



## **Break With the Bourgeois Tripartite Alliance!**

# **Forge a Leninist-Trotskyist Party to Fight for Workers Revolution!**

Thirteen years after the fall of apartheid, it has become increasingly evident to the black toilers that the Tripartite Alliance government has not altered the social and economic conditions of the impoverished masses. The rigid, legally enforced racial segregation and subjugation of apartheid is no more. But behind the liberation rhetoric of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) and the democratic trappings of "one person, one vote," there is the reality of *neo-apartheid capitalism*, based on the same social foundations as the former regime: the brutal exploitation of the overwhelmingly black proletariat by a tiny class of fabulously wealthy white capitalist exploiters (albeit now sprinkled with a few black front men).

The official unemployment rate for the black African population exceeds 40 percent, while millions have been evicted from their homes or had their electricity or water cut off because they could not pay sky-high bills. Police crackdowns have escalated against workers striking against poverty wages, township residents protesting deadly cuts in electricity and drinking water, students resisting tuition increases. There is mounting rage directed at the uncontrollable corruption of the government. Meanwhile the capitalist ANC-led government searches for scapegoats to head off mounting discontent. Immigrants, many fleeing starvation and repression, are blamed for the high unemployment rate. Ominously, tribal enmities are being fostered. Since coming to power, the ANC has increasingly worked to pit different sections of the oppressed against each other. The contest to succeed Thabo Mbeki as head of the bourgeois ANC is viewed by many as a contest between the Xhosa central leaders of the ANC and Jacob Zuma, a Zulu traditionalist. Zuma himself is a bourgeois politician who endorses the austerity policies of the current government. An ANC run by

**Apartheid 1990**



AP

**Neo-Apartheid 2004**



Shayne Robinson/Sapa

**Police are the enforcers of capitalist rule. Left: Cop attacks anti-apartheid demonstrator in Bloemfontein. Right: Under ANC-led government, police brutalise demonstrator protesting water and electricity fees at Soweto township.**

Zuma would be just as anti-working-class as the current ANC.

It was against this backdrop of growing dissatisfaction that the twelfth national congress of the South African Communist Party (SACP) met in July in Port Elizabeth, where the future of the alliance with the ANC was the subject of vigorous debate. While SACP leader Nzimande gives thinly veiled support to Zuma on the false basis that he is pro-working class, some delegates at the recent congress called for the SACP to run candidates under its own name, as opposed to on the ANC slate. However, the resolution of the Gauteng region proposing that the SACP run its own candidates explicitly asserted that the "revolutionary alliance led by the ANC" is "an historic and important alliance that should be preserved." This means that the SACP could continue to serve in the bourgeois government but as part of a coalition with the ANC rather than as ANC ministers.

The real question confronting SACP militants is why would a party that claims to represent the interests of the working class

*(continued on page 19)*

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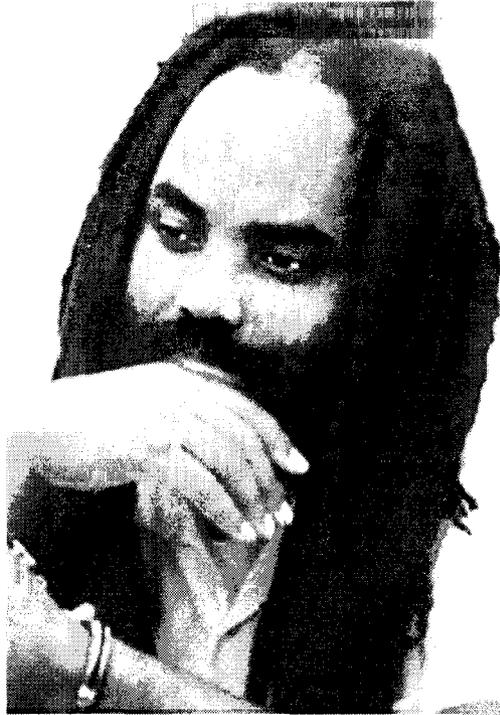
# Mobilise Labour's Power!

## Mumia Abu-Jamal Must Be Free!

Mumia Abu-Jamal, the foremost political prisoner in the U.S., has been on death row for a quarter of a century, isolated in a cell that he describes as living in a toilet. The racist U.S. rulers seek to forever silence this powerful "voice of the voiceless." A former Black Panther Party spokesman, supporter of the MOVE organisation and award-winning journalist, Mumia was framed up in 1982 on false charges of killing a Philadelphia police officer. A passionate fighter against racial, ethnic and class bias, against cop terror and for social justice, Mumia was sentenced to die on the basis of his political history and beliefs. His frame-up shows what the death penalty is all about. Racist and barbaric, it is the lynch rope made legal, the ultimate weapon of state repression against the working class and oppressed.

The U.S. federal appeals court will pronounce on Mumia's fate imminently. But there should be no illusions in these proceedings. For 25 years both the Pennsylvania state and federal courts have rejected or refused to even consider overwhelming evidence of Mumia's innocence, including the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed the police officer. In Mumia the state sees the spectre of black revolt. They are determined to carry out his legal lynching or bury him in the living hell of life in prison. This must not happen!

Mass protest to demand immediate freedom for this innocent man needs to be rekindled now! The Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle legal and social defence organisation associated with the Spartacist League/U.S.—stands for pursuing every legal avenue on Mumia's behalf while putting no faith in the "justice" of the capitalist courts. It will take an international mobilisation of the masses, centrally the workers movement, to secure Mumia's freedom. When he faced execution in 1995, a world-wide mass outpouring of protest, including from unions representing millions, stayed the executioner's hand. This struggle was demobilised by those who organised protests subordinating the demand for Mumia's freedom to



Mumia Abu-Jamal.

the call for a new trial, a course which fostered illusions in the very "justice" system that railroaded Mumia to death row in the first place.

The case of Mumia goes to the heart of the role of the bourgeois state—police, courts, gaols and the standing army—as an instrument of violence and coercion in the hands of the ruling capitalist class. All talk about the state being "neutral" can only be a result of crass ignorance or conscious deception. The South African working class and the oppressed masses are no strangers to the use of the death penalty as a tool to silence political opponents. Many fighters against apartheid perished through legalised state murder as well as disappearances at the hands of government death squads like the Vlakplaas Civil Cooperation Bureau's operatives, including apartheid mass murderer Dirk Coetzee.

International protests were crucial in saving leading anti-apartheid and working-class leaders like Nelson Mandela and Moses Mayekiso from the

apartheid death gallows. Though the death penalty was subsequently abolished in South Africa, there is huge pressure for its reinstatement as the contradictions between a constitution which in some aspects is among the most liberal in the world and the realities of poverty, inequality and disillusionment at the base of society continue to dog the rulers of the neo-apartheid capitalist "new" South Africa. The working class must be at the forefront of the fight against attempts to bring back the death penalty.

The South African working class and poor must join with all those opposed to capitalist oppression and the death penalty in demanding: Freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal now! The American black oppressed minority was one of the leading international allies of the South African poor in the fight against apartheid, mainly because they saw the oppression of South African blacks as a mirror image of their own oppression as a race-colour caste, the special oppression of which forms the bedrock of American capitalism.

The support of South African workers in the early 1990s played a critical role in winning increased support for Mumia internationally. This working class was part of the international labour-centred protests that forced the stay of execution after the signing of the death warrant in mid-1995. Leading trade unions like COSATU, NACTU and NUM have joined the current fight to save the life of this innocent man.

The fight for Mumia's freedom is the fight against capitalist tyranny and injustice everywhere. His freedom will not be won through reliance on the rigged "justice" system or capitalist politicians. The power that can turn the tide is the mobilisation of the workers movement which has the social power to shut down production. The struggle to free Mumia is part of the fight for black liberation, and the broader fight for socialist revolution and therefore the liberation of us all.

Mumia must not die! Fight for his immediate release now! ■

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# Permanent Revolution vs. “Two-Stage” Stalinist Betrayal

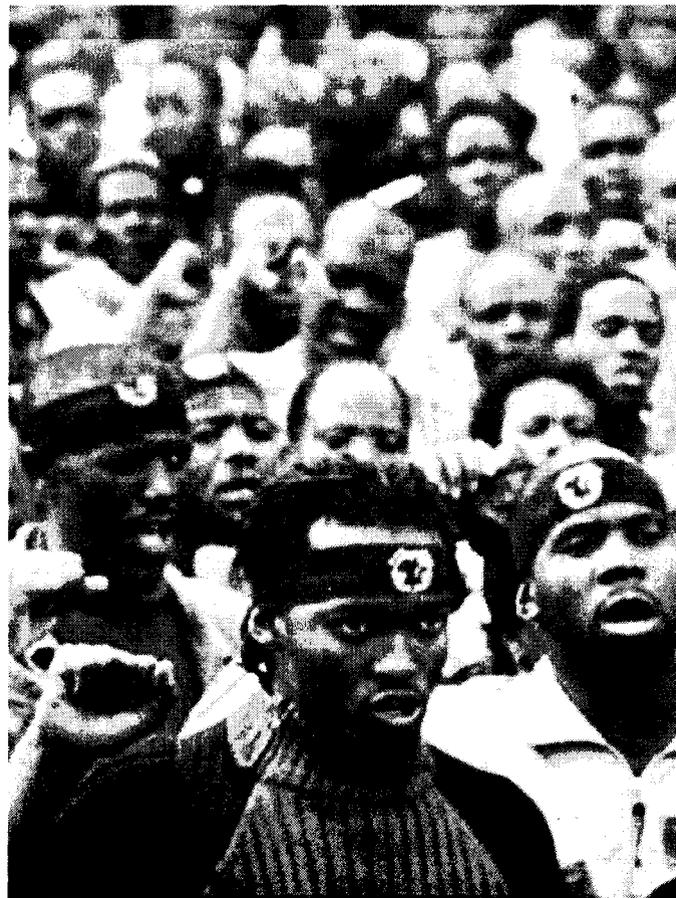
The following article is reprinted from Workers Vanguard No. 875, 1 September 2006.

In 1994, after more than a decade of massive struggles by the predominantly black working class and township poor, the white-supremacist police-state regime in South Africa was replaced by Nelson Mandela’s African National Congress (ANC). The black African, coloured (mixed-race) and Indian working people were promised that their everyday conditions of life would be greatly improved by redistributing the country’s wealth from the affluent white ruling elite. Instead, under the bourgeois-nationalist regimes of Mandela and his successor, Thabo Mbeki, conditions for the working class, rural toilers and township masses have in many important respects gotten worse.

Almost a million workers have been laid off through the privatization of government-owned industry and other kinds of capitalist restructuring. Sixty percent of the adult jobless black African population has never been employed. Two million people have been evicted from their homes because they could not pay the sky-high utility bills, and some ten million have had their electricity and water cut off. At the same time, a small black elite has arisen who drive Mercedes, vacation in Dubai and clink champagne glasses with the Randlords of the AngloGold Ashanti corporation. The income of white families has increased substantially while that of the overwhelming majority of blacks has plummeted.

A key factor in the ANC’s accession to power was the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, which for decades had supported the ANC materially and diplomatically. During the Cold War, the ANC and other bourgeois and petty-bourgeois “Third World” movements and regimes were able to play off Moscow and Washington, thereby achieving a certain latitude in which to maneuver. But as the Moscow Stalinist regime under Mikhail Gorbachev fell apart, the ANC leaders openly embraced “power sharing” with the white racist South African rulers, a section of whom accepted that ANC rule no longer posed a threat to the white economic oligarchy. Today, despite the change in the political and judicial superstructure, South Africa remains, as it was under the white-supremacist apartheid system, a country in which the black masses live in Third World poverty while most whites enjoy First World conditions. We have thus described South Africa under the ANC as a neo-apartheid capitalist state.

Nothing more clearly exposes the fact that the ANC-led regime is the enemy of the workers and the oppressed than its response to the AIDS pandemic that has ravaged South Africa. According to the United Nations, in 2005 an estimated 5.5 million South Africans were HIV positive and some 320,000 died from AIDS. Women are among the hardest hit by the pandemic. Today, over 39 percent of pregnant women in the province of KwaZulu-Natal test HIV-positive. An effective, scientific response to this crisis has been willfully frustrated by the *criminal policies* of the ANC-led government. Mbeki himself outrageously refuses to acknowledge the scientific fact that the HIV virus causes AIDS! On August 24, police using pepper spray



Reuters

May 18: Johannesburg rally during one-day COSATU general strike protesting unemployment, poverty.

attacked protesters in Cape Town who, as part of a national day of protest by the Treatment Action Campaign, were calling for the firing of the health minister and demanding that prisoners be treated with anti-retroviral drugs.

A key agency upholding the government is the heavily overlapping leadership of the reformist South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). As part of the governing “Tripartite Alliance,” the SACP/COSATU tops keep the country’s powerful and combative working class tied to the bourgeois nationalists of the ANC, who in turn are the black front men for the dominant white capitalist class. Leading SACP cadres are senior officials in the government, including those branches directly engaged in the brutal repression of labor struggles and township protests: the Security Ministry and the intelligence service.

In the last two years, major labor strikes and militant township protests have signaled growing hostility on the part of the black masses toward the ANC regime. The future of the Tripartite Alliance is now being intensely debated within the workers movement and among broader layers of society. Amid the anger and bitter disillusionment among their

**Break With the Bourgeois ANC—No Support to Mbeki, Zuma! Forge a Leninist-Trotskyist Party!**

working-class supporters, the SACP tops recently came out with a discussion document in which they openly criticized the central ANC leadership (*Bua Komani! Special Edition*, May 2006). The document raised the possibility of running candidates in future elections in the party's own name, within the framework of the Alliance. Such candidacies would have a purely token character, in no way challenging, much less weakening, the ANC's governmental power. The document categorically rejects "watering down the ANC's overwhelming electoral majority."

Along somewhat similar lines, the COSATU bureaucrats have issued a discussion document ("COSATU Political Discussion Document—Possibilities for Fundamental Social Change") in preparation for a congress in September strongly condemning the "neoliberal" policies of the Mbeki regime. It points out that the share of national income going to the workers has decreased while the share raked off in corporate profits has markedly increased. Nonetheless, the COSATU misleaders cite favorably surveys through 2004 that "have confirmed that the overwhelming majority of COSATU members support COSATU's approach of strategic engagement from within the Alliance."

The sordid reality behind the ideological claptrap of the SACP document is the maneuvering inside the ANC itself. The SACP/COSATU tops are backing Mbeki's main factional opponent, Jacob Zuma. Mbeki's former deputy president, Zuma combines a "man of the people" posture with appeals to Zulu tribalist nationalism.

The SACP leaders have always used the Menshevik/Stalinist schema of "two-stage revolution" as an ideological justification for their historic alliance and interpenetration with the ANC. According to this schema, conditions are not currently ready for socialism. Therefore, first must come a political bloc with "progressive" bourgeois nationalists, which in South Africa is called the "National Democratic Revolution" (NDR). Then, some far-off and unspecified time later, this will evolve into socialism. Thus the recent document asserted "the inextricable linkage between the NDR and the imperative of 'building socialism now,'" while reaffirming "our commitment to the ANC-led Alliance."

South Africa's black workers and poor know damn well that the country is not moving toward socialism but in the opposite direction: toward increasingly brutal capitalist exploitation and immiseration. The SACP leadership is in some difficulty as it has failed to produce the gains it promised the masses. Hence, in order to repair the damaged credibility of the Alliance, the SACP/COSATU tops have adopted a more leftist stance toward the Mbeki regime while promising to fight for more worker-friendly policies. This is a cynical political con game. In order to go forward in its struggles, the working class must break with the ANC-led Alliance and with the reformist politics of class collaboration packaged as the National Democratic Revolution.

In opposing the "two-stage revolution" schema—a formula for class betrayal—Spartacist South Africa, section of the International Communist League, stands for the program and perspective of permanent revolution developed by Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky. This posits that in countries of combined and uneven development, the outstanding democratic tasks historically associated with the bourgeois revolutions can only be carried out through the assumption of power by the working class. In South Africa, genuine national liberation and the destruction of black oppression require proletarian revolution and its extension to the advanced capitalist (imperialist) countries of North America, West Europe and Japan. In fighting for that goal, we seek to build a Leninist revolutionary vanguard party of the working class that would champion the cause of the vast unemployed urban masses, the landless, immigrants,

women, agricultural laborers and all of those oppressed under neo-apartheid capitalism.

## Upsurge in Labor Struggles, Township Protests

All too little has changed in the "new" South Africa. Retaining an ironclad grip on the economic resources of the country (mines, banks, factories and land), the white bourgeoisie subcontracts out the task of administering the capitalist state to the ANC.

Last year saw the largest strike wave since the ANC assumed power, as workers protested starvation wages in the face of booming profits and fat bonuses to management. Militant actions by South African Airlines workers grounded both domestic and international flights, stunning the company by their determination and the level of public support. In the first national mine workers strike since the late 1980s, 100,000 members of the National Union of Mineworkers shut down the gold sector, supported in an important (and unprecedented) action by two historically white craft unions.

In June 2005, COSATU called a one-day general strike against unemployment and poverty, supposedly meant to launch a series of rolling mass actions. A rally at Johannesburg Library Gardens was characterized by heightened anti-ANC sentiment. When the COSATU bureaucrats persisted in raising desperate cries of "Viva ANC! Viva!", a large section of the crowd of up to 50,000 replied "Phansi!" (Down!).

For the past two years, a wave of protests—mainly over lack of water, electricity and decent housing—has swept South Africa. The most dramatic upheaval occurred in the Merafong township of Khutsong on the West Rand, where residents called for a boycott of the local elections in March 2006 and turned the area into a "no go zone" for the ruling party. When Defense Minister and ANC national chairman Mosiuoa "Terror" Lekota attempted to call a pro-government rally, he was greeted with chants of "voetsek" (f--k off).

In the township of Soshanguve, north of Pretoria, residents used rakes, spades and building tools to drive off security guards who had dismantled their shacks the night before. Police then arrived and fired on the crowd with rubber bullets and stun grenades. In Durban, a march by the Shack Dwellers Movement, which organized an electoral boycott, was attacked by the cops. Protesters were beaten while in police custody. These scenes of revolt and repression take place almost daily in the "new" South Africa.

## Jacob Zuma: Anti-Working-Class Politician

The SACP and COSATU tops have sought to deflect the growing anger against the government among the working class and township poor into support for the Zuma "camp" of the ANC. When Mbeki dismissed Zuma as deputy president in June 2005, the COSATU leadership, the SACP and the ANC Youth and Women's leagues came to his defense. Mbeki is widely viewed as a coldblooded, arrogant technocrat whose main priority is placating the white corporate elite and their imperialist senior partners, as well as their black junior partners. But as a bourgeois politician and Zulu traditionalist, Zuma is no less a class enemy of the proletariat than Mbeki. Criminally, the SACP/COSATU tops have told the working class to take sides in a power struggle between two bourgeois politicians whose reactionary politics are *indistinguishable*. Opposing Mbeki is not the same as opposing class collaboration with the bourgeois ANC. ***Break with the ANC! Forge a revolutionary workers party!***

The obscenity of the SACP's pro-Zuma position became utterly manifest during his recent trial for the rape of an HIV-positive woman, which resulted in his acquittal. In his trial testimony, Zuma ignorantly proclaimed that he showered after sex to minimize the chance of catching AIDS! Meanwhile, his supporters paraded outside the courthouse carrying the slogans "Burn the Bitch" and "100% Zuluboy." Disgustingly, the Young Communist League joined the pro-Zuma pro-

tests, rendering absolutely contemptible the SACP's claims to stand against Mbeki's HIV denialism and against women's oppression.

One of the most sinister aspects of these events was their fostering of tribalist enmities. Many Zulus and others saw Zuma's dismissal as an anti-Zulu plot by Mbeki and other Xhosa central leaders of the ANC. The historically Xhosa region of the Eastern Cape in fact contains some of the most destitute areas in the country. In reality, the ANC represents the interests of the (overwhelmingly white) capitalist class against workers of all racial and ethnic groups: Zulu, Xhosa and other black Africans, Indian, coloured and white. Since coming to power, the ANC has increasingly worked to pit different sectors of the oppressed against each other.

### The Tripartite Alliance: A Nationalist Popular Front

The Tripartite Alliance between the ANC, SACP and COSATU is a nationalist popular front in which the power of the African working class is held in check by its subordination to the supposedly "progressive" national bourgeoisie. The SACP's class-collaborationist alliance with the bourgeois ANC goes back at least to the 1930s. The central purpose of the SACP discussion document is to provide a theoretical and historical rationale for maintaining the Alliance.

According to the document, the post-1994 period was a "democratic breakthrough" opening up progressive possibilities under the ANC regime. Focusing its criticism overwhelmingly on the GEAR policy—an anti-worker austerity plan implemented in 1996 under Mandela to attract foreign investment and boost profits—the document argues: "*Relative to the transformational potential of the 1994 conjuncture, this project [GEAR] represents a serious strategic setback for the working class (and the national democratic revolution)*" (emphasis in original). The document draws the conclusion that it is necessary to rebuild a mass-based ANC in order to fight for a "progressive developmental" (i.e., capitalist) state.

Even on its own terms, this account whitewashes the fact that the SACP initially endorsed GEAR and has played an active role in the ANC-led government for ten years. Underlying GEAR was not the sudden conversion of the central ANC leadership to neoliberal ideology but the imperatives of the world capitalist system: driving down the cost of labor in order to increase the international competitiveness of South African business.

Those like the SACP who argue that some other set of economic policies—e.g., the 1994 COSATU-authored Reconstruction and Development Program—could promote the welfare of labor and capital simultaneously are peddling a nationalist lie. And the purpose of that lie is to obscure the fundamental fact that modern society is divided into two main classes—the capitalist exploiters and the exploited proletariat—whose interests are irreconcilable.

By centering its criticisms on Mbeki's particular policies, the SACP seeks to disguise the class nature of South African society and the neo-apartheid capitalist state. Thus the document asserts: "The post-1994 democratic state is not inherently capitalist, it is, in fact, a sharply class-contested reality." Furthermore, in regard to the judiciary, the police and intelligence forces, the document declares that "demagogic attacks on these institutions are short-sighted and reckless."

As Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky argued repeatedly, there is no such thing as a class-neutral "democracy"; every state is an apparatus of repression—based on armed bodies of men, principally the army and police—that protects the social interests and property forms of the ruling class. Lenin wrote in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* (1918): "Even in the most democratic bourgeois state the oppressed people at every step encounter the crying contradiction between the *formal* equality proclaimed by the

'democracy' of the capitalists and the thousands of *real* limitations and subterfuges which turn the proletarians into *wage-slaves*" (emphasis in original). The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes. The capitalist state cannot be reformed. It must be smashed through socialist revolution.

Ironically, a counter-polemic against the SACP document published in an official journal of the ANC, *ANC Today* (13 June 2006), cites Marx to refute the notion that South Africa is not a capitalist society with a capitalist state: "In reality, the statement that South Africa 'is not inherently capitalist' is mere demagoguery, with no scientific, Marxist foundation." Indeed it is!

Apartheid's purpose was the procurement, reproduction and control of superexploited African labor for white-owned capital, initially centered on the mining industries. The legal edifice may have changed, but the fundamental basis of South African capitalism, including the enormous disparities between racial groups, has not. During the anti-apartheid struggles, the SACP and COSATU leadership consciously maneuvered to tie the working class to the bourgeois-nationalist ANC despite the masses' far more radical aspirations, thereby laying the basis for neo-apartheid capitalism. Exploitation, immiseration and oppression can be eliminated only through a *proletarian socialist revolution* modeled on the October 1917 Russian Revolution led by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party.

### Menshevik/Stalinist "Two-Stage" Betrayal

The 1917 October Revolution was the great event of the 20th century. Leading the vast, impoverished peasant masses, the small Russian working class, concentrated centrally in a few industrial centers, seized political power across one-sixth of the globe. The Russian Revolution smashed the old state apparatus, inherited from the tsarist autocracy, replacing the class dictatorship of capital with the dictatorship of the proletariat based on democratically elected councils (soviets) of workers and peasants.

Despite the enormous poverty and backwardness that the Bolsheviks confronted (and the later degeneration of the Soviet workers state under Stalinist rule), the October Revolution laid the basis for a planned economy that would transform the

Reply to the Guardian	
<b>The Stalin School of Falsification Revisited</b>	
A Spartacus Youth League Pamphlet	
	
<p>Eight articles, originally written as a polemic against American Maoists, expose decades of Stalinist betrayals of revolutionary opportunities. Includes articles on: the "revolution by stages"; the sellout programme of "socialism in one country"; class-collaborationist betrayal of the 1937 Spanish Revolution; "Mao's China from Stalin to Nixon." (published 1975)</p>	
<p><b>R2</b> (48 pages)</p>	
<p>Mail cheques/postal money orders payable to: <b>Spartacist, PostNet Suite 248, Private Bag X2226 Johannesburg 2000, South Africa</b></p>	



Stalin's 1927 autographed photo (centre) sent to Chiang Kai-shek: "To the Guomindang's victory and China's liberation." Left: In line with Stalinist policy, Shanghai workers welcomed Chiang Kai-shek's troops into city, April 1927. Right: Execution of Communist Party member, one of thousands massacred following Chiang's coup.

country into an industrial powerhouse whose military might served as a counterweight to U.S. imperialism. Full employment, housing and health care were won only through the overthrow of capitalism.

Against the Mensheviks, the original proponents of "two-stage revolution," Lenin wrote a few months after the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy while Russia was in revolutionary turmoil:

"The leaders of the petty bourgeoisie—the intellectuals, the prosperous peasants, the present parties of the Narodniks [populists]...and the Mensheviks—are *not* at present in favor of a revolution against the capitalists....

"The conclusion is obvious: only the assumption of power by the proletariat, backed by the semi-proletarians, can give the country a really strong and really revolutionary government" (emphasis in original).

—"A Strong Revolutionary Government" (May 1917)

This statement shows that Lenin had in effect come to the understanding earlier put forward by Trotsky that the revolution in Russia could be consummated only through the proletarian seizure of power.

As later practiced by the Stalinists, the "two-stage revolution" policy led not to socialism but to bloody counterrevolution. The second stage, so to speak, occurred when the bourgeois nationalists turned on and massacred their Communist would-be allies and the workers and peasants who supported them, such as in China in 1927 and Indonesia in 1965.

Consider the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27. By then the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet state had placed at the head of the Communist International J.V. Stalin and Nikolai Bukharin, who applied the old Menshevik schema to colonial and semicolonial countries under the slogan of the "Anti-Imperialist United Front." Insisting that the coming revolution in semicolonial China would be limited to a "national-democratic revolution" placing the bourgeoisie in power, Stalin and Bukharin, despite objections by Trotsky, continued the policy of the liquidation of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) into Chiang Kai-shek's bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang (GMD), which soon engaged in a civil war against imperialist-backed Northern warlords in the name of unifying China.

In early 1927, the GMD army marched on Shanghai, then controlled by a local militarist backed by the British. Under CCP leadership, 500,000 workers staged a general strike that

developed into a successful insurrection. Communist-led workers effectively took over this key metropolis. But the Shanghai proletariat laid down its arms on Stalin's orders. And shortly after Chiang's troops entered the city, where they were welcomed by the victorious workers, Chiang staged a bloody coup that beheaded the Chinese proletariat. Tens of thousands of Communists and revolutionary-minded workers were slaughtered. Following this catastrophic defeat, the battered CCP, under Moscow's instructions, shifted its support from Chiang to a rival "left" GMD bourgeois nationalist, Wang Jingwei, who controlled the major city of Wuhan. A few months later, Wang in turn massacred his Communist would-be allies and their working-class supporters.

### Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution

It was in the aftermath of the crushing defeat of the Chinese Revolution (and part of his struggle against the treacherous and disastrous Stalinist leadership of the world Communist movement) that Trotsky generalized his theory of permanent revolution, which he had first developed in 1904-06 with regard to the course of the revolutionary struggle in tsarist Russia. Permanent revolution *rejects* the nationalist bloc between the proletariat and its capitalist class enemy.

By the late 19th century, the major imperialist powers had subjugated the rest of the world through either conquest or commercial/financial dependency, while the struggle among them for economic and military predominance intensified. In countries of belated capitalist development, the propertied classes emerged as too dependent on and tied to imperialism to complete the historic tasks of social and economic modernization. "Progressive developmental" capitalism in a country like South Africa or those of Latin America is an illusion. However, in many cases foreign investment has created a force capable of breaking the hold of imperialist domination and opening the road to social progress: the industrial proletariat.

Thus, Trotsky wrote in *The Permanent Revolution* (1929): "With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution to their tasks of achieving *democracy and national emancipation* is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation."

In South Africa, adequate housing for millions in the town-

ships and shantytowns, electricity and clean water for the entire population, free quality education, the eradication of *lobola* (the bride price) and female genital mutilation, the mobilization of all available scientific and medical resources in combating the AIDS pandemic: these desperately needed measures require the socialist transformation of the economy and society. South Africa's industrial proletariat has the power and class interests to unite all of the oppressed in a determined battle for a revolutionary workers government.

Lenin, Trotsky and the other leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution never believed (contrary to Stalin's later falsifications) that socialism could be built in a single country, especially not in a relatively poor country besieged by world imperialism. As Trotsky wrote in *The Permanent Revolution*: "In a country where the proletariat has power in its hands as the result of the democratic revolution, the subsequent fate of the dictatorship and socialism depends in the last analysis not only and not so much upon the national productive forces as upon the development of the international socialist revolution."

As we wrote shortly after the ANC succeeded the apartheid regime:

"The consolidation or simply the survival of a socialist revolution in South Africa *requires* its international extension. This was the core of the Bolsheviks' program....

"For the moment South Africa is a weakened link in the chain of the world capitalist system binding the neocolonies of the Third World to the imperialist states of North America, West Europe and Japan. It is necessary to mobilize the forces of the proletariat to *break* that chain at its weakest links, and then fight like hell to take the battle to the imperialist centers, seeking allies against the vicious enemy of all the oppressed—international capital. Thus, the fight to build a South African Bolshevik Party is inseparable from the struggle we in the International Communist League are waging to reforge an authentically Trotskyist Fourth International."

—"South African Powder Keg: Part Four," WV No. 606, 16 September 1994, reprinted in *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 12

A socialist revolution in South Africa would reverberate among working people and the oppressed the world over, finding strategically powerful allies in the proletariat of the imperialist centers.

## For a Revolutionary Vanguard Party

Reflecting the growing popular discontent with the Mbeki government, several groups and individuals outside the Alliance have raised the call for a new mass workers party, for example, Trevor Ngwane of the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF). The Johannesburg-based APF functions as a kind of political sandbox for various pseudo-Trotskyist organizations in South Africa, including the Cliffite Keep Left group and the Democratic Socialist Movement, which is affiliated with the Taafefite Committee for a Workers International. Trevor Ngwane himself is a former ANC local councillor who was expelled from the party in 2000 for opposing the extensive privatization of government-owned industries.

In a brief document titled, "The Vanguard and the Mass" (February 2005), Ngwane calls for "a party which groups the majority of workers together on politics which reflects their own interests" and denounces any conception of an independent vanguard party as amounting to "not really a vanguard—just a sect." Ngwane's "Socialist Group" in the APF issued a similar call three years ago. In response, we wrote in "South Africa: Union Militants Protest COSATU Alliance with ANC" (WV No. 808, 29 August 2003): "This is essentially a call for a 'party of the whole class.' The model for this is the (old) British Labour Party.... We reject the notion that the South African working class must pass through the experience of a mass reformist party before a revolutionary party can develop out of

it—a kind of two-stage theory of party-building."

In practice, the APF is a class-collaborationist outfit seeking to pressure the ANC-led regime from the left. This is clearly indicated by the APF's allegiance to the World Social Forum (WSF) movement, which is also supported by the COSATU leadership. The purpose of the Social Forums, which are bankrolled by various agencies of the imperialist rulers and their neocolonial underlings, was to draw left-radical youth protesting the evils of "globalization" away from pitched battles with the forces of the capitalist state and to corral them behind the "democratic alternative" of parliamentary reformism, while pretending that these talk shops were "non-parliamentary" (see "Social Forum Con Game," WV No. 853, 2 September 2005).

The list of sponsors of the biannual meetings of the WSF in Porto Alegre, Brazil, include the Brazilian federal government, the Banco do Brasil and the country's giant oil company, Petrobras. The 2003 European Social Forum (ESF) in Paris was funded by the right-wing Chirac government. And the 2004 ESF in London was bankrolled and hosted by New Labour mayor Ken Livingstone, supporter of the U.S./NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999.

The Social Forums have been dominated by the misnamed "Non-Governmental" Organizations (NGOs). These organizations, sanctioned by and receiving much of their funding from churches, corporations and capitalist states, are hardly independent of the governments to which they are answerable. Like other components of the Social Forum movement elsewhere, the APF in South Africa is funded by NGOs such as Oxfam Canada and War on Want. As the old saying goes, "He who pays the piper calls the tune."

For the perspective of permanent revolution in South Africa to become a reality requires the forging of a vanguard party modeled on Lenin's Bolshevik Party, a party which led the first and only successful proletarian revolution in history. This party united the most politically advanced workers with the best of the leftist intellectuals. The Bolshevik Party was built through political and polemical struggle against the reformist pseudo-Marxists (the Mensheviks), the populist Social Revolutionaries and the left nationalists of the various oppressed peoples of the tsarist empire. Similarly, our comrades of Spartacist South Africa seek to aggressively confront the different currents of the South African left in political and polemical struggle with the aim of forging an authentic Leninist-Trotskyist party on a clear programmatic basis. ■

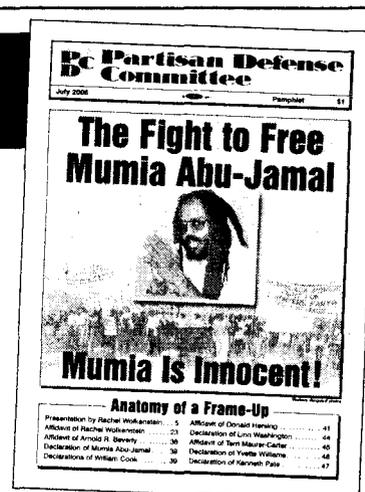
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# Protest Apartheid-Style Police Brutality Against Union Bus Drivers!

The following article is reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 893, 25 May 2007.

JOHANNESBURG—According to a *City Press* (5 May) article, a Johannesburg police unit is being probed for carrying out “apartheid-style torture” of members of the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) who had been on strike for more than two months earlier this year against the Metrobus system controlled by the local African National Congress (ANC) government. The *City Press* reports:

“According to (Dumisani) Langa [the SAMWU branch secretary], their 12 members were picked up at their houses in the early hours of separate days last month and taken to the Germiston police station. Once there, police officers allegedly tied their hands behind their backs. They then allegedly beat them up, attached live electric wires onto their bodies and doused them with water. The cops then allegedly covered their mouths and noses with an old tyre tube to starve them of air.”

Langa continued that the SAMWU members “were gruesomely tortured and forced to make confessions linking them to the deaths and violence that marred the Metrobus strike and after failed attempts to get our members to sign prepared incriminating statements, they were just released without even being charged or taken to court.”

Langa confirmed the story to *Workers Vanguard*. The union suspects that the employer colluded with the police by giving them a list of names of workers on strike and their addresses. Langa said that workers were arrested in different parts of Johannesburg, including the city centre, Krugersdorp, and Soweto, and were later taken to Germiston, where they were told on arrival that they had no rights and were going to be beaten if they did not confess or identify those responsible for attacks on scabs.

Examples of this brutalisation included cops forming a boxing ring around one of the victims. One large cop announced he was boxing champ Mike Tyson and said they would fight it out—but only the cop had the right to hit! One of the strikers, arrested earlier and then released, has now been taken into custody again, facing unspecified charges. This is *detention without trial!* Spartacist South Africa, section of the International Communist League, demands that the union comrade be released immediately: Cops and courts—hands off the Johannesburg bus drivers!

The reason why the bosses are so hostile to the SAMWU bus drivers is that their strike was a powerful example of class struggle that shut down bus operations, in contrast to relying on “conciliation” and arbitration in the bourgeois courts. The strike won real gains, including the reversal of an arrogant move by the employer to stop a long-existing policy of paying workers for accumulated sick leave. The strike also won the

reinstatement of three dismissed shop stewards and the rehiring of 19 other workers.

The police atrocities—committed by black cops—are well in line with the Marxist understanding that the cops are part of the capitalist state, together with the military, courts and prisons. Police are enemies of the working class and defenders of capitalist wage slavery. As Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin wrote in *State and Revolution* (1917), “The state is an organ of class domination, an organ of oppression of one class by another.”



Corbis

Members of South African Municipal Workers Union on strike in Johannesburg, 2005.

The bourgeois state cannot be reformed or pressured into acting on behalf of the working people and the oppressed. The capitalist system must be overthrown through workers socialist revolution and replaced by a workers state. One’s attitude toward the bourgeois state is what draws the final line between reform and revolution.

In South Africa it is easy and very cheap to describe the old, white-supremacist apartheid state as reactionary. The fact is that it is the current, “new” South African state under the bourgeois-nationalist ANC—joined by the Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in a popular front—that is responsible for maintaining the wage-slave system. That system benefits the new black elite as well as the same old white capitalist class responsible for the Soweto and Sharpeville massacres and other crimes against the non-white majority.

A massive explosion of workers struggle in the 1980s was a key factor contributing to the negotiated end to apartheid rule. Another was the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state, whose existence had provided the

ANC room to manoeuvre in the Cold War divide between the USSR on the one hand and the U.S. and other imperialist powers on the other, with the Soviets providing military aid to the ANC. The white rulers, backed by the imperialists, became confident that capitalist profits could be maintained by installing a black government. The demise of apartheid significantly altered the legal and political superstructure but preserved capitalist property relations and the capitalist state. While it is the ANC and no longer the white racist government that calls the shots, the post-1994 system of neo-apartheid capitalism has kept the overwhelming mass of the population in poverty and maintained intact racial and national oppression.

The fact that the state, including the police forces and the army, contains many more black faces does not mean that it is any less an institution for capitalist oppression. In an effort to propagate the nationalist lie that the only oppressors are white, the ANC goes to considerable lengths to rewrite history. One example is the memorial in the Orlando West section of Soweto to Hector Petersen, a student slain by the apartheid regime during the 1976 student revolt in Soweto, which shows only white cops and soldiers. In fact, numerous black cops were involved in this massacre.

It is the ANC-led government's police that today act as guardians of capital. Writing after the brutal murder of two miners by security guards at the black-owned East Rand Proprietary Mines in October 2002 following a two-day general strike by COSATU, we warned that "the murders on the picket lines are the face of what's to come" (*Spartacist South Africa* No. 3, Summer/Autumn 2003). Today, as a possible strike of several hundred thousand public sector workers looms, the National Intelligence Agency—whose boss is SACPer Ronnie Kasrils!—ominously visited the offices of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) in a naked attempt at intimidation (*Sowetan*, 10 May). The government attacks impoverished township residents protesting the failure to deliver services while victimising the most vulnerable sections of the working class and the poor—immigrants, prostitutes, hawkers, etc. *Workers Vanguard* No. 748 (15 December 2000) published an article from *Spartacist South Africa* protesting the use of three Mozambican immigrants as training bait for police dogs.

As under the old apartheid system, in the "new" South Africa the cops are agents of capitalist organised violence against the working class and the whole of the oppressed population. The police obey only one master: the capitalist class. We oppose

the inclusion of police or security guards in the unions and the broader workers movement. For example, COSATU includes the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU), and the SACP recruits cops into their own organisation. Any talk about "democratic control of the police," "winning over the police" or "raising the consciousness of the police" has nothing to do with revolutionary Marxism and everything to do with reformism. All reformist left organisations in South Africa, namely Keep Left, the Democratic Socialist Movement (formerly the Marxist Workers Tendency in the ANC), and the Workers International Vanguard League, support the membership of cops and security guards in trade unions.

The police are not "workers in uniform." In *What Next?* (January 1932), Leon Trotsky—chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, co-leader of the October 1917 Revolution with Lenin and organiser of the Red Army—had this to say in response to illusions that the Social Democratic Prussian police were going to defend the constitution against Hitler: "The fact that the police was originally recruited in large numbers from among Social Democratic workers is absolutely meaningless.... The worker who becomes a policeman in the service of the capitalist state, is a bourgeois cop, not a worker."

In order to hide the capitalist class nature of the ANC regime, the reformist labour leaders of the SACP and COSATU argue that "the post-1994 democratic state is not inherently capitalist, it is in fact, a sharply class-contested reality" or a "democratic breakthrough." But there is no such thing as a "multi-class state." There is either a capitalist state or a proletarian state—the capitalists and the proletariat, the two main classes in capitalist society, have historically irreconcilable interests. It is impossible to have more than one class playing a dominant role in the state. The ANC/SACP/COSATU nationalist popular front represents the subordination of the class interests of the proletariat to those of the capitalists. Illusions in the state are greatly reinforced by bourgeois nationalism, with the SACP and COSATU tops validating the ANC's "liberation" claims and painting the regime as "our" government.

Spartacist South Africa calls to break the Tripartite Alliance—for the class independence of the proletariat from the bourgeois parties and its state! What is necessary is the building of a revolutionary Leninist-Trotskyist party, part of a re-forged Fourth International, which can lead the proletariat and all the oppressed forward to achieve workers rule, as part of world socialist revolution. ■

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# Bitter End to Defiant Public Sector Strike

The following article is reprinted from Workers Vanguard No. 895, 6 July 2007.

For four weeks, at least 700,000 teachers, hospital workers and other public service workers struck against the South African government headed by the African National Congress (ANC). A coalition of 17 unions participated in the strike. The largest of the unions are affiliated with the mainly black Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), but there were also independent unions, including some that had never called strikes before, thereby uniting workers across racial lines. The strike, the largest since the end of the apartheid government in 1994, was widely popular, particularly among the country's impoverished masses. The strikers shut down most of the schools and hospitals in the country and braved police attacks and arrests as well as a government ultimatum to return to work.

Many workers are bitter at the settlement. Although the unions had originally asked for a 12 percent wage increase, the final settlement was only 7.5 percent, not much more than the rate of inflation. One analyst noted that it could take until after 2010 for teachers to recoup the money they lost during the strike. In protest, the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), while returning to work, refused to sign the agreement.

The strike highlighted that despite the change in the political and judicial superstructure since apartheid rule, South Africa today is a neo-apartheid capitalist state: the black masses live in Third World poverty while most whites enjoy First World conditions. The white capitalists, and their senior partners in the City of London and on Wall Street, now along with a small layer of black elite, live off the exploitation of the working class. Since 1994, the bourgeois state has been run by the Tripartite Alliance consisting of the ANC, COSATU and the South African Communist Party (SACP). Behind the failure to unleash the forces necessary to achieve victory in the strike—private sector mining, industrial and commercial unions—was the fact that the reformist union tops did not want to deal a decisive blow against the government of which they are a part.

The economy has been booming, but this has done little to improve the situation of the masses of working people. Unemployment is at least 40 percent. More than a third of all women between the ages of 25 and 29 are HIV-positive. This reflects not only the grinding poverty of the majority of the populace but also the deliberate neglect of AIDS treatment by the Thabo Mbeki regime. Commenting on the growing gulf between rich and poor, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, once closely associated with the ANC, was compelled to observe, "I'm really very surprised by the remarkable patience of people," adding that it was hard "to explain why they don't say to hell with Tutu, [Nelson] Mandela and the rest and go on the rampage" (*Financial Times*, 28 June).

Strikers, most of whom lack savings, were left to rely on their own resources or in many cases were forced to turn to loan sharks to survive. While there were virtually no union



Soobramoney/News24

Public service workers march in Durban during four-week long strike against the ANC-led government.

strike funds, the COSATU bureaucrats have invested millions of rands in the Johannesburg stock exchange in their futile schemes to achieve union influence over the boards of directors of capitalist concerns. Courageous picketers defied government strikebreaking in order to shut down schools and hospitals. Several thousand nurses and other health workers were sacked on the grounds that they were violating laws prohibiting workers who did essential services from striking. The settlement reinstates them to their jobs, but *with a final warning* attached to their work record. The unions must demand: No reprisals against the strikers!

The police and army were mobilized on a large scale to patrol hospitals and schools. Army medics were used to do the jobs of strikers. Police assaulted pickets, beating strikers and hurling stun grenades; military helicopters were employed. In KwaZulu-Natal, SADTU members were shot. Suraya Jawoodeen, secretary of the National Education Health and Allied Workers Union in Western Cape province, asserted that the cops "have used more violence against strikers than during apartheid" (*Mail & Guardian online*, 15 June).

Just as in the past, when workers around the world supported the struggles of the oppressed in South Africa against apartheid, the present battle got the attention and support of unions internationally, including Transport Workers Union Local 100 in New York City, the Service Employees International Union in the U.S., UNISON in Britain, the Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Nigeria Labour Congress.

The strike demonstrated again the Marxist truth that the core of the state—the cops, the courts, prisons and army—is

an armed apparatus that the ruling class uses to maintain power. However, the COSATU bureaucrats as well as the SACP treacherously treat the cops as a bona fide component of the workers movement. As the strike was going on and the police were brutalizing pickets, COSATU general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi addressed a conference of the cop "union," the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU), claiming outrageously that "we have to pay tribute to POPCRU as a mainstay of the public-service unions." POPCRU was a member of the public-service union coalition. But POPCRU did not go on strike. Rather, it assisted the government in its attempts to *break the strike*. This underscores that the police—black as well as white—are agents of organized ruling-class violence against the working class and all the oppressed. Our comrades of Spartacist South Africa forthrightly demand: *Police, security and prison guards—out of the unions!*

One reason that the strike ended as it did was because the public workers were left to strike on their own. The powerful National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA)—both of which are part of COSATU—as well as chemical and petroleum workers continued to work, even though all these unions were already threatening strikes against companies with whom they have contracts. A watershed in the strike occurred on June 13, when there was supposed to be a general strike by COSATU unions in solidarity with the public service unions. However, NUMSA, the NUM and several other unions refused to strike, using cowardly pretexts such as that they hadn't given the required seven-day strike notice.

As this case proved, the COSATU bureaucrats were all for "solidarity"—as long as it was acceptable to the bourgeoisie and its courts! The false idea that one has to observe the rules of the bosses and their state is contradicted by the experience of many South African workers, who on numerous occasions defied the edicts of the apartheid state. During the current battle as well, thousands of health workers regarded as providing "essential services" went on strike, knowing full well that they could be fired for doing so.

Had NUMSA, the NUM and other unions that represent workers in strategic sectors of the economy struck alongside the public workers, it would have brought the country to a grinding halt. It also would have created a political crisis for the ruling Tripartite Alliance. But this is exactly what the SACP/COSATU tops do not want.

At the same time that COSATU organizes millions of workers, its leadership forms an integral component of the same government that is carrying out attacks on its members. Blade Nzimande, general secretary of the SACP, noted, "Some of our international allies have asked us as to how come a government led by an allied formation faces such a massive public service strike led by an allied trade union federation." While affirming the SACP's support for the public workers strike, Nzimande was quick to assure his ANC allies that "this does not mean that the SACP supports any or every strike by virtue of being a workers' strike" (*Umsebenzi Online*, 20 June).

This is certainly true. One notable example took place in 1990, in the period when the "power-sharing" deal that ended apartheid was being worked out between the Randlords, the ANC and the Western imperialists. Then-SACP leader Joe Slovo and SACPer Moses Mayekiso were flown into East London to quash a powerful workers occupation at the Mercedes-Benz plant. The SACP wanted to make crystal clear that it would guarantee the sanctity of private property in the face of any proletarian challenge.

The SACP is a reformist workers party. In order to placate its working-class base, the SACP has been forced to become more critical of Mbeki. At the same time, the SACP tops are

ultimately loyal to the bourgeois order. In order to justify its participation in the government, the SACP has to pretend that the Tripartite Alliance is something other than what it is: a *bourgeois government*. The SACP claims that "the post-1994 democratic state is not inherently capitalist, it is in fact, a sharply class-contested reality" and that the workers can somehow achieve "hegemony" or control over that state. This is designed to obscure the basic Marxist truth that modern society is divided into two main classes—the capitalist exploiters and the exploited proletariat—whose interests are irreconcilable. In allying themselves to the bourgeois-nationalist ANC, the SACP and the COSATU tops perform an invaluable service for the capitalist rulers in keeping the country's powerful working class tied to the capitalist order. And as participants in the governing Tripartite Alliance, the SACP and COSATU bear responsibility for the anti-working-class austerity implemented by the government.

Within the ranks of the SACP there is increasing restlessness with the party's servile subordination to the ANC. A March meeting of the party's Gauteng Provincial Council recommended a resolution for the SACP's upcoming 12th national congress that asserted: "Therefore, the Council overwhelmingly resolved that the SACP *must contest elections from 2009 at all levels by fielding its own candidates...* We *cannot* continue outsourcing this important function of the Communist Party" (emphasis in original). According to the South African news Web site [www.iol.co.za](http://www.iol.co.za) (3 June), a similar resolution was passed by the Port Elizabeth district of the SACP. However, although it says that SACP candidates should run in their own name rather than on the ANC slate, the Gauteng resolution asserts that the "revolutionary alliance led by the ANC" is "an historic and important alliance that should be preserved."

Genuine working-class independence requires not only organizational independence from capitalist parties like the ANC but also *political opposition* to them. But the SACP is and has long been politically subordinated to the bourgeois-nationalist ANC. Being allied to the ANC means accepting a common program, i.e., one that necessarily subordinates the workers and the oppressed to the capitalist order. Calls for "going it alone" while preserving the class-collaborationist alliance with the ANC can only be an attempt to refurbish the tarnished credentials of the alliance, at a time when it is facing huge anger at the base of society. The point is not to reform the ANC by futilely searching for a "pro-worker" alternative to Mbeki. An ANC run by Jacob Zuma would be just as anti-working-class as the current ANC. We call to break with the Tripartite Alliance and to forge a Leninist-Trotskyist party that fights for a workers government. This does not mean placing in power a labor government that administers capitalism, like the British Labour governments, but a revolutionary struggle that overthrows the capitalist order, as the Bolsheviks did in 1917.

A fundamental argument raised by reformists against such a perspective is that such a revolution would be isolated and crushed by the imperialists. It is true that in the post-Soviet period the imperialists have become more emboldened and arrogant. However, workers revolution in South Africa would reverberate powerfully among the oppressed working masses, from black and other workers in the U.S. to Latin America and Europe. It would revive revolutionary class struggle internationally. Only the extension of workers revolution to the advanced capitalist countries would provide the material basis for the establishment of a genuine socialist society, one in which poverty has been abolished and classes are no more. To that end there must be an instrumentality, a world party of socialist revolution. That is why we Spartacists fight for the reorganizing of the Fourth International. ■

# “Market Reforms” Exacerbate Contradictions in China Defend, Extend the Gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution!

## For Proletarian Political Revolution!

*We reprint below an edited version of a presentation by Trotskyist League of Canada spokesman Russell Stoker at an April 21 TL forum in Toronto, Canada. It was originally published in Spartacist Canada No. 153 (Summer 2007).*

One of the placards on the wall over there has the slogan in Chinese and English, “For unconditional military defense of the Chinese and North Korean deformed workers states!” What do we mean by that? What are the nature and dynamics of contemporary Chinese society? Why is the fate of China one of the most crucial questions facing the working class today? And why is refusing to defend China—the position of almost all our reformist left opponents—necessarily an accommodation to the imperialist rulers in Washington and Ottawa?

To answer these questions, we must start with the 1949 Chinese Revolution. The victory of Mao Zedong’s peasant-based People’s Liberation Army destroyed capitalist rule and profoundly transformed Chinese society. The capitalists and landlords fled to Taiwan under U.S. protection. A nation that had been carved up and plundered by the imperialist powers was unified. Rebuilt as a workers state based on a centrally planned economy, China saw a huge leap in social progress. Land was distributed to the peasants, key industries expropriated and a substantial state-run industrial sector built up from virtually nothing. The revolution’s liberating impact can be seen in the status of Chinese women, who advanced by orders of magnitude over their earlier miserable existence, historically symbolized by the barbaric practice of footbinding.

Ever since, the imperialist powers that dominate the world—centrally the U.S. and Japan, but also junior players like Canada—have sought to reverse the 1949 Revolution and reopen China to full-scale capitalist exploitation. The U.S. threatened nuclear strikes on China during the Korean War of 1950-53. It has sought to isolate China economically and diplomatically. It has persistently worked with Japan and Taiwan to surround China militarily. More recently, the imperialist bandits have employed a dual strategy, combining military provocations with economic penetration of China aimed at strengthening internal counterrevolutionary forces. This has been aided immeasurably by the “market reform” policies enacted by the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) starting in the early 1980s.

For all the very real gains of the Revolution, the People’s Republic of China was born bureaucratically deformed—ruled not by councils of workers and peasants but by a privileged nationalist bureaucracy. The CCP was not a proletarian but a peasant-based party, having abandoned the cities following the massacre of the workers of Shanghai by the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang in 1927. It was able to overthrow capitalism some two decades later only under exceptional historical circumstances. The working class had been atomized thanks to vicious repression by both the Guomindang and Japanese occupation forces. Bourgeois rule was particularly unstable after Japan’s defeat in World War II, with a deeply corrupt Guomindang regime rotting from within. A final crucial factor was the existence of the Soviet Union, a workers state that could provide



Burke/Life

**Mao’s People’s Liberation Army enters Beijing in 1949. Revolution smashed landlord/capitalist rule, but was deformed from inception by Stalinist bureaucracy.**

military and economic support to the new People’s Republic.

From the start, the CCP regime suppressed independent working-class activity while falsely claiming to be building socialism in a single, very backward country. This was in sharp contrast to the origins of the Soviet Union in the 1917 October Revolution—a proletarian revolution led by the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky that took Marxism out of the realm of theory and gave it flesh and blood. It showed that the working class could take power and run society through democratically elected workers councils. Internationalist to the core, the early Soviet Union was a beacon for workers and the oppressed everywhere.

The Bolshevik leaders understood that workers revolutions in the more advanced capitalist countries were essential to achieve international economic planning and the kind of vast growth in social production that could lay the basis for socialism, an egalitarian society rooted in material abundance. But the revolutionary upsurges that ensued, notably in Germany, were defeated, due to the treachery of the pro-capitalist social democrats and the lack of experienced Bolshevik-style parties that could direct the masses’ aspirations toward a proletarian seizure of state power. In the wake of these defeats, a conservative nationalist bureaucracy took control in the Soviet Union starting in 1923-24. Abandoning working-class internationalism, Stalin and his coterie invented the anti-Marxist dogma of “socialism in one country.” Soon they were sabotaging revolutionary opportunities abroad in a search for “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism.

Despite this bureaucratic degeneration, the Soviet Union remained a workers state. As long as it existed, it was a crucial military and economic counterweight to the imperialist powers. The Soviet nuclear umbrella prevented the U.S. from irradiating China, North Korea and Vietnam. Even in isolation, the Soviet

Union was transformed from an overwhelmingly peasant society to an industrial power, including sharp economic growth during the Great Depression of the 1930s when the economies of the capitalist world were stagnant and shrinking. This amply demonstrated the superiority of a socialized planned economy over the anarchy of capitalism, a system based on accruing private profit through vicious exploitation of the working class.

### Marxism and the Proletarian Dictatorship

What do we mean by a “workers state”? This is another way of saying that the USSR was and China, etc. are forms of what Marxists call the dictatorship of the proletariat. Any state is composed of bodies of armed men—police, army, prisons—charged with defending the rule of one class against another. In Canada today we live under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the class of rich financiers and industrialists who mask their rule under a façade of parliamentary democracy. Behind this lies the armed fist of the state—the cops who break picket lines, who beat up and jail Natives, minorities and the homeless.

Karl Marx called the dictatorship of the proletariat “the period of revolutionary transformation” to communism, in which a state apparatus is needed to reorganize society and suppress counterrevolutionary machinations by bourgeois forces. The existence of proletarian states in one or more countries is a huge advance that must be defended by working people everywhere. But as communists from Marx on understood, it will take the triumph of workers revolutions on a worldwide basis—especially in the most industrially advanced countries—to defeat capitalism for good and ensure a communist future for humanity.

The world we live in was shaped by the destruction of the Soviet Union through capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92. This was a terrible defeat that has emboldened the imperialist powers, especially the U.S., and thrown back the struggles and consciousness of workers and the oppressed everywhere. China is now by far the strongest of the remaining deformed workers states, the others being Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea. Its proletariat, now hundreds of millions strong, has become the largest and potentially the most powerful in the world. So the stakes here are exceptionally high: over the next period, the fate of China could shape the future of mankind, for good or ill.

The imperialist powers are seeking to replicate in China the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. They are working to cohere a right-wing political opposition centered on the class of capitalist entrepreneurs created during the past two decades of “market reforms.” At the same time, Washington and Tokyo are stepping up military pressure, including encircling China with military bases.

On the pretext of defending the offshore capitalist bastion of Taiwan, they have set up a common military command against China in Yokohama. Tokyo’s so-called Self-Defense Forces weigh in these days with a military budget well in excess of \$40 billion. The Pentagon is developing new weapons against China’s limited nuclear arsenal to allow the option of a nuclear first strike. Defense of China against imperialism crucially includes supporting China’s possession and testing of nuclear arms. In the face of U.S. imperialism’s unchallenged global nuclear hegemony, the only meaningful guarantee of any nation’s sovereignty today is possession of a credible nuclear deterrent.

In calling for unconditional military defense of China, we take the same stance that Trotsky took toward the Stalinist-ruled Soviet Union. “It means,” as Trotsky wrote at the outset of World War II, “that we do not lay any conditions upon the bureaucracy. It means that independently of the motive and causes of the war we defend the social basis of the USSR, if it is menaced by danger on the part of imperialism” (“Again and

Once More Again on the Nature of the USSR,” October 1939). But, again like Trotsky, we give not an iota of political support to the program of the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy.

The anti-revolutionary nature of the Chinese bureaucracy can be seen historically in its alliance with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union, a logical outcome of the quest for “peaceful coexistence” with the rulers in Washington. In 1972, even as U.S. bombs rained down on Vietnam, Mao Zedong hosted and toasted U.S. president Richard Nixon in Beijing. This policy continued under his successor Deng Xiaoping. In 1979, four years after the U.S. was finally defeated by the heroic Vietnamese, Chinese troops criminally invaded Vietnam. Soon after, China supported the CIA-backed Islamic cutthroats in Afghanistan who fought against the Soviet Red Army. In multiple ways, the Mao and Deng wings of the bureaucracy both directly aided the imperialists in destroying the Soviet Union. And it was China’s alliance with the U.S., launched under Mao, that set the stage for Deng’s “open door” to imperialist economic penetration.

Today the CCP regime of Hu Jintao supports Bush’s “war on terror,” the political rationale for the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and for Washington’s threats against Iran, one of China’s main energy suppliers. The Beijing bureaucrats have also joined the imperialist-led uproar against North Korea’s nuclear weapons tests, supporting a United Nations resolution last October that imposed sanctions against the Pyongyang regime. Yet any weakening of North Korea against imperialist militarism also weakens the defense of China, which has key industrial regions directly adjacent to the Korean border.

With its appeasement of imperialism and repressive, anti-worker practices, the CCP bureaucracy is an obstacle to the defense of the workers state and to socialist revolution abroad. What is needed is a fight to sweep away bureaucratic rule and replace it with a truly communist regime based on workers and peasants councils and rooted in Marxist internationalism. This would be a *political*, not a *social*, revolution. It would defend and extend the gains of the Chinese Revolution while removing the parasitic bureaucracy that undermines and squanders them.

Given its huge population and crucial position in the global economy, the ascent of a revolutionary workers government in China would truly shake the world. It would put socialist revolution in Taiwan, and thus the revolutionary reunification of China, on the immediate agenda. It would spur a fight for revolutionary reunification in Korea through socialist revolution in the South and workers political revolution in the North. A proletarian political revolution in China would provoke revolutionary upsurges in Indonesia and the Philippines, radicalize the proletariat of Japan, the imperialist overseer of Asia, and reverberate globally, including opening up prospects for socialist revolution in the United States and Canada. The success of this perspective hinges on building Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard parties as part of a reformed Fourth International.

### Contradictions of the “Market Reforms”

This is the necessary Marxist political framework for addressing the Chinese rulers’ domestic policies, specifically the “market reforms” of the past 25 years. If you ask Chinese students or other informed individuals their view of these measures, you get one of two reactions. Some, looking back fondly to the egalitarian rhetoric of the Mao era, claim the “reforms” are a total betrayal of the Chinese Revolution. Most, however, say they are overwhelmingly good, as they have brought a sustained level of growth that has greatly improved living standards and economic prospects. Both views capture only part of the reality; both are one-sided, superficial and thus fundamentally false.

China’s “market reforms” have intensified the contradictions inherent in any workers state in an economically underdeveloped

country. Under Mao, China was able to build a substantial and relatively modern heavy industrial sector, but it remained a largely rural, peasant country. Over three-quarters of the labour force was engaged in farming and over 80 percent of the population lived in the countryside. Agricultural output did not keep pace with industrial growth and low rural productivity was a barrier to increasing industrialization.

Mao's policies were far from consistent, ranging from the economic adventurism of the "Great Leap Forward" in the 1950s to the intra-bureaucratic purges of the "Cultural Revolution" in the '60s. But on the whole, Mao promoted nationalist autarky—a profoundly unreal conception that China could achieve socialism purely through its own methods in an economically backward and resource-poor country. The "reforms" introduced by Deng after Mao's death were initially an attempt to respond, within the framework of bureaucratic rule, to the inefficiencies of the command economy—poor productivity and quality, scarcity, etc.—that marked the Mao era. Sworn enemies of workers democracy, which is necessary for the healthy operation of a planned economy, the CCP regime turned to the market as a whip to increase productivity.

The foreign investment that began under Deng opened up areas of rapid growth that would not otherwise have been possible in an isolated and largely undeveloped workers state. And growth has indeed been rapid: almost ten percent a year for more than two decades, bringing hundreds of millions out of dire poverty and creating the biggest industrial proletariat in the world. The proportion of the population living in cities has more than doubled. There has been a vast expansion of industrial capacity, and over half the labour force works in manufacturing, transport, construction and the service sector. The precondition for these hugely progressive advances was the smashing of capitalist class rule and creation of a workers state.

By every socioeconomic measure, development in China has greatly outstripped that in capitalist neocolonies like Indonesia and the Philippines. India, which the imperialists tout as Asia's other "emerging economic giant," has a per capita gross domestic product that is barely half of China's. China's poverty rate is less than half of India's, while the rate of malnutrition in children is three quarters less. Female adult literacy is nearly 90 percent, almost double the rate in India.

We do not minimize the danger posed by substantial capitalist economic penetration within China. But we differ sharply with those liberals and reformist leftists who claim that the "market reforms" mean China is now capitalist. In fact, the core of the economy remains collectivized. The private sector, including foreign companies, is mainly made up of light industry. Heavy industry—steel, nonferrous metals, heavy machinery, telecommunications, electric power, oil extraction and refining—is concentrated in state enterprises and strategically much more important. The nationalization of land has prevented the emergence of a class of large-scale agrarian capitalists socially dominating the countryside. Continued control of the financial system has thus far enabled the Beijing regime to insulate China from the volatile movements of speculative money-capital that wreak havoc with so many neocolonial countries.

But that's only part of the picture. The "market reforms" have massively widened the gap in living conditions in China. At one end, they have created a wealthy new class of capitalists with links to both the CCP officialdom and the offshore Chinese bourgeoisie in Taiwan, Hong Kong and elsewhere. At the other end, they have impoverished millions of workers, hollowed out crucial social programs like health care, and created tens of millions of unemployed. Workers forced to find new jobs in the private sector generally get lower wages and none of the benefits provided by state enterprises.

Some 150 million migrant workers from rural areas have moved to the cities, where many labour under often terrible conditions for imperialist and offshore Chinese companies. Under the household registration (*hukou*) system, migrant workers lack the rights of the permanent city residents to health care, education, etc. These workers are often forced to live in segregated dormitories and are looked down upon by workers with urban residence permits. Yet this development, again, is acutely contradictory. Migrant workers in the Pearl and Yangtze River deltas—now the world's main manufacturing hubs—produce vast quantities of goods for the international market. That means, in turn, that these workers possess significant potential social power.

For years now, China has seen ongoing worker protests over unpaid wages, job losses and working conditions. Peasants too have protested against corruption, environmental disasters and land seizures by local CCP officials. According to the regime's own statistics, there were more than 80,000 such "mass incidents" in 2005—more than 200 a day. Last month, 20,000 peasants in Hunan province confronted police in protest against a doubling of transit fares by a privatized bus company. After suppressing the revolt, the regime reinstated the original fares and suspended the bus company while arresting the protest leaders.

The regime has attempted to mollify angry workers and peasants with "anti-corruption" campaigns, even executing some high-ranking officials, and has occasionally reversed some of its own "free market" measures. This is not because the Stalinists are committed to defense of the collectivized economy. As Trotsky wrote of the Soviet bureaucracy in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), "It continues to preserve state property only to the extent that it fears the proletariat."

Such actions are not those of a possessing class but rather are characteristic of a brittle parasitic caste that deeply fears social unrest. And the bureaucracy is clearly divided. Some elements want the economic reforms to continue unabated. Others want more state intervention to curb the ravages of marketization and to stifle discontent. Still others seek a return to a bureaucratically planned economy. The bottom line is that the CCP's economic policies are circumscribed by fear of working-class and peasant revolt. The ongoing struggles in China today are the raw material for proletarian political revolution. What is missing is revolutionary internationalist leadership.

### China's "Market Reforms" vs. NEP Under Lenin

We do not oppose China's extensive economic relations with the capitalist world through trade and joint ventures. To do so would be to accept that Mao-style national autarky is a viable alternative, which it manifestly is not. The key question is: what is the political program of the regime that administers the economy?

Here it is useful to contrast China's "market reforms" to the New Economic Policy (NEP) instituted by the revolutionary Bolshevik government in the Soviet Union in 1921. The NEP was an emergency measure aimed at reviving the Soviet economy, which had been crippled after three years of bitter civil war and invasions by 14 imperialist countries, including Canada. It included major concessions to small traders as well as invitations for foreign investment. Foreign currency thus earned could have enabled the workers state to purchase what it could not yet make. In the end, little investment came from a hostile capitalist world. But the perspective was completely valid—to secure the resources necessary to defend, and then extend, the revolution.

The Bolshevik leaders saw this as a necessary compromise to buy time until socialist revolutions succeeded in more developed countries. And they worked to actively prepare such revolutions. By day, the Soviet ambassador in Berlin signed

trade and other agreements with German capitalists. By night, he worked secretly to help the German workers overthrow these same capitalists. The inherent danger of the NEP, which Lenin and Trotsky were well aware of, was the creation of a new class of capitalist traders and rich peasants who would act as a force against the workers state. In contrast to China today, the early Soviet regime maintained a strict state monopoly on foreign trade.

In China, one of the motivations of the ruling bureaucrats in enacting the "market reforms" is to enrich themselves, while enhancing their privileged position atop the workers state. Numerous sons of top CCP officials—the "Communist" princelings—have become millionaires. Capitalists are now officially welcome in the CCP and wealth may be inherited, a key element allowing for the cohering of a distinct bourgeois class. The regime has also been happy to act as a labour contractor for foreign capitalists to savagely exploit migrant workers, who are offered up as second-class citizens with few rights and social benefits.

When the CCP's National People's Congress recently voted a constitutional amendment to protect private property, this simply reflected reality. Even here, however, reality isn't all it seems. Of the companies quoted on the two main Chinese stock exchanges, the government controls either a majority or a strong minority of the shares. Shareholders don't have property rights in the capitalist sense of the term. They can get income from stocks and sell shares but can neither determine nor influence enterprise management or policy.

More fundamentally, it is not the bureaucracy's resolutions that will determine China's fate, but *social struggle*. Private property in China is as unstable as the bureaucracy itself: it exists to the extent that the bureaucracy authorizes it. This supposedly inviolable private property could be violated by the bureaucracy under the impact of an open counterrevolutionary threat, or by the working class in a fight for political power in the Chinese deformed workers state. At some point, the explosive social tensions of Chinese society will shatter the current political structure. When that happens, the fate of China will be sharply posed: either proletarian political revolution to open the road to socialism or a return to capitalist enslavement and imperialist subjugation.

A China of workers and peasants councils would re-establish a centrally planned economy and reinstate the state monopoly of foreign trade. It would expropriate the Chinese capitalist entrepreneurs and renegotiate the terms of foreign investment in the interests of Chinese workers—insisting, for example, on at least the same benefits and working conditions as in the state sector. It would encourage the voluntary collectivization of agriculture on the basis of large-scale mechanized and scientific farming, while recognizing that this requires substantial material aid from successful workers revolutions in more economically advanced countries. A revolutionary regime in China would be profoundly internationalist, understanding that genuine communism can only come via a globally integrated and planned socialist economy following proletarian revolution in the imperialist centers.

### For Workers Political Revolution!

The potential for a pro-socialist workers uprising was shown in the May-June 1989 protests centered on Beijing's Tiananmen Square. At first the protests were mainly by students opposing corruption and seeking political liberalization. Soon the movement was joined by millions of workers, who began to hold mass meetings and create embryonic workers councils.

The entry onto the scene of the working class terrified the bureaucracy, which unleashed fierce repression. But the first army units it mobilized failed to suppress the protests, because they solidarized with the students' demands. The massacres

of June 1989, which overwhelmingly targeted the workers, could only be carried out when the regime brought in army units considered more loyal. The Tiananmen events illustrated a key point about the army in a workers state—it can be split *vertically* during a political revolution, with sections of both the ranks and the officer corps making common cause with the insurgent workers.

Our organization, the International Communist League, covered these events extensively in our press. We called to "Oust the Bureaucrats—For Lenin's Communism! Workers and Soldiers Soviets Must Rule!" and, after the massacre, to "Defend Chinese Workers! Stop the Executions!" While we were not able to intervene directly in China in the spring of 1989, six months later we were able to intervene in another upsurge in a deformed workers state, the German Democratic Republic (DDR), that posed the possibility of proletarian political revolution. When the East German population rose up against bureaucratic privilege and mismanagement, the Stalinist regime began to disintegrate from within. Up to a million people rallied in the protests, raising slogans like "For Communist Ideals—No Privileges!" We undertook the biggest intervention in the history of our tendency, fighting for workers and soldiers councils to be forged and to take power.

Workers came to us and asked, how do we form workers councils? Enough seriously considered what the ICL was fighting for that when fascists desecrated a Soviet war memorial in Treptow Park, East Berlin, the ruling Stalinist party felt compelled to join a united-front protest we initiated against the Nazis and in defense of the Soviet Union. A quarter million workers and soldiers came out. For the first time ever in a deformed workers state, Trotskyists addressed a mass audience. Our speaker called for "Workers and soldiers soviets to power!"

Two programs were competing: ours, of proletarian political revolution to defend and extend the gains of the workers state, and the Stalinist program of capitulation and counterrevolution. The Treptow mobilization frightened the powers that be, both East and West, and our forces were too small. We lost, as the Soviet Stalinist regime quickly surrendered the DDR to capitalism. But the lessons of this struggle must be assimilated by the international working class, including in China. Our intervention showed how, when an accumulation of events finally produces an upheaval and crack in bureaucratic rule, it is possible for a revolutionary internationalist program to have a massive impact.

### Down With Anti-Communist China-Bashing!

I now want to turn to the stance toward China taken by the social democrats and labour bureaucrats in Canada, as well as the reformist left groups that tail them. The bottom line is this: while we Trotskyists call to defend China against imperialism as part of a fight for international socialist revolution, the labour tops and fake leftists stand with the imperialists. In supporting all manner of anti-Communist campaigns against China, they are reprising their dirty work in backing the capitalist counterrevolution that destroyed the Soviet Union.

Let me start with the question of protectionism. As everyone in this room knows, the capitalists have been looting the working class of this country. Since the early 1990s, the wealth amassed by Canadian banks and corporations has soared while workers and the poor have seen huge cuts in real wages and social services. Hundreds of thousands of industrial jobs are gone, especially in Ontario. Despite outbursts of labour struggle, the union leaders have repeatedly capitulated to the attacks and giveback demands.

Instead of using class-struggle weapons like strikes, they whip up Canadian-nationalist protectionism, claiming that workers abroad—especially in Japan, Korea and China—are

“stealing jobs.” Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) president Buzz Hargrove regularly demands that Canada act against Asian automotive imports. And the UNITE HERE union is waging a joint campaign with the textile bosses demanding that Ottawa slash imports from China. This underlines the pro-capitalist character of the labour bureaucracy, a thin, privileged layer at the head of the unions. Its calls to ally with the Canadian capitalist state against foreign competition are flatly against the workers’ interests, which lie in common, internationalist class struggle against capitalism.

What I want to emphasize is how these campaigns are combined with anti-Communism against China. Take the recent furor over the award of a Toronto subway manufacturing contract to Bombardier for production at its Thunder Bay plant. When a German company claimed it could do the work cheaper, in part by assembling trains in China, the labour bureaucrats staged chauvinist rallies on the theme, “Made in Canada Matters.” Cynically manipulating workers’ fears of job losses, the CAW tops called to “oppose politicians who want to ship jobs overseas,” while NDP [social-democratic New Democratic Party] councillor Howard Moscoe railed, “I don’t want to build my cars in a communist regime.... I want to make my cars where it benefits Canadian workers” (*Northern Ontario Business*, 5 June 2006).

Such calls are coupled with demands that the Canadian rulers take a hard-line stand against China in the name of “human rights.” To look to the Canadian capitalists as a progressive force for “human rights” anywhere is grotesque. This is the same ruling class that interned Japanese Canadians in World War II; that has visited unspeakable devastation on Native people from the reserves and inner-city ghettos to the residential schools; that sent the army into Quebec to suppress struggles for national and social rights in October 1970, jailing hundreds.

Yet when Chinese premier Hu Jintao visited Canada in 2005, the NDP called on the then Liberal government in Ottawa to “drive home Canada’s serious concerns with China’s record of human rights abuses.” And the Canadian Labour Congress has joined with pro-imperialist organizations including the Falun Dafa religious sect, Canada Tibet Committee and Rights & Democracy, a “non-partisan” outfit set up by the Mulroney Tory government, to form something called the Canadian Coalition on Human Rights in China. Last fall, an open letter to

[Conservative prime minister] Stephen Harper by this outfit attacked the Liberal government’s “quiet diplomacy” with China and urged the Tories to implement a “strengthened approach.” Now they’re getting what they asked for, as Harper lectures the Chinese regime on “human rights” at every opportunity.

The Canadian labour tops, like their U.S. partners-in-crime, have a long record of dirty work on behalf of their imperialist masters. The CLC bureaucracy and the NDP were forged through vicious purges of reds from the unions from the 1940s up into the ’60s. In the 1980s, they hailed Polish Solidarność, a reactionary movement masquerading as a union that was in the forefront of the drive for capitalist restoration in East Europe. The American AFL-CIO channeled millions in CIA money to Solidarność. In Canada, the NDP and B.C. [British Columbia] Federation of Labour organized an anti-Communist picket against a Polish ship, while the CLC put on its payroll one Zygmunt Przetakiewicz, a rabidly reactionary Solidarność advocate who openly made common cause with Washington, including by supporting murderous CIA-orchestrated counterinsurgency against Central American leftists. Today, the union tops promote pro-imperialist so-called “labour activists” like the Chinese exile Han Dongfang, who broadcasts on the CIA’s Radio Free Asia and is a darling of American right-wing circles.

Political struggle against the pro-capitalist labour tops and their allies in the social-democratic NDP is central to the fight to forge a revolutionary workers party in this country. Buying into protectionism and anti-Communism means allying with the very capitalist exploiters who are ripping apart the livelihoods of working people. What is needed is class struggle *against* the capitalist rulers. A crucial component of this is defense of the gains of working people abroad—in China, in Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea—against the counterrevolutionary machinations of our “own” ruling class.

### Pro-Imperialist Accomplices of Counterrevolution

What about the reformist “socialist” groups who claim to stand to the left of the labour bureaucracy and NDP? Almost all of them claim that China is a capitalist country. This is not a mistaken analysis but an *anti-Communist political program*. These reformist groups openly back counterrevolutionary forces inside China or among the Chinese diaspora, or even directly support U.S. imperialism and its regional allies like

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Taiwan.

The International Socialists (I.S.) claim China has never been a workers state but has been “state capitalist” since 1949. This absurd “theory,” which they also apply to the other workers states, is a fig leaf for decades of anti-Communist practice on behalf of imperialism. The I.S. tendency began in Britain when its founder Tony Cliff bowed to bourgeois hysteria accompanying the Korean War. In a craven capitulation to the Labour Party government, which had sent troops to Korea, Cliff refused to call for defense of North Korea and China against U.S. and British imperialism. He and his followers went on to hail every manner of imperialist-backed movement against the workers states.

This included Boris Yeltsin’s pro-capitalist rabble in Moscow in August 1991, whose triumph paved the way for the destruction of the Soviet Union. The I.S.’s British parent group, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), proclaimed, “Communism has collapsed.... It is a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing” (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 31 August 1991). Rejoicing! The return of capitalist exploitation to Russia produced armies of the unemployed and homeless, plummeting life expectancy, murderous nationalism and the destruction of women’s rights. Unfettered by what had been the industrial and military powerhouse of the non-capitalist world, the U.S. has felt free to launch military adventures all over the world, while capitalist governments everywhere have accelerated their attacks on workers and the oppressed.

While the I.S. hailed capitalist counterrevolution, the ICL fought against it—standing, as Trotsky urged, “on the final barricade” in defense of the USSR. In the crucial days and weeks, our comrades distributed 100,000 copies of a Russian-language leaflet, “Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!” at factories and in workers’ districts.

Naturally, the I.S. and SWP also side with anti-Communist bourgeois forces against China. This includes the political heirs of the Guomindang, who for decades ran the brutal capitalist state of Taiwan. Eleven years ago, as U.S. warships plied the Taiwan straits in one of many provocations against Beijing, the SWP magazine *Socialist Review* (April 1996) proclaimed: “China’s claim to Taiwan is a colonialist one. We would oppose any Chinese invasion of Taiwan as an act of imperialist aggression.”

In sharp contrast, we Trotskyists will stand with China in any military conflict with Taiwan or its imperialist patrons. Ever since the Guomindang and the Chinese bourgeoisie fled to Taiwan, the latter has been an outpost for U.S. imperialism’s counterrevolutionary schemes. Taiwan has been a part of China since ancient times—it is ethnically, linguistically and historically Chinese. We also oppose the Chinese Stalinists’ proposal for reunification with Taiwan under the slogan “one country, two systems.” We call instead for the revolutionary reunification of China: socialist revolution in Taiwan to overthrow and expropriate the bourgeoisie and proletarian political revolution on the mainland.

Another group that embraces imperialist anti-Communism is the International Marxist Tendency (IMT) of Alan Woods, whose Canadian affiliate is the Fightback group. This group claims that China has gradually, even imperceptibly, been transformed from a workers to a capitalist state over the past 15 years via a series of policy decisions taken by the CCP bureaucracy. A document adopted at an IMT conference last year claims that by the early 1990s the CCP leaders “began to see capitalist restoration as the solution to their own crisis, but they were determined that the process would take place under the firm control of the bureaucracy. In essence this meant that the bureaucracy was preparing the ground to transform itself into a new capitalist class” (“China’s Long March to Capital-

ism,” October 2006). They go further, asserting that China “is now behaving like an imperialist power” and has an “imperialist character.”

The IMT’s claim that the Chinese state became capitalist gradually in a “process” with various “turning points” is an example of what Trotsky polemicized against in the 1930s when he said, “He who asserts that the Soviet government has been *gradually* changed from proletarian to bourgeois is only, so to speak, running backwards the film of reformism” (“Class Nature of the Soviet State,” October 1933).

The notion that capitalist restoration can come through incremental shifts from state to private ownership, without a counterrevolution, is the flip side of the IMT’s deeply reformist belief that “socialism” can come about if a bourgeois parliament nationalizes the key sectors of the capitalist economy. This is captured in the slogan featured in every issue of *Fightback*, “NDP to Power on a Socialist Program.” The idea that the NDP will ever adopt or implement a socialist program is the purest illusion-mongering, designed to pull militant workers and youth into the trap of social democracy. The IMT/Fightback reformists utterly reject the idea that the proletariat must smash the bourgeois state and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.

As Trotsky noted concerning the former Soviet Union, the decisive arena in which a capitalist counterrevolution in China would have to triumph is at the *political* level. A likely scenario will be when bourgeois elements move to eliminate CCP political power by supporting capitalist restorationist forces. And let me make a prediction: in such an event Alan Woods & Co. will side with counterrevolution, just as they did in the former USSR when they supported Washington’s man Boris Yeltsin in August 1991. A year after Yeltsin’s victory, their Russian affiliate, the Rabochaya Demokratia group, wrote that this was the start of “a revolutionary anti-bureaucratic process” and denied that “the liquidation of the USSR weakened the position of socialism in the world” (*Rabochaya Demokratia*, July-August 1992).

Finally, I’d like to address the group known as the Bolshevik Tendency (BT). Those familiar with the BT will know of their preoccupation with smearing the ICL. The “Who We Are” declaration on their website screeches, for example, that we are “a grotesquely bureaucratic and overtly cultist group of political bandits.” Such smears, which ape the language of anti-Communists who rail against Stalin-style gulags and personality cults, are one side of the BT’s face. The other is political opportunism of the social-democratic type, including an embrace of anti-Communism whenever it counts.

During the 1989-90 East German upsurge, the BT focused on denouncing the ICL, claiming we had conjured up an “imaginary political revolution.” As we noted at the time, only those in thrall to the anti-Communist myth that Stalinism had rendered the workers in the deformed workers states mindless automatons incapable of struggle could so blithely dismiss any outcome other than capitalist counterrevolution. The BT denounced our work in building the 250,000-strong East Berlin anti-fascist protest in January 1990, which defended the Soviet Union and the DDR against counterrevolution. Their complaint? We did not offer a platform to the German Social Democratic Party—an openly pro-capitalist party that was the spearhead for counterrevolution in the DDR!

And what about China? While claiming for the record that China remains a workers state, the BT again embraces counterrevolutionary forces. One example is the self-styled “god-king” of Tibet, the Dalai Lama. As I noted earlier, complaints about “poor little Tibet” are a regular feature of imperialist-sponsored “human rights” campaigns against China. In fact, it was the Chinese Revolution that liberated Tibet

from the barbarism of a society based on mass slavery. In 1959, China's People's Liberation Army put down a CIA-organized uprising aimed at overturning these gains. The Dalai Lama was then and is now unambiguously a creature of U.S. imperialism.

Yet the BT argues that "a revolutionary government in China would signal its willingness to coexist with Tibet's traditional ruling caste" as long as the latter "retain popular support" (1917, 2004). This grotesque respect for the devotion of benighted peoples to their religious leaders is the opposite of the Bolsheviks' policy in the early Soviet Union. Lenin and Trotsky steadfastly defended the rights of minority nationalities against Russian chauvinism, while suppressing nationalist or religious leaders who used this as a cover for pro-imperialist counterrevolution. Today, we oppose any manifestation of Han chauvinism toward the Tibetan people, while denouncing the anti-Communist hue and cry in the West that upholds supposed "rights" for Tibet's deeply oppressive priestly caste.

BT also apologizes for another anti-Communist religious force in China, the sect known as Falun Gong (or Falun Dafa). They denounce us for calling Falun Gong a "force for counterrevolution in China." They claim, "unlike Polish Solidarność, whose leadership functioned as a consciously pro-imperialist agency within the deformed workers' state, Falun Gong advances no particular political or social program." Anyone who has come across a Falun Gong rally or picked up a copy of its lavishly produced paper *Epoch Times* can see that this group openly allies with right-wing capitalist forces in calling for the counterrevolutionary overthrow of the CCP regime. Here are two of its banners at a recent Toronto rally: "The Root of Communism is Dead" and "Support 20 Million People Resigning from Chinese Communist Party."

The BT's polemic against us over Falun Gong is typically dishonest, claiming we "incline to a policy of repression" by the Beijing government and asking rhetorically, "Do you imagine that the best way to destroy the popular influence of Falun Gong practitioners, Tibetan monks and Xinjiang's mullahs is to round them all up and throw them in jail?" (1917, 2005). We call on the *working class* to combat such counterrevolutionaries as part of its struggle for a political revolution based on unconditional military defense of China against imperialism and

internal capitalist counterrevolution.

This is in line with our stance toward Polish Solidarność in the 1980s. When it consolidated around an explicitly capitalist-restorationist program in September 1981, we called to "Stop Solidarność counterrevolution," and when the Stalinist rulers invoked martial law to spike its bid for power later that year we supported this measure. At the same time, we recognized that it was Stalinist misrule that had driven the historically socialist Polish working class into the arms of clerical counterrevolution. Thus we wrote, "As the immediate counterrevolutionary threat passes, these martial law measures must be ended, including release of the Solidarność leaders. A Trotskyist vanguard seeks to defeat them *politically*, by mobilizing the Polish working class in its true class interests" ("Power Bid Spiked," *Workers Vanguard* No. 295, 18 December 1981).

Why do the self-styled socialists of the BT so readily embrace right-wing religious forces like Falun Gong and the Tibetan lamocracy? The BT originated, at first as the "External Tendency," from individuals who quit our organization because they couldn't stand our forthright defense of the Soviet Union against the imperialists' renewed anti-Communist Cold War of the 1980s. In particular, they hated our call to "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" The Soviet army entered Afghanistan in late 1979 to support a left-nationalist government that was under siege by woman-hating, anti-Communist religious fanatics who were backed to the hilt by U.S. imperialism and its Canadian junior partner. Our support to the Soviet intervention—which opened up a prospect of social liberation to the Afghan peoples, especially women—underlined our unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialism. Today it is China that is the main target for imperialist military and other anti-Communist threats. It is crucial that revolutionaries in the capitalist world fight to win the working class to defend the Chinese deformed workers state against all such threats. And once again the BT flinches when it counts.

### Defense of China and International Socialist Revolution

I'd like to conclude this talk by returning to Leon Trotsky, leader of the 1917 October Revolution and founder of the Fourth International from whom our organization takes its name. The last major political struggle Trotsky waged before being struck down by a Stalinist assassin in Mexico City in 1940 was against a renegade minority of the American Trotskyists that abandoned defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism in the face of anti-Communist "public opinion" on the eve of World War II. Trotsky's polemics during this struggle are collected in a book titled *In Defense of Marxism*, where he writes the following:

"The workers' state must be taken as it has emerged from the merciless laboratory of history and not as it is imagined by a 'socialist' professor, reflectively exploring his nose with his finger. It is the duty of revolutionists to defend every conquest of the working class even though it may be distorted by the pressure of hostile forces. Those who cannot defend old positions will never conquer new ones."

—"Balance Sheet of the Finnish Events" (April 1940)

If the working class in Canada, the U.S., Japan and the other capitalist countries do not come to understand the historic significance of the gains of the Chinese Revolution, like the collectivized economy, then they will never understand the importance of making a revolution against their own bourgeoisie. Comrades and friends, it is for the purpose of providing the necessary leadership to the proletariat in these struggles that the ICL seeks to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution. ■

<b>Just Out!</b>	
<b>Chinese-Language Pamphlet No. 8</b>	
Defend Chinese Deformed Workers State! For Proletarian Political Revolution! <b>China's "Market Reforms": A Trotskyist Analysis</b> <b>The Russian Revolution and the Emancipation of Women</b>	<b>R2 (28 pages)</b>
Mail cheques/postal money orders payable to: <b>Spartacist, PostNet Suite 248, Private Bag X2226 Johannesburg 2000, South Africa</b>	

## Fight for Workers Revolution!...

(continued from page 1)

trample on those interests in order to maintain an alliance with the bourgeois ANC. Why would a party that claims to be fighting for a communist society—in which capitalist exploitation has been eliminated and replaced by a collectivised economy and an egalitarian social order—participate in a government that defends the interests of the capitalists and suppresses the struggles of the workers, the oppressed and the township and rural poor?

The SACP is not a Leninist party. It is, rather, what Lenin called a *bourgeois workers party*, with a working-class base and a pro-capitalist leadership and programme. In order to placate its working-class base, the SACP tops have been forced to become more critical of Mbeki. The bottom line, however, is that through its alliance with the bourgeois ANC and its class-collaborationist programme the SACP must serve the bourgeois order.

This could be seen graphically during the recent bitterly fought public workers strike. While the SACP claimed to support the strike, via its ministers in the bourgeois government it served as strikebreakers: Minister of Safety and Security Charles Nqakula set the cops and army against the strikers, while Minister for Intelligence Services Ronnie Kasrils unleashed the intelligence services to spy on the teachers union. The COSATU bureaucracy, an integral component of the ruling Tripartite Alliance, deliberately refused to mobilise unions like the miners and metal workers which had the social power to win the strike. You cannot wage an effective struggle against the capitalist government when you are part of that government!

The Tripartite Alliance is a *nationalist popular front*, the South African variant of a governmental coalition binding a reformist workers party to the bourgeoisie. Through such class-collaborationist coalitions, the Communist parties in countries like France and Italy have derailed working-class revolutions. The essence of class collaboration is the argument that the interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie can be expressed in a common programme, like the “national democratic revolution.” In truth, the interests of the exploited and the exploiters are irreconcilably *counterposed*. The alliance with the bourgeois-nationalist ANC that is at the core of the SACP’s politics, and has been for decades, necessarily means subordinating the workers and the oppressed to the capitalist order. The SACP justifies this perspective by asserting that the ANC represents all classes of the black African population. It was absolutely necessary to stand in solidarity with the ANC—as well as AZAPO, the Pan-African Congress and other nationalist fighters—when they engaged in military confrontations with the apartheid state. But that is a very different matter than extending political support to the bourgeois-nationalist programme of such organisations.

Lenin’s Bolshevik Party was a steadfast champion of all struggles against national oppression and Great Russian chauvinism in the tsarist empire, which Lenin termed a prison house of peoples. But the Bolsheviks fought for the rights of oppressed peoples *with the methods of proletarian class struggle*. Lenin politically exposed and combatted nationalism as a bourgeois ideology, be it of the “most just” or “most refined” sort. This Leninist understanding is all the more critical in South Africa, where class exploitation is integrally bound up with national oppression. Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V.I. Lenin of the October Revolution, wrote to his followers in South Africa in the mid 1930s:

“It is entirely obvious that the predominant majority of the population, liberated from slavish dependence, will put a certain imprint on the state.

“Insofar as a victorious revolution will radically change not only the relation between the classes, but also between the races, and will assure to the blacks that place in the state which corresponds to their numbers, insofar will the *social* revolution in South Africa also have a *national* character.”

The struggle for national liberation can be a powerful motor force for socialist revolution in South Africa. Yet far from educating and leading the black African proletariat to take its place in revolutionary struggle at the head of all the oppressed, the SACP has for decades diverted the struggles of the proletariat into support for the bourgeois-nationalist ANC. The result of this has been not the liberation of the black African and other non-white masses but the “freedom” of a handful of aspiring black bourgeois to jump aboard the “gravy train” and join in the exploitation of their “own” people. The nationalism promoted by the ANC/SACP has also served to fuel and embitter national, tribal and other divisions among the masses, frustrated by their failure to achieve any modicum of gains 13 years after the end of apartheid. At the same time, sections of workers and youth are beginning to perceive that they can be oppressed by their own kind and not simply by whites.

South Africa is not a nation but a colonial-derived state. Apartheid South Africa brutally exploited migrant labour from elsewhere in southern Africa. The peoples of these surrounding countries made numerous sacrifices to support the struggle against apartheid. But today immigrants are discriminated against and subjected to deportation. Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! South Africa/Azania, one and indivisible, cannot be the programme for workers revolution in southern Africa. We stand for a voluntary socialist federation of southern Africa in which the peoples of the region should enjoy regional autonomy.

Lobbying the SACP tops to adopt a more critical posture toward the ANC will do nothing to advance the struggle of the proletariat for its own emancipation and that of all the exploited and oppressed. Rather what is necessary is the forging of an entirely different party, a party based not on nationalism and class collaboration but on the proletarian, revolutionary and internationalist programme of the Communist International at the time of Lenin and Trotsky and its programmatic continuator, the Fourth International founded by Trotsky in 1938. It is to this task that Spartacist South Africa, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), is dedicated, as part of our struggle to reforge an authentically Trotskyist, democratic-centralist Fourth International.

### The State: An Organ of Class Domination

In this issue of *Spartacist South Africa*, we are reprinting three articles originally published in *Workers Vanguard*, the newspaper of the American section of the ICL. These articles address some of the central issues debated by members of the SACP and others in the workers movement. One of the most important of these issues is the need to have a clear understanding of the nature of the state. As we note in “Bitter End to Defiant Public Sector Strike”: “In order to justify its participation in the government, the SACP has to pretend that the Tripartite Alliance is something other than what it is: a *bourgeois government*.” The SACP line that the existing state is some kind of “class-neutral” entity in which the workers can gain “hegemony” is a profound revision of Leninism. There are two fundamental classes in modern society—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. As Lenin wrote in *State and Revolution*: “The state is an organ of class *domination*, an organ of *oppression* of one class by another.” The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes, or achieve workers rule by electoral means. The capitalist state, which serves as the executive committee of the bourgeoisie,

cannot be reformed. As Lenin insisted, the replacement of a bourgeois state by a workers state requires a *revolution* that overthrows the capitalist system of exploitation.

The article "Protest Apartheid-Style Police Brutality Against Union Bus Drivers!" addresses the issue of the bourgeois cops. The core of the state consists of the police, army, courts and prisons. The public sector workers strike underscored that the cops are an integral part of the capitalist state, wielded by the bosses to repress the working class. The line of the SACP and COSATU that cops are workers, welcoming them into the trade unions, reflects their revisionist position that the state is "ours." This dangerous illusion is reinforced by the fact that some cops in the "new" South Africa formerly served as armed fighters in the ANC's struggle against apartheid rule. This does not diminish by one iota their current role as enforcers of capitalist state repression against the oppressed, meting out terror and brutality in the same way as the hated apartheid police did. Nor is such a development unusual: once Algeria gained independence from France, the freedom fighters who had once been tortured by the French colonialist army and police became the torturers of their own people on behalf of the neocolonial bourgeois-nationalist Algerian regime. Spartacist South Africa says: Police, security and prison guards—out of the unions!

Responding to the grumbling at the base of the party, deputy SACP head Jeremy Cronin cynically asserted that SACP ministers in government had been appointed for something other than carrying out ANC policies: "You can't forget that you are a communist. If you are not a communist, then leave this party... You can't privatise state-owned enterprises or abuse workers and their rights. You have options. Step down as a minister" (*Morning Star Online*, 13 August). The Gauteng resolution put forward at the SACP congress accepts the reformist, class-collaborationist framework of the SACP leadership that the workers can "contest power" in a bourgeois government. It is one thing for communists to stand candidates for and participate in bourgeois parliaments, in order to act as a tribune of the workers and oppressed there, as the Bolsheviks did even under the arduous and repressive conditions of the tsarist autocracy. It is a very different matter to stand for and assume executive office or serve as a bourgeois minister, whether on a local or national level. To assume such a position necessarily means enforcing the bourgeois order, including using the cops or army to repress workers struggle. This is why we are opposed to running for executive office (see "Down With Executive Offices!", *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 60, Autumn 2007).

On one level, Mbeki's sacking of deputy health minister Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge reflected the government's continued contempt for AIDS victims and more generally for the masses of poor people who suffer from the country's crumbling health system. Madlala-Routledge had made mild criticisms of the government's neglect of HIV/AIDS and had pointed out that the fact that 2000 babies had died at Frere Hospital in the Eastern Cape over five years constituted a national emergency. Unable and unwilling to marshal the resources necessary to provide free anti-retroviral medications and other measures to alleviate the impact of the AIDS pandemic, the bourgeois-nationalist ANC instead pushes anti-science obscurantism. Mbeki has never acknowledged the elementary fact that AIDS is caused by a virus, HIV, while his health minister Tshabalala-Msimang is a notorious advocate of "traditional remedies." In other words, millions of people deprived of anti-retroviral drugs are abandoned to die. Women are among the hardest hit by the AIDS pandemic: for example, over 39 percent of pregnant women in KwaZulu-Natal test HIV-positive. "Traditional views" are frequently combined and overlap with the religious doctrines of the Christian church and missionaries, reinforcing

anti-sex bigotry and the stigma of AIDS. We demand: Free anti-retrovirals and free quality health care for all! Open up the private hospitals for all!

COSATU general secretary Vavi hailed Madlala-Routledge (a member of the central committee of the SACP), claiming that thanks to her "the spirit of AIDS denialism is behind us." This is just false. Only a small percentage of those with HIV/AIDS are receiving medication. Moreover, the under-five mortality rate has actually *increased* since 1990, going from 60 per 1000 live births to 65 per 1000 live births (*Sunday Independent*, 12 August). By far the largest cause of death in children under five is HIV/AIDS! It is hardly a secret that medical services are crumbling: a shortage of staff, poor pay for health workers, decaying facilities, budget cuts for health services. And when health workers struck recently, the government—in which the SACP serves—threatened to fire many of them because they are "essential workers." The fact is that the SACP, in aiding and abetting the capitalist attacks on working people as part of the Tripartite Alliance, is co-responsible with Mbeki for his criminal neglect of health services.

The AIDS pandemic exposes the bankrupt "nation-building" rhetoric pushed by the SACP; it obviously cannot be solved within the borders of one country. To even begin to provide free, quality health care and treatment for all in South Africa requires the creation of a workers government and the expropriation of the blood-sucking pharmaceutical giants. Only world socialist revolution, tearing the means of production out of the hands of the greedy capitalist class, can put the positive gains of modern science at the service of all mankind. (For more on this, see "Capitalism, AIDS and ANC 'Rollout' Scam," *Spartacist South Africa* No. 4, Spring/Summer 2004.)

Meanwhile the bourgeois press has been filled with hysteria whipped up over financial allegations regarding the SACP. What exactly is going on here is not clear. It does seem to involve infighting between different factions of the SACP, including those around Nzimande who are pro-Zuma and others like COSATU president Willie Madisha, who is closer to Mbeki. In any event, we oppose any state prosecution of the SACP. This is an issue of workers democracy—financial irregularities, if there are any, in workers parties or trade unions should be addressed by the workers movement. An attack on the SACP on such grounds opens the door for similar attacks by the government against trade unions and other workers organisations. From the standpoint of the workers movement, the real corruption in the SACP is political: its class-collaborationist support for the ANC is directly responsible for the betrayal of the interests of the workers and oppressed.

### **The Trotskyist Programme of Permanent Revolution**

It is critical that militant workers and youth assimilate the history of the communist movement. As we note in our article "Permanent Revolution vs. 'Two-Stage' Stalinist Betrayal," also reprinted in this issue, the bankruptcy of "revolution by stages" was proven by the course of the Russian Revolution of 1917. Tsarist Russia was an example of combined and uneven development, an overwhelmingly peasant country with a myriad of national minorities oppressed by the Great Russian landlords and capitalists. At the same time, however, there was a small but important proletariat in a few industrial centres, concentrated in huge factories equipped with the most modern technology. The Mensheviks, who in fact were the original proponents of "two-stage revolution," argued that the bourgeoisie must come to power to resolve the outstanding democratic tasks such as giving land to the peasantry. Against this perspective of binding the proletariat to the liberal bourgeoisie, Lenin counterposed the revolutionary collaboration of the

proletariat and the downtrodden peasantry, culminating in a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry." Trotsky likewise recognised that the Russian bourgeoisie was incapable of leading a democratic revolution, but went further than Lenin. In his theory of *permanent revolution*, developed during the period 1904-06, Trotsky asserted that the Russian Revolution would be proletarian-socialist in character; that the solution of the bourgeois-democratic tasks (such as destruction of the tsarist autocracy, land to the tiller, democratic solution of the national question) was conceivable only in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, leaning on the peasantry. The dictatorship of the proletariat would place on the order of the day not only democratic tasks but socialist tasks as well. To guarantee such gains and to lay the basis for a world socialist society, proletarian rule had to be extended to the advanced capitalist world.

In 1917, when the tsar's government collapsed, the Mensheviks supported the new liberal bourgeois Provisional Government and later joined the government. Lenin waged a merciless political struggle against the Mensheviks and those in the Bolshevik Party who conciliated them. He came over to Trotsky's view that the revolution could triumph only by placing the proletariat in power. While the majority of the Bolshevik leadership initially called for "completing the bourgeois-democratic revolution," Lenin insisted that "The conclusion is obvious: only the assumption of power by the proletariat, backed by the semi-proletarians, can give the country a really strong and really revolutionary government." Lenin won over the key cadre in the Bolshevik party; the Bolsheviks led the working class, supported by the peasantry, in a revolution that smashed the old state apparatus, replacing the class dictatorship of capital with the dictatorship of the proletariat based on democratically elected councils (soviets) of workers and peasants.

At the time of the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, the Communist International (Comintern) revived the Menshevik line of "two-stage" betrayal. By then the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet state had placed at the head of the Comintern J.V. Stalin and Nikolai Bukharin, who advocated the anti-Marxist, nationalist dogma of building "socialism in one country," denying the need to spread the revolution outside the Soviet Union. They continued the policy of liquidating the Chinese Communist Party into the Chinese bourgeois nationalists, the Guomindang, led by Chiang Kai-shek. Lulled into the belief that Chiang was an ally, tens of thousands of Communists and militant workers, who were the effective power in the key city of Shanghai, were disarmed and murdered when he turned on them in the Shanghai massacre of April 1927. This policy of subordinating the working class to the bourgeois nationalists was opposed by Leon Trotsky. As a result of this experience, Trotsky generalised his theory of permanent revolution to the colonial and semi-colonial world.

However, the Stalinist leadership of the Comintern drew the opposite conclusions. It defended its treacherous conduct in China and generalised this strategy of subordinating the working class to the national bourgeoisie to other countries like South Africa. (For more information, see our pamphlet *The Stalin School of Falsification Revisited*.) In fact, the alliance with the ANC dates from the year after the defeat of the Chinese Revolution. At its recent congress the SACP leadership cited a resolution of the 1928 Sixth Congress of the Comintern that asserted:

"Our aim should be to transform the African National Congress into a fighting nationalist revolutionary organization against the white bourgeoisie and the British imperialists, based upon the trade unions, peasant organizations, etc., developing systematically the leadership of the workers and the Communist Party in this organization [we repeat: "*developing systematically the leadership of the workers and the Communist Party in this organization*"]..."

The development of a national-revolutionary movement of the toilers of South Africa...constitutes one of the major tasks of the Communist Party of South Africa."

—Political report of the SACP's 11th Congress Central Committee as tabled before the 12th Congress (brackets and emphasis in original)

Stalin's Comintern sought to prettify its class collaboration by dubbing the Guomindang a "workers and peasants party." This "two-class" formula, denying that the class interests of the proletariat differed from the petty proprietor outlook of the peasantry, covered up the *bourgeois* character of the Guomindang. The Comintern claimed that a bourgeois revolution would "grow over organically" into the socialist revolution. Similarly the SACP denies the necessity for proletarian revolution, rejecting the "erroneous (and divisive) conclusion that a socialist transition required *another* political revolution in which the working class, in the name of 'socialism' overthrew its own national democratic state, and marginalized its own closest allies" ("Taking Forward the Struggle for Socialism, Chapter 5"). The ANC is dubbed a "broad national liberation movement" and a "class-contested terrain," the better to deny that the SACP is politically subordinated to a bourgeois party and participates in running the bourgeois state.

Contrary to what some SACPers believe, the ANC has not betrayed its "socialist past," as supposedly embodied in the 1955 Freedom Charter. That document in fact makes no reference to either socialism or the working class taking power. The famous phrase that "the mineral wealth beneath the soil... shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole" was deliberately vague as to how it was to be realised. At best, it posed a nationalisation of the mines within the framework of capitalism. The charter explicitly upholds the right of "all people" to "trade where they choose" and "to manufacture," that is, it upholds the right to private property in the means of production. In the main it consists of a series of bourgeois-democratic demands, such as abolition of the apartheid laws and laws restricting suffrage. The document claims that "the people" should "share in the country's wealth" and envisions that "only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people, can secure to all their birthright without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief." But "the people" are divided into different classes with counterposed interests. In referring to "democracy," the ANC meant *bourgeois democracy*, which means above all defence of the "right" of the capitalists to exploit the workers. The ANC was asserting its appetite to become the bourgeois rulers of the country. In pushing the Freedom Charter, the SACP reinforced the ideology of nationalism, the false belief that the black African people all have a common interest which stands higher than class divisions.

The demise of apartheid refuted the SACP's false claims that genuine racial and national equality could be achieved in alliance with the national bourgeoisie. Apartheid was not destroyed through revolution but rather through a "power-sharing deal" between the Randlords and the ANC, backed up by the Western imperialists. While one factor in inducing the capitalists to arrive at an agreement with the ANC was the escalation of labour struggle against apartheid, the bourgeoisie did not seriously feel that its rule was threatened. The deal took place in the wake of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the USSR, which provided material as well as diplomatic support to the ANC. Throughout the 1980s the ANC devoted the bulk of its efforts to a "divestment" campaign aimed at pressuring the Anglo-American imperialists to pressure the Afrikaner rulers to come to terms with the ANC; after the counterrevolution the ANC quickly came to terms with the Western imperialists and their South African junior partner.

Indeed the ANC was eager enough to share in the spoils of

South African capitalism. Talk of “nationalising the mines” was quickly dropped. As early as 1990 Nelson Mandela made clear that he had “never advocated socialism at all” and that he favoured “the flourishing of capitalism among Africans.” The “power-sharing deal” was guaranteed by various “sunset clauses” (pushed vigorously by then SACP leader Joe Slovo) that enshrined the privileges of the old white ruling class. The ANC acted fundamentally no differently than other former petty-bourgeois nationalists like Robert Mugabe who, upon taking power, exploited their own people in league with the imperialists.

Over the following 13 years the ANC—aided and abetted by its labour lieutenants in the SACP and the COSATU bureaucracy—has indeed kept its end of the bargain with the Randlords, defending the sanctity of the bourgeoisie’s property and profits. While there is a black government, the economic and social conditions of the black, Indian and coloured working masses have if anything deteriorated. This gives the lie to the SACP’s claims of a “national democratic revolution.” It confirms in the negative the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution, underscoring that achievement of national equality requires the overthrow of the capitalist system of exploitation.

Some SACPers, trade unionists and other leftists (including some grouped around the magazine *Amandla*), dissatisfied with the alliance with the ANC, have proposed a lash-up with other forces, including AZAPO and the “social movements” like the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF). Despite its criticisms of the government, AZAPO is a bourgeois-nationalist formation qualitatively no different from the ANC (except being smaller). Indeed, its willingness to administer capitalism is demonstrated by the fact that it currently has a minister in the government (Mosi-budi Mangena). Our article on “Permanent Revolution vs. ‘Two-Stage’ Stalinist Betrayal” deals with the popular-frontist “social forums.” It speaks to the treachery of the SACP in enforcing the dictates of capital that outfits like the APF have come to the fore,

acting as a safety valve for the ANC-led government by leading protests against some of the government’s more unpopular measures, such as cutting off water in the townships. No less than the SACP itself, these formations are tied to the imperialists and the capitalist states via their ties to and funding by bourgeois governments, banks and CIA-linked institutions like the Ford Foundation. (See also “Social Forum Con Game,” *Workers Vanguard* No. 853, 2 September 2005.)

What is necessary is the forging of a Leninist-Trotskyist party, which must unite the most politically advanced worker militants with the best of the leftist intellectuals. Such a party must be a “tribune of the people,” championing the interests not only of the working class but of all the oppressed—the unemployed, the rural poor, women, immigrants, tribal and ethnic minorities. It will be built in political and polemical struggle against the various currents of the South African left, including the SACP, whose best elements must be won away from its pro-capitalist leadership to a Trotskyist programme. Only the revolutionary expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a workers state and planned economy will put the mineral wealth and all that has been built through the sweat and blood of the toilers at the disposal of working people.

A socialist revolution in South Africa, centred on the black proletariat, would confront formidable enemies in the imperialist powers, emboldened and strengthened by the final undoing of the Russian Revolution. Yet such a revolution would also galvanise strategically powerful allies: from the American black working class, to the militant young proletariat of South Korea and Indonesia and the working class in West Europe. This would electrify workers throughout the world and establish a base for the struggle for international revolution, especially in the advanced capitalist countries, which is vital for the achievement of a world socialist society, one in which poverty has been abolished and classes are no more. ■

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## Women's Liberation...

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women had achieved. The Trotskyists organised a new, Fourth International, founded in 1938, on the programme of authentic Marxism that had animated the Bolshevik Revolution.

Despite the triumph of the Stalinist bureaucratic caste and the consequent degeneration of the Russian Revolution, the central gains of the revolution—embodied in the overthrow of capitalist property relations and the establishment of a planned economy—remained. These gains were apparent, for example, in the material position of women. That is why we of the International Communist League, based on the heritage of Trotsky's Fourth International, which fought against Stalin and the degeneration of the revolution, stood for the unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack and all threats of internal and external capitalist counterrevolution. We called for a political revolution in the USSR to oust the bureaucracy, to restore soviet workers democracy and to pursue the fight for the international proletarian revolution necessary to lay the material basis for constructing a genuine socialist society in which poverty and want is eliminated and classes cease to exist. The Stalinist bureaucracy sold out to capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92, bringing untold poverty and desperation to the former Soviet Union.

In countries of belated capitalist development, the struggle for women's emancipation is a particularly powerful motor force of social revolution. In these societies, such as South Africa, the acute oppression of women is deeply rooted in pre-capitalist "tradition," tribalism and religious obscurantism. The bourgeois nationalists who now rule in capitalist South Africa have always been hostile to the struggle for women's liberation, which would threaten to undermine their own class rule. Women in southern Africa are still largely deemed minors with few enforceable rights of ownership or inheritance. Widows are still inherited by their husband's brothers. Practices such as polygamy, based on the social and economic subordination of women, as well as *lobola*, arranged marriages and the brutal practice of female genital mutilation still occur. The catastrophic impact of the AIDS pandemic has been accelerated by superstition and bigotry as well as poverty and capitalist greed. The AIDS crisis is a product of the government's criminal neglect and stands as a powerful indictment of neo-apartheid capitalism.

The experience of the Russian Revolution and, later, the lessons of the aborted Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, which was driven to defeat by the disastrous policies of Stalin's Comintern, verified Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, which rejects the nationalist bloc between the proletariat and its capitalist class enemy. In countries of belated capitalist development, only the dictatorship of the proletariat, leaning on the peasant masses and fighting to extend proletarian rule to the imperialist centres, can realise the historic tasks of the European bourgeois-democratic revolutions—e.g., agrarian revolution and political democracy—and address the tasks of socialist construction. To achieve this goal and unleash the revolutionary potential of the struggle for women's emancipation requires the leadership of a proletarian vanguard party, a tribune of the people, armed with a broad new vision of a socialist order of equality and freedom. Spartacist South Africa seeks to build that party as part of a proletarian, revolutionary international.

**V.I. Lenin:**

### "International Working Women's Day"

The gist of Bolshevism and the Russian October Revolution is getting into politics the very people who were most oppressed under capitalism. They were downtrodden, cheated and robbed

by the capitalists, both under the monarchy and in the bourgeois-democratic republics. So long as the land and the factories were privately owned this oppression and deceit and the plunder of the people's labour by the capitalists were inevitable.

The essence of Bolshevism and the Soviet power is to expose the falsehood and mummery of bourgeois democracy, to abolish the private ownership of land and the factories and concentrate all state power in the hands of the working and exploited masses. They, these masses, get hold of politics, that is, of the business of building the new society. This is no easy task: the masses are downtrodden and oppressed by capitalism, but there is no other way—and there can be no other way—out of the wage-slavery and bondage of capitalism.

But you cannot draw the masses into politics without drawing in the women as well. For under capitalism the female half of the human race is doubly oppressed. The working woman and the peasant woman are oppressed by capital, but over and above that, even in the most democratic of the bourgeois republics, they remain, firstly, deprived of some rights because the law does not give them equality with men; and secondly—and this is the main thing—they remain in "household bondage", they continue to be "household slaves", for they are overburdened with the drudgery of the most squalid, backbreaking and stultifying toil in the kitchen and the family household.

No party or revolution in the world has ever dreamed of striking so deep at the roots of the oppression and inequality of women as the Soviet, Bolshevik revolution is doing. Over here, in Soviet Russia, no trace is left of any inequality between men and women under the law. The Soviet power has eliminated all there was of the especially disgusting, base and hypocritical inequality in the laws on marriage and the family and inequality in respect of children.

This is only the first step in the liberation of woman. But none of the bourgeois republics, including the most democratic, has dared to take even this first step. The reason is awe of "sacrosanct private property".

The second and most important step is the abolition of the private ownership of land and the factories. This and this alone opens up the way towards a complete and actual emancipation of woman, her liberation from "household bondage" through transition from petty individual housekeeping to large-scale socialised domestic services.

This transition is a difficult one, because it involves the remoulding of the most deep-rooted, inveterate, hidebound and rigid "order" (indecent and barbarity would be nearer the truth). But the transition has been started, the thing has been set in motion, we have taken the new path.

And so on this international working women's day countless meetings of working women in all countries of the world will send greetings to Soviet Russia, which has been the first to tackle this unparalleled and incredibly hard but great task, a task that is universally great and truly liberatory. There will be bracing calls not to lose heart in face of the fierce and frequently savage bourgeois reaction. The "freer" or "more democratic" a bourgeois country is, the wilder the rampage of its gang of capitalists against the workers' revolution, an example of this being the democratic republic of the United States of North America. But the mass of workers have already awakened. The dormant, somnolent and inert masses in America, Europe and even in backward Asia were finally roused by the imperialist war.

The ice has been broken in every corner of the world.

Nothing can stop the tide of the peoples' liberation from the imperialist yoke and the liberation of working men and women from the yoke of capital. This cause is being carried forward by tens and hundreds of millions of working men and women in town and countryside. That is why this cause of labour's freedom from the yoke of capital will triumph all over the world.

—March 4, 1921



V.I. Lenin Address on International Women's Day, 1921

## Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

The Russian Revolution of October 1917 was a beacon of liberation for the oppressed masses worldwide, not least for women, who suffered lives of extreme degradation. Bought and sold like chattel in marriage, subjugated as household slaves, women were bound to the stultifying confines of the family. The Revolution brought the promise of a fundamental transformation of society, the possibility of unprecedented advances to women and all the oppressed.

We publish below an address by Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin on International Women's Day 1921. As Lenin describes, immediately upon leading the working class to power, drawing behind them the peasant masses, the Bolsheviks enacted the most far-reaching measures for the legal emancipation of women that the world had ever seen. But, as he explains, this was only the first step. Even in the advanced capitalist countries, where women have achieved a measure of formal equality, the oppression of women cannot be simply legislated out of existence. Women's oppression originates in class society itself, and can be rooted out only through the destruction of private property in the means of production.

The institution of the family, the main source of the oppression of women in class society, flows from its role in the inheritance of property, which requires women's sexual monogamy and social subordination. The family plays the critical role of rearing the next generation to work on the land, in the factories and mines and to serve as cannon fodder in the bourgeois army. It also serves to train youth to obey authority and inculcates religious backwardness as an ideological brake on social consciousness. The family cannot be abolished; it must be *replaced* with communal childcare, housework, dining halls and laundries, freeing women to take part fully in social, political and economic life.

The material abundance necessary to fulfill this task can come only from the highest level of technology and science, based on an internationally planned socialist society. Recognising this, the Bolsheviks fought to extend the revolution internationally, especially to the advanced capitalist economies of Europe. The Third (Communist) International (Comintern—CI) was founded as a vehicle for the international extension of the revolution.

From the earliest days of the Revolution, the Bolshevik Party, limited by scarce resources, took heroic measures to extend its liberating influence, to even the most backward and benighted Far Eastern regions. Special commissions traveled throughout the country, mobilising women and men to implement the new laws that established individual rights and the equality of the sexes. Abortion was legalised and made free in 1920 and all laws against homosexual acts and other consensual sexual activity were abolished. The party made efforts to defend women from abuse and wife-beating, and opposed



no credit

Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin.

all instances of discrimination and oppression, wherever they appeared, acting as the tribune of the people according to the concept put forward in Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* (See "The Russian Revolution and the Emancipation of Women," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 59, Spring 2006.)

But the early Soviet workers state faced economic devastation, famine and disease wrought by the ravages of the First World War and the Civil War that followed when the imperialists invaded the country with armies from 14 capitalist countries. The failure of the 1923 German Revolution was a tremendous blow, leaving the struggling Soviet workers state isolated. A conservative bureaucratic caste led by Stalin began to consolidate control over the Bolshevik Party and the CI. This was to take on programmatic expression in late 1924, as the Stalinist bureaucracy propounded the anti-Marxist dogma of building "socialism in one country." Through its futile pursuit of accommodation with imperialism and its opposition to international revolution, the bureaucracy undermined the gains of the revolution, reversing, for example, many of the gains

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