

Revolutionary Leadership is the Key

Capitalist Austerity Sparks Resistance



Toronto: 250,000 unionists and their allies mobilize on October 26 following one-day general strike. "Days of Action" showed power of labor, but sellout union misleaders channel worker militancy toward pro-capitalist NDP.

The October 25, one-day general strike in Toronto gave a taste of the social power of organized labor. Striking unionists threw up hundreds of picket lines all over the Metro area, sealing off factories, distribution centers and government offices to protest the massive cutbacks of Mike Harris' provincial Conservative government. Defying a court injunction, pickets brought the strategic TTC transit system to a halt: not a subway, bus or streetcar moved all day. The next day, a quarter million people filled the streets in the largest demonstration in Canadian history.

The Toronto "Days of Action" were the fifth of the anti-Tory protests called by the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL). But far from seeking to mobilize a powerful offensive by organized labor against the austerity rampage, the OFL brass have seen the days of protest as a way of blowing off steam and dissipating the widespread discontent. Throughout, their goal has been to channel that discontent into rebuilding the social-democratic NDP, whose own vicious attacks on the unions, the poor and desperate immigrants under the 1990-95

Bob Rae government paved the way for Harris.

The strikes in Toronto and other Ontario cities, with their mass pickets, union flying squads and defiance of the bosses' laws, as well as the factory occupation at General Motors in Oshawa during the October auto strike, have allowed the working class to get a sense of its potential power. In sanctioning such actions, the pro-NDP union bureaucrats have been skating on thin ice—and they know it. A major wing of the OFL has now decided that it's time to end the mobilizations. Thirteen unions led by the Steelworkers and Power Workers have declared they will not support any more "Days of Action," and the next projected strike, in Sudbury in late February, has been canceled.

Power Workers president John Murphy is up front: "Where we're going to beat Harris is at the ballot box, not walking up and down University Avenue." "The alternative for us, as working class people," he says, "is the New Democratic Party." Unlike the Tories and Liberals, the NDP social democrats are
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PC Partisan Defense Committee

Defend the Chicago Anti-Klan Three!

Three anti-Klan protesters continue to be persecuted by the capitalist courts and cops for their participation in a June 29 protest against the Ku Klux Klan in Chicago's Daley Plaza. Gene Herson, the Labor Coordinator of the Partisan Defense Committee and Jeff Lyons, a supporter of Refuse & Resist, face up to one year in jail, and Dennis Glass, a young black worker, faces up to two years—all on bogus charges of assault and battery against police.

What the three anti-Klan militants confront is a vendetta by Chicago cops, and behind them the city administration. In preparation for the Democratic National Convention last summer, Chicago authorities were desperate to prevent any protests. The cops protected the deadly Klan racist terrorists on June 29. Police launched a series of attacks against the more than 100 anti-fascist protesters after a provocation by Klansmen—armed with bolt-studded shields and wielding heavy flagpoles as clubs—had been successfully routed. The demonstrators had struck a blow on behalf of all victims of fascist terror and the cops were incensed.

As Leroy Collier, president of the Pasadena, California branch of the National Association of Letter Carriers, wrote in a letter protesting the arrest of the anti-Klan demonstrators: "The actions of the police—indiscriminately beating and spraying protesters with pepper gas at close range—is indicative of the current political and social climate in America. Attacks on people of Color, poor people, labor unions, immigrants, gays and lesbians are a reality."

The fascists are emboldened by the climate of racist reaction whipped up by the rulers of America as they shred any and all social programs for the working class and the poor, particularly minorities. At the same time, with the gap between rich and poor growing wider by the day, there is an accelerating drive by the state, its cops and courts to suppress protest, denying such elementary constitutional rights as freedom of speech and assembly. The current vendetta by the Chicago police is aimed at reinforcing the cops' authority to trample on the democratic rights of the population as a whole.

Statements protesting the state's attempt to victimize the

anti-Klan militants have been sent by a wide range of unionists and others both in the U.S. and internationally, including Chicago's Amalgamated Transit Union Local 308, the Fire Brigades Union in Scotland, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Robert Allen, the editor of *The Black Scholar*, black death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, and Local 10 of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union in the San Francisco Bay Area. Join in the defense of the Anti-Klan Three—it is vital to the defense of the rights of all of us against the racist terror of the KKK and its police protectors.

Funds are urgently needed to cover the legal costs of this defense effort. Donations should be sent to the Partisan Defense Committee (earmarked "Anti-Klan Protesters").

Send protest statements demanding that charges be dropped to: Richard Devine, State's Attorney of Cook County, Richard J. Daley Center, 55 W. Randolph Street, Chicago, IL 60602. Mail donations and copies of protest statements to the PDC in Chicago at P.O. Box 802867, Chicago, IL 60680-2867, phone (312) 454-4931; or in Toronto at P.O. Box 314, Station B, Toronto, ON M5T 2W1, phone (416) 593-4138.

María Barahona Fights Deportation

The Partisan Defense Committee issued a protest demanding that a deportation order against Salvadoran refugee María Barahona be withdrawn and that she, and her five young children, be granted permanent residence status. She is currently in sanctuary in Trinity United Church in Vancouver.

Barahona fled El Salvador in 1980 at the age of 18 at the height of the civil war between the murderous Salvadoran junta and leftist insurgents because, as a supporter of the Fuerzas Populares de Liberación (FPL), she was targeted by right-wing death squads. After hiding for ten years in the U.S., she requested refugee status in Canada, but was refused by the government because it had determined she was no longer in danger! But such is the fruit of the Salvadoran leftists' "negotiated settlement": two of Barahona's brothers were deported to El Salvador in 1995; one disappeared, the other was in hiding until his recent death.

The vicious determination to deport this woman is part of Ottawa's broader war on refugees and immigrants. The PDC demands: Stop the deportations! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants and refugees! Send letters of protest to Lucienne Robillard, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, House of Commons, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6, fax (613) 952-5533. ■

SPARTACIST CANADA

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

EDITORIAL BOARD: John Masters (Editor), Peter Stegner (Managing Editor), Russell Stoker (Production Manager), Jane Clancy, Arthur Llewellyn (Editor, Young Spartacus pages), Miriam McDonald, Oliver Stephens.

CIRCULATION MANAGER: R. Nassir

BUSINESS MANAGER: M. McPherson

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

Printed in a union shop by union labor.

Return postage guaranteed Publications Mail Reg. No. 8161 ISSN: 0229-5415
Winter 1996/97 Date of issue: December 1996

Get Your Copy of
**CLASS-STRUGGLE
DEFENSE NOTES!**

**No. 24
Winter 1996-97**

For a single copy of issue
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Partisan Defense Committee
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Toronto, ON M5T 2W1


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PC Partisan Defense Committee
CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

Number 24 2001 Winter 1996-97

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Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!**

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Chicago Anti-Klan 3!**

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HONKEY APPEAL - Support Class War Struggle!
Brazil: Finally! Police Attacks on Marches/Worker Unions
For International Labor Defense

Young Spartacus

Students, Youth: Fight for a Socialist Future

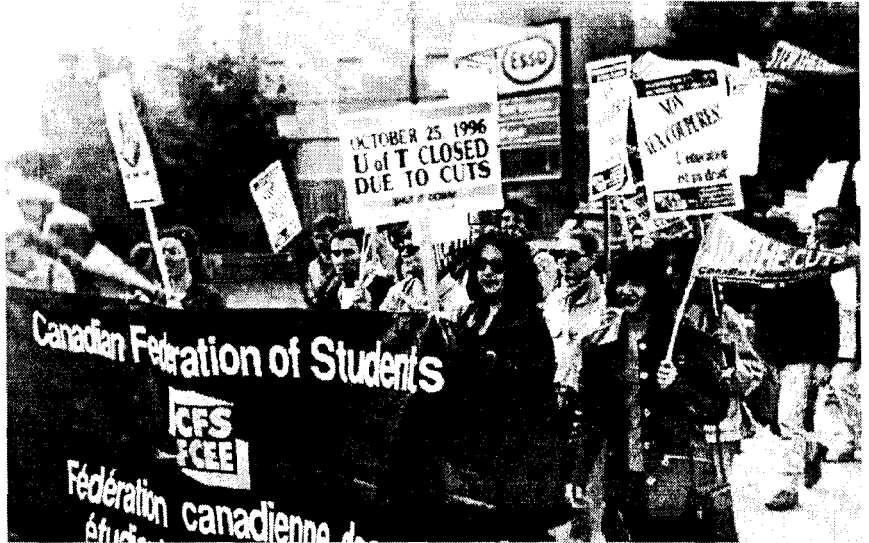
Students and other youth from throughout Ontario marched alongside trade unionists, immigrants and other minorities, anti-poverty activists and the unemployed on the October 25-26 labor "Days of Action" in Toronto. Supporters of the Spartacus Youth Club and the Trotskyist League joined picket lines and intervened at rallies throughout the two days of protest. The University of Toronto SYC helped build the picket lines at that campus, chanting "Nobody In, Nobody Out." In the course of the two days, our comrades sold more than 1,700 copies of Spartacist Canada, Workers Vanguard and other publications of the International Communist League, while the SYC also distributed several thousand copies of a special leaflet which we reprint below.

* * *

There have now been five union-led "Days of Action," with hundreds of thousands drawn into the streets in defense of jobs, education and social programs. Tens of thousands of students and other youth have marched alongside unionists, the unemployed and others against the vicious onslaught of the Tory government. But while mass protest is important, no amount of "popular democratic pressure" will force Mike Harris and the class he represents to act against their own most basic self-interest.

Unemployment, cutbacks and savage attacks on the poor reflect the iron logic of a decaying social system based on private profit. Through their governments—the Tories in Ontario, the Liberals federally and the NDP in B.C. and Saskatchewan—the capitalist rulers seek to shore up their rate of profit by driving down wages and working conditions, and by eliminating what they consider unnecessary social "overhead expenses"—medicare, welfare, a decent education for anyone but their own heirs.

All the talk about the "X generation"—the "slacker" generation—is the ruling capitalists' way of saying that youth have no value. A whole generation of youth raised in poverty, ill health and ignorance is merely the cost of "doing business." How can we fight back? Young people themselves don't have a lot of social power. But the working class, with its hands on all the levers of production and distribution of wealth, does. The fundamental divide in this society is between the capitalist ruling class, a tiny minority who own industry, and the working people who produce everything. With its numbers and organization, the working class can not only beat back these attacks, but can bring down the entire



SC photo

Harris' cuts target youth, women, immigrants. Students: Ally with the working class against capitalism!

system of exploitation and oppression, replacing it with a just and egalitarian socialist society.

But to wage revolutionary struggle against capitalism, the working class must be *conscious* of its power and its historic task. We need to build a revolutionary party, based on the program and perspective of Marxism, which can bring this consciousness to the working class. Only such a party, acting as what the Marxist leader V.I. Lenin called a "tribune of the people," can break down the endless attempts of the capitalists to "divide and rule" by setting white worker against black and Asian, English Canadian against Québécois, men against women. In freeing itself, the working class will necessarily liberate all sections of society from the many forms of oppression which are rooted in class divisions.

Crisis of Leadership

So far the capitalist rulers' class war has been one-sided. Far from leading a struggle against capitalism, the current leadership of the unions—the OFL and the CLC—only argue over the terms of surrender. Instead of fighting for jobs for all, they haggle over how many jobs will be lost. Last winter, the OPSEU public-sector strike went down to defeat with the union leadership agreeing in advance to thousands of firings!

The reason the labor bureaucracy won't fight and can't fight is that they accept and defend the capitalist system, at best hoping to blunt its sharpest edges through piecemeal, reversible, social-democratic reform. Thus the OFL's "Days

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We Need a Revolutionary Workers Party That Fights for All the Oppressed!

Socialist Future...

(continued from page 3)

of Action" have been carefully choreographed with the aim of waltzing the NDP back into power in 1999. While leaning on a base of union support, the NDP always rules on behalf of the capitalist class whenever it is in power, and exchanging Howard Hampton (or Peter Kormos) for Bob Rae won't change that. Today in Saskatchewan, it's the NDP that is closing the hospitals; in B.C. it's the NDP which is implementing workfare and which sent the RCMP and army against Native protesters at Gustafsen Lake.

The current attacks on youth, working people and minorities in this country are part of a *global* capitalist assault. Especially since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, a degenerated workers state which was undermined and strangled by decades of Stalinist bureaucratic rule, the various national ruling classes have been gearing up for another struggle to redivide the world's finite markets among themselves. Twice before in this century, such "global competition" has led to the butchery of whole generations of youth in world wars. The next one will be fought with nuclear weapons. Irrational, yes, but capitalism is an irrational system, with leaders to match.

The NDP and the union bureaucracy wrap themselves in the flag, defending Canadian capitalism against its international competitors. For the NDP, such patriotism means rabid chauvinism against Quebec. Similarly, the labor tops' nationalist call for "Canadian jobs for Canadian workers" means scapegoating workers in other countries and immigrants and other minorities here at home.

Youth seeking to fight the capitalists' attacks must militantly oppose Canadian imperialism's depredations abroad, typified by its infamous murder mission in Somalia and its participation in the Desert Slaughter against Iraq. This in turn means fighting every attempt by the capitalist rulers to rally the "home front" around themselves, especially their anti-Quebec "national unity" crusade. The key block to class struggle in this country is the deep animosity created by the national oppression of Quebec and the frothing chauvinist tirades of the English Canadian ruling class. Marx insisted that a nation which oppresses another can never itself be free. As revolutionary internationalists, we say only independence for Quebec can lay a basis for directing social struggle against the capitalist rulers in both nations.

Socialism Is What We Need, Communism Is How We Get It

To young people who have never witnessed a winning strike, let alone a revolution, a fight for socialist revolution might seem way "out there." But what is really crazy is the notion that the present system can be rendered humane and just. No amount of tinkering can do away with capitalism's *raison d'être*: the exploitation of all the world's peoples for the profits of a tiny handful.

The International Communist League, of which the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste is the Canadian section, fights to build revolutionary workers parties which can bring together all of the many victims of capitalist oppression behind the power of the organized working class. The Spartacus Youth Clubs seek to educate and win students and other youth to that revolutionary perspective. This is in sharp contrast to

various other "left" organizations who act as pressure groups on the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats and New Democrats.

Some youth wanting to fight against the capitalists' attacks have been attracted to the activism of anarchism. Rejecting the class struggle as the motor force of history, anarchists—like Toronto's Anti-Racist Action, for example—can only oscillate between street-level confrontation and liberal accommodation to those in power (get the Trotskyist League packet "Marxism versus Anarchism" for more on this current). Then there are "left" social-democratic organizations like the International Socialists (I.S.) or Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP). The I.S. in particular chatter about building a "socialist alternative" to the NDP—yet they urged the re-election of the hated Rae government last year, and promise in advance to vote NDP again in 1999!

OCAP, the I.S. and their ilk loudly demand more "action," bigger "action." But any effective action by the oppressed will come up in short order against the *capitalist state*—the racist cops, courts, prisons, etc. which exist to preserve the rule of capital. Marxists understand that the capitalist state is the enemy and that it must be smashed through workers revolution. Yet OCAP's central leaders in the Labour Militant group propound the deadly dangerous idea that the police are "workers in uniform" who can become allies of the oppressed. And during the OPSEU strike, the I.S. paper *Socialist Worker* hailed the "militancy" of prison guards, who like the cops are racist killers and a central armed component of the capitalist state.

The Spartacus Youth Clubs fight for a party like Lenin and the Bolsheviks built to lead the Russian Revolution of 1917, the only time in history that the working people and oppressed took power and held it. Unfurling the banner of international socialist revolution as the only solution to the decay of capitalism, we fight for:

- A shorter work week at no loss in pay—Jobs for all!
Organize the unorganized, including the unemployed!
- Free tuition, open admission to colleges and universities, and living stipends for students!
- Free 24-hour child care! Free quality health care for all! Free abortion on demand!
- Full citizenship rights for immigrants and refugees!
- Down with English Canadian chauvinism—
Independence for Quebec!
- For a workers government to expropriate the capitalist class!

Against the attempts of labor bureaucrats, student leaders and self-proclaimed "socialists" to divert social struggle into electoral politics and attempts to reform a dying system, we seek to rally youth to the perspective of communism, which lives on in the struggles of the oppressed around the world. The SYCs are organizations of revolutionary action and education. Join us! ■

Marxism vs. Anarchism

A Trotskyist League Packet
\$2.00

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Spartacist Canada Publishing
Box 6867 Station A, Toronto ON M5W 1X6

Down With the Monarchy! Independence for Quebec!

Ottawa's Royal Agent Exposed as Fascist Sympathizer

On November 5, Jean-Louis Roux, Ottawa's handpicked Quebec lieutenant-governor, resigned after the revelation of his pro-Nazi activities during World War II. In 1942 Roux painted a swastika on his medical student's lab coat and marched in a Montreal demonstration against conscription which turned into an anti-Jewish pogrom. To the end, Roux claimed the affair was only a "tempest in a teapot." And Chrétien stood by him, declaring "I didn't fire him.... I defended him."

Most of the English-language media tried to trivialize Roux's actions, retailing his self-portrait of a young man who only had a "student's mischievous desire to show off and be provocative, and [whose actions] in no way corresponded to any political conviction or ideology" (*Globe and Mail*, 5 November). But Roux himself gave the lie to this, as reported by *l'Actualité* magazine's Luc Chartrand (15 November):

"Anticipating the questions, it was he who had revealed that he had been a Pétainist, Francoist and supporter of Mussolini.... He saw himself once again in the street in 1942, at age 20, amidst an anti-conscription riot on its way to sack the offices of *The Gazette!* On Rue Ste-Catherine, the windows of all the shops with foreign-sounding names—'especially *israélite*,' he specified—were smashed to pieces. He found himself on the front lines, facing the police...."

A former Liberal senator (and a well-known actor in Quebec), Roux never kept his activities in the early 1940s a secret among his powerful friends. But for the Anglo-chauvinist rulers in Ottawa, Roux—a fanatical federalist who stated before last year's referendum that he couldn't live in an independent Quebec—was a perfect candidate to install as the queen's representative. With what can only be described as *chutzpah*, Roux even denounced Quebec artists who didn't publicly condemn separatism as akin to German intellectuals who didn't oppose Hitler's Nazis!

Chrétien's appointment of Roux last summer was an open provocation, part of the government's hardline "Plan B" against any attempt by Quebec to exercise its right to independence. It went hand-in-hand with threats to use force (see "Ottawa Threatens Partition of Quebec," *SC* No. 109, May/June 1996) and calls for the Supreme Court to rule that Quebec separation would be illegal. Justice Minister Allan Rock ominously warned that: "A unilateral declaration of independence by Quebec would undermine our stability and is simply not acceptable. It...is deeply threatening to the orderly governance of our nation."

Ottawa and its federalist allies in Quebec tried to deflect attention from the Roux scandal by denouncing the Parti Québécois government's appointment of two former Front de

Jean-Louis Roux, avowed enemy of Quebec independence, sworn in as federal viceroy.



Boissinot/Canapresse

Libération du Québec (FLQ) members to high-level posts in the public sector. In the "October Crisis" of 1970, the federal government seized upon kidnappings of government officials by the left-nationalist FLQ to stage a military occupation of Quebec. While civil liberties were abrogated, hundreds of leftists across the country were rounded up and imprisoned. Today, even as it defends a former apologist for fascism, Ottawa continues to target ex-FLQers who, however misguided their strategy and tactics, sought to fight against national oppression.

For more than 200 years, the rulers of Canada have kept the French-speaking nation in Quebec in subjugation, not least by military means. The capitalists use anti-Quebec bigotry to blind English-speaking workers to their own *class* interests. Instead of seeing the English Canadian ruling class as their enemy, the workers are lined up to oppose "the French." At the same time, Anglo chauvinism drives the Québécois workers deeper into the arms of their "own" capitalists, who pose as their protectors. As revolutionary Marxists, we advocate independence for Quebec as the means to get the national question off the agenda—to break the stranglehold of Anglo chauvinism and to redirect the struggles of the workers in both nations against their "own" exploiters.

Down With the Monarchy!

Ottawa named Roux lieutenant-governor because he made clear he was prepared to declare any move to Quebec separation null and void. Invoking the "rights" of the Crown against Quebec is no idle threat. Twice before, lieutenant-governors have thrown Quebec governments out of office, notably that of Honoré Mercier. Mercier's 1889 declaration that "Quebec is Catholic and French and it will remain Catholic and French" drove English-chauvinist Ontario into a frenzy. Using a financial scandal as a pretext, the Tory lieutenant-governor dismissed him in December 1891.

After Roux's resignation as lieutenant-governor, PQ premier Lucien Bouchard said: "We long for the abolition of this office, a colonial relic, and that the sooner it be done, the better." But the English monarchy is not merely a "relic." Its purpose is to serve as a rallying point for all that is reactionary

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Steel-Perkins/Magnum



Chin/NY Times

Seizure of Kabul by Taliban militias (left) has led to intensified Islamic fundamentalist reign of terror against Afghan women, imprisoned at home or forced to wear head-to-toe "veil."

Bitter Fruit of Imperialists' Anti-Soviet Dirty War

Afghanistan: Hell for Women

On September 27, Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, fell to the Taliban, a fundamentalist Islamic militia. Four years of horrific rule under a shifting "coalition" of warring factions of reactionary Islamic *mujahedin* ("holy warriors") had already brought Kabul to the point of famine and devastation. Now the Taliban killers have begun to wreak bloody vengeance against any vestige of social progress, overlooked by the vultures who preceded them. One of their first targets was Najibullah, the pro-Soviet Afghan president ousted by the *mujahedin* in 1992, who was dragged from his sanctuary in the city's United Nations compound and beaten, shot and hanged, his body left strung up on the street for several days. Justifying this atrocious act of savagery, a member of Kabul's Taliban council railed that Najibullah "was against Islam. He was a criminal, and he was a Communist."

Without question the chief victims in the consolidation of Islamic fundamentalist reaction in the aftermath of the Soviet military withdrawal in 1989 have been Afghanistan's miserably oppressed women. While the civil war has now resumed, with ethnically based militias which supported the former *mujahedin* regime launching an offensive against Taliban positions outside Kabul, all the contending forces are deeply reactionary.

Among the first acts of the Taliban after seizing Kabul were to bar women from all work, to close down all girls' schools and to order women to remain locked in their homes in *pardah* (social isolation) unless accompanied by a man. As a result, almost all educational facilities have been shut down, since 75 percent of teachers are women, overwhelmingly trained during the Soviet presence in the 1980s. This has also created chaos in hospitals and orphanages that were primarily staffed by women. Given fundamentalist taboos against women being treated by male doctors, the elimination of female medical personnel means a death sentence for countless women and girls.

The situation is today so dire that better-off Afghans are

seeking refuge for their daughters in neighboring Iran, which is under the rule of Islamic fundamentalist ayatollahs. The Taliban's orgy of woman-hating terror adds the finishing touches to the program of social reaction implemented by the *mujahedin* cutthroats who took power four years ago and revived the stoning of women for adultery and "immodesty," while subjecting the entire population to a reign of terror and plunder.

While hypocritically distancing itself from some of the "excesses" in the nightmare of dark reaction which has befallen the women of Kabul, Washington has been the chief force in the Taliban's rise to power. Through its client regime in Islamic Pakistan, U.S. imperialism has for years funneled vast sums of money and high-tech military equipment to various *mujahedin* factions, from the notorious Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who rose to prominence by throwing acid in the face of unveiled women students at Kabul University in the 1970s, to, most recently, the Taliban cutthroats. Even as women were being beaten and brutalized in the streets of Kabul, U.S. spokesmen rushed to meet with Taliban representatives, hailing the efforts of these medievalist killers and torturers to "liberate Afghanistan."

The unspeakable hell which has descended on women, teachers, doctors, working people, ethnic and religious minorities and all secular elements in Afghanistan is the bitter fruit of the unrelenting imperialist drive to undermine and destroy the former Soviet Union, whose military presence in Afghanistan in the 1980s was the chief bulwark against Islamic fundamentalist reaction. For over a decade, Washington armed the *mujahedin* murderers to the hilt, building them up to wage a proxy war against the Soviet Army and the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). *But the blood of every unveiled woman butchered by the Afghan fundamentalists is also on the hands of those leftist organizations internationally which lined up behind imperialism's anti-Soviet dirty*

war in Afghanistan!

For years, groups like the International Socialists (I.S.), Canadian supporters of Tony Cliff's British Socialist Workers Party (SWP), marched in lockstep behind Washington's drive for the defeat of Soviet troops by the mullah-led forces who were openly fighting for the enslavement of women in Afghanistan. Now they have gotten what they wanted. *These self-styled "socialists" contributed, to the extent their limited means allowed, to bringing about the horror which is today being inflicted upon Afghan women.*

The "Russian Question" Pointblank

In the 19th century, utopian socialist Charles Fourier observed that social progress can be gauged by the status of women in society. This is unambiguously clear in the case of Afghanistan. For Marxists, as indeed for all opponents of women's oppression, taking the side of those fighting the U.S.-backed Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan was as clear and obvious a position as was the support of Karl Marx's First International for the Union forces led by Abraham Lincoln in the American Civil War against slavery.

How, then, could self-avowed socialists like Cliff's I.S./SWP line up with those fighting for the enslavement of women in Afghanistan? The answer lies in their virulent hostility to the Soviet bureaucratically degenerated workers state. From the moment the Bolshevik Revolution toppled capitalism in Russia in 1917 until the capitalist counterrevolution led by Boris Yeltsin several years ago, the imperialists' central aim was focused on restoring capitalist exploitation in the Soviet Union and overturning the social gains which remained despite decades of Stalinist degeneration. That is why the entire apparatus of political indoctrination in North America and West Europe was geared to producing hatred for and fear of the Soviet Union. Because groups like the I.S. bought into the anti-Soviet program propagated by the bourgeoisie, they lined up with any and all forces opposed to the Stalinists in power—from sadistic Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan and Iran to the Vatican-backed anti-Communist, anti-Semitic and anti-woman Solidarność movement in Poland.

Historic American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon, in waging a factional struggle within the then-revolutionary U.S. Socialist Workers Party against the Shachtman/Burnham minority which argued to abandon the Marxist position of military defense of the Soviet Union, said in 1939:

"The question of the Russian revolution and the Soviet state which is its creation has drawn a sharp dividing line through the labor movement of all countries for 22 years. The attitude taken toward the Soviet Union throughout all these years has been the decisive criterion separating the genuine revolutionary tendency from all shades and degrees of waverers, backsliders and capitulators to the pressure of the bourgeois world."

In the case of Afghanistan, this dividing line not only separated revolutionaries from reformists, but proponents of social progress from those who backed, openly or otherwise, medieval barbarism.

Uniquely in modern history, the rights of women were a central issue in the civil war which raged in Afghanistan from the late 1970s to the early 1990s. After coming to power in an April 1978 coup, pro-Moscow intellectuals and army officers in the PDPA sought to implement some minimal reforms to bring the country closer to the 20th century: land distribution, freeing women from the *burka* (the head-to-toe "veil"), re-

ducing the bride price to a nominal sum and providing education for girls. However, such basic democratic reforms can be explosive in a cruelly backward country like Afghanistan, not least because women's subordination in the family has decreed them as the "bearers" of the traditional culture to the next generation. Afghan landlords, tribal chiefs and mullahs launched a ferocious *jihad* (holy war), burning down schools and flaying teachers alive for the "crime" of teaching young girls to read.

When Moscow airlifted Red Army troops to Kabul in December 1979 to prevent its PDPA client regime from falling to the Islamic reactionaries and to protect its southern flank against imperialist incursion, the "Russian question" was posed pointblank. U.S. president Jimmy Carter's savage proxy war against the Soviet troops in Afghanistan and his retaliatory embargo against the Soviet Union were the opening shots of Cold War II. Under Carter's successor, Ronald Reagan, the U.S. spent hundreds of billions of dollars on high-tech "Star Wars" weaponry aimed at facilitating a first-strike nuclear attack against the USSR. And over \$2 billion worth of equipment was lavished on the Afghan *mujahedin* in the biggest CIA operation in history. Meanwhile, the capitalist media kept up a hysterical propaganda barrage against the Soviet "evil empire."

As consistent defenders of the gains of the October Revolution, we Trotskyists of the International Communist League (then the international Spartacist tendency) proclaimed: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend social gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples!" We warned that the Kremlin bureaucracy reluctantly intervened simply to stabilize a strategically placed client state and might well cut a deal with the imperialists. Nonetheless, sending troops into Afghanistan was an unambiguously decent and progressive act, cutting across the grain of the reactionary Stalinist-nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country," which renounced Lenin's fight for world socialist revolution in favor of a futile quest for "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism.

Moreover, we recognized that it was only the Soviet military intervention which offered the possibility of opening the road to emancipation for the hideously oppressed peoples of Afghanistan. If liberation was to come to Afghanistan, it had to come from without. The tiny proletariat was dwarfed by a far more numerous Islamic clergy, the urban population was surrounded by a sea of nomadic herdsmen and peasants beholden to the khans, the forces of social progress were outweighed by reactionary forces for tradition and the status quo.

The conservative leadership in the Kremlin did not send 100,000 Soviet troops to Afghanistan to make a social revolution. But the very presence of these troops brought with it the possibility of social liberation, as did Napoleon's military drive through Europe in the early 1800s in the wake of the Great French Revolution. As Trotsky noted in *The Revolution Betrayed*, his definitive analysis of the Stalinist bureaucracy, "In the sphere of national policy, as in the sphere of economy, the Soviet bureaucracy still continues to carry out a certain part of the progressive work, although with immoderate overhead expenses. This is especially true of the backward nationalities of the Union, which must of necessity pass through a more or less prolonged period of borrowing, imitation and assimilation of what exists."

Under the Soviet military umbrella, Afghan women were liberated from the veil and trained and brought into the
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Afghanistan...

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workforce as teachers, nurses, doctors and government functionaries; thousands served as soldiers and commanders in the Afghan army and self-defense militias. The vast gains which were potentially open to the Afghan peoples were visible in the stark contrast between Afghanistan's backwardness and the massive advances in living standards, education, health care and women's rights north of the Amu Darya River in the Soviet Central Asian republics. These achievements were the result of the working-class revolution led by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party in October 1917 and extended to Central Asia largely through armed intervention by the Red Army against the mullahs and tribal khans and a campaign by heroic Bolshevik women who worked to bring social progress to the women of that backward region.

Following Moscow's military intervention in Afghanistan, the imperialists and their "left" hangers-on railed against "Soviet expansionism." But far from seeking to incorporate Afghanistan, the Kremlin oligarchy fought the war half-heartedly, despite the fact that Soviet troops were winning the war on the ground in the early 1980s. When Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985, he immediately began maneuvering for a withdrawal of Soviet troops in the hope of easing the strains on the Soviet economy and appeasing imperialist hostility. In the upshot, Gorbachev prepared the destruction of the Soviet Union itself. The Kremlin's retreat emboldened the imperialist rulers, who remained intent upon nothing less than the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state, and strengthened the forces of capitalist restoration within. Withdrawal from Afghanistan was followed by counterrevolution in East Europe: Solidarność' rise to power in Poland, the capitalist reunification of Germany, Boris Yeltsin's 1991 pro-capitalist counter coup in Moscow. This, in turn, led to a total cutoff of aid to Kabul, spelling the doom of the fragile Afghan economy and central government.

When Soviet forces were pulled out in 1988-89, paving the way for a bloody onslaught against Afghan workers, women and leftists, we bitterly denounced this betrayal. We warned

that it was far better to fight and defeat the forces of counter-revolution in Afghanistan than be forced to take them on inside the Soviet Union itself. At the same time, we actively solidarized with the masses who continued to wage a bitter struggle for survival. The Partisan Defense Committee, the class-struggle legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League/U.S., wrote to the Afghan government in February 1989, offering to organize international brigades to help fight the CIA's fundamentalist cut-throats. Though this offer was declined, the PDC and fraternal organizations around the world responded to an appeal by the PDPA regime for funds, raising US\$44,000 internationally to aid civilian victims of the *mujahedin* attack on the eastern city of Jalalabad.

As an expression of solidarity, we dispatched a *Workers Vanguard* correspondent to Kabul and Jalalabad. As we wrote at the time:

"Jalalabad besieged was the focal point of imperialism's *jihad* (holy war) against social progress and the Soviet Union. Jalalabad victorious can inspire revolutionary struggle throughout the region, from India to Turkey. That requires above all the program of Leninist internationalism, the banner of the International Communist League."

— "Front Line Afghanistan," *Workers Vanguard* No. 482 (21 July 1989)

Our Jalalabad campaign struck a chord among class-struggle fighters everywhere: immigrant workers throughout West Europe, Asia and North America; trade unionists; students eager to take a stand against the CIA; and everywhere from women, including in Muslim communities. It was in the course of this campaign that we decided to launch the International Communist League, underscoring that our tendency, uniquely, fights for the communism of Lenin and Trotsky.

Anti-Soviet "United Front" with Imperialism

The Cliffites responded to the 1979 Soviet intervention by retailing the line of every imperialist government in the world: "Soviet troops out of Afghanistan!" The British *Socialist Worker* (12 January 1980) tried to whitewash the CIA-backed *mujahedin* opposition, saying "it speaks the rhetoric of Islamic fundamentalism. But in this time and place that tells us little." It didn't take a Marxist to know what the "rhetoric of Islamic fundamentalism" and, on the other hand, the Soviet intervention meant for Afghan women. This was recognized even by some Western bourgeois journalists, notably women. Writing as the last Soviet troops were pulling out, Mary Williams Walsh reported in the *Wall Street Journal* (19 January 1989):

"The plight of Kabul's women is a poignant reminder that the West's vicarious victory over communist expansion here isn't without its ambiguities. In a backward country where the female peasantry still toils like medieval serfs, Kabuli women have managed to hold on to many 20th-century freedoms.... Instead of staying at home behind purdah walls, they emerge each day and work in offices, hospitals and schools."

The I.S. opportunists pose as "revolutionary" opponents of the capitalist rulers, but they take their cue from the reformist labor misleaders, who are themselves (in Lenin's words) "social-imperialist" lackeys of the bourgeoisie. But over Afghanistan, the Cliffites even surpassed their reformist Labourite big brothers in abject treachery. The British Cliffites were actually able to make a real contribution to the imperialists'

Socialist Worker

Monthly paper of the International Socialists

March 1989

the backwardness lies outside the borders of the Afghan state. It lies elsewhere, among the working classes of Iran, India, or in the West, where they have power to challenge this system rests.

However, the importance of the defeat of the Russian army should not be overlooked by western socialists. Just as a defeated America turning tail from Vietnam fuelled the aspirations of national liberation struggles throughout America's sphere of influence, so a defeated Russia will spur the struggles of the oppressed nationalities in Eastern Europe and inside Russia itself.

stance began as a reaction to the nationalist zeal of the middle classes. It was a localized form of oppression in the areas where were fought for and a feudal system of land resistance to even the national land reform, the subjection of women in

I.S. supported CIA-backed *mujahedin* killers. When Gorbachev ordered Soviet withdrawal, I.S. cheered.

anti-Soviet drive by making common cause with...right-wing Tories. In 1980, SWP leader Paul Foot, writing in his column in the bourgeois *Daily Mirror*, attacked the virulently anti-Communist Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher *from the right* by denouncing the possibility that British meat exports to the Soviet Union might be going to Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan. The incendiary "revelations" in Foot's column provoked an anti-Soviet frenzy on the floor of Parliament, helping to justify an escalation of imperialist support to the Afghan *mujahedin*.

Though particularly flagrant in their embrace of imperialist anti-Sovietism over Afghanistan, the Cliffites were far from unique on the left. After some initial zig zagging, the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat of the late Ernest Mandel issued a statement in 1981 toeing Reagan/Thatcher's line, with the call "For an End to the Soviet Occupation of Afghanistan!" Somewhat more contradictory was the centrist Workers Power group in Britain, which arose as a split from Cliff's organization. In response to the imperialist uproar over the Soviet intervention, Workers Power took a step to the left, breaking from Cliff's absurdly anti-Marxist theory that the Soviet Union was "state capitalist" (without either a capitalist class or a capitalist economy) and announcing its formal adherence to Trotsky's analysis of the Soviet Union as a bureaucratically degenerated workers state.

But while not calling for an immediate Soviet withdrawal at the time, Workers Power joined the rest of the anti-Soviet left in "condemning the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan" as "counterrevolutionary" (*Workers Power*, February 1980). When the Kremlin later pulled out of Afghanistan, Workers Power turned around and denounced the withdrawal. And all the while, they vituperated against our call, "Hail Red Army!" Behind Workers Power's insistence that the eminently progressive Soviet intervention was counterrevolutionary lay a deeply ingrained anti-Soviet prejudice inherited from their Cliffite origins.

But the Cliffites themselves showed no such qualms, consistently supporting the imperialist line. When Gorbachev withdrew the Soviet army, the I.S. gloated: "Just as a defeated America turning tail from Vietnam fuelled the aspirations of national liberation struggles..., so a defeated Russia will spur the struggles of the oppressed nationalities in Eastern Europe and inside Russia itself" (*Socialist Worker*, March 1988). This comparison is truly grotesque! The I.S. sees no essential difference between medieval fundamentalist killers coming to power in Kabul and the victorious *social revolution*—which the I.S.'s forebears refused to support—that drove U.S. imperialism out of Indochina. And the "struggles" that ensued in East Europe and the Soviet Union (cheered by the I.S. every step of the way) meant devastating social counterrevolution combined with nationalist "ethnic cleansing."

With the fate they welcomed having come to pass and its horrendous consequences daily described in the bourgeois press, the I.S. can only wring its hands and hypocritically moan about the "long series of tragedies to beset the Afghan people" (*Socialist Worker*, 5 October). Even now, with the



Trotskyists hailed 1979 Soviet intervention against imperialist-backed reactionaries. We mobilized international aid to embattled city of Jalalabad following Gorbachev's treacherous 1989 withdrawal.

Workers Vanguard



Soviet Union gone, they continue to whitewash the role of the Islamic fundamentalist anti-woman terrorists and their Pakistani and U.S. backers, writing that "Taliban's success comes from popular disenchantment with the leaders who oppose it" and complaining that "the Taliban has no answer to the terrible crisis of the country." These fundamentalist reactionaries *do* have an "answer"—a program of all-sided reaction and extirpation of even the most modest social advances for women!

Again borrowing from Western imperialist propaganda, the sole fig leaf that the Cliffites and the rest of the anti-Soviet camp offered for their line was that the Soviet intervention violated Afghan "national self-determination." For Marxists, the question of self-determination is subordinated to overriding class considerations—in the case of Afghanistan, defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism and the struggle against feudal reaction and women's oppression.

Moreover, Afghanistan is not a unitary nation, as the Cliffites assert, but a caldron of distinct, feuding nationalities (as well as tribal and other ethnic groupings) divided by artificial borders: the Pashtuns extend into Pakistan and the Uzbeks into the former Soviet republic of Uzbekistan, while the Tajik people overlap the border with both Tajikistan and Iran. The hue and cry about the "national rights" of "poor little Afghanistan" had about as much validity as the cries of "states' rights" raised by the Confederacy during the American Civil War and again 100 years later by diehard Dixie segregationists. Precisely because the Soviet Union was not capitalist/imperialist, the Red Army intervention into Afghanistan, rather than deepening oppression and reinforcing the forces of reaction as imperialism does in its semicolonies, posed the possibility of bringing progress to that backward land of fragmented peoples.

We Are the Party of the Russian Revolution!

As Afghanistan demonstrated, the Cliffites' ludicrous "state capitalist" analysis and their posture as leftist opponents

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Capitalist Austerity...

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linked to the trade unions. But the NDP in government always rules for the bosses, carrying out their austerity edicts against workers and the poor. Bob Rae legislated pay cuts and tore up union contracts under the Social Contract, jailed leaders of striking postal unionists, and moved to eliminate medicare coverage for refugees and visa students. And today's B.C. NDP government plans the elimination of 3,500 jobs, some 8 percent of the public-sector workforce.

Buzz Hargrove of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) and Sid Ryan of the Canadian Union of Public Employees posture as the more "militant" wing of the labor bureaucracy. They want to continue the "Days of Action" as part of a "grass-roots movement" of labor and social-justice groups. But their differences with the Steelworkers & Co. here are merely tactical. Shrewder than their rivals, leaders of the CAW and allied unions recognize that the bitterness against the NDP generated by the Rae government will not easily be overcome. So they seek to resuscitate the NDP by trying to give it a more pro-labor, activist face. Inside the NDP, the same perspective is represented by Peter Kormos, a reputed "maverick" who voted against Rae's Social Contract and recently staged an unsuccessful leadership campaign. Kormos' campaign was a stalking horse to lure the disaffected back into the NDP.

Labor and Capital: Irreconcilable Enemies

The shutdown of the Toronto transit system on October 25 ran straight up against the bosses' laws. The Oshawa GM plant occupation a few days earlier was a direct challenge to

their "sacred" property rights. These examples show that the union tops are quite capable of utilizing militant labor tactics when it suits their purpose. Working people and others who saw in the "Days of Action" a way to strike back against the Tory onslaught must ask themselves why the immense social power of the working class is being channeled into the dead end of pro-NDP parliamentarism. Why is it not being unleashed to do away with the chauvinism, racism, immiseration and unemployment which are everywhere on the rise? The fundamental problem is *political*.

If the power of labor is truly to be brought to bear in defense of workers and all the oppressed, the starting point has to be the understanding that the interests of the working class—who produce all the wealth in this society—are irreconcilably counterposed to those of the capitalist owners of industry and commerce. The union bureaucrats operate as mediators in the ongoing conflict between capital and labor. Accepting as legitimate the interests of capitalism, they confine class struggle within the limits imposed by the class enemy. Thus they subordinate the working class to the national interests of their "own" capitalists.

Such "national unionism" is directly counterposed to labor's interests, which are necessarily international in scope. This is being brought home with increased urgency in today's post-Soviet world. The worldwide drive to destroy social programs, decimate the unions and drive down wages has intensified in the wake of the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state. Despite the profound bureaucratic deformations introduced by Stalinism, which eventually destroyed the workers state, the Soviet Union still represented the spectre of workers revolution to the major capitalist powers, who suppressed their own interimperialist rivalries in a common effort to overturn the planned, collectivized economy which issued out of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

Many among the hundreds of thousands who rallied in Toronto on October 25-26 identified their struggle with that of working people around the world seeking to defeat this global austerity offensive. A popular chant was "Hey Mike, Hey Harris, We'll Shut You Down Like Paris," referring to the massive wave of public workers' strikes which shook France one year ago. Such expressions of the commonality of interest of the working class internationally must be translated into *common class struggle* against the imperialist rulers. Yet the patriotic labor bureaucrats keep the workers chained to their class enemy, in the name of defending the competitiveness of their "own" capitalists against rivals abroad.

This was seen clearly in the October CAW auto strike against General Motors. The three-week strike rapidly led to plant closures throughout North America. More than 23,000 auto workers in the U.S. and Mexico were laid off, including over 4,000 *maquiladora* ("free trade" zone) workers in auto parts plants in the sprawling industrial belt in northern Mexico. When GM tried to remove dies from its Oshawa fabrication facility to maintain production in the U.S., 200 unionists stormed the plant, threw out the managers and security guards and welded the doors shut. This plant occupation should have been the spark for an auto strike extending from Canada to the U.S. and Mexico (where GM is the largest private employer).

The nationalist class-collaboration of the labor tops prevented this. The CAW leaders made no effort to extend the strike—the Oshawa plant occupation was merely designed to pressure GM back to the bargaining table in Canada. In the U.S., the United Auto Workers bureaucrats subordinated the

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SC 111

"Left" Charlatans and the General Strike

For over a year now, a host of ostensibly socialist organizations—Labour Militant, Socialist Action, the International Socialists (I.S.) et al.—have been calling on the Ontario Federation of Labour bureaucrats to organize a "province-wide general strike" to bring down the Tory government. A general strike by its nature poses the question of *power*—which class shall rule in society. As Frederick Engels, the close collaborator of Karl Marx, emphasized more than a century ago, "the political strike must either prove victorious immediately by the threat alone...or it must end in a colossal fiasco, or, finally, *lead directly to the barricades.*" Yet all that the left-reformist proponents of an Ontario general strike today have in mind is a pressure tactic aimed at forcing early elections.

In fact, the "militant" general-strike rhetoric of the fake-left is a cover for their dead-end, pro-NDP politics. "Kick out the Tories," they say. And then what? Labour Militant and Socialist Action tell workers to build and support the NDP, aiming to give this wretched pro-capitalist party a more popular face, then return it to office. And while the I.S. occasionally mutters about a "socialist alternative," they have already promised to vote NDP again.

The fake-lefts seek to distinguish themselves from the reformist union tops by calls for greater militancy (e.g., the "unlimited" or "all-out" general strike), but at bottom they share the bureaucrats' conception of the "general strike" as a militant parliamentary pressure tactic. In Italy two years ago the union misleaders called a number of "days of action," but kept the working class straitjacketed within a parliamentary framework. The Italian capitalists let the right-wing Berlusconi government be swept away. The result? Today Italy has the "left-wing" Ulivo (Olive Tree) government, which was elected with the union leaders' fulsome support...and which is carrying out the same austerity policies as Berlusconi.

Here at home the labor tops, through the vehicle of the NDP, defend the capitalist rulers and their system of exploitation. The fake-socialists, in turn, hang on to the coattails of the pro-NDP bureaucrats. As the Marxist leader V.I. Lenin explained in *What Is to Be Done?* (1902), the task of revolutionaries is not simply to support the economic struggles of the working class, but to intervene to make the workers conscious of their historic task of overthrowing capitalism. That requires the construction of a revolutionary party which

can unify and direct the struggles of the workers and the oppressed beyond the bounds of what capitalism will "allow."

The group which styles itself the International Bolshevik Tendency (IBT) put out a leaflet on the Toronto "Days of Action" calling "For a 'Common Sense' General Strike." A victorious general strike would profoundly destabilize capitalist society—the call for workers councils, for example, would be on the agenda. But that's not what the IBT has in mind. Instead, they say that if "Harris is brought down through mass strike action, the government that replaces him will have to be a lot more cautious." Thus the IBT summons the working class to a general strike in order to win...a "more cautious" capitalist government!

In essence, this position is identical to that of the openly pro-NDP groups like Labour Militant. The IBT tries to mask this by declaring "we cannot expect the professional 'labor statesmen' to run an effective general strike." But nowhere does their leaflet address the key question: the need to politically defeat and replace the pro-capitalist misleaders in order to achieve a workers' victory.

Integral to such a perspective is rallying the working class in defense of all those in the capitalists' crosshairs. Yet the IBT leaflet puts forward no demands for labor to take up in defense of immigrants and other minorities as part of its "Common Sense" general strike. And about the national oppression of Quebec, the leaflet breathes not a word. This is no accident, since the IBT *opposes* Quebec independence, even lining up with the chauvinist Canadian rulers in calling for a No vote in last year's referendum. Not surprisingly, the IBT leaflet also omits their defense of crossing picket lines, which is what they did during a janitors strike in New York last winter (see "'Socialist' Scabs Squirm," *Workers Vanguard* No. 641, 15 March).

For the various pseudo-socialists, talk of an "all-out" or "unlimited" general strike is aimed at masking their submission to the labor misleaders, and thus to the capitalist status quo. The fight against the many attacks of the Harris government requires mobilizing the social power of the labor movement at the head of all the oppressed. However, the key to victory is not mindless appeals for more and bigger "action" from the pro-capitalist labor tops but the fight for a new, revolutionary leadership which can rally all the many victims of capitalism in class struggle. ■

interests of their members to the re-election of Clinton's Democratic Party, blocking any strike action and even denouncing the Canadian strike.

A continent-wide auto strike would have struck a powerful blow against the NAFTA "free trade" agreement, under which the U.S. and Canadian capitalist rulers have sought to drive down wages and destroy union jobs through the super-exploitation of workers in the Mexican *maquiladoras*. However, the union tops' "opposition" to NAFTA is reduced to blaming foreign workers for the capitalists' methodical devastation of North American industry. In the bureaucrats' mouths, "Save 'our' jobs" means screw everybody else. This protectionism sows the poison of racism and chauvinism, keeping the workers divided and pitted against each other while the bosses laugh all the way to the bank.

Such chauvinism was instrumental in derailing the militant

French public-sector strikes last year. Capitulating to a virulent campaign of racist terror by the bourgeoisie, the union bureaucrats refused to extend the strikes to the private and mainly industrial sector, with its strong, combative component of workers from North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. Instead, they cut short the strike movement and pushed through a "compromise." While the government was forced to temporarily retreat on some austerity measures, it simply waited out the strike wave and reintroduced them a few months later.

The treacherous "Canada first" protectionism of the labor tops and New Democrats is reflected on the home front in their embrace of the English Canadian rulers' chauvinism against Quebec. The NDP in particular is a ferocious enemy of independence for this oppressed nation. By rallying the workers under the tattered flag of "Canadian unity," the

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of Stalinism were simply a cover for their profound programmatic hostility to the homeland of the October Revolution. From the time of the 1950-53 Korean War, when Cliff broke from Trotskyism in refusing to defend North Korea against U.S. imperialism, the Cliffites' supposed "third camp" ("Neither Washington nor Moscow") was nothing but an empty shell, as they continually lined up with imperialism (first in a veiled way, then openly) against the Soviet Union.

Opposition to Stalinism from a revolutionary, Trotskyist standpoint meant defense of the social foundations of the Soviet Union—centrally the existence of a planned collectivized economy, a necessary precondition for the creation of an international classless, communist society. The Trotskyist call for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist usurpers was premised on our defense of the gains of October, including our unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union against internal counterrevolution and imperialist attack. In his 1939 speech, cited above, James P. Cannon explained:

"The Soviet Union emerged from the October revolution as a workers' state. As a result of the backwardness and poverty of the country and the delay of the world revolution, a conservative bureaucracy emerged and triumphed, destroyed the party and bureaucratized the economy. However, this same bureaucracy still operates on the basis of the nationalized

property established by the revolution. That is the decisive criterion for our evaluation of the question."

—reprinted in "We Are the Party of the Russian Revolution!" *Workers Vanguard* No. 181
(11 November 1977)

Stalinist treachery and imperialist terror have left Afghanistan devastated, with a total breakdown of transportation, trade and economic life. This is a direct product of the counterrevolutionary cataclysm which resulted in the restoration of capitalism in East Europe and the former Soviet Union. The horrors being played out in Afghanistan today are the starkest expression of the choice which has been posed, with increasing sharpness and urgency, throughout this century: socialism or barbarism.

Young fighters against social oppression must study and learn the lessons of past struggles and defeats, including the world-historic defeat represented by the destruction of the remaining gains of the October Revolution, if they are to go forward to win new victories. We of the International Communist League fight for a new October, both in North America and around the world. We fight to forge Bolshevik parties internationally to lead the workers—standing at the head of all the oppressed—to power and to a society in which capitalist oppression and enslavement of women are relics of a barbaric past.

—Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 654, 25 October

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social democrats and labor tops divert popular anger away from the Anglo capitalists and direct it against the Québécois. This in turn drives francophone workers into the arms of their own bourgeois-nationalist class enemies in the Parti Québécois. The PQ government is today carrying out its own forced-march austerity program by slashing wages and social programs. This has the nationalist Quebec union bureaucrats muttering about strike action. But they have already accepted the main points of the PQ's vicious "zero deficit" plan, and are only maneuvering for more influence inside the party.

For Revolutionary Leadership!

At every step, the labor bureaucrats' fealty to their "own" national capitalists stands as an obstacle to successful class struggle. Against the Anglo chauvinism of the rulers in Ottawa, it is necessary to advocate *independence for Quebec*, in order to lay a basis for directing social struggle against the capitalists in both nations. Forging class unity to resist the capitalist onslaught also requires a fight for *full citizenship rights for immigrants and refugees*, and opposition to deportations and racist immigration laws. This must be combined with a *massive unionization campaign* aimed especially at organizing the vulnerable, brutally exploited immigrant workforce of the garment, electronics and other sweatshops.

A real struggle against unemployment means a fight for jobs for all through a *shorter workweek at no loss in pay*, together with welfare at a living wage. Against the ravaging of public education, medical and child care programs, we need a fight for *open admissions with no tuition, free quality health care for all* including free abortion on demand, and *free 24-hour child care*. All of these demands mean a frontal

assault on the system of capitalism, which is based on the exploitation of the many by the few. Their realization requires seizing industry out of the hands of the capitalists and reorganizing society in the interest of the vast majority, on the basis of a *socialist planned economy*.

Two possible roads lie before the working class. One is the bureaucrats' acquiescence to what is "possible" and "practical" under capitalism, which has led to disaster for working people and the oppressed. Or there is the revolutionary road proposed by us Marxists. In the course of sharp class struggles and through patient education, the workers will become imbued with the consciousness of their historic interests as a class fighting for itself and for all the oppressed.

The starting point is to remove the obstacles to class struggle. That means a political battle to oust the labor bureaucrats, who early American Marxist Daniel DeLeon aptly called the "labor lieutenants of capital." The recognition of the counterposed interests of labor and capital requires a political expression. That means a genuine workers party, one which unlike the NDP social democrats is based on the program of class struggle and which gives conscious leadership to the struggles of the workers, not only to improve their present condition but to sweep away the entire system of capitalist wage-slavery. ■

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Royal Agent...

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and anti-democratic. Roux's pro-fascist sympathies would not have alarmed the royal family, which was rather open in its support of the Third Reich.

More recently, in 1975 the queen's Australian governor-general threw Gough Whitlam's Labor Party government out of office at the behest of the CIA, which worried that Whitlam might close secret American bases. It is testimony to the social democracy's deep loyalty to capitalism and the institutions which maintain it that Whitlam accepted his dismissal. Indeed in the late 1970s and early '80s, the queen's governor-general for Canada was himself a social democrat, the NDP's Edward Schreyer, former premier of Manitoba.

The very existence of the monarchy is an anti-democratic outrage. The bourgeois Jacobin revolutionaries did away with France's monarchy, broke the rule of the aristocrats and separated church from state. Oliver Cromwell separated Charles I from his head, but after Cromwell's death the English "commonwealth" collapsed, and the English, Welsh and Scots remain saddled to this day with the House of Windsor, the House of Lords and an established church. We look forward to the day when the working class, led by its revolutionary vanguard party, uproots the bourgeoisie and its entire rotten retinue of feudal remnants. Down with the monarchy!

Independence for Quebec!

The Roux affair highlights how the national question shapes politics in this country. As a pro-fascist nationalist in the Quebec of the 1940s, Roux was truly a man of his times. In a 1942 referendum, the Québécois overwhelmingly rejected conscription, as they had in World War I. This reflected widespread hostility to the Anglo overlords, expressed as opposition to fighting a "war for the English." At the same time, it reflected fascist sympathies among layers of the francophone elite centered on the Catholic Church, which then held great sway. Indeed Adrien Arcand, who led a mass clerical-fascist movement in the late 1930s, was simultaneously a pro-Nazi demagogue and an intimate of premier Maurice Duplessis.

Today, sections of the Quebec nationalist movement exhibit vile anti-immigrant racism, as shown by former PQ premier Parizeau's speech blaming last year's referendum defeat on "the ethnic vote." Schools in Quebec and a major Montreal subway station continue to be named after Lionel Groulx, a vicious anti-Semite who was the chief ideologue of Quebec nationalism in the interwar period.

The Anglo rulers play on this history, trying to paint Quebec as uniquely anti-Semitic. But it was in Orange Toronto that "No Jews or Dogs Allowed" signs lined entrances to beaches and boardwalks in the 1930s. It was the federal government under Mackenzie King that barred desperate Jews fleeing Hitler's Holocaust from entering

Canada. It was the Anglo rulers, acting at the behest of their British brethren, who opened the doors after the war to thousands of Nazi war criminals. And inside Quebec, it was the insufferable wealthy Anglos of Westmount who for decades barred Jews from their universities and private clubs.

For its part, the NDP yields to no one in chauvinist ravings for queen and country. Crusading for the "defense of Canada," the NDP's predecessor, the CCF, supported throwing men, women and children of Japanese descent into concentration camps on the eve of World War II. Today the NDP rallies around the flag of "Canadian unity" with attacks against Quebec's national rights. To uphold their own class interests against the capitalist rulers, the workers need a genuinely internationalist revolutionary party, which can only be forged through breaking with the NDP labor frontmen for capitalism.

Ottawa is determined to stop Quebec's exercise of its right to independence. Roux's appointment represented one contingency plan, but it blew up in the feds' faces. There will be other provocations as the Anglo rulers maneuver to keep Quebec in their grip. As we wrote last year ("For Quebec Independence!" *SC* No. 105, September/October 1995):

"Nationalism and chauvinism have been the key strands in the ropes which bind the English-speaking and French-speaking workers to their 'own' capitalist enemies, setting them against each other, and against anyone else who is 'not us.' Thus French-speaking Haitians in Montreal, English-speaking Jamaicans in Toronto, Asians in Vancouver, aboriginal peoples struggling to assert their rights, are all victims of racist abuse and open state terror 'justified' in large part by the vicious logic of nationalism which currently defines and bedevils this country.

"We advocate independence for Quebec to help clear the way for united struggle by the racially integrated working class of the whole continent against the system of exploitation and oppression that threatens the future of all humanity. For an independent Quebec! For class struggle against all the capitalist exploiters, from Bay Street and Ottawa, to Rue St-Jacques and Quebec City, to Wall Street and Washington! Forward in the fight for North American socialist revolution!" ■

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- Feb. 13: **The Bolshevik Revolution**
- Feb. 27: **The Degeneration of the USSR: How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled**
- Mar. 13: **The Fight for a Revolutionary Party Today**

All classes 7:00 p.m., alternate Thursdays, at International Student Centre, 33 St. George St. (north of College), University of Toronto.

For more information contact the TL/SYC at (416) 593-4138 or write to: TL, P.O. Box 7198 Station A, Toronto ON M5W 1X8

Vancouver

Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste Forum

The Fight for a Socialist Future

Friday 7 February, 7:30 p.m.
Britannia Community Centre, 1661 Napier
(just off Commercial Drive), Room L3
Speaker: Oliver Stephens, *Spartacist Canada*
Editorial Board

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

Introduction to Revolutionary Marxism

- Jan. 15: **The Origins of Marxism**
- Jan. 29: **The Marxist Program**
- Feb. 12: **Marx's View of Economics**
- Feb. 26: **The State and Revolution**
- Mar. 12: **The Bolshevik Revolution**

All classes 7:00 p.m., alternate Wednesdays, UBC, Student Union Building, Room 213.

For more information contact the TL/SYC at (604) 687-0353 or write to: TL, Box 2717 Main P.O., Vancouver BC V6B 3X2

Cuba...

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proletarian internationalism. The Cuban regime's promotion of foreign capitalist investment and economic "liberalization" is a recipe for disaster. "Dollarization" of the economy has brought acute inequalities, making access to even basic items like food and soap incredibly difficult for anyone who doesn't have dollars. The biggest source of dollars are the overwhelmingly white Cubans who fled to Miami, so ugly racial divisions between black and light-skinned Cubans are being resurrected and intensified. Women are being driven to prostitution in the growing tourist sector.

The Castro bureaucracy is today undermining the remaining gains of the Cuban Revolution and preparing the way for its downfall. With the legalization of the dollar as a means of payment, appeals for foreign investment and now sizable mass layoffs (500,000 in 1995 alone), the regime's policies are pushing Cuba toward the restoration of capitalism, and with it the evils that are the product of the profit system, such as mass unemployment.

The Cuban bureaucracy would like to follow the road taken by the Chinese Stalinists, who have surrendered vast chunks of China's planned economy to private capital while maintaining the Communist Party's grip on power. Facing the implacable hostility of American imperialism and based on a relatively small island dependent on foreign trade, the options available to the Stalinist bureaucrats in Havana are far more limited than those of their counterparts in Beijing. Nonetheless, the Cuban regime likewise fears and would oppose the rule of workers councils far more than the reintroduction of capitalism.

Cuba, Canadian Imperialism and the Left

Canadian capitalists are front and center among the investors being courted by the Havana regime, and are now the largest source of foreign investment on the island. The most prominent of these companies, Alberta-based Sherritt International Corp., now runs the country's largest nickel smelter as well as cobalt mining, oil production and hotels. It is now poised to spend \$300 million more in capital projects in sugar refining, real estate and telecommunications.

While companies like Sherritt rake in megaprofits from their Cuban investments, the government in Ottawa pursues a strategy of "constructive engagement" with Cuba aimed at fomenting capitalist restoration from within. Scandalously, most of the Canadian left and "Cuba solidarity" milieu plays along with this dangerous game, painting the Canadian imperialists—deadly *enemies* of Cuba's anti-capitalist revolution—in "progressive" colors. Thus demonstrations against Helms-Burton outside U.S. government offices in Canada have been a sea of Maple Leaf flags, featuring so-called "socialists" carrying signs reading: "The Canadian Government Must Dissociate Itself from U.S. Policy" and "Defend Canadian Sovereignty, Defend Cuban Sovereignty."

The position of supporting the Canadian capitalist ruling class as a supposed ally of Cuba was laid out baldly by supposed NDP "left" Svend Robinson in an interview with Toronto's *NOW* magazine. After criticizing "the cruel and inhuman blockade of Cuba by the U.S.," Robinson exulted: "There are tremendous opportunities for Canadian business there. How many other markets are there where there is no



Syigma

On previous visit to Chile in 1971, Castro stood shoulder to shoulder with "constitutionalist" general Augusto Pinochet, architect of bloody 1973 coup.

U.S. competition?" (*NOW*, 26 May 1994). In a similar vein, a recent "Cuba solidarity" conference in Montreal, co-sponsored by the Canadian Labour Congress and the Quebec union federations and attended by representatives of various ostensibly socialist groups, called to "support the Canadian government in its choice to maintain diplomatic relations with Cuba and oppose the Helms-Burton Bill." Underlining this open appeal to Ottawa as a "friend" of Cuba, one of the invited speakers at this conference was Liberal MP Jean Augustine, then a senior parliamentary assistant to Jean Chrétien.

The social democrats, labor bureaucrats and fake-socialists lend themselves to the service of capitalist counterrevolution by lashing up with "progressive capitalists" who oppose the U.S. economic embargo as counterproductive (and costly to their profits), preferring to undermine the revolution through greater capitalist economic penetration. We Trotskyists link our opposition to the blockade with defense of the revolution and its gains, based on collectivized property and a planned economy. We emphasize that such defense requires ousting the bankrupt nationalist bureaucratic caste through a political revolution placing real power in the hands of the workers and peasants, who alone have an unqualified interest in maintaining the achievements of their revolution.

In contrast, the misnamed Communist League (CL), together with its U.S. parent group the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) of Jack Barnes, acts as an uncritical cheerleader for the Castro bureaucracy. The American SWP's adaptation to Castroism in the early 1960s was one of the decisive factors marking its break with Trotskyism, which was fought internally by the Revolutionary Tendency, forerunner of the Spartacist League/U.S. Today, the CL and SWP seek to attract radical-minded youth by proclaiming themselves the most consistent defenders of the Cuban Revolution. In fact, their politics are counterposed to genuine defense of the Cuban workers state.

The Barnesites focus almost exclusively on seeking to pressure the Clinton administration to lift the U.S. embargo, while parroting the bourgeoisie's lies about the "death of communism." In a recent interview, SWP presidential candidate James Harris grotesquely gloated that the breakup of the Soviet Union "was one of the most progressive things that has happened in decades" (*Militant*, 11 November). Yet it was only the existence of the Soviet Union which allowed the

Imperialist Hands Off Central Africa!

An imperialist expeditionary force nominally headed by Canada has descended on the black central African countries of Zaire and Rwanda. More than a thousand soldiers from 14 countries including the U.S. and France are lined up for the mission, supposedly aimed at ensuring "humanitarian" aid to Rwandan Hutu refugees in eastern Zaire.

Originally planned as a much larger invasion under United Nations auspices, "Operation Assurance" was called back after U.S.-supported Rwandan Tutsi forces engineered a mass exodus of refugees back to Rwanda in mid-November. Nonetheless, hundreds of Canadian and other imperialist troops have already landed in the region. As revolutionary internationalists, we say: *U.S., Canadian and all imperialist-led forces get out and stay out!*

A military occupation of central Africa would do nothing to ease the terrible suffering of the people in that region and can only pave the way to a far greater slaughter—by rival ethnic groups, whose conflicts are a direct legacy of colonialist "divide and rule" schemes, or at the hands of the imperialists themselves. The real aim of this show of military force is to affirm the imperialists' "right" to assert their control over their neocolonial slaves wherever and whenever they please.

Many of the same powers participated in the UN-sponsored "humanitarian" rape of Somalia four years ago, where U.S. helicopter gunships massacred hundreds of unarmed men, women and children in the streets of Mogadishu. Belgian troops killed hundreds more in the port of Kismayu, raping Somali women and throwing children into the Juba River to drown. Canadian units shot through with Klan-type fascists engaged in outright torture and murder. Their crimes were covered up by the high command, provoking a scandal which finally forced the resignations of the chief of staff and defense minister. Ottawa's move to take the lead in the invasion of Rwanda and Zaire was aimed in part at restoring the military's tarnished reputation as "peacekeepers." More broadly, the government is

acting in concert with its senior partner in Washington, as the big imperialist powers jockey for position against one another in various arenas around the globe.

With the restoration of capitalism in the former Soviet Union and East Europe, conflicts between rival power blocs dominated by the U.S., Germany and Japan have increasingly come to the fore, as the competing bourgeoisies no longer feel compelled to subordinate their differences to the overriding goal of destroying "red Russia." Behind the thin veneer of imperialist unity over "Operation Assurance" lies a sharpening clash for domination in black Africa, centrally between the U.S. and France, whose competing capitalist rulers view the peoples of central Africa as expendable pawns to be exploited—or murderously sacrificed—in their insatiable quest for profit and power.

Over the years, Canada's carefully cultivated image as soft-cop "mediators" has been very useful to the U.S., helping give "democratic" cover to imperialist brigandage from Vietnam to the Near East and now Africa. With the collapse of the Soviet Union removing the restraint of any countervailing force, the would-be masters of the world in Washington are riding roughshod over semicolonial peoples everywhere, launching invasions from the grisly slaughter in Iraq in 1991-92 to the racist occupations of Somalia and Haiti. In every case, Canada has dispatched troops to assist these bloody adventures.

The rulers in Ottawa have been aided and abetted by a string of liberals, social democrats and fake-leftists who preach that the racist imperialists can be pressured into acting in the interests of the workers and oppressed. In contrast, we Trotskyists seek to rally the working class and oppressed in struggle *against* our "own" bourgeois rulers. We fight to build internationalist Trotskyist vanguard parties to lead the struggle for worldwide socialist revolution, which can alone redress the many and bloody crimes of imperialism by putting an end once and for all to the barbaric rule of capital. ■

ban deformed workers state to defy U.S. imperialism over decades. In the early 1980s, the SWP and its Canadian allies joined Washington, Ottawa and the Vatican in supporting CIA-backed Solidarność in Poland. Closer to home, they foster deadly illusions in the capitalist state, for example appealing to Clinton to send the U.S. Army to "protect" black churches from racist arsonists. The Cuban workers and peasants can do without "defenders" like the CL and SWP!

Chile Revisited

The thousands of Chilean leftists who welcomed Castro with red banners are evidence of the Cuban leader's continuing popularity throughout Latin America, a measure of the considerable authority he retains for having led a revolution and challenged U.S. imperialism. But that authority has been used for decades to stifle revolutionary opportunities which could have brought assistance to the Cuban workers state.

There is no clearer example of that than Castro's role in Chile in the early 1970s. Despite the fact that workers revolution was a real possibility in Chile at the time, never and nowhere did the Castroites call for the working class to organ-

ize and seize state power. On a state visit to Chile in 1971, Castro stood shoulder to shoulder with Pinochet in a military review, reinforcing the illusions pushed by the "socialist" president Allende that the Chilean generals and their armed forces—the backbone of the capitalist state—would be loyal to "constitutional democracy" while Allende pursued his "peaceful road to socialism." As we said at the time, Allende's popular-front government acted to demobilize the working class, paving the way for Pinochet's bloody coup—sponsored and supported by the U.S.—in September 1973, in which Allende himself was killed.

The future of the Cuban Revolution hangs in the balance of class struggle outside the Caribbean island. There have been and will be ample opportunities for proletarian revolution in the Caribbean, Mexico and Central and South America. The key requirement for victory in the struggles which lie ahead is the forging of Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard parties, built in irreconcilable opposition to all variants of petty-bourgeois nationalism. That is the aim of the International Communist League.

—Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 656, 22 November



Castro Courts Pope, Capitalist Rulers

Defend Cuba—For Workers Political Revolution!

On November 19, Cuban president Fidel Castro had a “historic” audience with Pope John Paul in the Vatican, where they agreed to a greater role for the church in Cuba and a visit by the anti-Communist cleric to the island next year. We Trotskyists warn that any involvement in Cuba by the pope, the patron of *Solidarność* counterrevolution in Poland, can only be for the purpose of fomenting capitalist restoration.

The Cuban leader’s visit to the Vatican came shortly after he attended the sixth Ibero-American Summit in Santiago, Chile, his first trip there since 1971. While former Chilean military dictator Augusto Pinochet railed that Castro was the devil himself, thousands of Chilean leftists greeted the Cuban leader with red flags and cheers. But the purpose of Castro’s trip was to hobnob with the assembled Latin American capitalist rulers—the likes of Mexican president Zedillo, who is waging a ruthless war of terror against leftist guerrillas and imposing starvation austerity on the workers and peasants. One Latin American diplomat called Castro “a wayward sibling who’s trying to reconnect with his family.”

These days bourgeois leaders throughout Latin America, as well as in Canada and West Europe, no longer view the graying guerrilla chieftain as a threat and, indeed, believe that capitalism can be restored in Cuba by working through the Castro government. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union cut off the country’s main international support, the imperialists see their big chance to destroy the Cuban bureaucratically deformed workers state through capitalist counterrevolution. But they are divided over how to achieve this. While the United States has tightened its brutal economic embargo, seeking to squeeze Cuba into submission, other imperialist powers think this will shore up support for Castro. In particular, Canada’s capitalist rulers have long seen the embargo as counterproductive to linking up with and encouraging counterrevolution from within.

For Revolutionary Internationalism!

It is the duty of all class-conscious workers and leftist youth to defend the Cuban bureaucratically deformed workers state against imperialist attack and the threat of capitalist counterrevolution, either from within or without. The Interna-



Reuters

Castro meets with Pope John Paul. Catholic Church aims to foment counterrevolution in Cuban deformed workers state.

tional Communist League and its predecessor the Spartacist tendency have fought for this since our inception. At the same time, we have always warned that the Castroite Stalinist bureaucracy which consolidated itself during the Cuban Revolution would undermine the revolution, unless an additional *workers political revolution* placed political power into the hands of the working class itself. A Leninist-Trotskyist party is vitally necessary to lead that political revolution, and to fight to extend proletarian power through socialist revolution throughout Latin America and in the North American imperialist heartland. Isolated, the Cuban deformed workers state cannot survive.

The Chilean summit went on record in opposition to Washington’s Helms-Burton law, which penalizes foreign companies doing business with nationalized Cuban enterprises originally expropriated from American capitalists. The Castro regime hails this vote and similar anti-U.S. declarations in various diplomatic forums as victories in its pursuit of “peaceful coexistence” with Cuba’s capitalist neighbors. Yet for Cuba’s workers and peasants, Castro’s diplomatic victories are hollow.

Castro’s nationalist pursuit of “peaceful coexistence”—the hallmark of Stalinism—is counterposed to class struggle and

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