are shared as well by groups which flaunt a more leftist rhetoric. The Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista (LBI) ostentatiously called for a blank ballot in the presidential election, pointing to the flagrantly rightist character of the PT/PL alliance.

But on the eve of the first round of voting, the LBI sent out a warning (October 4) against what they called "the greatest fraud in history, to ensure that a second round is held." In this alert, they call on "all class activists, independently of whether they are supporting Lula or even José Maria (PSTU), to vigorously denounce the fraud being carried out, and if this comes to pass, as everything indicates, to launch a broad national mobilization, culminating in an active work stoppage against the electoral fraud." In other words, the LBI claims it gives no political support to Lula, but under the cover of a struggle against fraud, it calls on "activists" to go into the streets to insist that the Supreme Electoral Tribunal declare the candidate of the popular front the winner on the first round!

Both the falsifiers of Trotskyism who called for a vote for Lula and those, like the latter, who pretended to oppose the popular front want to be part of the "Lula phenomenon." Proof of this is that after the elections, they all had an almost identical line, to support the mass struggles that they expected would occur as a result of Lula's victory, in order to pressure him. (There are different formulations, the PSTU says that these struggles will be the result of the masses' "expectations," while the PCO insists that they will be the product of the "revolutionary tendencies of the masses," but in any case the policy is the same.) PCO leader Rui Costa Pimenta spells it out, saying that it is necessary to "pressure all the organizations that are at the base of this government and which participate in it, directly or indirectly (CUT [Unitary Labor Confederation, the left-wing union group], MST [Rural Landless Workers Movement], and the Pcdob [Communist Party of Brazil, former Maoists become social democrats], the PT, the unions, the UNE [National Students Union], etc.), to break with the bourgeoisie and embark on the path of meeting the workers' demands and of a government of the working class itself" (*Causa Operária*, 2 November 2002). The PCO goes so far as to deny that the PT is any kind of a workers party, but here it calls on the PT to break with the bourgeoisie! A little late...

It is also telling that they now call for the formation of a

new “mass workers party,” or a variation on this theme, which would in fact be an alternate PT, with a program slightly to the left of its current one, in other words, to return to the “original PT.” The Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil, in contrast, calls to forge an revolutionary workers party, based on Trotsky’s program of permanent revolution. We insist that in the imperialist epoch, even the most elemental democratic demands cannot be obtained without a workers revolution, supported by the peasantry, and its extension to the imperialist centers. The PCO, for example on the agrarian question, talks of nationalization of the land, which at bottom is merely a democratic demand, and calls for “all land to be distributed in the form of grants” for use by the peasants under a “workers government,” which coming from the PCO means an alternative PT government. The LQB calls not for an agrarian reform by a more left-wing PT government, but for *agrarian revolution*, in which the peasants seize the land through a tumultuous uprising, in which they don’t wait for the arrival of a functionary of some land reform agency but instead themselves seize the landowners mansion in support of a workers insurrection in the cities, and that the nationalized land of the great estates and agro-industrial complexes be cultivated collectively.

While the pseudo-Trotskyists talk of not placing any confidence in the Lula government, the LQB says openly that the PT/PL government is a government of the class enemy, and that the workers and peasants, the urban and rural working people, must prepare to resist the attacks of this bourgeois popular-front government. Today, due to the openly rightist character of the PT/PL alliance, many groups which falsely claim to be Trotskyist say that they cannot support Lula. But

the LQB is the only organization of the Brazilian left which has defended the genuinely Trotskyist policy of giving no vote to any candidate or party of a popular front. We base ourselves on the policy of Leon Trotsky himself, who wrote during the Spanish Civil War:

“The workers and peasants can assure victory only if they wage a struggle for their own emancipation. Under these conditions, to subordinate the proletariat to the leadership of the bourgeoisie means beforehand to assure defeat in the civil war.

“These simple truths are least of all the products of pure theoretical analysis. On the contrary, they represent the unassailable deduction from the entire experience of history, beginning at least with 1848. The modern history of bourgeois society is filled with all sorts of Popular Fronts, i.e. the most diverse political combinations for the deception of the toilers. The Spanish experience is only a new and tragic link in this chain of crimes and betrayals.”

—Leon Trotsky, “The Lessons of Spain: The Last Warning” (December 1937)

In contrast to the narrow nationalism of the Brazilian popular-front left, the LWB fights for revolutionary proletarian internationalism. We, along with our comrades in the United States, fight to defend Iraq and defeat the imperialists. We defend North Korea against Washington’s threats and nuclear blackmail. We also defend China, Vietnam and Cuba against counterrevolution, both external and internal. The Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil, section of the League for the Fourth International, fights for a class-struggle opposition to all popular fronts, for a revolutionary workers party to reforge a genuinely Trotskyist fourth International. *Join us!*

Brazil Betrayals Too Hot for Mandelites, Lambertistes

The Debate That Wasn’t

They threw in the towel before even stepping into the ring. The American comrades of two “Trotskyist” tendencies in the Workers Party (PT) of Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva scuttled a debate on the PT and the popular front, planned for May 28 in the San Francisco Bay Area. Among reformist leftists, the Lula government which took office in January 2003 was hailed as a sign of a “turn to the left” in Latin America, recalling Salvador Allende’s Unidad Popular in Chile. But almost three-quarters of a century ago when the Stalinized Comintern launched “People’s Fronts,” Leon Trotsky warned that these class-collaborationist coalitions with bourgeois forces would attack the workers and pave the way for the triumph of bourgeois reaction, as occurred in Spain and France in the 1930s and in Chile in the ’70s. The fake-Trotskyists, it seems, couldn’t defend the betrayals committed by their com-

rades as part of Lula’s popular front that imposes the dictates of capital against the Brazilian masses.

First to pull out was Socialist Action, one of the last remnants of the several groups in the U.S. that supported the “United Secretariat of the Fourth International” (USec) of the late Ernest Mandel. The USec tendency in Brazil, Democracia Socialista (DS), has been an integral part of the PT bureaucracy for decades.* Long gone are the days when the Mandelites posed as “heroic guerrillas” in the mold of Che Guevara. Today the USec’s magazine, *International Viewpoint*, touts the electoral successes of their Brazilian section (various mayors, deputies and senators elected on the PT ticket) as a model internationally. As a reward for its loyal services, Lula appointed DS member Miguel Rosetto as Minister of Agrarian Development in the cabinet of his bourgeois government. This is the most blatant case of social-democratic ministerialism in “Trotskyist” garb since the USec’s former comrades in Sri Lanka joined the bourgeois Bandaranaike government in 1964.

In a soft cop, hard cop routine, the USec’s Rosetto is in charge of agrarian reform, to piece off the militant Landless Peas-

* The role of fake-Trotskyist tendencies in helping Lula clamp down on key workers struggles is discussed in “Army Death List Targeted Brazilian Worker Militants,” *The Internationalist* No. 8 (June 2000), and “Workers Struggle vs. Popular Frontism in Brazil,” *The Internationalist* No. 14 (September-October 2002).

ants Movement (MST), while powerful agribusiness interests are represented by Roberto Rodrigues, the Minister of Agriculture. But the Lula government has embarrassed its left apologists internationally by keeping the country's masses of hungry landless peasants landless and hungry. While the PT promised during the election campaign to grant land to hundreds of thousands of peasants, it has only distributed a minimal amount of land to a few thousand families. In fact, the popular front has granted far fewer land titles than even the previous bourgeois government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso. Moreover, Military Police and Federal Police have been sent against MST members occupying uncultivated estates and camping out on the side of federal highways in the state of São Paulo and elsewhere, and federal police "investigations" of the peasant movement have multiplied across the country.

After agreeing to the Brazil debate initiated by unaffiliated leftists in the Bay Area, Socialist Action's Jeff Mackler precipitously pulled out. SA likes to strike a "critical" posture towards some of the more egregious actions of its own international tendency – and Mackler argued that he would be in an untenable position defending the role of his Brazilian comrades, since his group disagrees with their role in Lula's government. Perhaps he didn't relish explaining how USec supporter Rosetto continues in the government and 12 DS deputies are still part of the PT fraction in Congress, while DS senator Heloísa Helena was expelled from the PT for not voting for the IMF-dictated pension "reform" and is being proposed as a presidential candidate by an amorphous "new party." Being a Mandelite means never having to say you're responsible for what your comrades do abroad, even while claiming the cachet of the Fourth International (which was actually destroyed half a century ago by Mandel's mentor Michel Pablo).

The prospect of debating USec supporters was attractive to a small group called Socialist Organizer, headed by former *Socialist Action* editor Alan Benjamin and aligned with an-

other pseudo "Fourth International," this one headed up by French fake-Trotskyist Pierre Lambert. A small local group aligned with the centrist Partido Causa Operária (Workers Cause Party) was also slated to participate.

The Lambertistes are a former centrist tendency which plunged into outright social democracy in the mid-1970s, fervently backing the Cold War Socialist parties of François Mitterrand in France and Mário Soares in Portugal. In Brazil, after initially opposing the formation of the PT, the Lambertiste tendency O Tralbalho (Labor) became a bloc partner of the leading PT tendency around Lula, repeatedly campaigning for Lula, including in the last presidential elections. Not coincidentally, O Trabalho gained prominent positions in the PT bureaucracy as well as the CUT labor federation, notably in Brasília, the nation's capital. Despite their own record of collaboration with the Lula leadership, the Lambertistes have seen an opportunity to score some points against the USec. A couple of months ago, they launched an "Open Letter" to USec supporters around the world condemning Rosetto's role. Key to their attempt to make hay out of the USec's bourgeois minister has been the attempt to keep the unwary uninformed about O Trabalho's own labors in the service of class collaboration.

The Internationalist Group, part of the League for the Fourth International (LFI), was invited to debate the Mandelites and Lambertistes in the Bay Area speaking on behalf of the LFI's Brazilian section, the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (LQB). The LQB is the only organization in Brazil to put forward the clear and unequivocal line of proletarian opposition to the popular front, on principle, for no votes to any candidates of this class-collaborationist alliance. (See "Lula Government, Putting Out Fires for the IMF" on page 42 and "Brazil: Proletarian Opposition to the Popular Front," *The Internationalist* No. 14, September-October 2002.)

The LQB is known on the Brazilian left as well because of its struggles against the presence of police of any kind in the work-

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ers movement, including the fight to expel cops from the Volta Redonda municipal workers union in 1996. The LQB warned against any support to the wave of bonapartist Military Police “strikes” that swept the country in 1997, stressing – as shown once again by recent police repression against landless peasants – that cops are the “armed fist of the bourgeoisie.”

In contrast, as we pointed out in “Latin America: Opportunist Left Embraces the Cops” (*The Internationalist* No. 4, January-February 1998), fake-Trotskyist groups in Brazil fulsomely supported the “police rebellion,” with the Morenoite PSTU calling for support to the “workers in uniform” (sic!) while admitting that they are “accustomed to breaking our strikes.” As for the Lambertiste tendency O Trabalho, we noted that it “is actually organizing the cops”: one of its members “is the leader of the ‘union’ of the civilian police of the state of Alagoas” in Brazil’s Northeast, which “led the Brazilian news weekly *Veja* (23 July [1997]) to talk of ‘Trotskyist cops’....”

Our reference this crucial fact about his Brazilian comrades was too much for Bay Area Lambertiste spokesman Alan Benjamin. In a May 19 letter noting that Mackler’s withdrawal took away a key motivation for his group to participate in the debate, Benjamin wrote that he “was very unhappy to see that the Internationalist Group was added to the program.” Explaining “why I was so distraught,” he wrote that he had seen our article on the cop “strikes.” He went on:

“I was appalled to read their unfounded and shrill attacks on our section in Brazil – all without any substantiation. In essence, our O Trabalho comrades are accused of either being or acting as agents of the police in the workers’ movement. This is simple slander of the worst sectarian sort.... How can I participate in a debate with people who make such unfounded and pathetic statements. There is no basis for discussion, here.”

What Benjamin is “distracted” over, and flees from having to defend in open debate, is not supposed “agent” baiting by the LFI (a pure invention on his part), but the fact that his tendency in Brazil *publicly proclaims* the adherence of the leader of the police “union” in Alagoas.

“Slander”? Oh really? Anyone can check for themselves: just do an Internet search on the name “José Carlos Fernandes Neto,” the Lambertiste head of SINDPOL (the Alagoas civil police “union”) mentioned in our article. Innumerable references pop up. One of the first is the front page of the Alagoas Secretariat of Public Security Web site (<http://www.ssp.al.gov.br/>), which proclaims that after 1999 SINDPOL elections, “José Carlos Retains Presidency of the Union” – that is, the Civil Police Union of Alagoas. Moreover, *Veja* was far from the only top media source to quote Fernandes Neto prominently. He was interviewed repeatedly in the midst of the 1997 cop unrest. The news agency of *O Estado de S. Paulo* (22 July 1997) cites Neto as a leader of joint Military and Civil Police “strikes.” SINDPOL president Fernandes Neto opined that the “movement” of police “strikes” was victorious, according to a 26 October 1997 dispatch posted on an official public security Web site (www.seguranca.ce.gov.br/repor188.jsp).

Two years later, a business journal interviewed Neto as he led another cop “strike.” According to the *Jornal do Commercio*



“What the PT Radicals Want” – Lenin, Trotsky and Marx on witchhunting cover of Brazil news magazine.

(14 May 1999), “the president of the Union of Civil Police, José Carlos Fernandes Neto, warns that if the governor acts on his threat” to withhold bonus pay, “he will not be able to control the revolt....” Police “revolts” mean strengthening the hand of the bourgeoisie’s armed thugs against workers, peasants and slumdweller throughout Brazil. Later Neto was quoted by top Brazilian paper *Folha de São Paulo* (13 July 2001):

“The climate is one of revolt. The police are quite unsatisfied with the salaries they receive. Presently, the Military Police receive an average of 350 reals and the Civil Police 550 reals. The police of Alagoas get the worst salary in Brazil,’ says the president of the Union of Civil Police of Alagoas (Sindpol), José Carlos Fernandes Neto.” No surprise here; cops all over the world think they should get more money and better equipment for their “job” of breaking strikes and meting out repression against the workers and oppressed. Three days later, Fernandes Neto tells *Folha* that the Military and Civil cops will hold an assembly to decide on yet another “strike” by the uniformed enforcers of capital.

But perhaps his *political affiliations* are unclear, unknown or under wraps? On the contrary. Not only did *Veja* refer to them prominently, but the PT lists Fernandes Neto as one of the parliamentary candidates of Lula’s popular front (http://200.155.6.3/site/comites_brasil/alagoas.asp). The slate also lists numerous members of the Liberal Party (PL) of textile magnate and evangelical impresario José Alencar, elected as Lula’s vice president.

continued on page 67

Honor the Heroic Rosenbergs

By R. Tifta

Fifty-one years ago, on 19 June 1953, the United States government murdered by electrocution two heroic communists named Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, whom they falsely accused of stealing the “secret” of the atom bomb and giving it to the Soviet Union. Companions and comrades in life, the Rosenbergs remained loyal to socialism as they understood it, to the very moments they were struck down by one of the most blood-thirsty of all modern capitalist states. All along the authorities knew the Rosenbergs, and their codefendant Morton Sobell (who served more than eighteen years in prison), were innocent. But the U.S. ruling class wanted scapegoats on whom to blame the Soviet Union’s success in building its own atom bomb in 1949—which in truth was the result of the efforts of hundreds of brilliant Soviet scientists, including V.I. Vernadskii, Yulii Khariton, Kyrill Sinel’kinov, Igor Kurchatov, Pyotr Kapitsa, Georgii Flerov, and Konstantin Petrzhak. Their work helped stymie the voracious U.S. imperialists, who were already planning an atomic “first strike” to incinerate Soviet cities, as they had done to Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan.

In the larger context of the U.S. rulers’ war to destroy Communism and dominate the world, the Rosenbergs and Sobell were framed as treacherous Jewish Bolsheviks who “stabbed America in the back.” While the virulent Cold War repression came to be known as McCarthyism, after the right-wing Republican senator Joseph McCarthy, many would like to conveniently forget the sinister role of Democratic liberals in whipping up the anti-Communist hysteria and purging the unions, the universities and schools of “reds.” Even the Communist Party was reluctant to defend the Rosenbergs. In contrast, the Trotskyists denounced their execution as “a bestial act of capitalist class terrorism intended to help intimidate into silence all who would criticize or oppose Wall Street’s policies abroad or at home” (*The Militant*, 6 July 1953). The Rosenbergs were murdered both in a hysterical fit over the advent of the new Soviet deterrent to imperialist conquest, and to terrorize the American population into submission before their government. The workers of the world will never forget the Rosenbergs; we are proud of their heroism and will one day avenge their martyrdom.

The Lies of David Greenglass

The brief Rosenberg-Sobell trial was held in March 1951, at the federal courthouse at Foley Square in lower Manhattan. The prosecutors, Irwin Saypol and his sidekick, deranged McCarthy henchman Roy Cohn, offered no physical evidence of the crimes the Rosenbergs supposedly committed, because they had none. Their case rested on the say-so of one man—Ethel’s brother, David Greenglass, whose well-rehearsed testimony was supported by his wife, Ruth. Greenglass had worked as an army machinist at Los Alamos National Laboratory in 1944 and 1945, just when the campaign to build the A-bomb, known as the “Manhattan Project,” was in high gear there.



AP

Ethel and Julius Rosenberg as newlyweds in Central Park.

The prosecution produced a few crude drawings supposedly depicting the atom bomb and the means by which it could be triggered. Greenglass said these were re-creations of the ones he gave Julius Rosenberg to turn over to the Soviets, along with a 12-page essay he wrote himself, telling how to build a bomb. Pictures of three drawings were first published in 1965, in Walter and Miriam Schneir’s *Invitation to an Inquest: Re-opening the Rosenberg “Atom Spy” Case*, a well-researched exposé of the government frame-up. The government contended that America’s atom secrets were contained in these ridiculously simple drawings and the supposed bomb-making instructions of a man with only a high school education. (Greenglass flunked out of Brooklyn Polytech, failing eight out of eight classes.)

Without Greenglass, the government had no case against the Rosenbergs, and would have been forced to concoct a different, and possibly less effective, pack of lies. Or they might have had to try to find entirely different scapegoats to murder. That Greenglass told a pack of lies was finally put beyond doubt by Greenglass himself, in 1996—though his confession of perjury, made to *New York Times* editor Sam Roberts, was not published and broadcast until 2002. When he was arrested in July 1950, Greenglass told the authorities about a meeting at which he turned over the bomb material to Julius. He never mentioned Ethel at all,

but at the trial eight months later, he changed his tune. Then Greenglass testified that Ethel was not only present at the meeting, but that she typed up the bomb-making notes he brought to it. Greenglass's wife Ruth supported his story about Ethel, and on the basis of their lies Ethel was put to death. Greenglass served ten years in prison and went into hiding when he got out. Roberts found and interviewed him for his book, *The Brother: The Untold Story of the Atomic Spy David Greenglass and How He Sent His Sister Ethel Rosenberg to the Electric Chair* (2001). In exchange for a share of the royalties, Greenglass told Roberts that he lied when he told the story about Ethel's typing: "I don't know who typed it, frankly, and to this day I can't remember that the typing took place." He added, "I would not sacrifice my wife and my children for my sister" ("False testimony clinched Rosenberg spy trial," BBC report, 6 December 2001).

Of course, like all dutiful journalists serving the U.S. ruling class who find themselves in the midst of a story about government lying, Roberts practices damage control. He tries to salvage the central government lie in the aftermath of Greenglass's damaging admission. Julius Rosenberg, Roberts maintains, *was* guilty, even if Ethel was not. Evidence? Why, the say-so of Roberts's new business partner, David Greenglass, of course! Why not believe David Greenglass? After all, he supposedly knew how to make an atom bomb in 1945! In truth, everything indicates (and Roberts' book shows) that Greenglass was an unstable person, not very bright, and in 1950 had a chip on his shoulder about his smarter and more generous sister and brother-in-law.

Julius Rosenberg took Greenglass in as a partner in his radio repair business, out of family loyalty. Relations between the two families had reached a very low point when it came out that Greenglass had stolen army property during the war, including—this he himself admitted at the time—uranium from Los Alamos. Financial records indicate that the Greenglasses had a steady supplemental income of unknown origin during 1945 and 1946. According to Julius, Ruth Greenglass told him about how David had stolen from the army to make money on the side. The FBI found out about the uranium, at least, and began investigating him—not as an atom spy but simply as a thief. The Feds probably began to threaten Greenglass with a long prison term for theft of government property and black-marketeering in wartime. And they were just then desperately putting together their picture of how the Soviets got the bomb from American subversives.

Internationalist photo



Monument to the Rosenbergs, near Revolution Park in Havana, Cuba.

Scapegoats

"Dr. James Beckerley, director of the Atomic Energy Commission Classification Office, said it was time to stop 'kidding' ourselves about atomic 'secrets,' and time to stop believing that Soviet scientists are incompetent. . . . The atom bomb and the hydrogen bomb were not stolen from us by spies, Dr. Beckerley emphasized. . . . Atom bombs and hydrogen bombs are not matters that can be stolen and transmitted in the form of information, Dr. Beckerley said. . . ."

—*New York Times*, 17 March 1954

Beckerley made these remarks less than one year after the Rosenbergs were executed. In 1945 the U.S. possessed no bomb "secret" to steal, unless one were to so regard the papers of many hundreds of scientists from all over the world, including figures like J. Robert Oppenheimer, Niels Bohr, Leo Szilard, and Enrico Fermi. Their work included hundreds of theoretical articles and perhaps thousands of notebooks filled with mathematical calculations of unprecedented complexity, reams of plans and test results concerning a cyclotron, a nuclear reactor, and, most problematic of all, the production of great quantities of fissionable nuclear material. The Manhattan Project was a full governmental mobilization of world scientific resources with the aim of building this super-bomb that some scientists had said was theoretically possible. The project necessarily made use of a vast body of scientific activity dating back to the discovery of radiation in Germany and France by Roentgen, Becquerel, and Pierre and Marie Curie (1896) and Einstein's special theory of

relativity (1905), with its postulate of the interchangeability of mass and energy (summarized in the 1907 formula, $E=mc^2$), and calculations about the energy stored in atoms. Advances in the understanding of the power of the atom were made in many countries in subsequent decades, and shared by physicists all over the world, until the early 1940s.

The idea that all this could be summed up in a couple of crude drawings and a 12-page paper written by a machinist with a high-school education is ludicrous. But the bosses of the U.S. A-bomb project were determined to keep the "secret" of nuclear weaponry out of Soviet hands. The Anglo-American rulers cut off all collaboration in atomic research, though Soviet scientists wanted to continue sharing with their counterparts in Britain and the U.S., as part of the supposed alliance to fight Hitler. (In reality, Churchill and Roosevelt allowed the Nazis a free hand in the USSR, refusing to open the famous "second front,"

until the Soviet Army beat them back and began to chase the Wehrmacht back across Europe.) One German physicist in Britain, Klaus Fuchs, attempted to continue to collaborate with his Soviet counterparts, by supplying some of his research to contacts he assumed were working for the Soviet government (the Soviets always denied this). Fuchs was a personally principled, dedicated anti-fascist, and though not a communist, he did what he felt he could to defend the Soviet Union. When questioned, he freely discussed his activities with agents of the British government, hardly aware that he might be looked upon as a dangerous spy. Fuchs eventually offered a sketchy description of one of his collaborators. Across the ocean the FBI made this description match a man whom they had had in their clutches since 1947 at the latest—a seemingly childish fantasist named Harry Gold.

A lonely chemist from Philadelphia, Gold possessed neither identifiable political beliefs (except, perhaps, an aversion to communism) nor a resemblance to Fuchs's description. When his father was informed that his son was arrested as a Russian spy, he replied that the government must have given Harry drugs (Schneirs, *Invitation to an Inquest*). Maybe, but maybe they didn't have to, because all his life, Harry Gold made up stories about himself. The authorities fully exploited Gold's fantastic propensities in numerous investigations and trials over the years. In serving the government, Gold seemed to find a purpose to his otherwise directionless life. He occasionally expressed devotion to his newfound master in highly emotional speeches, before rendering for the feds the tale they needed him to tell.

In the hysterical climate of the late 1940s and early 1950s, it did not seem to matter that Gold was unable to speak without contradicting himself, or tell the same story twice without altering significant details, or that he occasionally confessed to crimes which did not fit with the government's plans. In accordance with the feds' needs in the 1950 Brothman-Moskowitz spy trial, for example, Gold duly admitted to having perjured himself about his spy activities before a federal grand jury in 1947. Also at this trial, Gold hinted that in 1941 his accomplice Brothman showed him blueprints relating to atomic research at Oak Ridge, Tennessee—a year before this research had even begun! Gold, whom an FBI agent jokingly dubbed "Fibber McGee," eventually identified Greenglass as an accomplice, and Greenglass, already under suspicion for theft of uranium, accused Julius and Ethel Rosenberg.

Despite the truth that there was no atom secret to steal, and that in 1944 or '45 no one theoretical physicist could draw



Faces of infamy. David Greenglass (left), with federal marshal, and Harry Gold.



AP

up plans for the production of an atom bomb, prosecutor Saypol told the Rosenbergs' jury that the formula for the atom bomb had been stolen by the defendants and given to the Soviet Union. (The formal charge was simply "conspiracy to commit espionage.") Judge Irving R. Kaufman, a fanatical anticommunist and open admirer of J. Edgar Hoover, went so far as to blame the Rosenbergs for the 50,000 U.S. military deaths in the Korean War. What Kaufman meant was that the U.S. was forced to fight the Korean War to a stalemate, instead of simply nuking the peninsula, because the Soviets then had the bomb too, and might nuke the U.S. back. As it was, from 1950 to 1953 the U.S. imperialists saturated the Korean peninsula with bombs, firebombs, and napalm, killing two to three million Koreans (including nearly the entire family of this author's late stepmother). Kaufman's remark unintentionally stressed the hidden truth that but for the saving grace of the Soviet potential for nuclear retaliation, mad-bomber Truman would have obliterated Korea, killing maybe ten million more.

Of course by scapegoating the Rosenbergs, the U.S. ruling class resorted to a typical political strategy of right-wing governments and fascists dating back to Hitler and beyond — find a scapegoat and scream that the nation's manhood has been the "stabbed in the back!" Lost World War I? Claim that Jews and Bolsheviks inside Germany betrayed you. (This was the famous *Dolchstoßlegende* of the Freikorps and later the Nazis, who blamed German defeat on a "stab in the back.") Failed to imperially subjugate Indochina because the workers and peasants of Vietnam defeated your army on the battlefield? Blame it on hippies, draft-dodgers, and newspaper reporters. Can't create nuclear holocausts with impunity? Blame it on a Jewish communist living in a tenement apartment on the lower east side of Manhattan. The simple truth about the Soviet bomb, which saved many millions of lives by partially

checking the murderous plans of the U.S. imperialists, is that it was the result of Soviet science – not of a shady Jewish communist spy ring invented by entrapped, half-witted FBI pat-patsies like Harry Gold and David Greenglass.

Soviet Bomb Blocked U.S. “First Strike” Plans

The U.S. rulers killed the Rosenbergs as part of their all-out war against communism. This war is known euphemistically as the “Cold” War, though many millions perished by it, as the U.S., supported by the smaller imperialist nations and anticommunist puppet regimes, unleashed bloody terror across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Several times, as their brutal campaigns met stiff resistance, American presidents and generals strained every fiber of their beings to find a way around the Soviet nuclear deterrent, and so incinerate those who resisted, just as they had incinerated the defenseless people of Japan in 1945. But in each case the trigger-fingers of the American “nuke ‘em all” maniacs were stayed by the armed might of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union was a workers’ state, where capitalism had been abolished by the Russian Revolution of 1917 – the victorious workers revolution led by Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolshevik Party. Despite its subsequent bureaucratic degeneration under Stalin and the usurping bureaucratic caste he typified, the Soviet Union remained world capitalism’s most powerful enemy until its counterrevolutionary demise in the mid-1990s. Hampered by the cowardice and stupidity of Stalin and his clique in the face of the German invasion, the Soviet masses were nonetheless able to beat back and destroy the Nazi war machine, virtually unaided by the Western imperialist allies Stalin valued so highly. That this invasion, the most massive in world history, was decisively crushed by the Soviet Army, is testimony to what were the principal surviving gains of the Russian Revolution—the attachment of the multinational Soviet toilers to the Revolution and the Soviet Union’s centralized, planned economy.

At the end of World War II in Europe, the Soviet Army, the most powerful and best-equipped army in the world, gave the imperialists nightmares. American general Patton wanted to begin World War III right away by attacking the Soviets, but was accurately regarded as dangerously unbalanced by his superiors and removed from command. The U.S. managed to explode an atom bomb in advance of the Soviets, however, and quickly built two more to drop on Japan. The holocausts at Hiroshima and Nagasaki had no military purpose whatever – these cities were of no strategic importance and Japan was then pleading with the U.S. for peace terms. By killing over 100,000 Japanese civilians instantly (some 250,000 were dead by 1950), the U.S. imperialists sought only to demonstrate to the Soviets that they would stop at nothing in their drive to-

ward world domination. Babies boiled in the bathtubs in which their mothers immersed them in a vain attempt to save their children – this, Truman and his depraved war cabinet proclaimed, would be the fate of all those who resist utter subjugation to American capital.

Their first order of business once Japan had been defeated and its major cities incinerated was to destroy the Soviet Union. Truman called nuclear weapons “the greatest thing in history,” as he gleefully prepared to commit the greatest crime of mass murder the world would ever know – an atomic Blitzkrieg against the USSR. Under names like “Strategic Vulnerability,” “Pincher” and “Broiler,” the U.S. war planners, with Eisenhower in the lead, called for the sudden unprovoked obliteration of every major Soviet city, from Moscow and Leningrad to Novosibirsk and Irkutsk. They wanted to kill tens of millions at once and perhaps 100 million eventually, as vast areas of the Soviet Union would become irradiated wastelands (see Michio Kaku and David Axelbrod, *To Win a Nuclear War: The Pentagon’s Secret War Plans* (South End Press, 1987).

In August 1949, a little over four years after the U.S. exploded its first atom bomb the Soviets exploded an atom bomb of their own. Within a month, the U.S. discovered its precious nuclear monopoly was broken, by its mortal enemy no less. This meant that the U.S. rulers could no longer drop atom bombs on defenseless civilians at will and without adverse consequences to themselves. This great achievement of Soviet science saved the world from immediate catastrophe, and *The Internationalist* salutes all those who contributed to it.

Truman and his gang were petrified, and ordered a massive arms build-up, including a crash program to explode an H-bomb, which promised to be a thousand times more powerful than the A-bomb. The U.S. rulers also unleashed a massive, nationwide campaign of political repression against all sectors of U.S. society, especially the labor movement. McCarthyism was a full mobilization of the entire capitalist state, and its supporting media apparatus, to spy upon, jail, fire, blacklist, blackball, and otherwise harass, millions of people whom the FBI and other police agencies suspected of communist sympathies. The feds especially sought to destroy the Communist Party itself, which in 1946 had perhaps 100,000 members, and, more importantly, powerful influence among the most class-conscious American workers (who mistakenly identified the pro-capitalist Stalinized party with the goals of communism and the Russian Revolution).

The witchhunters jailed CP leaders, drove the party underground, and greatly reduced its size and influence. Across the country, hundreds of thousands of trade unionists lost their jobs,



Klaus Fuchs, German-born physicist who courageously sought to help Soviet Union get A-bomb.

and those who didn't were terrorized into silence and conformity. The anti-Communist frenzy was at its height in the years 1947 to 1954, but extended well into the 1960s, and was every bit as repressive as the round of American witchhunting launched in response to the Russian Revolution (known as the "Palmer Raids," for Attorney General Palmer, who, with his henchman J. Edgar Hoover, once had arrested 10,000 radicals and immigrants in two nights in January 1920).

Neo-McCarthyism: Shachtmanites Try to Kill the Rosenbergs All Over Again

In the early 1960s when Walter and Miriam Schneir were attempting to publish their findings about the government frame-up of the Rosenbergs, they approached Irving Kristol, whom they mistakenly believed was a liberal book publisher. As honest and somewhat naive journalists, the Schneirs did not know that Irving Kristol was a follower of Max Shachtman, who who tried to organize "socialist" support for the U.S. imperialist slaughter in Korea. Back in 1940 Shachtman broke with Leon Trotsky over Trotsky's forthright call for the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union in the face of the Nazi invasion that was in the offing. In response Trotsky and the leader of the American Trotskyists, James P. Cannon, waged a bitter struggle against the renegade Shachtman and the group of juvenile wiseacres that followed him (which included Kristol).

Since Shachtman was neutral in the war between the USSR and the Nazis (some of Shachtman's WWII writings compared Hitler favorably to Stalin), he was temporarily out of step with the U.S. government, which was formally allied with the Soviets during World War II. Once the war was over, however, and U.S. imperialism resumed its war on communism at full throttle, Shachtman and his henchman moved closer to their government. Eventually they took over the American Socialist Party and turned it into a political mouthpiece for the anticommunist operations of the CIA and the Mossad. By the time the Schneirs encountered Kristol, many of Shachtman's cothinkers were actually in the pay of the CIA and other U.S. government agencies—including Kristol himself (as part of the CIA-backed "Congress of Cultural Freedom," reported a 1967 *Ramparts* magazine article). Today they're called "neo-cons" (neoconservatives).

During the post-WWII witchhunts, Shachtman and his collaborators were sometimes known as "State Department socialists," and they filled a valuable role for the U.S. government, as loyal labor bureaucrats. As the government jailed and otherwise threw Communist Party supporters and other leftists out of their duly elected union posts, and then blackballed them from union jobs, the Shachtmanites volunteered their services to replace them. They also infiltrated the civil rights movement, and founded many shady institutes to advise the government on how best to fight radicals. (Max Shachtman died in 1972, but his heirs still carry on in his spirit, some still within his old party, since 1972 called the Social Democrats USA, though most have moved on to lucrative think-tank and government posts.)

By the late-1960s and early 1970s, largely due to the U.S.'s

losing imperialist war on Vietnam, the feeling was widespread that McCarthyism unfairly destroyed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, and was a dark period in American history akin to the medieval Catholic Inquisition or the New England Puritan witchhunts of the 17th century. Of course, the blacklists and FBI spying had never ceased—in fact the FBI escalated its covert activities during this time to the point where it was committing murders on a large scale. (Dozens of members of the Black Panther Party were murdered as part of the FBI's COINTEL program, for example.) Nonetheless an influential strain of liberal public opinion remained disgusted with McCarthyism and McCarthyite tactics.

From the Reagan years forward, the American rulers have dedicated themselves to eradicating this strain. As part of their effort, a crack team of Shachtmanite and Shachtmanite-allied scholars have been employed to "kill" working-class martyrs, like Sacco and Vanzetti and the Rosenbergs, all over again. In concert with the CIA, the National Security Agency (NSA), and now the "Department of Homeland Security," their purpose—apart from lining their own pockets with government loot—is to prove that McCarthyism is necessary, if perhaps distasteful, because dangerous traitors lurk everywhere, and strenuous methods must be used to hunt them down.

Today the immediate focus is on all immigrants, and especially Americans of Latino, Near Eastern, and South Asian descent. With the "U.S.A. Patriot Act" and numerous other police-state laws, Bush, Cheney, and Rumsfeld, and their Democratic Party allies such as Kerry have laid the formal groundwork for an inquisition more far-reaching than McCarthyism, and an ethnic cleansing more thorough than the Palmer Raids. The Matrix program, run by the Fatherland Security Department through a private contractor via Jeb Bush's Florida state government, has a database of 120,000 names with a "High Terrorist Factor" score. The Shachtmanite contribution to preparing this fascistic nightmare is to help motivate *liberal* public support—that is, to reach those who can't stomach Christian fundamentalist yahoos like John Ashcroft.

In 1983, prominent Shachtmanite Ronald Radosh resurrected and revitalized the FBI smear job on the Rosenbergs, which had been so discredited by the work of the Schneirs and others. Radosh's book, *The Rosenberg File: A Search for the Truth*, which he wrote with Joyce Milton, was received enthusiastically in the *New York Times*, the *New York Review of Books*, and other journals of liberal anti-Communist opinion. Since Radosh aimed at liberals, he pretended to be fair while covering up the grossest aspects of the FBI frame-up. But Radosh added nothing to the pack of lies that the Schneirs have already discredited, except a typically obvious FBI cock-and-bull story about a jailhouse snitch, Jerome Tartakow, who of course told the FBI—says the FBI—that Julius Rosenberg confessed to him while in prison.

Venona – A Big Lie

In 1995, after the collapse of the USSR, the NSA and the CIA rolled out the story of "Venona" to the press. This is the name that the imperialist spies have given to what they claim



Demonstration across from the White House calling for clemency for the Rosenbergs, January 1953.

was a successful effort to decrypt Soviet intelligence documents relating to Soviet spying in the United States in the 1940s. The 3,000 intercepted documents were transmitted in a complex code which, according to the CIA/NSA, U.S. agents had cracked 40 years earlier. At some early point in the project, so runs the story, the Soviets learned about the effort and so Venona was compromised. Not before, however, messages supposedly revealing the identities of important American members of the supposedly vast Communist spy network had been decoded. In 1995 the CIA-NSA released 49 Venona documents, including, they claimed, every one that relates to the Rosenbergs (19 in all – other documents, none related to the Rosenbergs, were released subsequently). The documents purport to be clear-text English translations of the decrypted Russian documents but many are highly dubious.

First, the documents are presented as if they are 1940s originals, but in fact they were typed decades later, and have been much revised through the years. The original documents, whatever they are, have not been made available. Second, the importance of the Venona texts hinges mainly on the identities of the supposed Soviet agents mentioned in them. The texts were purportedly transmitted in code and then cracked, revealing the original Russian, which was translated into English. But the names of the supposed Communist operatives are doubly encoded; in the messages identities are masked by code names such as “LARIN” and “LIBERAL.” Since the messages convey mainly vague information, the code names resist identification.

Yet all too conveniently, the CIA/NSA public relations officers offer up a purported New York-Moscow cable from 1944 that spelled out exactly who was who: “LIBERAL [ii] recommended the wife of his wife’s brother, Ruth GREENGLASS, with a safe flat in view. She is 21 years old . . . lives on STANTON [STANTAUN] Street.” Another part of the same cable reads “[C% Ruth] learned that her husband [v] was called up by the army but he was not sent to the front. He is a mechanical engineer and is now work-

ing at the ENORMOUS [ENORMOZ] [vi] plant in SANTA FE, New Mexico.” A note identifies ENORMOUS as “Atomic Energy Project.” Another so-called cable mentions that LIBERAL’s wife’s name is Ethel. Commenting on these improbable messages, Morton Sobell has said, “It’s as if the KGB drew a roadmap for the FBI.” For Soviet spies to have sent messages with the real names and addresses of their agents, they would have to be idiots. And the historical evidence is that they were anything but that. The identification of Julius Rosenberg with LIBERAL, and, perforce, the existence of a Rosenberg spy ring, is wholly based on these highly dubious messages, the ones with the real names in them.

Morton Sobell, now thankfully out of prison after 18 years, has revealed that the claims about Venona are so much government hogwash (some of his analysis, which will be included in a forthcoming book, is available now on the “H-DIPLO” Web site: www.h-net.msu.edu/~diplo/Sobell.htm). Sobell points out, for example, that though he was convicted as a

very important member of the Rosenberg spy ring, he is not mentioned in the Venona cables. Other points Sobell raises: since the government claims to have known, through Venona, of a Rosenberg spy ring since 1944, why didn’t the Feds spy on the Rosenbergs before 1950—that is, why did they wait six years, until they had David Greenglass in their clutches? The only “evidence” which ever pointed the feds toward the Rosenbergs were the lies told by a frightened Greenglass in 1950. Venona is at best a set of real intercepts that have nothing to do with the Rosenbergs, plus some falsified ones to make the connection that’s not there. At worst, Venona is... well, just consider the source.

Like the story of Iraqi “weapons of mass destruction,” the Venona tale can’t stand much scrutiny, and was badly in need of Shachtmanite lawyers to sell it. Fortunately for the CIA-NSA, Harvey Klehr was available. Klehr is an Emory University professor with very close Shachtmanite ties. He was once commissioned by top Shachtman lieutenant Irwin Suall in his role as head of the “Anti-Defamation League” (ADL) to survey and report on the American left. In 1993 the ADL was caught red-handed keeping massive files on leftists in San Francisco that were clearly the product of elaborate and well-funded spying operations, and were shared with the police (see, e.g., “Adversaries go inside ADL spying operation,” *San Francisco Examiner*, 1 April 2002). In this context, Klehr’s 1988 ADL report, *Far Left of Center: The American Radical Left Today*, can be understood for what it is: a guide for a new witchhunt. The assignment Klehr carried out for Suall includes a hefty section on the CPUSA, assessments of all parties defining themselves as Trotskyist or Maoist, as well as of black nationalist organizations and “Radical Groups” – a category Klehr extends to liberals like the Institute for Policy Studies, Jesse Jackson’s Rainbow Coalition, and Clergy and Laity Concerned. All these groups were or are, in the view of Klehr and the ADL, potentially dangerous to American capitalism.

Tellingly, Klehr had not a word to say about any of the Shachtmanite groupings that pose as “left,” such as the League for a Revolutionary Party (followers of Shachtmanite Sy Landy) or the Revolutionary Socialist League, or the various political offspring of Shachtman’s one-time sidekick, Hal Draper. The *fundamental* anti-Sovietism of all Shachtmanite groupings establishes their *bona fides* for the U.S. ruling class. Even if they call themselves “socialist” or “revolutionary,” they follow Shachtman, the man who wrote propaganda leaflets for the U.S. imperialists during the Korean War. A previous Klehr assignment, this time from CIA operative Midge Decter at Basic Books, was to produce the 1984 neo-McCarthyite tract, *The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade*.

Venona: Decoding Espionage in America (Yale, 1999), written by Harvey Klehr with John Earl Haynes, is Klehr’s book-length advertisement for Venona, a public relations dossier in celebration of McCarthyite witchhunting. According to the CIA-NSA viewpoint Klehr and Haynes mouth, Venona was the product of the genius and heroism of a few Army spies who defied the KGB-controlled Roosevelt administration to fight the USSR instead of the Nazis. Stalin, says Klehr and his spy friends, had mounted a potentially crippling espionage attack on the United States, all American Communists were spies, and McCarthyism – despite the excesses of the man who gave his name to witchhunting – saved the nation. And, of course, Venona supposedly proves that the Rosenbergs were guilty. Out of one side of his mouth Klehr quietly concedes, in case any thinking person is paying attention, that the fruits of Greenglass’s “spying” were pitiful. But his main message is that Julius Rosenberg was a traitor who stole the secret of the atom bomb and gave it to the Soviets. The lie told by Saypol, Cohn, and Kaufman in court to justify killing the Rosenbergs is repeated matter-of-factly by Klehr today, even though it has been proven over and over again that Soviet science and not spying produced the Soviet A-bomb.

The U.S. ruling class and their Shachtmanite servants are at the moment engaged in a desperate grab at world domination. Irving Kristol’s son, William Kristol, and his friends Paul Wolfowitz, Shachtman progeny Jeane Kirkpatrick and Elliot Abrams, and others, are the theoretical planners for the New World Order. Their latest plan was a blueprint for a U.S.-dominated “Greater Middle East.” They believe that in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union there is a window of opportunity for U.S. imperialism, supported by Israel, to use its unprecedented military power to establish absolute control of world resources and markets. To realize their dreams of their own “Thousand-Year Reich” (they call it the “Project for the New American Century”) these would-be masters of the universe need to repress workers and immigrants “at home,” whom for the moment they dub not “communists” but “terrorists.”

An important step for them is to convince liberal yuppies, who may have been raised to abhor McCarthyism and its methods, of the efficacy of trading in the Bill of Rights for a police dictatorship. This is the purpose of the Venona lies and the campaign to kill the Rosenbergs all over again. While proclaiming the guilt of the Rosenbergs, the treachery of commu-

nism, and the virtues of the feds, the Shachtman offspring often let slip the mask of “fairness” they have loosely affixed to their pack of lies. In a new post-Venona edition of *The Rosenberg File*, Radosh, for example, admits that Ethel Rosenberg was not guilty of any crime and that the government knew this but sentenced her to die to get Julius to confess. They had counted on this confession, and offered Ethel’s life in exchange for it, but the Rosenbergs held firm. Of course the feds knew that Julius was innocent of their charges too, but now they admit they knew Ethel was innocent and they went ahead and killed her anyway. According to Radosh:

“The decision to prosecute Ethel Rosenberg on a capital charge, in an effort to put pressure on her husband, is hardly surprising. Although we continue to feel that the use of the death penalty in this context was improper and unfair, the Venona releases show that, overall, our justice system functioned with integrity under trying circumstances.”

The Rosenbergs were murdered in cold blood. What the anti-communist persecutors call a “justice system” functioning “with integrity” is nothing but a Murder, Inc.

Only the international working class can smash the deranged plans of the Democratic and Republican neo-McCarthyites, but to do so once and for all, the workers must be organized under the banner of authentic communism, in revolutionary parties of the kind which, under Lenin and Trotsky, made the Russian Revolution. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg (along with Morton Sobell) opposed the capitalist system and regarded themselves as committed communists. They stood up to the most extreme forms of state repression and did not waver from their beliefs. They were drawn to and supported the Communist Party because they believed it upheld the principles of Marxism and of the Russian Revolution. Yet by the 1930s, the Communist Party was communist in name only. It had become the American reflection of the Stalinist political counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, which overturned the proletarian internationalism of Lenin and Trotsky, murdering the leaders and cadres of the Russian Revolution, including Lenin’s closest collaborator, the organizer of the October insurrection itself, Leon Trotsky, in the hopes of a deal with the imperialists (what would later be called “peaceful coexistence”). The parties of the once-revolutionary Third (Communist) International went through Stalinist purges, abandoned the program of proletarian revolution, and preached class collaboration. Yet because capitalism had been abolished in the Soviet Union, the Communist Party continued through the 1930s and 1940s to attract—and miseducate in the Stalin school of reformism—many of the best and most politically advanced workers.

Trotskyists, as the inheritors of the legacy of Lenin and Trotsky’s Communist International, always distinguished these rank-and-file Communist workers from their Stalinist misleaders, and sought to reclaim the former for the banner of Marxism. A new revolutionary upsurge against American imperialism is in fact unthinkable without the support and active leadership of those who will fight for the oppressed with the same determination as Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. We Trotskyists honor them and will never forget them. ■

Prosecution of Radical Lawyer A Threat to Rights of All Defend Lynne Stewart!

On June 21, the trial of noted radical defense attorney Lynne Stewart, along with her codefendants Mohamed Yousry and Ahmed Abdel Sattar, is scheduled to open in Federal District Court in Manhattan. Already jury selection has begun, as Judge John Koeltl warns that the trial could last six months. Stewart's trial is a centerpiece of the government's war on civil liberties, part of the drive toward a police state accompanying the open-ended imperialist "war on terrorism" by which U.S. rulers are attempting to terrorize the world.

The trial is slated to be held in the same courtroom where Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were railroaded to death at the height of the Cold War anti-Communist hysteria (see article, page xx). Stewart faces up to 40 years in prison on charges of aiding a "terrorist organization." The original indictment in April 2002 charged her with "providing material support" to a terrorist conspiracy. When Judge Koeltl threw these charges out last July on the grounds that the statute was "unconstitutionally vague," the government came back with a new indictment, charging her with "providing personnel," the personnel being the "blind sheikh," Omar Abdel Rahman, for whom she was the court-appointed lawyer.

For Attorney General John Ashcroft and the government in general, defense lawyers are an annoyance as the U.S. military runs its torture and murder centers in Guatánamo, Afghanistan and Iraq while shredding democratic rights here



Stephen Chernin/AP

Lynne Stewart at June 2002 press conference for march on FBI protesting repression in guise of U.S.' "war on terrorism."

via the U.S. Patriot Act (which, like the war, was voted for by Democrats and Republicans alike). Defense of Lynne Stewart is a defense of everyone's rights, and we urge readers to show their support by attending the trial and contributing to the Lynne Stewart Defense Committee, 351 Broadway, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10013.

Frame-Up Trials and Campus Purges

CUNY: Rehire Mohamed Yousry Now!

Compulsive witch hunters at the City University of New York (CUNY) have struck again, setting off mounting indignation at their firing of York College adjunct professor Mohamed Yousry. The blatantly political firing is one more example of how the CUNY administration has jumped to join the assault on fundamental democratic rights on the home front of U.S. imperialist war. In the Yousry case they have jumped right into the lap of John Ashcroft, whose Justice Department – armed with Patriot Act powers voted by Republicans and Democrats alike – is working 'round the clock to feed basic civil liberties into the shredder.

In campaigning to defend Miguel Malo, the Hostos College student leader facing a year in jail for holding up a sign protesting cuts in English as a second language programs, we have stressed that his persecution is part of a broader drive to impose police-state conditions at CUNY. The university

administration's attacks on students and teachers have taken on particular viciousness since the onset of the government's terrorist "war on terror." In the fall of 2001, CUNY launched an anti-immigrant "war purge" against "undocumented" students by more than doubling their tuition. That attack was partially reversed after determined protests, initiated by the Internationalist Group. But soon enough the administration aimed tuition hikes and budget cuts at the student body as a whole.

Now CUNY administrators are trying to fend off growing criticism from faculty members and campus unionists over the firing of Mohamed Yousry. CUNY officials openly admit they fired Yousry in late 2002 because Ashcroft's Justice Department included him in a sweeping indictment aimed at radical lawyer Lynne Stewart. Yousry was the Arabic interpreter for Stewart, the court-appointed attorney for Abdel Rahman, the "blind sheikh" imprisoned since 1995 for "conspiring to wage a war of terrorism

against the United States," in Ashcroft's words. We call on all supporters of civil liberties to defend Stewart and Yousry against this sinister attack which guts the basic right of defendants to an attorney, a key target of the U.S.A. Patriot Act.

Stewart and Yousry face up to 15 years in prison if found "guilty." Stewart has noted that Yousry, an Egyptian-born scholar whose leftist views are a far cry from Rahman's Islamic fundamentalism, was "the only [interpreter] approved by the government to do translation during the entire time" Rahman has been in jail (*Monthly Review*, November 2002). If court translators are to be imprisoned through guilt by association, there will be no court translators. In a vindictive twist that should alarm every graduate student and college professor, the feds seized all of Yousry's notes for his doctoral dissertation.

CUNY students, like those at universities across the country, learn in freshman history and poli sci courses that you are supposed to be innocent until proven guilty. Yet CUNY's administration says this does *not* apply to what it unctuously describes as its own "academic community." In a February 15 reply to members of the Professional Staff Congress, the faculty union, CUNY vice chancellor for legal affairs Richard Shaffer retails the "conspiracy" charges against Mohamed Yousry, concluding: "Following the original indictment, Mr. Yousry was relieved of his teaching assignments."

Indignant faculty members noted not only that CUNY's stance meant "presumed guilty," but that a long list of famous teachers and college professors have been charged with any number of things over the years, and not dismissed. They cited cases including the anti-gay prosecution of Allen Ginsberg. Exchanges on the faculty's email discussion list cited the administration's cringing in the face of attacks from the gutter press, like those launched by the *New York Post* after an antiwar teach-in at City College in 2001. Others noted that while CUNY (the country's largest public urban university) followed the government's repressive lead, the feds ran into resistance from tiny Drake University when they tried to subpoena the names of participants in an antiwar conference at the Iowa campus.

Now it appears that the NYPD is monitoring the CUNY faculty e-mail discussion list, calling up a professor about a posting from someone else. And at Hostos, a recent event featuring former president Bill Clinton was set up to exclude non-citizens.

CUNY Witch Hunts Past and Present

Particularly ominous are the echoes of Cold War-era repression, when McCarthyism cut a jagged swath through the vaunted "groves of academe." Then as now, when witch hunters said "jump," CUNY administrators asked, "How high?" In trampling basic rights in the Yousry case, the CUNY tops are following in the footsteps of their bureaucratic forebears.

Already in the early 1940s, City College reacted to passage of the anti-"sedition" Smith Act by purging leftist professors. In the '50s, CUNY officials played second fiddle to the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee (SISS) when the Congressional subver-

sion hunters went after what they called "reeducators." Some professors were fired after being "identified as Communists." But in most cases, they were fired for citing their Fifth Amendment right not to incriminate themselves when asked, "Are you now or have you ever been" a Communist? Oscar Shaftel, a Queens College professor and teachers union activist fired by Queens College in 1954, later recalled:

"When [SISS] came to New York, they got lists of union people and leftists who would probably refuse to answer the direct question. They checked the letterhead of the College Teachers Union. It listed the vice president for each branch of City College - Hunter, Queens, Brooklyn - and committee heads. They simply subpoenaed everybody on the list."

- Griffin Fariello, *Red Scare: Memories of the American Inquisition* (1995)

As Shaftel noted, "You were fired for Section 903," a long-standing resolution of the board of trustees requiring teaching staff to cooperate with a "duly constituted investigating committee."

Just as a racist Queens politician sparked CUNY's 2001 "war purge," during the McCarthy era a local Queens politician got quick results when he demanded that "all un-American groups and the professors who tolerate them must go.... We want our students taught 'Queens style' or not at all" (Ellen W. Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities* [1986]). Queens College's firing of Shaftel and fellow professor D. Straus eventually became a *cause célèbre* of academic McCarthyism.

Queens was far from the only CUNY campus to join the purge. Among the best-known victims were City College mathematician and civil rights activist Lee Lorch, one of 28 teachers CCNY "relieved" of their jobs in 1949; City Hunter psychology professor Bernard Riess, fired for taking the Fifth in 1952; and composer Miriam Gideon, who taught at Brooklyn and City colleges. CUNY campuses refused to allow "subversive" speakers on campus, and denied charters to "suspect" student groups. In 1955, the president of City College boasted: "Let it be recognized that CCNY is actually the college which won the Purple Heart for its front-rank and continuing battle against Communism" (David Cauter, *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge Under Truman and Eisenhower* [1978]).

As a rule, periods of heightened jingoism and war always intensify attempts to purge the education system, not only the universities but primary and secondary schools as well. During the Cold War, the ruling class pushed to regiment every facet of public and private life for the anti-communist crusade. Today, as U.S. aggression is carried out in the name of a "war on terror," domestic witch hunting is part of the home front of U.S. rulers' drive for unchallenged world domination. The struggle to defend elementary democratic rights is inseparable from the struggle against imperialist war.

Students, teachers, campus workers and opponents of government repression must demand that CUNY immediately rehire Mohamed Yousry, with full back pay, and that all charges against him be dropped. The attack on Professor Yousry is, in the most literal sense, an attack on the rights of us all. ■

NYC Mayoral Child Abuse: Bloomberg/Klein Beat Up on 8-Year-Olds

Forced Flunk-Outs and the Assault on Public Education

What It's All About: Corporatization, Resegregation and War

APRIL 19 – On April 20, across New York City tens of thousands of eight-year-old school children are going to be subjected to a test that will be used by school authorities to determine whether they can go on to fourth grade. Already, billionaire mayor Michael Bloomberg and his flunkey, schools chancellor Joel Klein, have set a quota of 15,000 3rd-graders to be deliberately failed. This is child abuse on a grand scale. The racist city rulers have set out to ruin the lives of these primarily black, Latino and immigrant students in a cynical electoral ploy, and to further a bipartisan capitalist agenda of privatizing, corporatizing and resegregating public education. Moreover, this use of standardized tests goes hand in hand with the drive to undermine or break teachers unions, and unions in general, and to regiment the population for imperialist war.

The assault on 3rd-graders was so outrageous that the mayor couldn't even get his hand-picked Panel for Educational Policy to endorse it. Just hours before the policy came up for a vote on March 15, Bloomberg realized his own rubber stamps weren't going to rubber-stamp it. Some of them incredibly thought they were supposed think about educational policy, so hizzoner did a Donald Trump and fired three of them on the spot. They were quickly replaced with a trio of more pliant flunkies. After a truncated discussion before a seething audience of several hundred parents and teachers, in which Chancellor Klein told an eight-year-old girl to shut up and sit down, the stacked panel had a farcical vote in which the hand-raisers dutifully raised their hands to flunk 15,000 kids. The whole charade was so blatant that a host of Democratic City Council members denounced the "Tuesday night massacre" (recalling Richard Nixon's "Saturday night massacre" when he fired his three top legal officials for refusing to follow orders).

The electoral ploy couldn't be missed. After repeatedly declaring that voters should judge him on his record on education, Bloomberg has only managed to throw the NYC school system into turmoil, introducing whole reading curriculums



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Widespread opposition to high-stakes testing of NYC third-graders did not stop mayor and schools chancellor, who simply fired dissenting bureaucrats in the "Monday night massacre," March 15.

and then dumping them when Bush's Department of Education nixed them, appointing a whole layer of highly paid "management experts" who know nothing of education, naming a chief of instruction (Diana Lam) and then abruptly sacking her a year and a half later for nepotism. Bloomberg desperately wants to show "progress" on fourth-grade reading tests, so in order to get his desired statistical results he decides to get rid of the bottom 20 percent of the 75,000 3rd-graders! This is the same twisted statistical "logic" that Washington uses to disguise the true unemployment rate by reclassifying millions of jobless as "discouraged workers" who will no longer be counted as job seekers.

This is not about pedagogy. The studies show that forced grade retention does not help students learn but instead has the opposite result: reading scores drop and particularly after the eighth grade "drop out" rates soar. In the Chicago public schools, recent studies by the University of Chicago show that "retained 6th-graders improved less in reading than a group of low-achieving peers who weren't held back," that a fifth of

the retained 3rd and 6th graders ended up being dumped in “special education” classes, and that 8th graders held back were more likely to drop out of school (“Holding Kids Back Fails Too, Study Says,” *Chicago Tribune*, 7 April). In New York City, the Education Priorities Panel studied the experience of 27 programs of grade retention programs around the U.S. and found “a clear correlation between grade retention and the likelihood of dropping out.” This dismal result also occurred with NYC’s “Promotional Gates” program begun in 1981, and again when it was revived in 1999 (EPP letter to Mayor Bloomberg and Chancellor Klein, 20 February).

So what is it really about? The EPP points to ideology (“deeply held beliefs about individual responsibility, hard work, and promotion to higher grades based on merit”), which is certainly a factor. The onslaught against “social promotion,” like the whole emphasis on “standards-based” curriculum, is a right-wing construct aimed against proponents of “progressive education.” The whole idea that the terrible state of public schools is due to lazy eight-year-olds is a cruel joke. It is obvious that kids who are kept back become demoralized and separated from their peers; labeled “failures,” they conform to the label. Contrary to the bourgeois ideology of individualism and punishment, the fact is that children do better when they are enthusiastic about learning, and that successful education is a collective endeavor involving teachers and students as a group.

It’s also about money: blaming the children is a way of getting around the fact that New York City schools, like big city schools throughout the country, are underfunded to the tune of billions of dollars a year. Supposedly, those kids being held back will be given extra attention, with smaller classes and intensive remedial programs. As one principal remarked, they ought to give the those children the additional resources before they flunk – but that costs big bucks. In fact, the EPP showed that under Bloomberg/Klein and Giuliani/Levy, class sizes increased except in the years where tests were given (fourth and eighth grades). Meanwhile, teachers are forced to “teach to the test,” and the effect is a “dumbing-down” of the educational system. It goes together with plans to gradually privatize the school system through vouchers, handing over school management to profit-making corporations like the Edison schools, or setting up “charter” schools in which the union contract is thrown out. Since Edison schools and charter schools are failing, one after another, the emphasis is increasingly on “corporatizing” the public schools by turning them into factories.

It’s about racism: the overwhelming majority of the students being held back are black, Latino and from families where English is a second language. This accompanies the sharply increased segregation of U.S. schools over the last couple of decades. It is not an unintended result, but a deliberate effort to refashion “public” education in the U.S. to reflect a changing class structure. As the workings of capitalism lead to the slashing of union jobs, as the fabled “middle class” that used to be considered the bedrock of “American democracy” is thinned out, there is an increasing division between the poor,

minority and immigrant working-class population and a wealthy bourgeois layer. Corresponding to this shift is the drive toward a two-tier education system: well-equipped country club suburban schools and elite urban schools for the sons and daughters of the ruling class and their managers, and warehouses that push poor students out to take minimum wage McJobs and serve as cannon fodder in imperialist wars.

This is what the “No Child Left Behind Act” is all about. The 3rd grade mass flunk-out is a graphic demonstration of what a fraud this is: here is a deliberate plan to leave 15,000 children behind. Already, 40 percent of Latino students in New York City do not graduate high school in four years, and the numbers are rapidly escalating with the introduction of the 8th grade test and the elimination of regular high school diplomas in favor of Regents’ diplomas. Of course, when suburban kids get axed, as happened with last year’s Regents math test, suddenly they discover that the tests are not accurate and the scores are “adjusted.” And it’s no accident that the NCLB act included a provision demanding that the names of all high school juniors and seniors be turned over to military recruiters. This is a back door to reintroducing the draft: as the U.S. expands its imperialist wars and colonial occupations, and as battlefield deaths mount, it needs more manpower to feed the voracious military machine.

The plan to flunk 15,000 3rd-graders is an atrocity. But it cannot be defeated by pointing to the overwhelming evidence that it harms school children, or to the inherent racial and ethnic discrimination. Appealing to liberal Democrats as opposed to the Republicans Bloomberg, Pataki and Bush is no answer, for it was the Democratic Clinton administration that first seriously began pushing standardized “high stakes” testing in the public schools. Moreover, New York Democrats in the city council and state legislature have regularly voted for education budgets that subjected NYC students and teachers to intolerable conditions making education impossible. Resistance must come instead from the working-class, minority and poor who are the targets of this bipartisan capitalist assault on public education. As opposed to mayoral control, there should be a fight for teacher-worker-parent-student control of the schools. Abuses like Bloomberg’s 3rd grade flunk-out test could be stopped by a militant union leadership, yet the United Federation of Teachers under Randi Weingarten tacitly backed Pataki and had a love-in with Bloomberg, and the UFT supports the compulsory high-stakes testing.

The real answer will not come through “educational reform” under capitalism, which has been tried and failed time after time. Rather, what’s needed is a class-struggle leadership of the unions, of poor and working people, and a struggle to build a revolutionary workers party that fights for a workers government, that for the first time can provide high quality, free public education for all from primary school through the university. For education to become a right, there must be a revolution, a socialist revolution not only in the United States but internationally. Then schools can for the first time become centers of learning instead of for propagating the system of wage slavery. ■

Hostos College Student Leader Still Faces Jail for Holding Protest Sign

Drop the Charges Against Miguel Malo NOW!

In August 2001, Hostos College student leader Miguel Malo was arrested and brutally manhandled by campus security personnel of the City University of New York (CUNY). His "crime"? He was holding up a sign protesting cuts in English as a Second Language (ESL) programs and bilingual courses at Hostos, a college that was founded to serve the large Spanish-speaking population of New York City. For this he was seized without warning, thrown to the ground and hauled off to jail. At the time, Malo was vice president of the Hostos Student Senate. He was subsequently elected president.

Three other students were arrested that day, one of them while standing on the public sidewalk holding up a sign saying "Stop Arresting Our Students, Let Them Exercise the First Amendment of the Constitution"! The next day a City College professor was arrested for attempting to enter Hostos with his CUNY faculty ID and the president of the faculty union, the Professional Staff Congress (PSC) was threatened with arrest. The charges against the others have been dropped, but the persecution of Miguel Malo continues.

Last December, after a week-long ordeal in court, a mistrial was declared at the request of Malo's defense attorney, who was systematically prevented from raising the central issue of the right to free speech or presenting testimony about the police rampage at Hostos during which Miguel was arrested, and even hindered in presenting character witnesses for Miguel. (See the Internationalist Group December 10 statement on the mistrial on the facing page.) During the trial the charge of resisting arrest was thrown out as groundless, as Malo wasn't even informed he was under arrest until afterwards. Even so, he is to be put on trial a second time on bogus charges of assaulting the very "peace officers" who in fact assaulted him, charges which could bring up to a year in jail.

Miguel is now being represented by prominent radical trial lawyer Lynne Stewart, who last year was honored by CUNY law students (over objections by the university administration) for her courageous defense of civil liberties. Stewart herself faces witchhunting prosecution by the federal government, which has raised an outcry throughout the legal profession and from civil liberties organizations.

The college authorities' brazen attack on free speech was part of an offensive targeting immigrant students and seeking to impose police-state conditions at the City University. Miguel Malo's arrest and his subsequent odyssey through the courts (he has been to court on at least 39 occasions over almost three years) set off alarm bells throughout CUNY, the largest urban university in the United States. Already in 2001, the Hostos College Senate and the Professional Staff Congress pointed to the threat to academic freedom this represented and demanded that charges against Miguel be dropped. National attention was drawn to the civil rights emergency at CUNY when the Modern Languages Association passed a resolution demanding that charges against Malo be dropped.



Supporters of Miguel Malo demonstrate outside Bronx Criminal Court, 25 November 2003.

In recent months, student government presidents at ten CUNY campuses, the Hostos Student Government, the CUNY Doctoral Students Council and the University Student Senate all issued calls for the trumped-up charges against Malo to be dropped. In April, the Hostos College Senate for a second time voted to demand dropping of the charges, over the heated opposition of the College president Dolores Fernández. A few days later the University Faculty Senate added its voice, voting a resolution to send a delegation to CUNY president Matthew Goldstein and Bronx district attorney Robert Johnson to request that the charges against Malo be canceled and the prosecution called off.

The case of Miguel Malo has received repeated coverage in all three of New York City's Spanish-language daily newspapers, *El Diario-La Prensa*, *Hoy* and *Noticias del Mundo*, as well as on Spanish-language TV Channels 41 and 47 and Bronx cable TV Channel 12. WBAI radio has carried extensive coverage, before, during and after the trial. CUNY student newspapers including the *Hunter Envoy*, *CUNY Advocate*, *CCNY Messenger*, *Bronx Community College Communicator* and *The Paper* have all carried articles. During the trial, the *New York Times* (10 December) published an article, "Backers See Free-Speech Issue in Hostos College Student's Trial," quoting from about a dozen professors who had come to attend the trial on "faculty/staff day," and who complained that even Hostos faculty were prevented from handing out flyers against the Iraq war, for example.

Immediately following the mistrial last December, Malo's supporters at Hostos and elsewhere in CUNY issued a petition (see text, next page) demanding a halt to the persecution of Miguel and calling for charges to be dropped. As an indication of the widespread outrage this case has produced, signatures were received from 18 different CUNY campuses, including more than

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500 from Bronx Community College alone. On March 25 a delegation of university faculty and student representatives took the petitions with 1,200 signatures to Johnson's office. A press conference was held, but Johnson refused to meet with the delegation, sending down a flunkey to pick up the petitions.

The Internationalist Group has intensively built the campaign to defend Miguel Malo, which has involved numerous CUNY students and faculty, left and labor groups. A notable aspect of the campaign has been the active participation by unionized immigrant workers. A united-front defense committee, CUNY Action to Defend Miguel Malo, held demonstrations at Bronx Criminal Court on September 3, September 25, November 3, November 24 and December 5, as well as bring supporters to court hearings and every day for the trial. Forums on the Malo case were held at Hunter College, Hostos and Bronx Community College. During the trial the IG provided daily updates posted on our web site (www.internationalist.org) and distributed at CUNY campuses, as well as reports on WBAI radio.

As we have emphasized from the outset, the persecution of Miguel Malo and the drive to impose police-state conditions at CUNY are intimately connected to the escalating domestic repression as part of the U.S. global war drive. As U.S. imperialism lays waste to Afghanistan and Iraq, it targets immigrants, minorities and immigrant students here. *An unjury to one is an injury to all! Defend Miguel Malo!*

Mistrial Declared in Frame-Up of Miguel Malo

We print below a statement issued by the Internationalist Group on 10 December 2003.

Today in Bronx Criminal Court, where the trial of Hostos Community College student leader Miguel Malo has been under way for the last week and a half, defense attorney Ronald McGuire moved for a mistrial due to ineffectiveness of counsel for the defendant. "It would be a travesty for this trial to continue until Miguel has competent counsel," Mr. McGuire said. He added, "I put my client's interest ahead of my professional pride." With Miguel Malo's agreement, Judge Robert Torres granted the motion.

A spokesman for CUNY Action to Defend Miguel Malo said, "The entire trial has been a travesty, rigged from the beginning to prevent an adequate defense for Miguel due to endless obstacles raised by an overtly biased judge and a system guaranteed to produce injustice for immigrants, oppressed minorities, poor and working people."

"Behind the problems faced by the legal defense were the court's rulings which barred Miguel from raising the right to free speech, which is at the core of his defense. The judge refused to allow several key witnesses to be heard, repeatedly refused to admit evidence, and on at least a hundred different occasions prevented the defense counsel from asking questions of the witnesses who were allowed," the defense committee stressed.

Judge Torres told the court that "despite appearances, I have tried to have a fair trial." The appearances convincingly proved otherwise throughout the frame-up trial. The courtroom today was infested with menacing police. When Miguel Malo was asked for a statement, he responded that his de-

CUNY Students, Faculty And Staff Say: Drop All The Charges Against Miguel Malo!

To: Bronx District Attorney Robert Johnson

Hostos Community College student Miguel Malo was arrested in August 2001 for holding up a sign protesting cuts in English as a Second Language programs and bilingual courses. At the time of his arrest he was Vice President of the Hostos Student Senate. Afterwards the Hostos students elected him president of the Student Senate.

Miguel Malo's unjust and brutal arrest, and the legal vendetta pursued against him, are aimed against all of us. There have been repeated protests and meetings at CUNY defending Miguel. The University Student Senate has demanded all charges against him be dropped, as has the faculty union.

More than two years later, after 28 pre-trial court appearances, Miguel had a "trial" in which most of his defense witnesses and evidence were excluded, and any defense based on his right to free speech was ruled out of order. Now a mistrial has been declared and he is supposed to go through this again. We are outraged at this persecution of Miguel.

We call on you to: **DROP ALL THE CHARGES AGAINST HOSTOS STUDENT LEADER MIGUEL MALO, NOW!**

fense had been prevented from presenting evidence and witnesses to testify to the state of Hostos. Thereupon the judge cut him off, as he had done endless times with Mr. McGuire. This case is about the police-state conditions at Hostos College, which has been on lockdown since 2001. In several demonstrations in front of the court, Malo's defenders carried signs saying, "CUNY Is Not a Prison."

The persecution of Miguel Malo has been an abomination from Day One. He is on trial for having dared to hold up a sign protesting cuts of bilingual and English-as-a-second-language courses at Hostos College in August 2001. He faces several assault charges and up to a year in prison if convicted, yet the fact is that Miguel was assaulted by several CUNY "peace officers" while he was standing peacefully with a sign talking with students. Witnesses to the arrest testified yesterday that the police threw Miguel to the ground and put a knee in his back while handcuffing him. Photographs of his back taken minutes after he was released from police custody showed welts covering his entire back.

CUNY Action to Defend Miguel Malo has organized demonstrations at the court in his support and attended the trial throughout. Many thanks are due to the students and faculty who have come out to defend Miguel, along with support from unions and socialist groups. Efforts should now be redoubled to demand that the trumped-up charges against Miguel Malo be immediately dropped.

Miguel Malo is innocent, the racist capitalist injustice system is guilty.

Union Tops Betray Ranks in Key Class Battle

California Grocery Strike Sold Out

On February 26, the leaders of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) threw in the towel and signed a concessionary contract with Albertson's, Kroger (owners of Ralph's supermarkets) and Safeway (parent of Vons and Pavillion). The southern California grocery workers strike lasted four and a half months and won support from unionists across the U.S. But rather than mobilize this solidarity in strike action nationally against the giant chains, the UFCW tops played by the bosses' rules. The result will be a disaster for California grocery workers and will hurt labor struggles around the country.

The pact establishes a "two tier" scale for wages and benefits.

Top pay for newly hired workers will be slashed up to \$2.80 an hour, while wages for existing workers were frozen.

Management will make use of this to fire long-time workers and replace them with cheaper labor. The central issue in the strike was health care and pensions, and here the workers took a real beating. All employees will have to make "co-payments," new hires will have weekly payments deducted from their checks to cover health care, employer contributions to the medical insurance fund were capped, and company contributions to the pension fund were cut!

UFCW chief Joe Hansen desperately tried to cover up this sellout, talking about how strikers were more "politically astute" after ten weeks on the picket line. He was joined by the



Rebeto Matthews/AP

Solidarity rally on Wall Street for California grocery strikers, February 5. Union tops courted Democrats rather than shutting down supermarket chains nationwide.

reformists of the Workers World Party, who hid behind the ranks' militancy to alibi the union tops, headlining "Grocery Workers Stood Firm in Health Care Fight" (*Workers World*, 11 March), while the Communist Party U.S.A. shamelessly repeated Hansen's denunciation of anyone calling the pact a defeat (*People's Weekly World*, 13 March). Such pseudo-socialists share the "business unionist" outlook of the pro-capitalist labor fakers.

We print below a leaflet distributed by the Internationalist Group at a February 5 NYC rally in solidarity with the UFCW strikers:

California Supermarket Strike – A Crucial Class Battle

- **Shut Down Distribution Centers with Mass Picket Lines That Nobody Crosses!**
- **Strike Safeway and Kroger Nationwide!**
- **For an All-Out Drive to Unionize Wal-Mart!**

The strike by 70,000 supermarket workers in Southern California, now in its 15th week, is a showdown in the class struggle. Working people throughout the United States have a vital stake in the outcome. The issues are not local but national in scope. The giant grocery chains are trying to gut health care for their employees, hitting existing employees with hundreds of dollars of charges and drastically slashing coverage for new hires by \$4,000 to \$6,000 a year. For part-time workers, this would effectively make health insurance unaffordable. This

amounts to a huge pay cut, and pensions would also be in imminent danger with such two-tier schemes. This vicious union-busting won't be defeated with business-as-usual tactics. The power of the workers movement must be massively mobilized to bust the union-busters!

All across the country employers are gearing up to saddle workers with huge health care costs. If they're not stopped in California, soon workers everywhere will be facing the bosses' take-away demands. This week, unions around the country are holding demonstrations to express solidarity with the California strikers. A massive show of labor support would be a belated first step – something that should have been organized more than three months ago. But it is far from enough to stop the supermarket corporations, which are dead-set on break-

ing the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union. The vital supermarket distribution centers should be shut down by picket lines so massive and militant that nobody dares cross. Teamster truckers must refuse to handle any cargo for the strikebreakers. Stores owned by Safeway (Vons and Pavilion), Kroger's (Ralph's) and Albertson's should be struck throughout California. And there should be a strike against the entire national chains of Safeway and Kroger's.

The UFCW and AFL-CIO bureaucrats are not organizing such action because they are playing by the bosses' rules. Instead of bringing out tens of thousands of unionists day after day to literally shut down the scab operations, they have invited capitalist politicians of the Democratic Party to mouth off at rallies. On January 20, AFL-CIO secretary treasurer Richard Trumka announced plans to "take the pickets national." But what he meant was phony "informational pickets" to put pressure on the chains. On January 31, up to 20,000 strikers and their supporters marched in Los Angeles, only to be treated to speeches by California attorney general Bill Lockyer and Los Angeles mayor Jim Hahn. Yesterday, UFCW Local 770 leader Rick Icaza held a press conference flanked by Hahn and Democrat Jesse Jackson where he offered to throw in the towel and go back to work in exchange for binding arbitration. The companies rejected this offer of capitulation out of hand.

The union tops' "strategy," if you can call it that, is to "stay out one day longer" than the bosses. In other words, just hang tough. Well, the grocery strikers have been hanging tough. And contrary to the expectations of the business press, they have had considerable sympathy from shoppers who are heavily boycotting the struck stores. Without a doubt, the strike has hurt the chains financially. Newspapers report \$1 billion in lost sales. But for corporations whose combined revenue is \$121 billion a year, this is small change. While Wall Street firms like Merrill Lynch have urged investors to sell stock in Safeway, it hasn't stopped the company's union-busting CEO, Steven Burd, who raked in \$1.26 million in salary and bonus last year. In fact, while the company pleads poverty to justify slashing wages to pay for health care, top Safeway execs have been rewarded with stock options worth millions. Burd himself has cashed in more than \$1.5 million in options since last August. Like Kenneth Lay at Enron, these execs are literally looting their own company.

There have been plenty of opportunities to build a solid strike front, but this requires breaking with the politics of pro-capitalist "business unionism." Early on, maintenance workers in the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) walked out shutting down mass transit in Los Angeles. This strike was called off in a deal brokered by Democratic Party politicians. Thousands of L.A. County workers represented by the Service Employees International Union rallied to protest the county bosses' refusal to negotiate, but they did not walk out. Contracts of grocery workers in Arizona represented by the UFCW employed by the same chains came due, yet the union didn't bring them out either. Local 770 even took down picket lines at Ralph's, even though UFCW members there were locked out, in a "gesture of good will toward shoppers"! Ralph's workers have bitterly complained about this sellout as scabs do their work. In an article in the early days of the

strike last fall, we wrote of the UFCW/ATU/SEIU:

"To win this crucial fight, the struggles should be united in a fighting triple alliance demanding full employer-paid health care for all workers, full and part-time. Elected strike committees should be formed, with delegates who can be recalled at any time. Prevent scabbing by building and defending mass picket lines that nobody crosses. Extend the strikes to all supermarket, mass transit and municipal/county workers with flying picket squads. Instead of impotent consumer boycotts, mobilize labor's power to cut off deliveries to scab operations. Demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants!"

The stakes involved in the Southern California grocery strike are as high as in the battle over the PATCO air controllers strike in 1981, at the onset of the Reagan years. At that time as well, the AFL-CIO tops mouthed words of solidarity and called for a "don't fly" boycott of the airlines while Machinists, Teamsters, Transport Workers and airline unionists regularly went to work, often crossing picket lines to do so. This stab in the back was followed by two decades of union-busting assaults that have driven down wages and destroyed union benefits everywhere. To prevent another PATCO, it's necessary to mobilize the power of the workers movement nationally in a class-struggle political fight. And that centrally requires breaking with the capitalist parties, Democrats and Republicans alike (as well as minor bourgeois parties like the Greens and the Working Families Party in New York that just act as shells for the Democrats). What's urgently needed is a fight to oust the pro-capitalist misleaders of labor and to build a revolutionary workers party that fights for a workers government and international socialist revolution! ■

Victory in Oakland 25 Case!

On April 22, the Alameda County District Attorney's office dropped charges against 25 unionists and antiwar protesters arrested in a cop rampage a year ago. The 25, including International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 business agent Jack Heyman, were arrested on 7 April 2003 when police opened fire on a demonstration at the Port of Oakland, California. Although the cops called their ammunition "less-than-lethal," the wooden dowels and "rubber" bullets severely injured a number of ILWU workers and demonstrators (see "Oakland Cops Shoot at Longshore Workers and Antiwar Protesters," *The Internationalist* No. 16, May-June 2003).

The sight of police shooting at workers and demonstrators caused an international uproar. Even the United Nations, which has given cover to U.S. imperialist wars from Korea to Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq, cited the Oakland attack as an egregious example of "human rights" violations. But the U.S. government (and Oakland's liberal mayor Jerry Brown) were determined to keep war goods flowing for the U.S. invasion of Iraq. The ILWU is the lead plaintiff in a continuing federal court suit against the Oakland PD over the attack. However, the real answer to the bourgeoisie's police-state repression is to mobilize workers' power, to "hot cargo" (refuse to handle) military cargo and defeat the bosses' war, both overseas and "at home."

Democrats, Republicans...

continued from page 16

vote for it as long as they can keep their U.S.-armed *pesh merga* militias; and the Sunnis seethe at being relegated to political oblivion. The reality is that the U.S./U.K. colonialists are preparing to stay a long time, as evidenced by the permanent military bases being built by Bechtel and Halliburton.

Last year millions marched in the streets of Europe and the United States in some of the largest antiwar demonstrations ever, but it didn't stop or even slow down the imperialist juggernaut. The U.S.' imperialist allies/rivals put on a show of opposition in hopes of getting in on the spoils, to no avail. Washington was running the show, period – which was the central point of the war in the first place, to cement U.S. world hegemony by controlling the oil-rich Persian Gulf. Protests decreased in size, except when Bush showed up in person in London last November. But the war wouldn't go away as Iraqi resistance continued to stymie the conquerors. The Pentagon may not count the Iraqi dead, but the listing of U.S. soldiers killed has become a daily column in the papers, while the U.S.' Iraqi stooges are afraid of being executed for their criminal collaboration. Opposition to the Iraq war and occupation has not only continued but increased, because the U.S. is not winning but losing the war of attrition.

For the last several months opposition to the war has been channeled into the shell game of bourgeois politics as the media have focused on the Democratic Party primary elections. After the initial success of former Vermont governor Howard Dean in attracting young volunteers and millions of dollars via the Internet, all of the candidates feigned an antiwar stance. Yet the virtual nominee, Massachusetts senator John Kerry, a “war hero” who got medals for shooting up villagers along the river banks of Vietnam, voted for the Iraq war, as did the number 2 candidate, North Carolina senator John Edwards, and neither propose to withdraw U.S. troops if elected. Nor, for that matter, did Dean, who told the *New York Times* in an interview that U.S. withdrawal was impossible. And Ohio congressman Dennis Kucinich called for 100,000 “United Nations” troops to occupy Iraq – in other words, for U.S. soldiers to put on blue U.N. “peacekeeper” helmets.

Now that the primaries are essentially over, the liberals are worried that antiwar youth disappointed with the outcome will drift away from the safe channels of bourgeois politics. “Come Back, Little Deaniacs” headlined a *New York Times* (1 February) editorial. To bring them back, the annual spring peace demonstration is being held on March 20. The usual empty pacifist rhetoric will be spouted from the platforms while police pen demonstrators up behind metal barricades. One significant development is that an important sector of the labor movement, locals of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), will be shutting down a number of West Coast ports, including San Francisco-Oakland and Portland, demanding: stop the war, end the occupation, withdraw the troops. Stopping work for one shift is only a token of labor's power, and coming today, a year late, it is essentially a demonstration rather than a real attempt to block the invasion. Nevertheless, the fact that for the first time in decades industrial action is

being taken in the United States against an imperialist war is an important development that revolutionaries should make use of to fight for all-out workers action to defeat the bosses' war.

The union bureaucrats are worried that if Bush wins the election they will really be under the gun, so they have pledged \$44 million to the Democrats. They are pushing for a protectionist platform to “save American jobs.” Many others are worried that Dr. Strangelove is already in the White House (or the vice president's office in Blair House). Yet the stark reality is that both the Democrats and Republicans are parties of imperialist war, unemployment and racism. The Democrats unleashed World Wars I and II, the Korean War, the Bay of Pigs invasion, the Vietnam War, the first war on Afghanistan and two wars on Yugoslavia. The Democrats and Dixiecrats maintained Jim Crow segregation in the South for decades, and are presiding over the resegregation of public schools today. Putting up trade barriers will be used to foster interimperialist trade war, as the Smoot-Hawley tariffs did in the 1930s, paving the way to the second imperialist world conflagration. The Green Party and Ralph Nader's candidacy will only serve as sucker bait to draw the gullible into the dead end of bourgeois politics.

It is necessary to fight on March 20 and beyond for a revolutionary class program, for solid working-class action against the war, and to begin to forge an internationalist workers party that can fight all the imperialist warmongers and strikebreakers by realizing the slogan put forward over 150 years ago by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the Communist Manifesto: “Workers of the World Unite!” ■

Colonial Revolt...

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of the supply chain as it geared up for the war on Iraq.

It is the LFI which today continues the struggle for authentic Trotskyism in the middle of and under the tremendous pressure of imperialist war; which continues to call for workers action and strikes against the war, and seeks to initiate such actions where it can; which in the face of the petty-bourgeois nationalist and Islamic fundamentalist currents of various stripes, fights for workers revolution, both in Iraq and internationally, from the semicolonial countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America to the imperialist centers themselves.

Genuine communists seek to be the best fighters against the imperialist invaders, insisting that in order to win democratic rights for women and for all the ethnic/religious communities of Iraq, in order to liberate the hard-pressed peasantry and the urban poor from misery, there is no other road but *permanent revolution*, led by a Bolshevik party such as Lenin and Trotsky built in tsarist Russia. Today there are a series of attempted opportunist regroupments which claim to “refund” or “reconstruct” the Fourth International, but which actually only try to rearrange the various remnants of the pseudo-Trotskyist tendencies of the past which exploded and imploded due to the contradictions of their tailist politics. The test of Iraq shows once again that, rather than organization recombinations, a tenacious *programmatic* struggle is required in order to reforge a truly Trotskyist Fourth International. ■

From Santo Domingo and Port-au-Prince to New York City

The Struggle for Workers Revolution in the Caribbean

The U.S.-engineered “death squad coup” in Haiti and the collapse of the populist Aristide government highlight Leon Trotsky’s theory and program of *permanent revolution*. Summing up the lessons of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917, Trotsky stressed that for countries of belated capitalist development, the tasks of the democratic revolution (democracy, national liberation and agrarian revolution) can only be achieved through the dictatorship of the proletariat, by the workers seizing power at the head of the peasantry and proceeding to undertake socialist tasks and international extension of the revolution. This was the program of the October Revolution, led by Lenin and Trotsky, which gave birth to the first workers state in history. The Leninist-Trotskyist program was the antithesis of Stalin’s nationalist illusion of “two-stage revolution” and building “socialism in one country.” Toussaint Louverture undertook the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1804 with the aim of sweeping away the legacy of slavery and black oppression. In the imperialist epoch, the struggle begun by Toussaint can only be completed through *international socialist revolution*.

Today, Haiti is by far the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Life expectancy for a Haitian at birth is only 52 years, compared to 73 in Mexico for example, or 63 years in Bolivia. The gross national product per capita of Haiti is variously estimated at around \$480 a year, under \$1.50 a day, compared to double or triple that in Bolivia, or \$5,500 a year in Mexico. The infant mortality rate is by far the highest in Latin America: 95 out of every 1,000 children born die before the age of 1, compared to 7 per 1,000 in Cuba. The figures are horrifying. And the reason is that the economy has been devastated by imperialist boycott, occupation, and superexploitation. Even after the abolition of slavery by the first successful slave uprising ever, the capitalist powers were intent on keeping Haiti enslaved to the capitalist world market. And living conditions in Haiti today have actually gotten substantially *worse* over the last decade and a half, since the overthrow of “Baby Doc” Duvalier. In 1986 the minimum wage amounted to roughly \$4 a day, today it’s 70 gourdes, about \$1.75 a day.

Labor Struggles in Haiti

Nevertheless, Haiti does have a working class, trade unions and labor struggles. The light manufacturing sector employed 44,000 workers in 1990, but fell to about 20,000 five years later due



Batay Ouvriye

Haitian agricultural workers protest arrests of workers at Rémy-Cointreau plantation after massacre that left two dead, 8 August 2002.

to economic sanctions against the military dictatorship. More recently, the number of assembly plants (mainly clothing and electronic components) has begun to increase with the establishment of “free trade zones” in the capital and on the border with the Dominican Republic. Over 40 percent of the Haitian workforce is female, one of the highest rates in Latin America, and in assembly manufacturing women workers are the vast majority. There have been struggles to unionize these workers and to fight against sweatshop conditions, both under the Duvaliers and the military dictators who followed him, and under Aristide. While Aristide portrayed himself as a nationalist and the voice of the little man, in fact he was administering the country on behalf of the U.S. corporations, whose interest is superexploiting Haiti’s miserably paid workers. A 1996 report of the National Labor Committee was titled, “The U.S. in Haiti: How to Get Rich on 11 Cents an Hour.” Garments are manufactured in Haiti for major retailers and clothing companies including Sears, J.C. Penney, Wal-Mart, Kmart, Sara Lee (Hanes), Levis. LV Corp (Wrangler and Lee jeans) and others.

Historically, Haiti has been an agricultural country. Today the media focus on the denuding of the hillsides and ecological damage, which they typically blame on poor Haitian peasants who cut down wood for fuel, since they can’t afford to buy gas. Yet when Haiti was France’s main colony in the Caribbean it was

known as the “Pearl of the Antilles,” a lush land and prodigious source of tropical products. In fact, large-scale plantation agriculture still exists in Haiti. There are coffee estates – would-be strongman Guy Philippe comes from a family of coffee planters – centered in the hills of eastern and southern Haiti. In the rich northern plain, there are huge citrus plantations owned by multinational corporations. In the last several years, there have been bitter battles by agricultural workers against Rémy-Cointreau and Grand-Marnier, both located in the area around Cap-Haitien. These are two of the most renowned, and expensive, sweet liqueurs in the world, based on extracts from oranges, but for the workers these are very “bitter oranges.”

In August 2000, the 350 agricultural workers of the Sendika Ouvriye, or Workers Union, of the 200-acre Marnier-Lapostolle plantation won an increase of more than 50 percent in their wages. The demands of the union, affiliated with the Intersyndicale Premier Mai Batay Ouvriye (May 1 Workers Struggle Labor Federation), were quite modest: basically, they were calling on the owners to pay the minimum wage. A campaign was waged on their behalf by the Haiti Support Group in Britain and the Réseau Solidarité in France. But when Batay Ouvriye (BO) tried to replicate this the next year with 2,000 workers at the plantation of Rémy-Cointreau, they were met by fierce resistance from the management, local authorities (supporters of the Lavalas Family party of President Aristide), and from the national government. When the union called a meeting in May 2002 to divide up idle land for planting by the workers, an established practice for years to supplement their meager wages, the company sent gun thugs to break it up. They dispersed the meeting, and then chased the union members down. Two who were found hiding in a house were tied up and dragged to the plantation where they were mutilated, cut up with knives and finally beheaded. Their bodies were buried on plantation land.

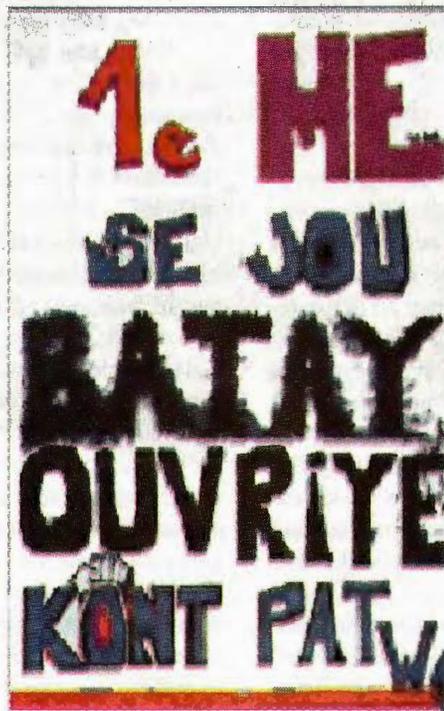
Such barbaric repression is hardly new in Haiti – it has been a constant for decades under the regimes set up by the United States to dominate the island. But what was significant was the action of the Aristide government. Local authorities arrested nine union members, most of them members of Batay Ouvriye, who were victims of the murderous attack. In the coming days, the homes of unionists were burned to the ground and arrest orders were issued for another 20 unionists. The mayor of St.-Raphaël, a member of Lavalas, said he had ordered the arrests because he knew the union militants as “terrorists.” Coming a few months after the 9/11 attack, this was a clear appeal for support from the U.S. government. Another Lavalas mayor of the town of Milot justified the arrests, saying it was a “land invasion” and Aristide

had declared the government’s defense of private property. After a few months, the unionists were released from jail, but the role of Aristide and his Lavalas party had been made clear as defenders of the bourgeois order who countenanced outright murder in defense of the bosses’ interests. And this was not an isolated instance.

Lessons of Anti-Sweatshop Campaign

Meanwhile, the focus of labor struggles has shifted to the clothing factories. Garment and textile plants have been a focal point for agitation against sweatshop conditions in Haiti. In the 1990s, a campaign was waged against the Disney Company in Haiti. Walt Disney was a rightist sometime sympathizer of Hitler’s Nazis and a big supporter of Chiang Kai-shek against the Chinese Communists, and for years exploited Chinese workers in near slave labor conditions to make his cartoons. In 1996, Disney closed a couple of garment plants in Alabama and moved the entire production to Haiti. Its Haitian plants included at least 13 factories producing T-shirts, pajamas and the like with “Winnie the Pooh,” “1001 Dalmatians” and “Pocahontas” logos. A campaign was waged in the U.S. calling for consumer boycotts. The National Labor Committee put out a video, “Mickey Mouse Goes to Haiti,” which ludicrously called on Disney to be a responsible corporation and “do the right thing” by increasing its workers’ pay. Yet in September 1997, Disney simply pulled out of Haiti and sent the work to even lower-wage contractors in Bangladesh. (More recently, Bangladeshi women workers have been fighting for higher wages, so Disney shut down there as well.)

In fact, the various anti-sweatshop campaigns ultimately come down to appeals to corporate “conscience” and the good will of the bosses. Similarly, banners



Bataye Ouvriye poster: “May 1 is the day of struggle of the workers against the bosses.”

in anti-globalization demonstrations denounce “corporate greed,” as if capitalist enterprises can be motivated by anything other than the drive for maximum profits. Reformist union bureaucrats may express pious sentiments of solidarity with the downtrodden workers of Haiti or Bangladesh, but behind their protest is a program of *protectionism*, of *social-chauvinism*, to protect “American jobs” at the expense of those of workers elsewhere. Such do-gooder liberalism and protectionism inevitably spell defeat for the workers, as does the bourgeois populist nationalism of Aristide and much of the Haitian left. At bottom, these programs all accept the capitalist framework, and only push for a few reforms. This reformist vision is illusory. It is necessary to wage the fight against superexploitation and all the other evils of capitalism in semicolonial countries on a revolutionary program of *class struggle*.

The urgency of fighting for an internationalist program of workers revolution was underlined by the experience of the coup against Aristide, and its dramatic impact on unionizing efforts. Recently, a free trade zone was set up in Quanamthe, located on the border with the Dominican Republic. Anti-sweatshop groups and labor bodies focused on getting the World Bank to include a "labor rights" clause in a \$20 million loan to the Dominican garment manufacturer Grupo M, which it did. Batay Ouvriye set up a union, SOKOWA, which proceeded to sign up workers. In late February, a BO union leader was fired; the workers walked out in protest. Then on March 1, the day after Aristide left Haiti, management went through the plant informing workers that Levi Strauss was withdrawing its orders because of work stoppages. According to a BO action alert, that afternoon, 34 employees were fired. Dominican army troops were called in, and training their weapons on the workers, seized their company identification badges. Two days later, as SOKOWA mobilized to protest the firings, members of the rebel army suddenly showed up at the company's request to menace workers with their guns, handcuff leaders and force the rest back to work.

This incident is all the more significant because of the politics of the groups involved. Batay Ouvriye, a leftist labor group, has been wary of joining with the anti-Aristide bourgeois opposition, recognizing that these neo-Duvalierists and sweatshop bosses are no friends of the workers. A December 20 BO statement on the current situation in Haiti correctly stated that the Lavalas government is bourgeois and "Lavalas has always given the greatest advantages to the bourgeoisie." At the same time it emphasized that "Lavalas and the bourgeois opposition are two rotten legs of the same torn pair of pants." But, significantly, BO said it was necessary to "call into question and to thwart the bourgeois orientation within the anti-Lavalas mobilization," and urged workers, poor peasants, students, the unemployed and "consistent progressives" to "build their autonomy" as the "camp of the people" representing the popular masses "within the general movement of struggle." So the "anti-Lavalas mobilization" continued to grow, led by the bourgeois opposition, with Batay Ouvriye and other "progressives" tagging along. Due to the pressure of U.S. imperialism, they succeeded in ousting Aristide ... and immediately the workers are victimized.

Haitian and Dominican Workers Unite!

Following the eternal logic of nationalism and the "popular front," the politics of two "camps" (progressives vs. reactionaries) rather than two *classes* (the proletariat vs. the bourgeoisie), *these leftists end up acting as the left tail of imperialist-sponsored counterrevolution, and it is the workers who pay the price.* What Quanamthe showed is the urgent need for *internationalist, revolutionary working-class mobilization.* Only a few dozen kilometers away, in Santiago, Dominican Republic, the same Grupo M bosses pay the same starvation wages to Dominican workers. Moreover, on January 29-30 there was a general strike in the Dominican Republic in which hundreds of union leaders were arrested and nine workers were killed by Dominican troops just returned from Iraq. So Dominican and Haitian soldiers repress workers on both sides

of the border, ignoring the frontier as they fulfill their role as the armed fist of the capitalists and their states. *This cries out for joint revolutionary struggle by Dominican and Haitian workers against their common bosses, the neo-colonial regimes which repress them, and against their imperialist patrons!*

This requires the building of *revolutionary workers parties* on a program of proletarian internationalism against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism of all varieties. For decades anti-Haitian racism has been used by Dominican rulers to divide the working class, using discrimination and whipping up xenophobia, while Haitian workers living in miserable "*bateys*," hovels located next to the cane fields, are reduced to modern-day slavery as they do the backbreaking work of the sugar harvest. The Dominican left, infested with nationalism, has failed to fight this abomination. In Haiti, on the other hand, nationalist leftists make no effort to join with working-class brothers and sisters on the other half of the island and instead are torn between backing bourgeois populists like Aristide or being drawn into the wake of the counterrevolutionary, pro-imperialist, "democratic" bourgeois opposition. It is necessary to overcome this heritage of fratricidal nationalism and above all to extend the struggle to the heart of U.S. imperialism, New York City, where 300,000 Haitian immigrants and 400,000 Dominicans live and work and where the power of tens of thousands of unionists can be mobilized.

A fight for workers revolution in Haiti must include special efforts to combat women's oppression. A large majority of factory workers are women, and are subjected to myriad forms of discrimination and oppression. This ranges from demands for sexual favors by the bosses and paternalistic management to the lack of child care facilities. Several Haitian women's organizations have called attention to attacks on women, but generally orient toward a petty-bourgeois milieu. We communists put forward a working-class program for equal pay for women, for union action against sexual harassment, for free abortion on demand, and for free, 24-hour child care centers, as part of our program for *women's liberation through socialist revolution.* In a predominantly peasant country in which the urban population is still only 37 percent of the total, it is crucial for a revolutionary workers party to appeal to the peasantry, today under the thumb of competing gangs such as the "Cannibal Army." A fight for *agrarian revolution*, to expropriate the big coffee estates and citrus fruit plantations and to establish technically advanced, voluntarily *collectivized agriculture* can offer the peasantry for the first time the real possibility of escaping from a life of grinding poverty.

Defend the Cuban Revolution Against Yankee Imperialism!

The struggle against the death squad coup is not only a matter for the hard-pressed Haitian masses, facing terrible poverty and now under U.S. guns. It must be part of an international and *internationalist* revolutionary struggle against imperialism. The Internationalist Group, section of the League for the Fourth International, has fought for the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Iraq and Afghanistan, and to drive the Yankee

colonial occupation forces out of the Near East and out of the Caribbean. The IG/LFI also called on Venezuelan workers to mobilize to smash the pro-imperialist coup attempt in December 2002-January 2003 which sought to pass off a bosses' lockout as a workers strike. The Pentagon considers the Caribbean an "American lake." We demand immediate, unconditional independence for Puerto Rico, for the French colonies of Martinique, Guadeloupe and Guyane. We demand the U.S. get out of the Guantánamo naval base in Cuba, and call to defend Cuba against imperialist threats and attack. Clearly, one purpose of the present deployment of U.S. Marines and Special Forces to Haiti is to tighten the military encirclement aimed at strangling the Cuban Revolution, which has always been a thorn in the side of Yankee imperialism despite the narrowly nationalist-Stalinist politics

of the Castro leadership. To overcome the legacy of colonial division that has fragmented the region – reflected in the linguistic divisions between Spanish, English, French, Dutch and Creole-speaking countries – Trotskyists fight for a voluntary *socialist federation of the Caribbean*.

Leninist-Trotskyists don't seek a different *U.S. foreign policy*, but fight against *U.S. imperialism*, and all the imperialists. Viewing the endless string of U.S.-engineered coups (Iran, Guatemala, Vietnam, Indonesia in 1965, Chile in 1973, etc.), imperialist wars (Vietnam in 1954-75, Afghanistan I in 1980-89, the contra war in Nicaragua during 1980-89, the Iraq I in 1990-91, Yugoslavia I over Bosnia in 1995, Yugoslavia II over Kosovo in 1999, Iraq II in 2003), and colonial occupations such as in Afghanistan, Iraq and Haiti today, it should be obvious that *imperialism is not a policy but a system*. And bringing down that imperialist system, putting an end to the coups and wars and occupations, will not be accomplished by an anti-war movement (whether writing letters to Congressmen or by pacifist "peace crawls") but through fighting for workers revolution. We combat the bourgeois politics of nationalism and popular-frontism with the fight for the revolutionary political independence of the working class.

The Trotskyists opposed American intervention in Haiti when the U.S. put Aristide in in '94, and we oppose it when U.S. yanks him out in '04. John Kerry, the Democratic Party presidential candidate who won medals for killing Communists and women and children in Vietnam, backs Aristide. While we call to mobilize workers power against the U.S. coup and occupation, we warn that the ousted Haitian president is no friend of the poor and working people but rather an instrument of U.S. imperialism. Aristide's strategy is to wait out the U.S. elections – if the Democrats win, he figures he's back in. Trotskyists warn that the Demo-



Toussaint Louverture

crats and Republicans are both parties of imperialist war and colonial occupation, that the Democrats have no more intention of withdrawing from Iraq and Afghanistan than do the Republicans, and we call for opposition to political alliances with any and all capitalist politicians. Rather than the dead-end of *class collaboration*, authentic communists seek to mobilize Haitian and Dominican workers together with working people and opponents of imperialism internationally in sharp *class struggle*.

Trotskyists hail the figure of Toussaint Louverture, known and feared by the colonialists as the *Black Spartacus* who led the Haitian Revolution, the first successful slave revolt in history, from 1791 until he was murdered by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802, defeating both French and British colonial armies. From its origins, the bedrock of American capitalism was the en-

slavement of black labor, and the struggle against black oppression remains the key to workers revolution in the belly of the imperialist beast. The Haitian Revolution, which gave rise to the first black republic in history, has a special importance to revolutionary struggle in the United States. Sending shock waves around the Caribbean, the example of revolutionary Haiti inspired the leaders of revolts against chattel slavery in the U.S., including Charles Deslondes in Louisiana in 1811, Denmark Vesey in South Carolina in the 1820s, and Nat Turner in southeastern Virginia in 1831. Today, the fight against a new Yankee imperialist occupation of Haiti can play an important role in the fight for workers revolution against wage slavery throughout the world. ■

The Debate That Wasn't...

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But wait – isn't there *any* room left for Benjamin to express some of that "distraught" indignation over our "unfounded," "pathetic," "sectarian" attacks? After all, how do we know *Veja* magazine didn't get its facts wrong – can we be sure this cop leader really is with O Trabalho, the Brazilian Lambertiste group? Let's look at ... the O Trabalho Web site. Just type the name of the leader of the Alagoas cop "union" into Google, and he pops right up in 0.18 seconds as a *signer of O Trabalho's 11 August 2003 "Rescue the PT" Manifesto*, an appeal to the reformist government party to resume a supposed original purity (www.jornalotrabalho.com.br/Resgate.htm). The cop "union" leader's name is right there under "Alagoas": "José Carlos Fernandes Neto - Diretor do SINDPOL."

So whose accusations are unfounded, Alan Benjamin? No wonder they bailed out from the Brazil debate.

Haiti: Death Squad Coup...

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ing the 1991 coup. To give a respectable face to this régime of the death squads united, a "council of wise men" appointed by U.S. ambassador James Foley has named a former United Nations official, Jean Latortue, as prime minister. (In 1992, the U.S. handpicked former World Bank official Marc Bazin to give a "civilian" cover to junta rule.)

The targets of the new regime are the impoverished black masses who in 1990 massively voted for Aristide, making him the first popularly elected president in Haiti's history. Because he dutifully carried out the anti-worker economic policies designed by Washington, Aristide's support had greatly eroded, disappearing altogether in the educated middle class while becoming passive among the jobless and illiterate poor. But now as the "rebels" stage murderous incursions into the shantytowns of Cité Soleil, Bel Air and La Saline, the residents are fighting back. On Friday, March 5, more than 10,000 people from the ramshackle slums converged on the U.S. embassy to protest the occupation, chanting "*Bush terroriste!*" "We'll burn the palace down with the Americans inside," threatened one marcher. Two days later, a smaller anti-Aristide demo of some 3,000 gathered in the posh suburb of Pétionville in the hills above the capital to march on the National Palace to cries of "*Aristide criminel!*" The counterposed marches continue: on March 12, thousands of Aristide supporters besieged the city center, now guarded by U.S. armored personnel carriers. Police fired indiscriminately on the crowd, killing at least two.

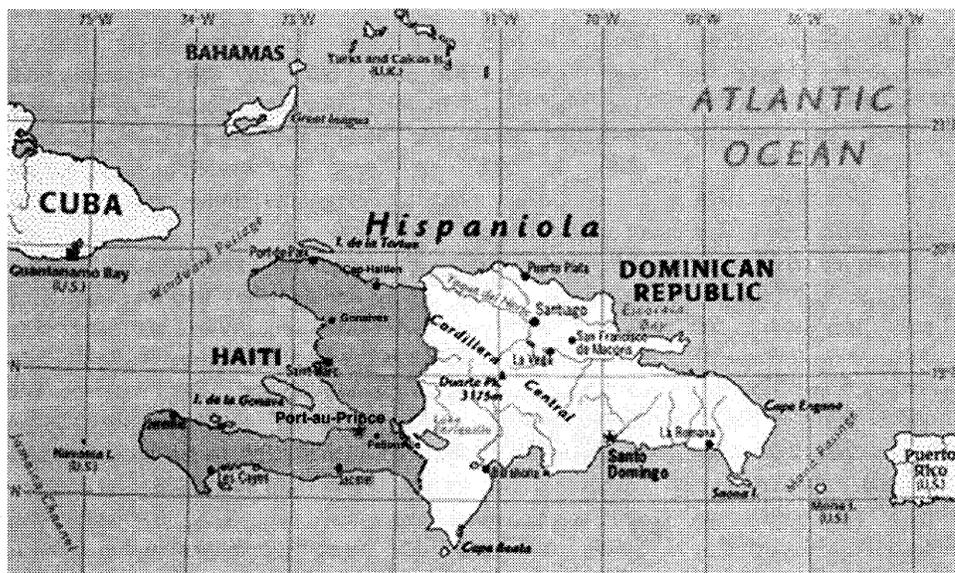
But the unemployed poor have little real power. It is the working class that must mobilize, in Haiti and internationally, to throw out the invaders and their puppet regime. Yet the misleaders of Haitian labor have instead, openly or tacitly, joined with the sweatshop bosses, death squad paramilitaries and Yankee imperialists in the anti-Aristide coalition. "The bourgeoisie has never done anything for us, the masses," declared a pro-Aristide marcher on March 5 in Port-au-Prince. "Now they have taken our president." "One solution, revolution!" chanted pro-Aristide Haitian demonstrators on March 6 at the Junction in Brooklyn. But with all his nationalist and populist rhetoric, and even though the Bush regime may have added him to its "axis of evil," Aristide is himself part of the Haitian bourgeoisie who as president served as loyal front man for Washington. Now under a new colonial occupation, the Haitian working masses desperately need an authentically revolutionary workers party to lead the struggle against the imperialists and *all* their local henchmen. And to forge that vanguard party requires an international fight, extending throughout the island of Hispaniola and the Caribbean to New York City.

Of course, the Bush government claims that they are restoring "democracy" after a "failed despot" voluntarily resigned. "Has Aristide been resigned?" asked *Haiti en Marche* (10 March) with grammatical irony, adding: "Watch out for the boomerang effect." It's obvious to everyone that Aristide was forced out of office. Hustled aboard an unmarked plane by U.S. personnel, he

was dumped in the French neocolony of the Central African Republic, whose former "emperor," Bokassa I, was convicted of murdering 100 schoolchildren. Upon arrival, Aristide issued a statement echoing that of Toussaint Louverture, leader of the slave rebellion that drove the colonists from Haiti two centuries ago. After Louverture was seized by Napoleon Bonaparte and jailed in the Jura Mountains of eastern France, he declared: "In overthrowing me, they only cut down the trunk of the tree of liberty, but it will grow back because its roots are many and deep." Wrapping himself in the mantle of Toussaint, Aristide declared, "In overthrowing me, they have cut down the tree of peace, but it will grow back because its roots are Louverturean." Yet Louverture liberated the slaves and fought Napoleon's army, while Aristide kept the Haitian masses enslaved to the imperialists and relied on the protection of a U.S. security company — until it was withdrawn.

The day before the U.S. abruptly "resigned" Aristide, a White House spokesman accused the Haitian president of "failure to adhere to democratic principles," blamed him for the "deep polarization and violent unrest that we are witnessing in Haiti today," and called on him to "accept responsibility and to act in the best interests of Haiti." In case he didn't get the hint, a U.S. official added oh-so-democratically: "Aristide must go." This is hardly the first time that the U.S. has ousted an elected government. The CIA did it to Mohammed Mossadegh in Iran in 1953; they did it to Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala in 1954; they did it to Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973, when President Nixon's security advisor Henry Kissinger made his famous quip, "I don't see why we need to stand by and watch a country go Communist because of the irresponsibility of its own people." A CIA cable from October 1970 was more explicit: "It is firm and continuing policy that Allende be overthrown by a coup.... We are to continue to generate maximum pressure toward this end utilizing every appropriate resource. It is imperative that these actions be implemented clandestinely and securely so that the USG [United States government] and American hand be well hidden."

These days, they barely bother to hide the American hand at all. Instead of operating clandestinely through the CIA they fund the opposition through the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute and the National Endowment for Democracy, while sending U.S. Navy gunboats in the case of Haiti, or a whole expeditionary corps of 150,000 troops to invade Iraq. The scale may differ, but the objectives are the same. Partly they serve the objectives of particular well-connected capitalist sectors: Halliburton's ties to the present U.S. administration with its lucrative contracts are notorious; and when the Marines first went into Haiti in 1914, they seized the Bank of Haiti in order to collect debts for National City Bank of New York. But it's not just about "crony capitalism." Whether under Bush or Clinton, the governments of the twin capitalist parties seek to further strategic interests of U.S. imperialism. During the Cold War that meant killing Communists and countering the Soviet Union; today, as the sole remaining "superpower," the United States is concerned to nail down its world hegemony, not only against "rogue" states, but also against its imperialist rivals and erstwhile "allies."



The occupation of Haiti is part of the global “war without end” that U.S. imperialism is fighting in the Near East, in the Caribbean, and in the U.S. as well. Far from being a “war against terrorism,” it is a war to terrorize the world into submission; an imperialist war targeting deformed workers states like North Korea, China, Cuba, and aimed at keeping Washington’s hand on the oil tap so that Japan and Europe don’t get out of line; and a capitalist war on the poor and working people, black, Latino and Asian minorities and immigrants in the United States. To be sure, Democrats and Republicans have their differences: the Democrats installed Aristide in 1994 in order to put a clamp on the Haitian masses and prevent thousands of “boat people” from arriving in Miami Beach; the Republicans yanked Aristide in 2004 because he could no longer keep the Haitian masses under control. No longer a useful instrument for U.S. imperialism, they toss him aside like a squeezed lemon, like they did with Noriega in Panama in 1990, Ngo Dinh Diem in South Vietnam in 1963, or Raphael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic the same year.

How U.S. Organized Haiti Coup

In the 1990 elections, the Haitian poor saw the former parish priest as their savior who would lift them out of misery. They voted massively (67.5 percent) for Aristide against former World Bank official Bazin (14 percent). But while he might rail at the “pocketbook patriots” of the Haitian bourgeoisie, “Titide,” or little Aristide, as he was affectionately known, was careful to cultivate Haiti’s imperialist overlords in Washington. During his first few months in office, he enticed international lenders to pledge \$450 million in aid. Still, his minimal plans to double the minimum wage and attempts to tame the Army high command angered the traditional elite, leading to the coup that overthrew him in September 1991.

But by the time Aristide was reinstated in 1994 by Clinton, he had been worked over by liberal think-tanks and the Congressional Black Caucus in Washington, and was utterly beholden to the imperialists. When the International Monetary Fund told him to institute an austerity program – slashing subsidies and priva-

tizing the telephone company, the electrical company, the airport, the port, three banks, a cement factory and a flour mill, involving thousands of layoffs – Aristide saluted and proceeded to carry out the demanded changes. The plan was so severe that the Haitian masses called it “*plan lanmo*,” the “death plan.” Aristide’s supporters protest in his defense that he only managed to implement part of this plan (Haiti Action Committee, *Hidden from the Headlines: The U.S. War Against Haiti* [2002]).

These policies continued under Aristide’s chosen successor René Preval, from 1996 to 2000. One of the most devastating measures

was the lifting of import duties, opening the way to the dumping of American agricultural surpluses and the destruction of Haiti’s peasant economy. By the end of the 1990s, half of all rice marketed in Haiti was imported from the United States and the former “rice basket” region around Gonaïves has been thrown into bankruptcy (see Michel Chossudovsky, “The Destabilization of Haiti,” www.globalresearch.ca, 29 February, for a detailed account of U.S. economic, military and political blackmail of Aristide).

By the 2000 elections when Aristide ran for president again, the enthusiasm of many of his supporters had considerably dampened. Even had there been a credible opposition Aristide undoubtedly would have won with the votes from the poor districts, and his Lavalas party (Creole for “avalanche”) would likely have won the May 2000 legislative vote as well. But instead, nervous about any opposition, Lavalas pulled some electoral shenanigans, giving the bourgeois opposition an excuse to boycott parliament and the November 2000 presidential vote and appeal to the U.S. in the name of “democracy.”

Already two weeks before Aristide’s reelection, in early November 2000 the Clinton administration forced the Haitian government to sign a “letter of intent” with the IMF which obligated the incoming president to carry out the U.S.’ economic agenda. Then the Republicans took office in Washington. The Bush gang never wanted Aristide, not because he’s a threat to their interests – it’s the impoverished Haitian masses who support him that they fear. Immediately after Bush took office, the U.S. cut off \$500 million in aid to Haiti. In itself, this is not a staggering sum. But in a country whose entire national budget is \$300 million, this meant that Aristide’s government was essentially running on empty.

In January-February 2003, again on orders from the IMF, the Haitian government raised domestic fuel prices by 130 percent, leading to a 40 percent rise in the overall cost of living, fueling widespread resentment against Aristide. Simultaneously, the government imposed a wage freeze on public sector employees. In addition, the Washington bankers demanded

a phasing out of Haiti's already abysmal minimum wage. In fact, as Aristide implemented the IMF-dictated economic policies real wages for Haitian workers have steadily fallen, to the point that they're less than half of what they were in the last years of the Duvalier dictatorship.

On top of that, since Aristide dissolved the army in 1994 (fearing a repeat of the earlier coup), and since the total police force was no more than 5,000, very lightly armed, his regime had no one to enforce its edicts, particularly in the provinces. So Lavalas made alliances with local political bosses. In the area around Gonaïves, in the central *département* (province) of Artibonite, Aristide's supporters were led by Amiot Métayer, whose gang was known as the "Cannibal Army." But as Aristide's IMF-dictated economic policies devastated the region, Métayer turned against the government. He joined in a 2002 attempted coup and was arrested for his role in the ensuing violence. Métayer's "army" demanded he be transferred to the jail at Gonaïves, from which they then sprung him in a jail break. Shortly after, he was killed and Aristide was blamed. Subsequently, the "Cannibal Army" renamed itself the "Revolutionary Artibonite Resistance Front" and joined the "democratic opposition."

Meanwhile, international drug traffickers revived Haiti as a transshipment point for flights to the U.S., and reportedly made alliances with local bosses, some of them from Lavalas. Charges of ties to drug trafficking were added to the Bush administration's complaints against Aristide. Actually, the leaders of the FRAPH death squads and the Haitian National Intelligence Service, all on the CIA payroll, who carried out the 1991 coup *against Aristide* were up to their necks in drug trafficking (not to mention the U.S. National Security Council's "guns-for-drugs" financing of the Nicaraguan contra war, CIA involvement in heroin trafficking via Air America during the Vietnam war, etc.). And some U.S.-trained police officials Aristide hired reportedly hooked up with the drug cartels. This was the case of Guy Philippe, the former chief of police at Cap-Haitien who has proclaimed himself head of a "National Liberation and Reconstruction Front." Philippe was trained by the U.S. Secret Service at the police academy in Quito, Ecuador. So Washington accuses Aristide of being linked to drug trafficking, yet those of his erstwhile allies who are named as the link are precisely the ones now leading the Washington-sponsored rebels!

This is what it means to be an imperialist puppet. Aristide accepts U.S.-trained military and police officials and they turn on him; he carries out IMF austerity policies and they provoke popular unrest against him. By doing what Washington demanded, he became expendable. Similarly, in the 1990s the Argentine government followed all the recipes of the "Washington consensus" for "neo-liberalism," privatizing state-owned industry, selling off assets to U.S. and European companies, even adopting the dollar as official currency, as Ecuador did later. It all led straight to bankruptcy and default, whereupon popular unrest brought down the government and Argentina went from being the "poster child" and model student to being the IMF's "bad boy." But Argentina's a long way away from

the U.S. in the Southern Cone of Latin America. Haiti is a half-hour flight from Miami, and only a few days by rickety boat. The Bush administration foresaw the spectacle of thousands of Haitian "boat people" landing in Miami and Broward County during the 2004 elections when they wanted to be concentrating on "hanging chads," "pregnant dimples" and other kinds of electoral fraud.

After sticking with Aristide for a few years, at the end of February, the Bush gang decided they had had enough of Aristide. It seems that Aristide's security was provided not by militias of his supporters but by the shadowy Steele Foundation, a security company headquartered in San Francisco. This is the same "executive protection" outfit that provides the bodyguards for President Karzai in Afghanistan, another American puppet. This reportedly cost Haiti \$6 million to \$9 million a year, and also must be authorized by the U.S. So Aristide asked Steele for some more bodyguards, and Washington nixed it. "The Bush administration blocked a last-minute attempt by Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to bolster his bodyguards – mostly former U.S. Special Forces members – fearing he wanted them to organize and lead a counterattack against the rebels who threatened his presidency," reported Juan Tamayo in the *Miami Herald* (1 March). Puppets are at the mercy of the puppeteer.

The Not-So-Democratic Bourgeois Opposition

Meanwhile, as the death squad "liberation front" was training in the Dominican Republic, with full knowledge of the Dominican military (which sent a brigade of 300 soldiers to Iraq to join the U.S./U.K. occupation forces), Washington had been building up a civilian "B Team." A "Democratic Convergence" ranges from neo-Duvalierists to ex-Maoists. It includes several right-wing parties of the Patriotic Movement for National Salvation; a coterie of bourgeois liberals led by former Port-au-Prince mayor Evans Paul and the "social democrat" Micha Gaillard; and the Organization of the People in Struggle (OPL) of Gérard Pierre-Charles and Suzy Castor, leaders of the former United Party of Haitian Communists (PUCH). The PUCH dissolved in 1991 and was reborn as the Organisation Politique Lavalas, aiming at being the organizational backbone for Aristide's amorphous Lavalas movement. In the 1995 legislative elections, OPL won 17 of 27 senate seats and 66 of 83 deputies, but had a falling out with Aristide over economic policy and electoral spoils two years later. Now these former Moscow-line Stalinists are the "democratic" allies of the death squads.

The Democratic Convergence is, in turn, allied with the "Group of 184" which presents itself as the voice of "civil society." The "184" are headed by U.S.-born "Andy" Apaid, the leading sweatshop owner in Haiti who employs some 4,000 workers, some of them forced to work 78 hours a week for as little as 68 cents a day assembling electronic products for giant U.S. companies including Sperry/Unisys, IBM, Remington and Honeywell. André Apaid Sr. founded Alpha Sewing Industries and was a notorious supporter of "Baby Doc" Duvalier. He headed a USAID project to attract U.S. businesses to Haiti,

and campaigned for support to the 1991 military coup that ousted Aristide. Apaid Jr. is following in his father's footsteps. The Group of 184 was set up in December 2002 after a meeting in Santo Domingo with the International Republican Institute (IRI). In addition to a number of chambers of commerce and employers' associations, the "184" include a number of "union" federations, including the FOS (set up under Duvalier), OGITH (a split-off from the FOS) and CATH (once an independent union group, which in 1990 was taken over by right-wingers), as well as several dozen peasant groups.

The Group of 184 was modeled on the pro-imperialist opposition coalition the U.S. has engineered in Venezuela in its unending attempts to overthrow nationalist president Hugo Chávez. It is a classical CIA front-group operation, harking back to the days when the AFL-CIO dispensed millions in U.S. government money to anti-Communist unions and union-busting operations all over Latin America through the "American Institute for Free Labor Development" (AIFLD). The "AFL-CIA" operation continues, but with new initials. AIFLD has now been renamed the ACILS (American Center for International Labor Solidarity), and it is mainly funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (and USAID). In fact, the groups in the "184" are almost all on the U.S. payroll, through one channel or another. And now they are again serving as conduits for a U.S.-sponsored coup d'état in Haiti, just as the AIFLD did in Guyana in 1963, Brazil in 1964, the Dominican Republic in 1965, Chile in 1973, and El Salvador in the 1980s. Meanwhile, "184" leader Apaid led opposition to Aristide's 2003 increase in the minimum wage and notoriously pulled a gun on union organizers picketing one of his plants.

A number of Haitian "progressive" groups have sought to distinguish themselves from these open counterrevolutionary outfits, yet with their (bourgeois) "democratic" programs they have been used by the pro-imperialist coup plotters. At the end of January, a Popular Democratic Group of 30 organizations, including a number of women's organizations, issued a declaration "No to Foreign Intervention Force" because, they figured, such a force would bolster Aristide. Saying "it is the valiant men and women of Haiti who are on the road of resistance to dispense with Aristide, without an occupation," the statement did *not* call for "dispensing with" the pro-imperialist anti-Aristide forces. The issue of "anti-Aristide unity" was posed sharply by a struggle of university students late last year. On December 5, pro-Lavalas "popular organizations" (known as *chimères*) swarmed onto the campus of the social sciences faculty (FASCH) in Port-au-Prince to block a demonstration calling for Aristide's resignation. This attack, which left 25 injured, gave rise to a chorus of denunciations from groups of intellectuals and academics. The protests were quickly taken over by the anti-Aristide Democratic Platform, feeding into a growing "anti-popular front" against the regime.

University students in an extremely poor country like Haiti can often act as a voice of popular protest against a dictatorship, but they are an intermediate layer with petty-bourgeois and bourgeois aspirations (and often origins) whose protests against "violation of university privileges" can have a reactionary character. In effect, the Lavalas bands pushed the

students more firmly into the arms of "democratic" reaction. The counterrevolutionary Group of 184 was quick to capitalize on this. According to a report by the ostensibly Trotskyist *Voix des Travailleurs* (22 January 2004), affiliated with Lutte Ouvrière in France, a spokesman for the "184" demanded that a banner declaring that "The Bourgeoisie Stole the Revolution of 1804 From Us" be taken down, "in the name of unity of the movement, of course." The students were also told to obliterate the graffiti "Down with the corrupt politicians, sell-out bourgeoisie, corrupt state." The fact that the "democratic" opposition would oppose such slogans speaks volumes about their concept of "democracy" – and their acute awareness of their class interests. The fact that the students accepted this "guidance" places their protest squarely in the camp of counterrevolution.

A genuinely Trotskyist party would seek to win elements from intermediate sectors such as students, who have been drawn into the wake of the bourgeois opposition. While the leader of the Group of 184, sweatshop boss Apaid, is head of the Haitian association for private education, communists fight for a massive literacy drive, for high quality public education for all and for free higher education with open admissions – demands which it will take workers revolution to achieve.

In contrast, much of the left has lined up either behind Aristide's Lavalas Family bourgeois regime or de facto with the bourgeois opposition. The French Communist Party simply parrots the line of their comrade Gérard-Pierre Charles, the "ex-"Stalinist who first went over to Lavalas and now acts as a "left" cover for counterrevolution as leader of the bourgeois Democratic Convergence. Lutte Ouvrière calls for no support to either of the bourgeois clans, but does not call for a struggle to drive out the imperialist occupation troops. Instead, it emphasizes that "The Armed Bands Are Still the Law" (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 12 March). As if the Lavalas *chimères* are the main enemy while French troops patrol Port-au-Prince! In the U.S., where the black Democrats support Aristide, so do the Communist Party and Workers World Party, reflecting their popular-front politics. (The pro-Castro Socialist Workers Party has "rectified" its earlier pro-Aristide line, which treated him as some kind of misleader of anti-imperialist masses.)

In statements issued on February 28 and March 1, the Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International called for building a revolutionary workers party against the feuding bourgeois forces, at the same time as we urged a military bloc against the approaching *macoute* army and now against the U.S.-French-Canadian occupation of Haiti. The victory of openly counterrevolutionary forces over the nationalist front man for imperialism, Aristide, threatens massacres of poor and working people such as occurred after the 1991 anti-Aristide coup. While Lavalas forces look to diplomatic pressure from Caribbean bourgeois governments (CARICOM) and lash out in sporadic and futile actions, it is necessary to organize worker-led resistance, drawing in the peasantry and other oppressed sectors, in a struggle for proletarian revolution not only in Haiti but throughout the Caribbean region and extending to the heart of U.S. imperialism. ■

Dominican Republic 1965, Chile 1973, Haiti 2004

Haiti: U.S. Engineers Death Squad Coup

MARCH 12 – For the third time in 90 years, the United States has occupied Haiti; and for the first time in 200 years of Haitian independence, the French colonialists are back. In 1915, U.S. Marines landed to restore “order” and stayed for almost 20 years. In 1994, Democratic president Bill Clinton sent 20,000 U.S. troops to restore Haiti’s president Jean-Bertrand Aristide to office. The aim: to forestall a mass uprising against a military junta which ousted Aristide three years earlier in a coup under Republican president George Bush I. Now, a decade later, George Bush II instigates an uprising and sends the Marines to remove Aristide. The “rebel army” whose chiefs now parade in the streets of the Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince, is led by some of the same mass murderers who slaughtered thousands of poor and working-class Haitians following the 1991 coup. Then as now, the Haitian military men have been trained by the Pentagon and the paramilitary thugs are led by CIA “assets.” The “civilian” opposition that helped oust Aristide is on the U.S. payroll. And to ensure this motley crew’s hold on power, a multinational force of 2,500 U.S., French, Canadian and Chilean troops is now patrolling the streets. “In short, welcome to Haiti, a new Franco-American colony in the Caribbean,” as the weekly *Haiti Progrès* (10 March) put it.

This is, quite literally, a “death squad coup” – and already the killings have begun. A member of Aristide’s Lavalas party is seized by the rebels in Petit Goâve and burned alive. On the road from the capital, corpses lie on the side of the road, executed with a shot to the head, many with their hands bound. It’s hardly a surprise. As they marched on Port-au-Prince, one of the top “rebels” was the former No. 2 of the euphemistically

**Throw the Imperialists Out!
Asylum for Haitian Refugees!**



Demonstrators march outside U.S. embassy in capital of Port-au-Prince March 5 to protest ouster of Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide and new occupation of the country.

named Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti (FRAPH), the CIA-backed gang of assassins whose initials sound out the word “hit” in French and Creole. So the FRAPH is back, and along with them the *tontons macoutes* left over from the dictatorship of “Papa Doc” and “Baby Doc” Duvalier, ousted in 1986; the *ninjas* unleashed by generals Namphy and Prosper Avril, who took over in 1988; and the *attachés*, used by General Cedras to terrorize the slum neighborhoods follow-

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