

1917

"To face reality squarely; not to seek the line of least resistance; to call things by their right names; to speak the truth to the masses, no matter how bitter it may be; not to fear obstacles; to be true in little things as in big ones; to base one's program on the logic of the class struggle; to be bold when the hour of action arrives—these are the rules of the Fourth International"

JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL BOLSHEVIK TENDENCY

No. 23



2001



LUCA ZENARO

Imperialist World Order: Misery for Profit

Global Capitalism & Class Struggle

The recent wave of international protest against the institutions of global capitalism is a manifestation of growing dissatisfaction among broad layers of the world's population with the operation of the imperialist world order. Despite confused, mutually contradictory and sometimes overtly reactionary politics, these protests signal the end of

a decade of capitalist triumphalism which followed the fall of the Berlin Wall. Our comrades at the 26 September 2000 protest in Prague carried placards (in Czech, German and English) which called for: "Down with the IMF/World Bank!," "Neither Free Trade Nor Protectionism," and "For Workers' Revolution to Smash International Capitalism!"



TOMAS MUSCIONICO—CONTACT

Seattle 1999: anti-corporate protesters

There is something profoundly wrong with a world in which the income of the three billion people at the bottom is less than the 500 at the top. The World Bank's *Annual Report 2000* admits that half of humanity subsists on less than two dollars a day, although it cynically insists on drawing the global "poverty" line at one dollar.

In November 1998, *Le Monde Diplomatique* reported: "Thirty million people a year die of hunger. And 800 million suffer from chronic malnutrition." The author, Ignacio Ramonet, asked:

"Is this the way it has to be? The answer is no. The UN calculates that the whole of the world population's basic needs for food, drinking water, education and medical care could be covered by a levy of less than 4% on the accumulated wealth of the 225 largest fortunes."

Obscene inequality is a fundamental and unalterable feature of capitalism. Under a "free market" system, social priorities are always arranged to benefit the privileged few at the expense of the many. This is not accidental, and it is not something that the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Group of Eight (G-8) or any other representatives of global capitalism could change, even if they wanted to.

How the IMF 'Fights' Poverty

For public relations purposes, the World Bank and IMF are now talking about making the eradication of poverty their top priority. At a press conference on "The IMF's Role in Poverty Reduction," held on the eve of the Prague demonstrations last September, fund official, Masood Ahmed, observed:

"[T]here has been I think over the last few years a coming together around the central challenge of poverty reduction as being the most important issue that faces the world today."

The IMF's plans for "fighting" poverty were outlined in a "Global Poverty Report" to the July 2000 G-8 Summit in Okinawa. The report, co-signed by the World Bank and four other development banks, praised earlier "anti-poverty policies":

"Some of the policy measures adopted include, stabilizing the macro-economic framework, trade and price liberalization (especially of agricultural prices), and privatization and promotion of efficient management of the public sector, including anti-corruption measures."

This is simply a description of the IMF's standard "structural adjustment" program which has routinely increased poverty levels, as well as imperialist leverage, in those neo-colonies where it has been applied. In most cases, its implementation has resulted in reduced social services through privatization of healthcare, education, power generation and transportation. These measures are chiefly designed to create opportunities for profitable investment for foreign capitalists and their domestic partners, while also reducing the domain of the national state. The hundreds of millions of working people in Mexico, Brazil, South Korea, Thailand, etc. who have first-hand experience with IMF efforts to "stabilize the macro-economic framework" have no illusions in its "anti-poverty programs."

"Trade and price liberalization" means getting rid of tariffs and subsidies for domestic manufacturers, thus forcing them to compete directly with massive international monopolies. The result is that many small and medium concerns in the neo-colonies are forced out of business, which increases unemployment and lowers wages.

The technical advances of the "Green Revolution" have made it profitable for agribusiness multi-nationals, or their surrogates, to drive subsistence farmers off their traditional lands so that these can be used to produce cash crops for export. Consequently many "underdeveloped" countries have experienced a massive expansion of agricultural output, while simultaneously recording dramatic declines in per capita food consumption as millions of former peasants are pushed into the disease-ridden shantytowns that ring the cities of the "Third World."

The growth of social inequality is a problem that cannot be "fixed" within the framework of the existing social order. Like its earlier "development" plans, the IMF's "Anti-Poverty Policies" will accelerate the extraction of wealth from the poor for the benefit of the finance capitalists of the

continued on page 14

Contents

Global Capitalism & Class Struggle	1
Tailgating Nader	3
'A Diversion and an Obstacle'	8
LRCI's Left Turn	10
Fiji: Permanent Revolution & the 'Pacific Way'	18
Zimbabwe: Cliffites' Poisoned 'Victory'	32

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closing date: 3 December 2000

Bourgeois Parties: Unsafe At Any Speed Tailgating Nader

The following statement was distributed during the 2000 American election campaign.

Since Bill Clinton's arrival in the White House eight years ago, the gap between rich and poor has widened enormously, welfare has been gutted, ten million more Americans lack health care coverage, the prison population has almost doubled and executions have tripled. Blacks and Hispanics have suffered disproportionately from the bi-partisan war against the poor and dispossessed. Overseas, the U.S., playing its role as the world's self-appointed cop, has engaged in a series of military adventures. Roughly a million Iraqis (mostly children) have died due to a U.S.-imposed embargo, and Yugoslavia is still reeling from NATO's murderous assault last year.

The twin parties of big capital have always agreed on essentials. Their policies are traditionally distinguished more by presentation than substance. But today even that distinction is blurred as Democrats tout their racist "crime-fighting" credentials, while George W. Bush postures as a "compassionate conservative." Colin Powell, the "hero" of the 1991 Gulf War massacre, took the stage at July's Republican national convention in Philadelphia to plug affirmative action and lament the racial bias of American justice. While making the wealthy white delegates visibly uncomfortable, his performance was intended to give the Grand Old Party a veneer of "diversity" thereby loosening the Democrats' grip on black votes.

Outside the convention the Philly police ignored the "kinder, gentler" rhetoric and aggressively attacked demonstrators. Their preemptive strikes against street theater puppeteers, environmentalists and miscellaneous other protesters resulted in 381 arrests (mostly of white middle-class youth). The courts did their bit by setting extortionate bails to ensure that those arrested did not reappear on the streets. John Sellers, a leader of the eco-radical Ruckus Society, had his bail set at *one million dollars!*

The Los Angeles cops were equally belligerent at the Democratic national convention in August. The American Civil Liberties Union has filed a federal suit charging that in an attack on a 16 August concert by Rage Against the Machine, the LAPD "tried to turn the lights out on the cameras that were recording their actions." Ramona Ripston, ACLU Executive Director for Southern California, concluded that in attacking members of the media, the LAPD's:

"ultimate aim was to dislodge the eyes and ears of the public, to control our understanding of the events that unfolded Monday night, and to shut down the truth-telling role that media, at their best, can play."

—ACLU press release, 16 August

The Democrats' rightward shift was underlined by Al Gore's choice of Senator Joseph Lieberman as his running mate. The Bush campaign gloated:

"From Social Security reform to missile defense, tort reform to parental notification [regarding abortion], and from school choice to affirmative action, Al Gore has chosen a man whose positions are more similar to Governor Bush's than to his own."

—quoted in *The Nation*, 21 August



MICHAEL DIBARI JR.—AP

Buchanan and Nader: American patriots

In 1968, Eugene McCarthy ran for the Democratic nomination as an anti-Vietnam War "dove," in a successful attempt to pull young protesters off the streets. George McGovern's 1972 campaign as a "peace" candidate had a similar effect. But today youth disenchanted with the status quo perceive the Democrats and Republicans as "a single party with two right wings," as Gore Vidal aptly observed.

Enter the Greens

The Democrats' indifference to their left-liberal fringe has presented the Green Party with an opportunity to gain a wider hearing for its eco-radical critique of corporate rule. The Greens originated in Germany in the mid-1970's as a wing of the anti-nuclear movement. By 1983 the first Greens won seats in the West German parliament. Today they help administer the German imperialist state in a coalition with the social democrats. Joschka Fischer, the Greens' leader, serves as Germany's foreign minister.

As the Greens in Germany edged closer to power during the 1990s, the "realos" in the party's majority faction gradually distanced themselves from their radical-pacifist origins. The minority "fundis" retained a verbal attachment to the original opposition to NATO and the German military, but it was widely noted that:

"On controversial foreign policy issues—namely German involvement in future NATO missions—the 'fundis' have been unusually silent.... Many top Greens are confident that the rank and file will not wreck the party's credibility now that it is finally in power."

—*Christian Science Monitor*, 9 October 1998

Six months later, delegates at an important Green conference in Bielefeld endorsed Fischer's enthusiastic sup-



Green imperialist: German foreign minister Fischer

port for NATO's terror-bombing of Yugoslavia:

"I am very relieved," said Antje Radcke, co-spokeswoman for the Green national leadership, who had earlier reminded the delegates that the party could exert greater influence on Germany's Kosovo policies inside the government than in opposition. They shouldn't 'play Russian roulette' with the coalition, she said."

—"A Green Light for NATO," *Time*, 24 May 1999

While supporting imperialist piracy abroad, the Greens in power have abandoned their previous posture as defenders of immigrant rights and taken responsibility for their government's continuing attacks on social services and working-class living standards.

'An Opportunist, A Liberal Hack & A Scab'

When Ralph Nader ran as the Greens' presidential candidate in 1996, he gained 700,000 votes and put the Green Party on the ballot across the country, while spending less than \$5,000 (*Mother Jones*, July/August). This year Nader aims to get at least five percent of the popular vote in order to qualify the Greens for federal matching funds in 2004.

Ralph Nader's career as America's premier consumer advocate began in 1965 when he published *Unsafe at Any Speed*, a groundbreaking exposé of the U.S. auto industry. In 1980 Tom Robbins tickled funny bones in the same left-liberal milieu where the Greens now troll for votes with *Still Life With Woodpecker*, a satirical novel about the romance between a deposed princess living in exile in Seattle and Bernard Mickey Wrangle, aka "Woodpecker," a Weatherman caricature. The two meet in Hawaii at a "Care Fest" where

Ralph Nader is to appear as keynote speaker. Nader's liberal reformism, which makes him an erotic object for the princess, so disgusts "Woodpecker" that he decides to bomb the Care Fest to strike a blow against the whimpering liberalism he blames for the demise of the New Left.

During this year's campaign, Nader has turned up at a few picket lines and marched in Detroit's Labor Day parade in an attempt to enhance his pro-union credentials. But in 1984, when employees of his *Multinational Monitor* magazine attempted to unionize, Nader fired them, sued them, changed the locks on the doors and sold the magazine (see: *Washington Post*, 28 June 1984). Tim Shorrock, one of the fired employees, concluded bitterly:

"Ralph Nader may look like a democrat, smell like a populist, and sound like a socialist—but deep down he's a frightened, petit bourgeois moralizer without a political compass, more concerned with his image than the movement he claims to lead: in short, an opportunist, a liberal hack. And a scab."

—*Left Business Observer*, October 1996

Nader's Campaign: Wake-Up Call for Democrats

In June, as Nader's support climbed toward ten percent on the West Coast and he appeared poised to siphon off a critical number of Democratic votes in Michigan and other swing states, his campaign suddenly became a hot topic. On 30 June the *New York Times*, which had previously ignored the Greens, chastised Nader for "cluttering" the field and "engaging in a self-indulgent exercise that will distract voters from the clear-cut choice represented by major party candidates."

No one likes clutter, but capitalist "democracy," the cheapest and most flexible means for the tiny monied elite to exercise control, only works properly if it is seen to be representative. The two-party system has served America's rulers well over the years, but today with the Democrats and Republicans virtually indistinguishable for most voters, the space exists for the emergence of small third and fourth capitalist parties (the Greens on the left, and Reform on the right).

The Greens' anti-corporate rhetoric no more threatens the U.S. ruling class than Nader's exposure of the American auto industry did 35 years ago. Indeed, Nader has made it clear that he hopes his campaign helps rejuvenate the Democrats, as David Lowery pointed out in a response to the *New York Times*' criticisms:

"So how will you feel if you wake up Nov. 8 to find Gore lost to Bush by 3 percentage points and you took 7 percent, TV pundit Chris Matthews sputtered at Nader recently? Great, he answered, because that will probably mean the Democrats regained the House of Representatives, probably gained seats in the Senate, Dick Gephardt will become Speaker of the House and the Democrats will have gotten a needed wake-up call and can start acting like Democrats again.

"That's not the mutterings of a spoiler cluttering the political playing field, as the Times editorial framed Nader's bid."

—*Austin-American Statesman*, 9 July [posted on the Association of State Green Parties web page, 10 July]

In an interview published in the *American Prospect* on 19 June, also circulated by the Greens, Nader asserted that, "if we can build a Green Party that goes over 5 percent, the

Democratic Party won't be the same again..." Looking past the current election he suggested:

"I think we'll be a strong lever on the Democratic Party because the Democratic Party already has lost about half the country from the get-go. And if they start losing another quarter of the country, such as California—because the Greens are going to take 10-15 percent away—that's really the end of the Democratic Party.

"The Democratic Party cannot sustain itself at a really shrunken level, or it will just implode. Some people talk about a rapprochement, where the progressive third party melds into the Democratic Party and influences it to become a more progressive party....I'm not looking that far ahead. But I suspect that the Democratic Party can't internally reform itself..."

CP vs. ISO on Nader

Nader's attempt to reform the Democrats from the outside is regarded as irresponsible ultra-leftism by the geriatric remnants of American Stalinism. Rick Nagin, former chair of the Ohio state Communist Party, recently complained:

"How can Nader and the Greens claim to be anti-corporate if their goal is to throw the election to Bush and Cheney, who represent the most dangerous, aggressive, anti-labor, racist, warlike, anti-democratic sections of big business? How can any progressive person seek the defeat of the Democratic candidate...?"

— *Cleveland Free Times*, 29 August

The CP's prescription for challenging "corporate power" by voting for one of the twin parties of big capital, is only quantitatively more absurd than the suggestion by self-proclaimed Trotskyists that voting for the Green Party, a petty-bourgeois (i.e., capitalist) party, somehow advances the struggle for working-class political independence.

The International Socialist Organization (ISO), one of the left groups most active in Nader's campaign, had initially refused to support Nader because he is not part of the workers' movement. But as he gained support in the radical-liberal campus milieu the ISO inhabits, their objections melted away and they scrambled for a spot on the bandwagon.

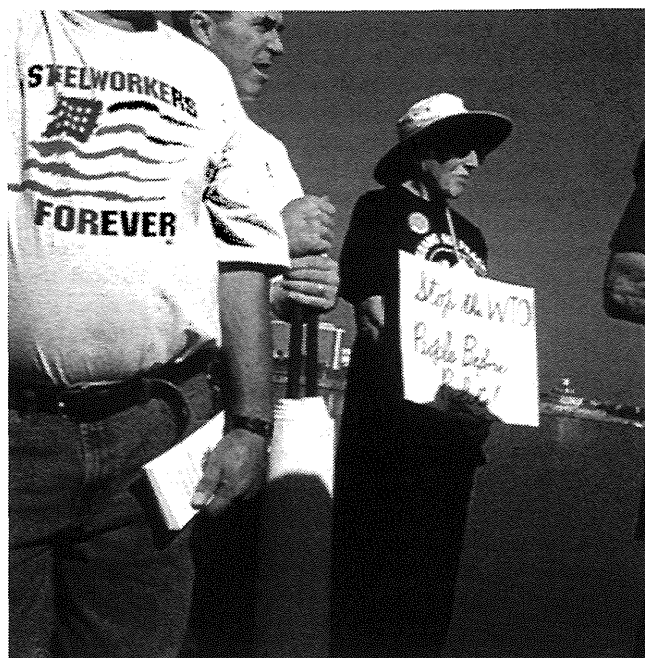
Unlike the self-proclaimed revolutionaries who support him, Nader doesn't pretend to be something he is not. Joel Geier, a prominent ISO leader, sums up Nader's celebrated "Concord Principles" as a:

"call for a return to a nineteenth-century past of good government based on small businesses and the small-town democracy of a New England town meeting. Nader seeks to replace the impersonal globalism of the present, where people have no control over the institutions and decisions that affect their lives with (an idealized) localism of the past. These ideas appeal to middle-class interests represented among the Greens and newly radicalized students."

— *International Socialist Review*, August-September

Geier observes further: "Nineteenth century small-scale capitalism was a limited democracy whose characteristics were racism, nativism, sexism, restricted suffrage, mass poverty and illiteracy." Fair enough, but why would Marxists want to vote for a candidate with such a program?

During the campaign, Nader has refused to take up the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther who sits on death row as a result of a politically-motivated frame-



TODD BIGALOW—AURORA

'Spirit of Seattle' at protectionist rally, Long Beach

up. Nader's record of indifference on this, as on other issues of racism, sexism and other forms of special oppression, and his tendency to see those who raise them as "divisive," is mildly embarrassing for his leftist apologists, but it flows logically from his fundamental loyalty to American capitalism. The ISO seeks to alibi Nader by blaming his followers for not putting enough pressure on him:

"Nader will be as outspoken on race as this new movement demands of him. It is this new radicalization that has to fight to overcome the racism which infects everything in this country."

— *Ibid.*

The ISO perhaps imagines that by joining Nader's presidential campaign they may nudge the Greens incrementally to the left. In fact the decision to vote for a capitalist party (albeit a small, fringe one) represents a significant step to the right for the ISO. Their political grandparent, Max Shachtman's Workers Party/Independent Socialist League which in the mid-1940s began flirting with the idea of giving electoral support to bourgeois third party movements, ended up by liquidating into the Democratic Party by the 1960s.

The ISO's British co-thinkers in the Socialist Workers Party (SWP/B) are enthusiastic about the turn to Nader. "US workers can now vote for a radical alternative in the coming presidential election" proclaims SWP/B leader Chris Harman, who also sees in Nader's populist reformism "an opportunity for the hundreds of thousands of people influenced by the new radicalism shown at Seattle, Washington and elsewhere to find a common language with the workers..." (*Socialist Review*, September).

The ISO and SWP/B leadership "find a common language" with the masses through wholesale adaptation to whatever illusions are currently popular. To confuse the gullible, the ISO leadership continues to denounce "lesser evilism" and to remind their members that: "Working-class political independence from capitalist parties has been a socialist principle for more than a century," (*Interna-*

tional Socialist Review, August-September). But these invertebrate tailists would never let mere "principle" get in the way of pursuing something popular. They consider it insane sectarianism to counterpose revolutionary Marxism to Nader's brand of bourgeois populism and seek to bridge the contradiction with double-talk:

"Nader does not call himself a socialist, and is part of that rather confused tradition of American radicalism which sees big business and corrupt politicians as the problem rather than the whole system. But he has embraced the spirit of Seattle..."

—Harman, *op cit*

Nader, Buchanan & the 'Spirit of Seattle'

The problem is that the "spirit of Seattle" was itself far from revolutionary. The denunciations of corporate greed from the protest organizers did not transcend the framework of bourgeois reformism and were, in many cases, laced with poisonous protectionism and the pro-imperialist jingoism of the labor aristocracy. Nader's comments in a live internet chat sponsored by *Time* magazine on 28 November 1999, the eve of the Seattle demonstrations, exemplify this. Nader was joined for the session by Pat Buchanan, America's most prominent right-wing demagogue, who also happens to oppose the World Trade Organization. One participant asked:

"Have Messrs. Nader and Buchanan discussed WTO-related issues in depth together? Or is it strictly a marriage of convenience—the enemy of my enemy is my friend' sort of thing?"

Nader passed up this opportunity to distance himself from his reactionary partner:

"Ralph Nader: Nonsense. We've discussed this for five years. We've held press conferences. And it's a cooperation of convictions that we must defend and improve our democracy so that we can agree to disagree freely.

"Pat Buchanan: Ralph and I have been in this battle for almost six years since the great NAFTA fight. And we stand together firmly on one principle, that whatever the decisions about the economic destiny of Americans are, they will be made by the American people and not the transnational corporations in collusion with this embryonic institution of world government."

As the discussion went on, it became clear that Nader shared Buchanan's concern about the undercutting of American sovereignty by a shadowy cabal of international "globalizers." This led one participant to inquire: "Mr. Nader, Do you support Mr. Buchanan's presidential campaign?" Most liberals, confronted with such a question, would have no trouble ruling out any possibility of voting for a racist, right-wing, anti-abortion homophobe like Buchanan. But Ralph ducked the question and evasively replied: "Since I am going to decide whether to run early next year, I can't support any one at this point."

American patriotism is the common denominator between Nader and Buchanan. This is blindingly clear in their response to a participant who asked if there are any good corporations:

"Pat Buchanan: Let me say that my criticism of American corporations is that so many of them are ceasing to be American in their outlook, in their interest and in their concern. They're turning their backs on their country, and their workers....

"Ralph Nader: About two years ago, I sent letters to some of the largest American corporations. I asked since they were born in the US, since they made their profits off the labors of American workers, since when they get in trouble they go to Washington for corporate bailouts by US taxpayers, and when they get in trouble overseas they call the US Marines, I suggested that these companies pledge allegiance to the American flag.... Only one company said it was a good idea: Federated Department Stores, I guess because they can't relocate overseas. All the rest who replied, about half of them, said no. I guess that illustrates what Pat was saying."

All very chummy—"Ralph" illustrating "Pat's" point. When another questioner asked for "suggestions on how a new 'patriotic' and 'responsible' form of capitalism can replace this new worship of the almighty dollar above national pride, national interests and patriotism," Ralph responded:

"One way is to really stop the discrimination against small business in favor of big business in national economic policy. Because small businesses are not going to threaten to move overseas if they don't get their way."

Reformism *Ad Absurdum*

The ISO are not the only supposed Marxists endorsing Nader. Socialist Alternative, U.S. section of Peter Taaffe's crumbling Committee for a Workers International (CWI) brags that it was "the first Marxist organization in the US to understand the phenomenon of the Nader campaign as part of the mass movement that is forming in this country," and proudly asserts:

"While stressing its agreement with the Nader Campaign, Socialist Alternative has criticized the middle class Green Party's policies—and its support in some regions for Democratic Party candidates—as well as placing demands on the Nader campaign to advance towards the construction of a working class party. This policy was actually initiated in 1996, when Socialist Alternative also called for a vote for Nader."

—*Justice*, September

This is reformism *ad absurdum*. If it makes sense to "demand" that Nader, a bourgeois populist, construct a workers' party, why not also "demand" that the Greens (or, for that matter, the Democrats) embrace socialism?

Nader is also supported by "Solidarity," an organization that shares the ISO's Shachtmanite ancestry. Like the ISO and Socialist Alternative, Solidarity advises workers to vote for Nader to get something he's not offering:

"Ralph Nader's campaign on the Green Party ticket represents the potential for a big step forward toward a new politics, independent of the capitalist class whose interests reign supreme in this country. Nader is not and makes no claim to be a socialist; but the Greens' vision of an ecological and democratic world ultimately entails an assault on the institutions of capitalism and the forging of a working-class alternative."

—"For Independent Politics 2000"

Contrary to Solidarity and the other fake-Marxists pimping for Nader, the Greens' campaign is *not* a step toward independent working-class politics. It is a product of the narrowing of the bourgeois political spectrum and, if successful, will serve to contain growing popular opposition to capital's global offensive within the framework of tinkering with the mechanisms of capitalist rule.

In early September, Dana Milbank, a *Washington Post* reporter, attended a fund-raiser for Nader held in a mansion high in the hills over Santa Barbara where guests paid up to \$1000 for the privilege of meeting the "scourge of corporate America":

"I'm not a revolutionary, I'm a business guy," says the host, Russell Palmer, a recording equipment executive who calls himself a Republican. "I don't want to tear things down, and I don't believe he does either. He's a legitimate guy."

— *Washington Post*, 5 September

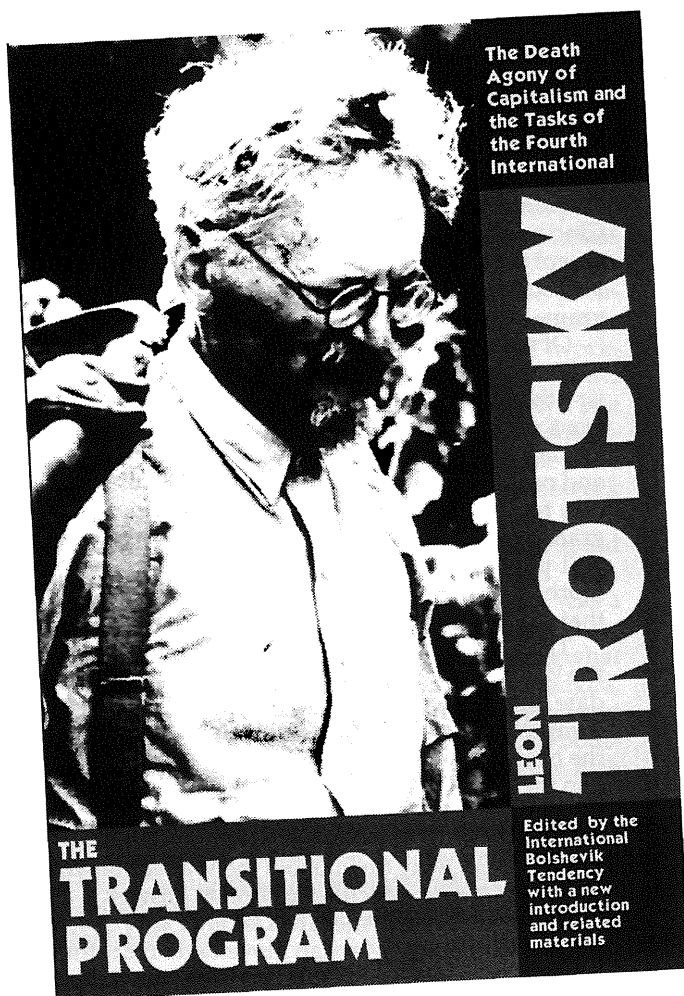
Russell Palmer understands something that Nader's ostensibly revolutionary supporters apparently do not. Unlike the Greens, who want to humanize capitalism, revolutionaries seek to *expropriate* the exploiters and replace the anarchy of the market with a rationally planned, collectivized economy where production is determined by human need rather than private profit. American workers desperately need to break with the Democrats and create their own party—but to serve the interests of the oppressed, rather

than their oppressors, it must begin with the understanding that the interests of capital and labor are diametrically opposed.

The history of the socialist movement is full of examples where isolation and impatience have led to opportunism. The eagerness of the ISO *et al* to paint Nader's reformist protectionism as a step toward "a working class alternative" to capitalist rule illustrates the distance that separates these reformists from the Marxist tradition they pay lip service to.

Those fake socialists who want to hitch a ride with Nader and the Greens today will inevitably find some new short cut tomorrow. But they will never be capable of leading the workers and oppressed in serious revolutionary struggle. A genuinely socialist party rooted in the working class can only be forged by militants who are capable of "swimming against the stream" and telling the truth. And the truth is that pulling the lever for Nader 2000 will only help prop up, not knock down, the racist system that gives us "government of the Exxons, by the General Motors, and for the DuPonts." ■

New Edition of the Transitional Program



In greeting the founding of the Fourth International in 1938, Leon Trotsky proclaimed the *Transitional Program* the movement's "most important conquest." Today, more than six decades later, the Bolshevik tradition that the Left Opposition carried forward remains as relevant as ever.

The International Bolshevik Tendency has recently published a new edition of Trotsky's *Transitional Program* based on the January 1939 version issued after the founding conference of the Fourth International. Discrepancies between the text approved by the conference and Trotsky's original draft, which appeared in the May/June 1938 *Biulleten Opozitsii*, are noted, as are some variants in subsequent editions published in the U.S. We have included an introduction and a short essay on the use of transitional demands by the Communist International in Lenin's time, along with a number of valuable articles (chiefly from the then revolutionary Spartacist League of the 1970s) on the history of communist trade union work in the United States from the 1920s to the 1970s.

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James P. Cannon on 1948 Wallace Campaign 'A Diversion & An Obstacle'



CORNELL CAPA—LIFE

Henry Wallace supported U.S. imperialism in Korean War

In 1948, Henry A. Wallace, Franklin D. Roosevelt's vice president from 1941 to 1945, ran for president on the Progressive Party slate. Wallace's campaign posed many of the same political issues for leftists as Ralph Nader's recent presidential bid. In 1948, some members of the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party/U.S. (SWP) argued for backing the Wallace campaign, but the majority, led by James P. Cannon, firmly rejected this. The following text is excerpted from Cannon's remarks on the question at the SWP National Committee's February 1948 plenum:

The Wallace party must be opposed and denounced by every class criterion. In the first place it is programmatically completely bourgeois, as all the comrades have recognized. Its differences with the Republican and Democratic parties are purely tactical. There is not a trace of a principled difference anywhere. And by principled difference I mean a class difference.

A reasonable argument could be made for the support of Wallace's movement in any circle of American capitalism. The fundamental issue that he is raising is the question of policy towards the Soviet Union. Wallace's policy can be just as much a preparation for war as the Truman-Marshall program. Just as much. It is a matter of opinion as to which is the most effective way of preparing war against the Soviet Union—whether by an outward effort to reach agreement by concessions in order to prepare better and put the onus of responsibility on the Soviet Union before the fight starts, or by the rough and tumble "get tough" policy of Truman and Marshall. At any rate it is a tactical difference within the camp of the bourgeoisie.

It would be very, very bad and demoralizing if we would allow for a moment the antiwar demagoguery of Wallace to be taken by any member of our party as some-

thing preferable to the blatant aggressiveness of Truman and Marshall. That would be nothing less than the preparation of the minds of party members for "lesser evil" politics—based on the theory that one kind of capitalist tactics in the expansion of American imperialism is preferable to another, and that the workers should intervene to support one against the other.

If I read the documents correctly, the argument is made by the Chicago comrades that the capitalists do not support Wallace and therefore it is not a capitalist party. I think it is quite correct that all, or nearly all, of the monopoly capitalists at the present moment oppose Wallace. That is not decisive at all as to the class character of the party. The class character of the party is not determined by the class that supports the party at the moment but rather by the class that the party supports. In other words, by its program. That is the decisive line.

The class character of the party is determined first by its program; secondly by its actual policy in practice; and thirdly by its composition and control....

The control of the Wallace movement rests in the hands of Wallace and those he supports. He determines the candidates and he determines the program. To talk about getting into the movement to change its program and get another candidate—that's absurd! The program and the candidate are presented to you in a finished package: Wallace for President, and Wallace's program. He made a speech in Cincinnati where he took up the challenge. He said: "Yes, I accept the support of the Communists, but when they come into our movement they don't come in to support their program—they support our program." He was quite right.

Of course you have only to look around to see that the bulk of Wallace's organized support at the moment is Stalinist—the Stalinist party, Stalinist-dominated unions, Stalinist front organizations, etc. But these Stalinist unions in the Wallace movement function as supporting organizations and not as controlling powers. They roughly play the same role toward Wallace's wrapped-up, pre-determined program as the PAC and the Political Committee of the AFL will play in the Truman movement.... They represent far more workers than the Stalinists in the Wallace camp, but that still doesn't make the Democratic Party a labor party.

The same is true about the Wallace movement. Get into the Wallace movement and change its program and candidate? Even from a practical point of view it seems to be completely utopian. The whole movement is organized on the basis of the candidacy of Wallace and his program. To join the formation and holler for a different program, a different man—this seems to contradict the whole premise of the movement. They would say to you: "If you're not a Wallace man, why do you join the Wallace movement?" It would be a very difficult question to answer.

The Wallace movement has another ugly side to it. It appears as a one-man Messiah movement. He is the head of a "Gideon's Army" throwing the bible at his adversaries. That, it seems to me, is the worst kind of substitute for independent political action by the workers' own organizations. Wallace's Messiah movement is a diversion and an obstacle in the way of a labor party. Support for it cannot be

considered for a moment. On the contrary, it must be exposed and fought.

America's Two-Party System

The traditional two-party system in the United States has been very well suited for normal times. The ruling capitalists couldn't ask for anything better than this system which absorbs shocks and grievances by shifting people from one bourgeois party to another. But that system can blow up in time of crisis. The aggravation of the crisis which we all see ahead can shake up the whole American political situation, so that the old two-party system will no longer suffice to serve the needs of the American bourgeoisie.

The Democratic Party is a badly shaken organism already. The whole structure can fly apart in times of crisis. It is quite evident now that the AFL-CIO scheme to deliver the labor vote once more to the Democratic Party is meeting strong resistance, even if this resistance is more passive than active. That seems to be one of the undisputable factors of the present political situation. The AFL and CIO chiefs may raise five, ten or even fifteen million dollars for the election campaign. But there is no confidence among them that they can get out the labor vote for Truman as they did for Roosevelt.

The less it becomes possible to mobilize the workers' votes for one or the other of these two old bourgeois parties, the more impelling and powerful will become the urge of the workers to found a party of their own or to seek a substitute for it. That mood of the workers will create a condition wherein American capitalism will objectively require a pseudo-radical party to divert the workers from a party of their own. This development, in my opinion, will most likely precede the development of a mass fascist party. America will most likely see a new radical bourgeois reform party before the development of American fascism on a mass scale.

That is what really happened in the Thirties, in a peculiarly distorted form. Roosevelt revamped the Democratic Party to serve the role of a pseudo-radical, "almost" workers party. By that he choked off entirely, for the period, the development toward an independent labor party. The Roosevelt "New Deal" became a sort of American substitute for the social program of the old, social democracy. Is a repetition of that performance likely within the framework of the Democratic Party? I doubt that very much. I think there can be only one Roosevelt episode. The whole trend since his death has been in the other direction.

Next time, the role played by Roosevelt—which was a role of salvation for American capitalism—will most likely require a new party. In the essence of the matter that is what Wallace's party is. Wallace is the, as yet, unacknowledged, candidate for the role of diverting the workers' movement for independent political action into the channel of bourgeois politics dressed up with radical demagoguery which costs nothing. That is what we have to say, and that's what we have to fight—vigorously and openly, and with no qualifications at all. We have to be 100% anti-Wallaceites. We have to stir up the workers against this imposter, and explain to them that they will never get a party of their own by accepting substitutes.

Summary

The slogan: "Build An Independent Labor Party!" is a slogan for the class mobilization of the workers. In some in-

comprehensible way this seems to have been transformed in the minds of some comrades as a mere demand to break the two-party system of the capitalists. This is not the same thing at all. It means merely a bourgeois party shake-up and not a class alignment.

Now, a break-up of the two party parliamentary system in America is undoubtedly a good thing. It destroys the fetish of the trade union bureaucracy to the effect that it is impossible to operate on the political field outside the traditional pattern. Splits in the two old bourgeois parties are bound to shake up the labor bureaucracy, loosen things up and create a more favorable situation for agitation for the formation of a labor party. But this break-up of the two-party system and splits in the bourgeois parties come about under the pressure of social crisis. These are not our tasks. Bourgeois parties are not the arena for our operation. Our specific task is the class mobilization of the workers against not only the two old parties, but any other capitalist parties which might appear.

The opposing comrades admit that we would have to pay a price to work inside the Wallace party. The admission price is just simply this: Get in there and rustle votes for Wallace for president. If you won't pay that price you cannot get in. You have no grounds even to haggle, because it is a *Wallace for President* movement. That is a price we cannot pay, because it is a price of principle. It is against our principles to solicit votes for bourgeois candidates under any circumstances. It vitiates the whole concept of independent working class political action.

It is wrong to assume that the Wallace party has a great future—that it is certain or nearly certain to become a future labor party. And it is doubly wrong to say, "This is the last chance to get in," or something approximately of that sort. A mass labor party in the United States, by its very nature, couldn't be a closed corporation....

Influence in mass parties is not determined by how long you have been there, but how much force you have. If we are in the unions and have forces there, we will be a power in any labor party formation that arises, the moment we join it, roughly in proportion to the strength of our forces in the unions and the general propagandistic power of our press.

LaFollette's 1924 Campaign

We had an experience in 1924 in this country of a third party headed by Senator LaFollette, which was quite different from the Wallace movement in this respect—that it had a much broader base of support in the labor movement. Instead of merely one small sector of the trade union movement supporting it, as is the case with the Wallace party, LaFollette's party was supported officially by the AFL and by the Railroad Brotherhoods, and even by the Socialist Party, which gave up its traditional independence. The Communist Party ran its own candidates and for the first time put itself on the national political map. The Socialist Party traded its independence for the privilege of going along with this bourgeois movement supported by the workers. They broke for the first time their traditional principle of no combinations with bourgeois parties and no support of bourgeois parties. That was an important stage in the degeneration of the American Socialist Party. They gave a finger to the LaFollette movement; eventually the bulk of the Social Democrats gave their whole hand to Roosevelt. ■

LRCI's Left Turn: 'No Coherent Middle Ground' Moribund No More?



19 August 1991: Yeltsin rallies forces of counterrevolution outside Russian Federation building

The November 2000 issue of *Workers Power* announces a dramatic about-face on "the meaning and significance of the shift back to capitalism in Eastern Europe and the former USSR following the collapse of Stalinism in the period 1989-1991." After a lengthy international discussion, the Fifth Congress of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI), in July 2000, passed a resolution renouncing their previous characterization of Russia as a "moribund workers' state." They now consider Russia to be a "bourgeois restorationist state." It is not entirely clear whether this change represents serious leftward movement or is simply an attempt to be rid of an embarrassing position—i.e., that for the past nine years Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin have been administering a state with a "proletarian class character."

The LRCI resolution notes that "in transitional periods—times of revolution or counter-revolution—the class nature of the state can be in sharp opposition to the class character of the economic system operating within its borders." Further, the LRCI now apparently accepts the elementary Marxist proposition that the class character of a state is determined by "the class interests and property relations it promotes and defends":

"The state is an instrument of class struggle—it represents the power of fundamental social groups. Its essential nature cannot be understood if we see it as a mere passive reflection of impersonal economic forces. We must look instead for its class political essence—the class and the social system that it is actively fighting for."

The resolution unambiguously characterizes Yeltsin's victory over the Stalinist hardliners' attempted coup in August 1991 as the critical event in the destruction of the

degenerated Soviet workers' state:

"the assumption of power by Yeltsin in Russia in 1991 and the abolition of the Communist Party did not immediately complete the restoration of capitalism. But it was a decisive step towards the final abolition of the crumbling post-capitalist property relations..."

This highly significant characterization is reiterated later in the text:

"The restoration of the capitalist state in Russia occurred when Yeltsin established his government in 1991 and abolished the Communist Party of the Soviet Union."

And, just to drive the point home, it is repeated a third time:

"The Russian state today guards and defends the nascent capitalist property relations within Russia—since 1991 it actively promotes the class interests and the property of the world bourgeoisie there."

The LRCI's position now closely approximates our own: "All available evidence leads us to conclude that the defeat of the coup and the ascension to power of the elements committed to reconstructing the economy on a capitalist basis constituted a qualitative turning point."

—"Counterrevolution Triumphs in USSR,"
September 1991, reprinted in 1917 No. 11

The LRCI resolution also rejects "the notion that there can be a proletarian institution—the moribund workers' state—which Marxists are not obliged to defend in times of war." Yet it remains silent on the necessity to defend a workers' state against internal counterrevolution. It seems unlikely that this is merely an oversight. While the resolution clearly signals a significant change in analysis, there is

no indication of a corresponding programmatic development, nor any reassessment of LRCI members' participation in the defense of Yeltsin's headquarters during the 1991 coup.

August 1991: LRCI's Gordian Knot

On the question of defensism, the LRCI has concluded that its "moribund workers' state" position lacks "theoretical and programmatic utility—it brings nothing but confusion to the issue." Yet there is still confusion within the LRCI, even among the critics of the moribund theory. The article reports that at the LRCI's previous congress in 1997, the majority rejected the suggestion that, if indeed Russia under Yeltsin was some kind of proletarian state (albeit a "moribund" one), Trotskyists were obligated to defend it. In making this point, the proponents of the moribund workers' state theory:

"presented a compelling argument—how could a united front with the restorationist regime of Yeltsin defend proletarian property relations?

"The absurd theory of the moribund workers' state had created an absurd subsidiary dispute. The Gordian knot needs to be cut here. There can be no defensism because there is no workers' state."

The moribund workers' state theory is indeed absurd, but in seeking to change labels without drawing the programmatic conclusions, the LRCI's current majority leaves their Gordian knot intact. If it was impossible to defend proletarian property relations by forming a united front with Yeltsin, and if, as the LRCI majority now acknowledges, the counterrevolution triumphed in August 1991 with the defeat of the Stalinist coup, then Soviet defensists should have sided militarily with Yanayev *against* Yeltsin.

While the LRCI's new resolution fails to take sides in this confrontation, it does come close:

"Brezhnev was objectively counter-revolutionary, reactionary, undermined the working class property relations, but he did not actively set about destroying them. Nor did Gorbachev. Until August 1991 Trotskyists argued for revolutionary defensism and a united front with the regime in times of war, against imperialism and capitalist restoration. Since August 1991 the LRCI believes this to have been impossible."

Until August 1991 LRCI comrades were defensists. After August this was impossible. But where does the LRCI stand on the August 1991 crisis? In an article in the May 1993 issue of the LRCI's *Trotskyist International* entitled, "Sectarians abandon the gains of October," Keith Harvey, the architect of the moribund workers' state theory, attacked us as "ultra-lefts," "dogmatists" and "Stalinophiles" for observing that Yeltsin's victory represented the triumph of counterrevolution. In the introduction to his article, Harvey noted:

"The August 1991 coup attempt in Moscow continues to throw a long shadow over the Stalinophile wing of degenerate Trotskyism. This event and Yeltsin's subsequent seizure of power from Gorbachev, his dissolution of the CPSU and then the USSR itself plunged these sects into the deepest gloom imaginable.

"They proved utterly unable to analyse what had actually happened. After a longer or shorter period of bewilderment they all decided to cut the Gordian knot and proclaim that the gains of the Russian revolution had finally been liquidated."



Red Guards, Petrograd 1917: fighting for a workers' state

Today it seems that some in the LRCI may be edging closer to cutting the knot for themselves, after belatedly recognizing the significance of Yeltsin's triumph.

'No Middle Ground'

LRCI cadres may find that revisiting Harvey's 1993 polemic (which includes what may be the first public use of the term "moribund workers' state") helps to put their new position into sharper focus. The chief issue which comrade Harvey addresses is our assertion that Soviet defensists were obligated to side militarily with the coup leaders. Harvey defended the decision to side with Yeltsin in the 1991 showdown, and excoriates the "political cowards" of the Spartacist League/International Communist League who, for their own reasons, refused to back either side. He correctly observed that those who:

"insist that the triumph of Yeltsin was synonymous with the end of the workers' state...have a duty to retrospectively argue that they should have supported the SCSE [Yanayev's Emergency Committee] since they would have delayed the outcome at the very least. In short, *between the IBT and the LRCI there is no coherent middle ground on the question of the 1991 coup.*"

—emphasis added

Comrade Harvey was absolutely right—there is no middle ground for Soviet defensists in August 1991. Having recognized that Yeltsin's victory was the "decisive step" in the destruction of the degenerated Soviet workers' state, the LRCI majority, if it is to be politically "coherent," must recognize that Soviet defensists had a duty to bloc with Yanayev against Yeltsin. The tortured theorizing that produced the absurd assertion that the Soviet workers' state survived under Yeltsin, and now Putin, was, at bottom, an attempt to justify siding with the counterrevolutionaries in 1991.

In his polemic Harvey criticized our "rigid adherence to a dogma," and cited as a "mistake" our assertion that:

"While we defend democratic rights, we regard collectivised property in the means of production as a much more valuable conquest for the working class, and private property, not political dictatorship as the greater evil..."

—1917 No. 12

Harvey acknowledged:

"the dogma starts from Trotsky's correct observation that the Stalinist bureaucracy was a parasite feeding off the healthy body of the USSR; it provided no useful function but it had every interest in the self-preservation of the body without which it would perish. Hence...workers could bloc with them not to defend their privileges but to defend the foundation of future political and economic conquests."

Comrade Harvey, whose position is rather difficult to distinguish from that of the Third Camp, dismissed this "dogma" with the observation, "this truth of Trotsky's was historically grounded and therefore relative." The situation, Harvey claimed, had changed so much in the 50 years after Trotsky's death that his Soviet defensist program was no longer valid:

"In the USSR the biggest obstacle to this task [of developing proletarian class consciousness] was the existence of the Stalinist bureaucracy; it was at one and the same time the architect and enforcer of political and national oppression, the disorganizer of the planned economy, and the chief source of pro-capitalist ideas.

"...to side with the bureaucracy against the working class and its democratic restorationist misleaders is criminal folly. It is in fact to drag the banner of Trotsky's name in the filth of Stalinism."

—emphasis added

Harvey proposed:

"By doing all it can to defeat the Stalinist-revanchist coup, the working class confronts the enemy Yeltsin with the decisive contest still ahead."

—emphasis added

Denouncing us as "ultra-orthodox dogmatists," Harvey insisted: "the imperialist bourgeoisie, who know a thing or two about property, have no doubt that the fundamental crossing of the Rubicon is yet to come." At the time this was written, in 1993, the imperialists were concerned by the deep split within the counterrevolutionaries between Russian nationalists (led by Aleksandr Rutskoi) and the pro-IMF compradors headed by Yeltsin. But there was general agreement that this was, at bottom, a dispute about how to build capitalism in Russia. The serious bourgeois press was, and remains, unanimously of the opinion that the Soviet "Rubicon" had been crossed two years earlier when Yeltsin took power and smashed the CPSU.

While the LRCI's reassessment of the significance of the events of 1991 represents an important step forward, it also raises a series of political questions. Harvey, to his credit,

Down and out in capitalist Russia: Moscow soup kitchen



had the political courage to consistently follow through the logic of his position and draw the political conclusions. It is not yet clear whether the new majority possesses similar resolve, for a serious political reassessment of the LRCI's mistake in August 1991 will necessarily entail a reexamination of the whole chain of political errors that led up to it.

The resolution reprinted in *Workers Power* repudiating Harvey's solution to the LRCI's "Gordian knot" does not mince words:

"If we stick with the moribund workers' state theory, we are left with a workers' state—an institution of our class—that we do not defend against the class enemy. This means one of two things: either that we are cowards and class traitors, or, as we should now openly admit, that we have introduced into the lexicon of Marxism a category that is devoid of meaning and without programmatic consequences."

While it is certainly true that "cowards and class traitors" refuse to defend workers' states against the class enemy, it does not follow that the "moribund workers' state" theory is devoid of programmatic consequences. Harvey's theory was *essential* to rationalize support for Yeltsin's counter-coup. If Yeltsin's victory had not threatened the survival of the degenerated workers' state, and the only issue posed was whether or not the democratic rights conceded by Gorbachev would be revoked, then the LRCI's position would have made sense.

Moribund Confusionism on the State

Even though they have officially renounced the "moribund workers' state" theory, the LRCI majority has yet to fully settle its political accounts. This is evident in its suggestion that events in China show that a Stalinist bureaucracy can:

"move to a fully restorationist policy and thus to a bourgeois state without a change of government or the abolition of the single-party system. The [Stalinist ruling] caste as a whole could avoid dissolution by transforming itself successfully into a ruling class."

To explain how a brittle caste of parasites, lacking any common economic or social interests beyond membership in the ruling party, could seamlessly transform itself into a new bourgeoisie without a ripple, the LRCI majority falls back on one of the key underpinnings of the moribund workers' state theory:

"Why should we not be 'thrown' by these various possibilities? *Because we have already recognised that the restoration does not require a 'smashing' of the state.* The social counter-revolution took place peacefully. Under Stalinism the bureaucratic-military apparatus already had a bourgeois form: unlike a genuine revolutionary working class state, it had a standing army, secret police, unelected officials. All that was necessary was for a new government committed to capitalism to assume control within the commanding circles of this state power."

—emphasis added

This argument sits uneasily alongside the resolution's recognition that "the state is an instrument of class struggle." The notion that the same state apparatus can serve different social classes flatly contradicts the Marxist position on the question:

"Revolution consists not in the new class commanding, governing with the aid of the *old* state machine, but in this class *smashing* this machine and commanding, governing with the aid of a *new* machine. Kautsky slurs over this *basic* idea of Marxism, or he had utterly failed to understand it."

—VI. Lenin, *State and Revolution*

Moreover, the LRCI's attempt to counterpose the "bourgeois form" of the Soviet Union, with its "standing army, secret police, [and] unelected officials," to that of a "genuine" workers' state is preposterous. The comrades of the LRCI surely agree that the USSR under Lenin was "a genuine revolutionary working class state;" yet Trotsky headed a standing army, Felix Dzerzhinsky headed a secret police force (the "Cheka") and a system of party appointments of unelected officials to key posts was widespread.

Trotsky addressed the apparent riddle of the "bourgeois character" of the apparatus of a workers' state in the *Revolution Betrayed* where he quoted Lenin's comment that:

"under Communism not only will bourgeois law [in relation to the distribution of goods to individuals on the basis of their individual inputs] survive for a certain time, but also even a bourgeois state without the bourgeoisie!"

Trotsky explained what this meant:

"The state assumes directly and from the very beginning a dual character: socialistic, insofar as it defends social property in the means of production; bourgeois, insofar as the distribution of life's goods is carried out with a capitalistic measure of value and all the consequences ensuing therefrom."

The proletarian revolution is distinguished from all previous revolutions in that power passes to the *majority*, not from one privileged minority to another. Thus, in an important sense:

"The regime of proletarian dictatorship from its very beginning thus ceases to be a 'state' in the old sense of the word—a special apparatus, that is, for holding in subjection the majority of the people."

—*Ibid.*

Trotsky pointed out that whereas the Bolshevik program had optimistically asserted that the "state as a bureaucratic apparatus begins to die away the first day of the proletarian dictatorship," this proved impossible, due to the pressure of imperialism and the inherited legacy of economic backwardness. Trotsky did *not* ascribe the "bourgeois" character of the Soviet workers' state to its bureaucratic degeneration under Stalin. Nor did he counterpose Lenin's "bourgeois state without the bourgeoisie" to a hypothetical "genuine" workers' state:

"The dual function of the state could not but affect its structure. Experience revealed what theory was unable clearly to foresee....For the defense of 'bourgeois law' the workers' state was compelled to create a 'bourgeois' type of instrument—that is, the same old gendarme, although in a new uniform."

—*Ibid.*

In a 1937 polemic with Joseph Carter and James Burnham, two "Third Camp" pioneers who, like the LRCI, also sought to contrast a "genuine" workers' state to Stalin's Russia, Trotsky returned to this question:

"The USSR as a workers' state does not correspond to the 'traditional' norm. This does not signify that it is not a workers' state. Neither does this signify that the norm has been found false. The 'norm' counted upon the complete victory of the international proletarian revolution. The USSR is only a partial and mutilated expression of a backward and isolated workers' state.

"The assertion that the bureaucracy of a workers' state has a bourgeois character must appear not only unintelligible but completely senseless to people stamped with a formal cast of mind....The workers' state itself, as a *state* is necessary exactly because the bourgeois norms of distribution still remain in force.



PETER TURNLEY—NEWSWEEK

Russia's Yeltsin, Poland's Walesa: counterrevolutionaries

"This means that even the most revolutionary bureaucracy is to a certain degree a *bourgeois organ* in the workers' state. Of course the *degree* of this bourgeoisification and the general tendency of development bears decisive significance. If the workers' state loses its bureaucratization and gradually falls away, this means that its development marches along the road of socialism. On the contrary, if the bureaucracy becomes ever more powerful, authoritative, privileged, and conservative, this means that in the workers' state the bourgeois tendencies grow at the expense of the socialist; in other words, that inner contradiction which to a *certain degree* is lodged in the workers' state from the first days of its rise does not diminish, as the 'norm' demands, but increases."

—Leon Trotsky, "Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?," 25 November 1937

By the mid-1930s the state bureaucracy under Stalin had "grown into a hitherto unheard of apparatus of compulsion" which had "turned into an uncontrolled force dominating the masses." It was necessary to carry out an armed insurrection, a political revolution, to break the grip of the oligarchy and restore the direct political rule of the working class. Yet Trotsky continued to insist on the necessity to defend the Soviet Union against capitalist restoration and safeguard the system of collectivized property. It was over this issue that Max Shachtman, Tony Cliff and all the other "cowards and class traitors" of the Third Camp broke with Trotskyism.

'Who Touches the Russian Question Touches a Revolution'

The final comment on the moribund workers' state in the LRCI resolution states:

"If it explains nothing, adds nothing programmatically, is not necessary and brings nothing but confusion, it must be cut away."

The moribund workers' state theory brought plenty of confusion and certainly deserves to be "cut away;" but in doing so, LRCI members must confront their support to the Yeltsinite counterrevolutionaries in August 1991. They would, moreover, do well to bear in mind James P. Cannon's pithy observation:

"Who touches the Russian question, touches a revolution.' Therefore, be serious about it. Don't play with it."

—*The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*

Globalization...

continued from page 2

imperial metropolis. This is not due to accident or oversight. It is quite deliberate and entirely rational within the logic of capitalism. Under the "free market," social priorities will always favor those at the top of the pyramid at the expense of everyone else.

'Does Protest Need a Vision?'

The so-called "anti-globalization movement" cannot really be considered a movement at all because it is so extremely politically heterogeneous:

"What's the opposite of globalization? Socialism? Isolationism? Vegetarianism? The answer is all three things, and many more. The radical-chic outfit of the season is a coat of many colors."

—*Time*, 24 April 2000

Some make a virtue of this. Pop-journalist Naomi Klein, the capitalist media's appointee as official spokesperson for "anti-globalization" youth, argues:

"The decentralised nature of these [anti-corporate] campaigns is not a source of incoherence and fragmentation but a reasonable, even ingenious adaptation to changes in the broader culture.... Once involved, no one has to give up their individuality to the larger structure; as with all things online, we are free to dip in and out, take what we want and delete what we don't. It is a surfer's approach to activism, reflecting the internet's paradoxical culture of extreme narcissism coupled with an intense desire for external connection."

—"Does Protest Need a Vision?" *New Statesman*, 3 July 2000

Individualists, narcissists and others who enjoy "dipping in and out" of the struggle are of little concern to the operators of global capitalism. But serious people have to make some fundamental choices. Should the objective be to win a "seat at the table" in negotiating ground rules for operating the imperialist world economy? Can the undesirable features of a profit-driven economy be eliminated, or is it necessary to overturn the rule of capital itself? These questions have to be answered.

History of 'Globalization'

Liberals, social democrats and nationalists tend to view the "globalization of production" as a sinister new development in which friendly, civic-minded, local, capitalist firms are gobbled up by heartless transnationals. But capitalism has always been a ruthless, "globalizing" system. The European arrival in the Americas in 1492 touched off an orgy of genocide and plunder, which along with the development of the slave trade, provided the pioneers of capitalism with their original "primitive accumulation." Over 130 years ago, Karl Marx identified the essential features of "globalization" in his description of capitalist development:

"One capitalist always strikes down many others. Hand in hand with this centralization, or this expropriation of many capitalists by a few, other developments take place on an ever-increasing scale, such as the growth of the co-operative form of the labour process, the conscious technical application of science, the planned exploitation of the soil, the transformation of the means of labour into forms in which they can only be used in common, the

economizing of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialized labour, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world market, and, with this, the growth of the international character of the capitalist regime."

—*Capital*, Vol. 1

A century ago, the vast majority of humanity was involved, one way or another, in production for the market. The British Empire, at that time the world's dominant economic and military power, also pursued a "free-trade" policy. The competition for markets and colonies touched off by "free trade" under the Union Jack led directly to the First World War. Many capitalist economists, however, regard this period as the golden age of the "free market."

In a recent speech denouncing protests against "globalization" Alan Greenspan, chair of the U.S. Federal Reserve Board, observed:

"the progress made since the Second World War in lowering trade barriers between nations really represented an effort by countries to get back to the open borders that had existed at the beginning of the 20th century."

—*Globe and Mail* (Toronto), 15 November 2000

Greenspan mused that a downturn in the world economy could produce a resurgence of protectionism: "Clearly, the risk is that support for restrictions on trade is not dead, only quiescent." During the inter-war period, this is exactly what happened. "Free trade" was abandoned as each imperialist power attempted to simultaneously blast its way into foreign markets, while sheltering its own national industries behind tariff walls. This resulted in the Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II.

October 1917: Workers' Revolution Against Global Capitalism

The October Revolution of 1917 presented the most serious challenge that international capitalism has ever faced. The successful expropriation of the Russian capitalists (and their international partners), and the organization of an entirely new form of state—a workers' state—sparked a powerful wave of revolt that shook the foundations of the bourgeois order. The Bolshevik leadership of the Russian workers, headed by Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky, considered the creation of the Soviet Union to be merely the first step in a global social revolution. In 1919 they launched the Communist International (Comintern) which set as its task the organization of a disciplined network of revolutionary socialist parties in every country on the planet. The Comintern declared war on the whole system of capitalist thievery and plunder, and made common cause with the workers and oppressed everywhere. In a speech to the Second Congress of the International, Lenin declared:

"World imperialism shall fall when the revolutionary onslaught of the exploited and oppressed workers in each country, overcoming resistance from petty-bourgeois elements and the influence of the small upper crust of labour aristocrats, merges with the revolutionary onslaught of hundreds of millions of people who have hitherto stood beyond the pale of history, and have been regarded merely as the object of history."

—Report on the International Situation and the Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International, 19 July 1920

International capital was acutely sensitive to the threat posed by Bolshevism. Fourteen capitalist countries imme-

diately dispatched troops in a failed attempt to help the Russian counterrevolutionaries strangle the Soviet Republic in its infancy. Despite the subsequent bureaucratic degeneration of the revolution under Stalin, the early years of the revolution stand as a beacon for all who seek to struggle for a world without exploitation, racism, poverty or oppression—in short, a world without capitalism.

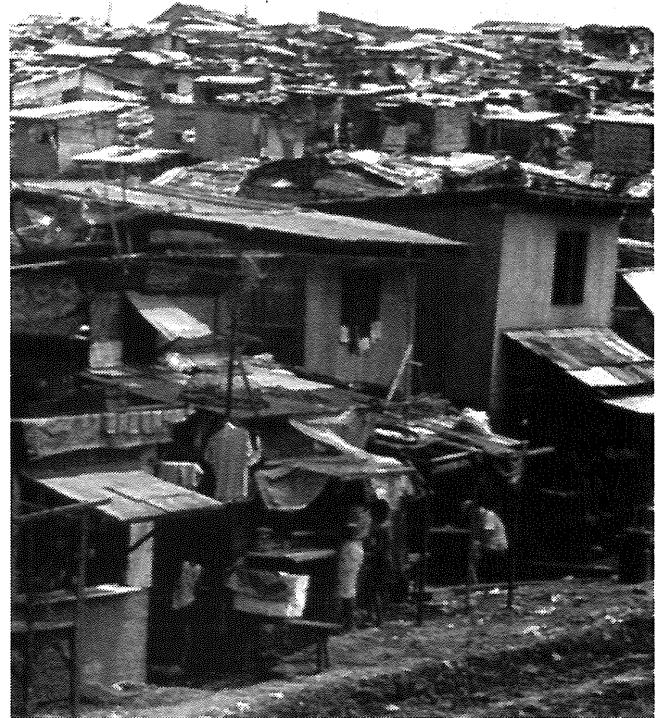
The undisputed economic and military hegemony of the U.S. after World War II allowed it to reorganize the world according to the requirements of the “American Century.” The IMF and World Bank (along with NATO, the UN and various other bodies) were all set up as American-dominated institutions. Yet U.S. power was constrained by the existence of the Soviet Union, which provided a global military and economic counterweight to imperialism. The existence of this “Communist” other compelled the ruling elites of Western Europe, Japan and North America to divert a portion of the social surplus into funding education, healthcare, pensions, benefits and other social services. It also forced them to make occasional diplomatic and economic concessions to the “non-aligned” neo-colonial states.

Fruits of Counterrevolution

The destruction of the Soviet Union represented an immense historic setback for working people around the globe. Capitalist victory in the Cold War has translated into attacks on many of the social gains won by previous generations. For ordinary people in the former Soviet bloc, capitalist restoration has been a catastrophe. According to one of the World Bank’s own publications, between 1988 and 1993, incomes declined by 25 percent in Eastern Europe, and 54 percent in the Slavic and Central Asian regions of the former Soviet Union (Branko Milanovic, *Income, Inequality, and Poverty During the Transition from Planned to Market Economy*). In a 6 November 2000 speech in Vienna, Horst Köhler, the IMF’s managing director, expressed “praise and admiration” for the forces of capitalist restoration, but admitted: “the number of people living on less than \$2 a day has risen fivefold since the transition began (from 16 million in 1987 to 93 million in 1998).”

The triumph of counterrevolution in the USSR sharpened competition between the major imperialist blocs. Each advocates free trade within its own sphere of influence, but jealously guards its turf from the others. A recent example was the spat between the U.S. and the European Union (EU) over rules governing banana imports. The U.S. threatened to slap 100 percent surcharges on EU imports over the latter’s policy of allowing banana producers from former Dutch, British and French colonies in the Caribbean preferential access to a small percentage of the EU’s banana market. The U.S. claimed that this policy was “unfair” to Latin American banana producers (whose products just happen to be retailed by U.S. food companies including Chiquita, Del Monte and Dole Foods).

The post-Soviet New World Order is also characterized by brutal attacks on the civilian population of “rogue states” like Iraq and Yugoslavia whose rulers have offended their imperial godfathers. Just as the international “rule of law” is discarded whenever it seems inconvenient, so too the pretense of commitment to “free trade” and “level playing fields” is routinely shelved for neo-colonial producers thought capable of offering serious competition. A “background paper” produced by Oxfam International for the Prague meeting of the IMF/World Bank entitled



T. RYAN—GAMMA/STUDIO X

Manila slum: ‘free market’ at work

“‘Multilateralism’ and world trade—or how to rig the rules against the poor,” pointed out:

“Politicians in the industrialised world preach the doctrine of free trade, and they use their control over the IMF and the World Bank to impose it on developing countries, but they practise protectionism. And in many areas they use the WTO [World Trade Organization] as a battering ram to open up Third World markets in the interests of the powerful transnational companies that dictate their trade policies.

“Much has been made by creditors of their generosity both in financing debt relief...and in providing development assistance. However, when measured against the wider losses associated with protectionism, the generosity is more apparent than real. For every \$1 provided through aid and debt relief, developing countries lose another \$14 as a consequence of protectionist barriers in the rich world. These barriers deprive poor countries of \$700bn a year in markets for labour-intensive manufactured goods, and another \$65bn in agricultural markets.”

‘Globalization’ and Class Struggle

During the last several decades, the world’s major corporations have made considerable progress in the international integration of manufacturing through new industrial technologies, improvements in transport and, particularly, communications and information technology. These same factors have also made it easier to relocate production from the metropolitan centers to low wage areas. This process, driven by a thirst for higher profits, has shattered the lives of millions of working people, particularly in the former industrial regions of the imperialist centers.

But the problems commonly blamed on “globalization” are not an inevitable byproduct of international economic integration or new technologies. The impoverishment and



São Paulo: Police attack Prague solidarity rally

social dislocation that accompany them are direct results of the drive to maximize private profit. A socialist economy would harness advances in production to eliminate unemployment, poverty and inequality.

The effects of "globalization" on working conditions are often exaggerated. Plant relocations and outsourcing are estimated to have accounted for less than a quarter of the decline in real wages in the U.S. between 1974 and 1994. The majority of workers in North America are employed in sectors such as education, government and finance that have been largely immune to international competition.

The chief reason for the decline of real wages in America in this period was the string of capitalist victories in the class war during the past two decades. This began with Ronald Reagan's firing of the PATCO air traffic controllers in 1981 and continued through to the shredding of welfare and other entitlements in the name of a "balanced budget." None of this was inevitable. All of it can be traced to the cowardice and treachery of the trade-union leadership.

Unwilling or unable to initiate the sharp class battles necessary to protect their base, the official leaders of the workers' movement throughout the "developed world" have resorted to flag-waving and protectionism. The result has been a divided and weakened workers' movement and the growth of poisonous nationalism and ultra-rightist movements like Jean Marie Le Pen's National Front in France.

Most of the young participants in the recent wave of international protests are opposed to the injustice of the capitalist world economy. But the remedies offered by prominent "anti-globalizers" amount to cosmetic modifications and leave the fundamental problem—a profit-driven economic system—intact. This is because the trade-union bureaucrats and professional leaders of the various ecological, religious and social-justice NGOs, who have provided the organizational backbone for most of the recent protests, operate within the framework of what is feasible under capitalism. Their ultimate objective is to pressure the IMF, corporate

monopolies and imperialist governments into behaving more humanely.

The 'Impotent' Nation State

One of the themes pushed by liberal critics of "globalization" is that national states have become impotent, as power has shifted to multinational corporations, and unaccountable international bureaucracies like the World Trade Organization. In fact, each corporation depends on the political and military clout of its own national state to safeguard its foreign holdings. Far from shrinking, the role of the national state in protecting property rights and enforcing legal agreements has expanded, along with the international integration of the world economy. Within the WTO, each government maneuvers to try to write the rules of international trade to benefit their own capitalists. The WTO, the IMF and the World Bank stand under, rather than above, the major imperialist powers which alone possess the armed might to enforce their will.

The American state, for example, is not showing signs of withering away just yet. The lavishly funded U.S. military (which proved so handy to the oil monopolies in the 1991 Gulf War) has an annual budget of \$275 billion. While pleading poverty as an excuse for gutting social services, the American ruling class has vastly expanded the capacity of its repressive apparatus: putting more cops on the street; enlarging police paramilitary units; and increasing video surveillance and electronic eavesdropping. There has been a huge expansion of the prison system (now increasingly run on a "for profit" basis). The prison population in the U.S., which has always been disproportionately black and Hispanic, recently topped two million. It is growing seven times as fast as the population at large.

The massive coordinated police response to the international protests against the WTO, IMF, etc., do not lend credence to theories about the "disappearance" of the state. Protesters are now "preemptively" arrested, as the various national police agencies combine their efforts to squash dissent. Prior to the Prague demonstration, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation dispatched dozens of agents to help the Czech police with their preparations. Hundreds of people suspected of having participated in earlier protests were stopped at the border.

Anarchism & Socialism

Many of the more militant demonstrators identify themselves as anarchists. Their views span a considerable political spectrum. Some advocate a return to a mythical past when everyone was a petty proprietor in a self-sufficient village economy. More left-wing anarchists, or "anarcho-communists," espouse a revolutionary overturn of capitalist rule, and the creation of an egalitarian society on the basis of the socialization of the means of production.

Both anarcho-communists and Marxists recognize that a workers' revolution must destroy the capitalist state machine (i.e., disband the police, officer corps, judiciary and the rest of the repressive apparatus). But while socialists propose that working people replace the organs of capitalist rule with their own state apparatus, anarchists, who oppose any and every kind of state on principle, are vague about how exactly a victorious revolutionary movement should exercise its power.

The history of every revolt against capitalist rule shows that the exploiters will stop at nothing to cling to power. In

the 1980s, Ronald Reagan armed and paid the contra mercenaries in Nicaragua; in Spain in the 1930s, Hitler and Mussolini backed Franco's legions; in the early years of the Russian Revolution, the imperialists supported the Whites against the Reds. If they are to successfully expropriate the exploiters, and reconstruct society on an egalitarian basis, the working class and oppressed must possess the political and military organization necessary to crush the counter-revolution. As Frederick Engels once remarked, a revolution is an "act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon—authoritarian means."

Revolutionary Strategy & Working Class Struggle

The problem of how to effect revolutionary change is of critical importance for intelligent people who are serious about challenging the rule of global capital. Many subjectively revolutionary anarchist militants, outraged by the system of global piracy, act out their anger in skirmishes with the police. It is necessary to organize effective self-defense for demonstrations against police violence, but trashing a few Starbucks or McDonald's is a diversion that poses no serious threat to capitalism.

The only layer of the population with both an objective interest and the social power to overturn capitalist rule is the working class. Those who produce the commodities, run the transportation and communication systems, and provide all the supporting services that capital depends on, can run society *without* their masters.

Many leftist youth today view trade unions as cumbersome, bureaucratized and conservative. The unions however, are also potential organizations of militant class struggle. The privileged labor aristocrats who run the labor movement in every imperialist country today are fundamentally loyal to capitalism. In many cases, they are actively involved in poisoning their ranks with bourgeois nationalism, and even outright racism. In the "developed" world, these "labor lieutenants of capital" have provided a vital prop for bourgeois rule for over a century.

But workers' struggles periodically break through the grip of the bureaucrats—even in the imperialist centers—and at these moments, it is possible to catch a glimpse of a very different future for humanity. The central strategic task in the imperialist countries is to construct an alternative, revolutionary leadership rooted in the rank and file and committed to a program of hard class struggle. Such a leadership would fight to oust the pro-capitalist bureaucrats and turn the unions into effective instruments for class war against the bosses.

Young militants who hate imperialism, but turn their backs on the workers' organizations, inadvertently help ensure the continued political domination of the pro-capitalist misleaders. Working-class activists who today may only be demanding "corporate responsibility" or "fair trade," may tomorrow come to realize that nothing essential can be changed unless imperialism is smashed. But such transformations in consciousness require the political intervention of revolutionaries to combat the protectionist, social-democratic illusions pushed by the labor bureaucrats.

The Music of the Future

Socialists can only welcome the mood of popular opposition to the ravages of the market after the retreats of the last decade. The business press naturally takes a different



IBT supporters in Prague

view. The 11 September 2000 issue of *Business Week* (America's leading corporate journal) ran a cover story entitled "Too Much Corporate Power?" which reported: "three-quarters of Americans think business has gained too much power over too many aspects of their lives," and "66% think large profits are more important to big companies than developing safe, reliable, quality products for consumers." *Business Week* glumly concluded: "Put simply, it's becoming fashionable to be anticorporate," and observed that unlike the 1960s: "Today, those Americans angry at corporations cut across generations, geography, and even income groups."

It is this sentiment that has fueled the recent demonstrations. What really alarmed the American rulers about the anti-WTO demonstration in Seattle in November 1999 was the widespread popular support for the protesters. But unless this impulse is connected to an understanding of the real dynamics of world capitalism, and the necessity to eliminate, rather than modify it, nothing fundamental will change.

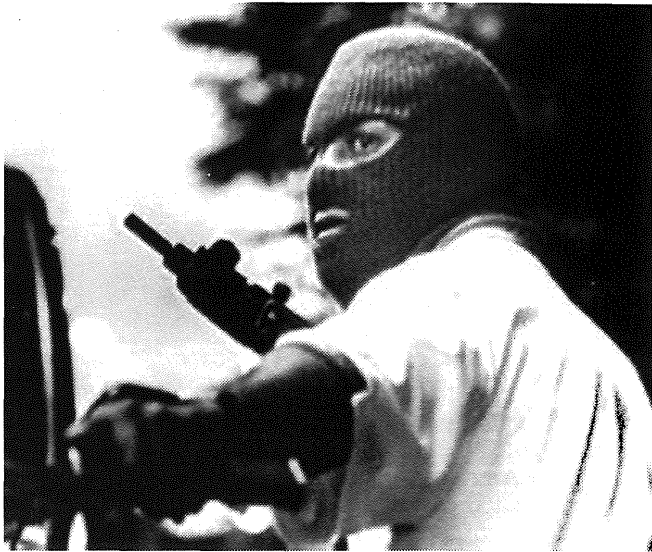
Demands for "Fair Trade, Not Free Trade" and for more "Corporate Responsibility" are designed to contain protest within the framework of the system. If the scope and depth of the protests grew sufficiently, it is possible that a Ralph Nader, Jesse Jackson or Ken Livingstone might one day be appointed to the board of the IMF or WTO. Their presence, however, would only serve to legitimize these institutions.

It is not enough to protest the effects of international capitalism or to demand the reform of its most extreme outrages. The answer is not "fair trade," and certainly not protectionism, but the uprooting of a system which poisons the earth, starves hundreds of millions of people and condemns billions more to lives of brutal poverty. The pursuit of profit will, sooner or later, inevitably produce yet another (and probably the last) inter-imperialist shooting war—this time with nuclear weapons. It is impossible to have an ecologically rational, non-exploitative, humane society develop peacefully from a system rooted in racism and exploitation.

Developing a mass political movement capable of overturning the global system of organized piracy represented by the IMF and World Bank depends on the creation of a disciplined revolutionary organization (a "combat party") armed with a program linking the interests of workers and the oppressed in the "developed" world to those in the neo-colonies. There can be no other road. ■

Fiji: Permanent Revolution & the 'Pacific Way'

Trouble in Paradise



One of Speight's gunmen

On 19 May 2000, a handful of armed men seized Fiji's parliament buildings and took the prime minister and senior personnel of the Labour-dominated government hostage. For almost two months the aristocratic upper echelon of the indigenous chiefly caste (which commands the loyalty of the armed forces and the state bureaucracy) dithered. Eventually, after 56 days, the senior chiefs reached agreement on the composition of a new regime. The coup leaders, having served their purpose by disposing of an unwanted government, were themselves disposed of.

The Fijian aristocracy is tiny, internally divided and without deep roots in the capitalist economy. It cannot rely on its courts, which routinely borrow senior judicial figures from neighboring countries, to express its interests. The core of the state apparatus is an army of 4,100 regular and 10,000 reserve troops, 99 percent of whom are ethnic Fijians. The Fijian military operates in a highly professional manner when deployed as United Nations mercenaries on behalf of imperialism abroad, but in domestic crises it tends to reflect divisions within the aristocracy—as well as those between the aristocracy, more junior chiefs and other elements in the indigenous population.

The settlement of the May-July coup must therefore be regarded as highly provisional. On 2 November, another rebellion was quickly suppressed, and it seems clear that there is more turmoil on the horizon.

Fiji's troubles are usually portrayed as an ethnic power struggle between the 51 percent of the population who are indigenous Fijians and the 44 percent who are of Indian origin. Leftist commentators tend to depict it as a struggle between big money and laborism. Others focus on squabbles within the elites over control of Fiji's security intelligence agency, or the apportioning of windfall profits from the impending harvest of its mahogany plantations. All of these were factors.

While integrated into the imperialist world system, Fijian capitalism coexists with elements of an indigenous pre-capitalist mode of production, which can be characterized as crypto-feudal semi-communalism. Among many indigenous peoples, including Fijians, there is an ideology of indigenism—of the rightful supremacy of those who were there first—buttressed by an appeal to selected traditions. But, as the coup in Fiji illustrates, in a world divided by class it is necessarily the upper layers that benefit most from indigenism, regardless of the sops thrown to other strata.

Class struggle in Fiji is complicated by the fact that the two interlocked modes of production give rise to a kaleidoscopic range of complex and shifting political blocs. The only way these different elements can be integrated conceptually is through Leon Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, which addresses the obstacles posed by global imperialism in "underdeveloped" countries to the consolidation of a national bourgeoisie, the formation of a bourgeois democratic state or even the creation of an ordinary capitalist market in labor or land.

Combined and Uneven Development in Melanesia

Fiji lies at the easternmost end of Melanesia where it merges into Polynesia. Melanesia is a band of island countries south of the equator stretching through 45 degrees of longitude, from Fiji right around to the Indonesian province of West Papua/Irian Jaya. Melanesia is home to perhaps eight million people, a third of the world's three thousand languages, some of the earth's richest mineral deposits and the most extensive tropical rainforests outside the Amazon. The imperialist order, characterized by combined and uneven development, caricatures itself here, with the highest levels of capitalist technique side by side with some of the least class-developed societies remaining on the planet.

In mid-2000, concurrently with the coup in Fiji, Melanesia also witnessed a civil war and a coup in the Solomon Islands, and a major congress of the indigenous inhabitants of West Papua declared independence from Indonesia. Subsequently, the truce between the "independent" state of Papua New Guinea and its province of Bougainville has shown signs of breaking down. The imperialist bourgeoisies view these events in connection with the current disintegrative tendencies in Indonesia, and the potential destabilization of the geo-strategically crucial commercial and naval shipping lanes between the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The planners in the Japanese and U.S. military academies are unlikely to have forgotten that the battle for possession of Guadalcanal in the Solomons was the key to the Pacific theater in the Second World War.

The tiny language groups of Melanesia do not sit comfortably in an international social-economic system that favors larger, more culturally homogenous nation states with stable legal systems and viable domestic markets. In an earlier, pre-imperialist phase of capitalist development, national bourgeoisies might have developed out of the pre-existing

fragments; but the rapacious penetration of international capital today leaves little room for indigenous social growth, and, as a result, none of these countries has anything like a sense of nationhood. This has short-term, divide-and-rule advantages for the imperialists, making it easier to control and exploit the resources of the region. But this comes at the cost of profound structural instability, which poses potentially serious long-term dangers for global capital.

Ersatz Traditionalism

Contemporary Fiji is the creation of the intersection of pre-capitalist tribalism with the British Empire of the 19th century. Consisting of 332 islands, only a third of which are inhabited, Fiji has a total population of 830,000.

In 1874, Ratu Seru Cakobau, the tribal leader who managed to gain temporary predominance after the introduction of firearms into regional warfare, sought to perpetuate his position by ceding the islands to Queen Victoria. The structure of clan rule, which had been fluid, became fixed under the British, who exercised control over the indigenous population through the thousands of village chiefs. An advisory council of a few of the most senior chiefs, subsequently institutionalized as the "Great Council of Chiefs," was given authority to appoint the country's president.

Today most indigenous Fijians still live in villages of a few hundred and engage in subsistence agriculture. They remain subject to tribal-communal obligations and day-to-day interference from the *ratus* and *adis*—"ratu" and "adi" are the honorifics, respectively, for male and female members of chiefly families. As recently as the 1960s, clan members who left their villages without their chief's permission could be returned by force of law.

This traditional tribal existence awkwardly coexists with a relatively developed capitalist economy that includes major sugar and tourist industries, significant gold and textile production, and considerable potential in timber.

Fijian society cannot be understood by simply treating it as capitalist. The crypto-feudal structures are neither capitalist nor authentically traditional; they are ossified adaptations of elements of the pre-European indigenous institutions tailored to the requirements of "law and order" in Queen Victoria's empire. Remnants of pre-capitalist social formations are not unusual in capitalist societies, but in Fiji they pose a profound and ultimately unsustainable social contradiction. Yet this contradiction has proved extraordinarily difficult to transcend.

Land and Labor in Fiji

The builders of the British Empire found much of the land in Fiji suitable for plantation agriculture. Initially, cotton was the main crop; however the revival of American production following the Civil War depressed world cotton prices, forcing Fiji's commercial farmers to switch to sugar. Colonial planters faced two major obstacles: land ownership and the supply of labor. The New Zealand Wars (1845-72) against a far smaller Maori population with a similar military culture to that of the Fijians, had taught the British a certain respect for the indigenous population. So the Fijians retained ownership of most of the land and leased it to the imperialists. To this day, 83 percent of Fiji remains the inalienable property of one of the 6,500 indige-

nous clan groups. Consequently there is no real market in land.

And who was to work the plantations? A measles epidemic, the year after Cakobau had ceded sovereignty to Britain, wiped out 40,000 Fijians. More importantly the reluctance of potential workers to leave their communal villages—and the chiefs' reluctance to release them—blocked the development of a capitalist labor market.

Beginning in 1879, Indian laborers were brought in to work on the Fijian plantations. In a system developed after Britain abolished chattel slavery in 1834, they were indentured to their employers for five-year terms. This continued until the First World War when it was stopped due to pressure from the rising Indian nationalist movement.

The plantation system could not continue without indentured labor, so the colonial administrators broke up the plantations into plots that were let out to the formerly indentured Indo-Fijians. These nominally independent tenant farmers remained completely dependant on the Colonial Sugar Refining Company of Australia, which purchased their crops.

Today a substantial percentage of the Indo-Fijian population remains tenant sugar-cane farmers, and control of their land is a hot political issue. The chief-dominated Native Land Trust Board administers the communally owned land, and lets it out on thirty-year leases at very low rates—equivalent to roughly 2.5 percent of the annual value of the crop. (In other countries agricultural rent is ten percent or more.) The Land Board keeps a quarter of the rent (for "administration" and "development" costs), pays a quarter to the chiefs, and distributes the rest among clan members.

Indigenous Fijians vs. Indo-Fijians

There is considerable pressure from indigenous Fijians, particularly plebeian layers, either to impose huge rent increases or to refuse to renew the leases and let the land revert to the clans. The resulting insecurity for tenants has reduced plantings of seed cane and cut investments in improvements, as farmers demand low-rate lease renewals or, failing that, substantial compensation.

At bottom, this is a conflict of class interests, but it has a communal axis. The indigenous Fijian population has, to a considerable extent, remained isolated from the money economy. They own the land, control the government and run the military, but Indo-Fijians receive more than 70 percent of personal income. The Indo-Fijians are a class-differentiated population, and many of them are quite poor; nonetheless, most of the rich people that ethnic Fijians encounter are of Indian descent. Most businesses are owned by Indo-Fijians, who also predominate in both the professions and the working class.

English is the second language for most members of both communities, but mother tongue to few. The two populations have different languages, cultures, religions and largely attend different schools. Each feels oppressed by the other. Indo-Fijians, considered aggressive, grasping and selfish by indigenous Fijians, tend to stereotype the latter as lazy, parasitical and stupid. These tensions are aggravated by the fact that 25 percent of the workforce is unemployed, including 40 percent of 18 to 25 year-olds.

The ethnic Fijian working class is concentrated in the civil service, on the docks and in the gold mines. There are also an increasing number of unemployed urban commoners, including former soldiers from overseas "peacekeep-

ing" ventures, who, along with a thin layer of petty-bourgeois intellectuals, provided a social base for political challenges to the party of the chiefs—Ratu Mara's "Alliance." This opposition developed along two very different lines: extremist ethnic nationalism, and labor-based anti-communalism.

Commoners, Chiefs and Aristocrats

There is no doubt that many plebeian Fijians derive a sense of security from a social order in which their chiefs are able to dominate their perceived rivals, namely the Indo-Fijians. But at the same time, subordination to the chiefs can also be frustrating, and many indigenous Fijians are exhibiting increasing ambivalence toward the whole set-up. Affirmative action policies for ethnic Fijians over the past several decades have nurtured an indigenous commoner middle class and bourgeoisie, which both benefit from chiefly patronage and chafe under its restrictions.

The chiefs themselves are a caste in crisis. Ordinary chiefs have certain privileges relative to their social subordinates, but for most the privileges are modest. The chiefs' rule restricts enterprise and fetters economic and social progress for their people—their status is rooted in a mode of economic activity that is inefficient, custom-bound and ultimately incompatible with the rising influence of the market in Fiji today. Some chiefs live very "traditionally," while others are eager to get into business.

While the rewards for most chiefs are negligible, they are very substantial for the families who head the three confederacies of tribes. They are accustomed to filling the top positions in politics as well as the civil service, diplomatic corps and armed forces. This tiny aristocratic layer occupies the position normally held by the top layers of the national bourgeoisie in most capitalist countries. But the members of this elite do not constitute anything like the political core of a national bourgeoisie; they have certain mutual loyalties, and are tied together by an elaborate pattern of strategic marriages, but they have not transcended the pulls of their provincial and tribal rivalries. They had the power to deal with the May-July 2000 crisis, but it took an inordinately long time for them to decide how to exercise it.

President Ratu Mara holds press conference



One component of this aristocracy is the Cakobau family, who made the original deal with Britain in 1874. Under British rule, the Cakobaus were treated with a presumption of preeminence and accorded all the plum political and civil service posts. Sir George Cakobau was appointed as Fiji's first governor-general after independence in 1970. It is perhaps not surprising that other elements of the elite did not find the Cakobaus quite as deserving as the British, and after independence, the Cakobaus' fortunes within the aristocracy declined slightly. Recently some members of the Cakobau family have become dissatisfied with what they see as second-rate political postings, and one of the submerged themes running through the recent crisis was their aspiration to regain their former stature.

Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara exemplifies the aristocracy. The product of a privileged education, he attended New Zealand's Otago University in the 1940s before going on to Oxford. He became high chief of Lau and then served as Fiji's prime minister from independence until 1992, with the exception of a brief interlude in 1987. He was subsequently appointed president—a post he only relinquished during this year's coup.

Ratu Mara's wife, Adi Lady Lala Mara, is paramount chief of one of the three great confederacies in her own right. Two of their son-in-laws (both former heads of Fiji's military) are very high chiefs in the other two confederacies. Both their fathers were former deputy prime ministers, and one went on to become governor-general and then Ratu Mara's predecessor as president.

Although some elements of this aristocracy have gathered considerable personal wealth, it is not a bourgeois structure. The distribution of power among the chiefs, which favors the more Polynesian-influenced east as against the west, no longer reflects economic reality. The western region, where the trade-union movement and the Labour Party are based, is undergoing the most rapid development, particularly in sugar, gold and tourism, and indigenous Fijians in this area (including the chiefs) are increasingly critical of the aristocracy. There is some talk of secession and the creation of an independent west Fijian state.

George Speight: A Second-Time Farce

In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Karl Marx recalled Hegel's comment:

"all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce."

In Fiji, Sitiveni Rabuka and George Speight both overthrew Labour-bourgeois coalition governments. Both were commoners who played the indigenous-rights card and sought to modify, but not destroy, the system of Fijian chieftainship. Lieutenant-Colonel Rabuka, who overthrew the first Labour-led coalition government in 1987, maintained power for twelve years, and to this day, despite his commoner status, chairs the Great Council of Chiefs. Speight held hostages in parliament, postured in his designer clothes in front the world's television cameras for two months, and now awaits trial for treason.

For fifteen years after independence, the party of the chiefs ruled with the support of wealthy Indo-Fijian, Euro-Fijian and Australasian interests. At this time there was no significant indigenous Fijian bourgeoisie. In 1985 the union movement (representing half the workforce) launched a Labour Party in response to the imposition of a wage freeze

and a series of other government attacks. Led by Dr. Timoci Bavadra, an indigenous general practitioner (who rejected his chiefly "Ratu" title as pretentious), the Labour Party was dominated by the trade-union bureaucracy and a layer of university teachers. Its social base was composed of Indo-Fijian trade unionists and a section of urban indigenous Fijian workers.

The Labour Party's program combined standard social-democratic reformism with demands which would have encroached on the power of the chiefs. Its leaders had initially projected a 12-year program for winning power, but quickly formed a coalition government with the bourgeois National Federation Party, the largest Indo-Fijian party. The coalition was supported by most of the Indo-Fijian population, as well as roughly ten percent of ethnic Fijians. This demonstrated how, given the right historical circumstances, even a timorous anti-racist program can cut through ethnic bitterness.

Bavadra's government certainly posed no threat to the indigenous population. His cabinet was evenly divided between indigenous and Indo-Fijian ministers and, while the majority of its parliamentary deputies were Indo-Fijian, ethnic Fijians held a majority of the total seats, so Bavadra could have been brought down at any moment by the defection of only two members from the government benches.

Nevertheless, an overtly racist anti-Indian Taukei ("Owners of the Land") movement, led by commoners and junior chiefs, succeeded in mobilizing disaffected and unemployed indigenous youth in urban areas. "Taukeism" introduced a new element into Fijian politics—the mass organization of indigenous Fijians outside the control of the aristocratic high chiefs. The ideology for this plebeian indigenism combined Methodist Christianity with chiefly "traditionalism." Taukeism is a deeply contradictory phenomenon that, while rhetorically supporting the chiefs, is at bottom an expression of dissatisfaction with their leadership. The ruling caste responded to this challenge by seeking to neutralize the Taukei movement by bribing its leaders and drawing them into the project of crystalizing an ethnic Fijian bourgeoisie.

Rabuka's 1987 Coup

A month after the 1987 election, Colonel Rabuka, a commoner who was third in command of the army, marched into Parliament House and arrested the government. He was immediately backed by Ratu Mara, and succeeded in balancing between the aristocracy and the indigenist Taukei movement.

The coup initially encountered significant working-class resistance. Some 22,000 sugar-cane farmers and 26,000 cutters and mill workers refused to harvest the sugar crop for weeks. But the leadership of the unions and Labour Party neither seriously attempted to broaden the scope of the strike, nor create strike committees or other potential centers of political authority, that could have challenged Rabuka's initially shaky grip on power. The Labour leadership's response was to attempt to make a deal with the chiefs; the idea that the workers' movement might constitute itself as an alternative social power to the rule of the aristocracy was beyond their imagination.

The coup was followed by several months of maneuvering, as the governor-general, Ratu Mara, and the judiciary sought to enhance their positions through rejigging the existing constitutional, diplomatic and tribal arrangements.



George Speight, left, with supporters

When the dust settled, it was clear that the beneficiaries of the coup, besides Rabuka himself, who secured control of the military and had himself appointed minister of Home Affairs, included the aristocracy and a new layer of ambitious ethnic-Fijian commoners with Taukei connections. Ratu Mara was reinstated as prime minister. Fiji was expelled from the British Commonwealth as a result of the coup, so the aristocratic chief who had been governor-general became president.

In a deliberate slap at the Indo-Fijians, the new government imposed a Methodist "Sunday Observance Decree" forbidding sport, travel, shopping or swimming on the Sabbath. Over the next decade 5,000 people left Fiji every year, including many skilled tradespeople and professionals. Ninety-five percent of these emigrants were Indo-Fijians, and, as a result, indigenous Fijians now constitute a majority of the population.

'Made in the Shade'

The new government promoted the development of indigenous businesses, through a web of government patronage, corruption and financing from state-owned banks. The preeminent representative of this indigenous capitalist layer is Jim Ah Koy, a wealthy Fijian commoner who served as Rabuka's minister of finance. One of Ah Koy's long-time cronies is Sam Speight, also a commoner politician, who held several posts under Rabuka. Sam Speight's son, George, who studied business in a Seventh Day Adventist university in the United States, subsequently moved to Australia, where his career as an entrepreneur included operating an illegal pyramid-selling scheme to fleece small investors.

In 1997, when George Speight returned to Fiji, he was promptly plugged into Jim Ay Koy's operations and soon appointed by the government to chair both the Fiji Hardwood Corporation and Fiji Pine Ltd. This made him the most influential person in the timber industry, a position of particular importance as Fiji's huge mahogany plantations, said to be the most valuable in the world, were coming to maturity.

The government contracted an international accountancy firm to locate a suitable partner to exploit this resource, and, at a February 1999 meeting in Suva with Jim



PIBA—PACNEWS

Military seals entrances to army headquarters for Great Council of Chiefs meeting

Ah Koy and George Speight, they recommended the British government-owned Commonwealth Development Corporation for the job. This advice was declined.

It seems that Speight had developed a relationship with Marshall Pettit, a Seattle financier, who had not only made a formal bid, but also, it later emerged, deposited substantial sums into Speight's Brisbane bank account. The government chose Pettit's Timber Resource Management bid, which was to be financed by a bond issue on which tidy commissions would be paid. One lawyer close to the process observed that with this deal, "George would have been made in the shade" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 May 2000).

But it was not to be.

In May 1999 an election was held before the deal could be finalized. Rabuka's years in power had taught him that an accommodation with the Indo-Fijian population provided an important prop for the rule of the aristocracy. Indo-Fijian business interests and cane farmers are central to the economy, and the structure of land tenure is an important source of income for the chiefs. Yet the aristocracy also has an interest in promoting anti-Indian racism to divide the subordinate classes against themselves, keep wage levels down and thus help attract imperialist investment. The aristocracy does not want ethnic antagonisms to get out of hand; too much social upheaval could threaten the stability of their rule. Fiji's ruling elite certainly has no interest in driving out the Indo-Fijian minority.

So a new constitution was devised with the intent of moderating any possible electoral excesses. In addition to maintaining the appointment of the president by the Great Council of Chiefs and separate electoral rolls and parliamentary seats for the different communities, it introduced a complex system of preferential voting. Profoundly deliberated and unanimously endorsed by both houses of parliament, Fiji's new constitution serves as a salutary warning to any political scientists foolish enough to imagine that deeply rooted social conflicts can be finessed with suffi-

ciently clever electoral formulae.

While Bolsheviks place no faith in any system of bourgeois electoralism, we favor a system of proportional representation for all contenders, including the most reactionary, as far more democratic than either a system of preferences or "first past the post."

The arithmetic of class struggle in Fiji is not complex. Class-collaborationist reformism cannot unite the plebeian masses. The Indo-Fijian workers cannot expect indigenous Fijians to fight with them against the party of the chiefs, unless they are also prepared to struggle against the capitalist class—including its Indo-Fijian component. Only a socialist program can work. Instead of drawing this lesson from their 1987 experience, the Labour Party leadership moved rightward, becoming more deferential to both the indigenous chiefs and the Indo-Fijian bourgeoisie, while ignoring the interests of poor and working-class indigenous Fijians.

In the 1999 elections, the Labour Party, under Mahendra Chaudry (Bavadara had died in 1990) won 24 of 71 parliamentary seats on first preferences. Chaudry was able to form a government by picking up another 13 seats, largely from second preference votes cast by those whose first preference was for Rabuka's more extreme ethnic-Fijian rivals.

Chaudry's success in maneuvering through the complexities of the new preferential electoral system meant that, for the first time, Fiji had an Indo-Fijian prime minister. This outraged more backward elements among the indigenous Fijians who felt that they had been tricked, and that consequently the new government was illegitimate. The Taukei movement was revived.

Rabuka accepted the result with good grace and stood aside. President Ratu Mara supported Chaudry against attempts by indigenous politicians to deny him the prime ministership, and actively supported the involvement of minority parties in the new government. (The new constitution required that parties winning more than ten percent of the seats had to be offered cabinet posts.) Eleven of the 18

ministers in Chaudry's government were indigenous Fijians, including Mara's daughter who became Minister of Tourism, and thus responsible for the country's largest industry.

But the results did not sit well with some in the Fijian military. Metuisela Mua, director of the army's Fiji Intelligence Service (FIS) said: "Let's give the new government a go. If they falter then it's a different matter" (*Fiji Times*, 21 May 1999). Chaudry transferred intelligence collection to Indo-Fijian officers of the police Special Branch who were directly accountable to himself, in order to have a way of monitoring the military. He also attempted to dismantle the FIS, although this was blocked by the senate and the judiciary.

The new government introduced a few moderate reforms: taxes were reduced on basic foodstuffs, water and electricity, and plans were announced to close a few tax loopholes and investigate dubious financial dealings under the previous government. Chaudry also proposed to establish a minimum wage and compensate cane farmers whose lands had reverted to indigenous owners. None of this was particularly radical, but it was enough to worry a lot of influential people. Among the government's accumulating enemies was the ubiquitous Rupert Murdoch, owner of the *Fiji Times*. The Taukei movement was mobilizing; anti-Indian rhetoric was growing.

Chaudry had replaced most of the previous government's nominees on agencies and boards. George Speight not only lost his positions in the timber industry, but was also charged with corruption. The new government, perhaps hoping that good relations with Britain might help Fiji sugar secure its European Union markets, indicated that it intended to sign the mahogany deal with the Commonwealth Development Corporation, rather than Speight's American connection. This irritated the American ambassador and the State Department (*New York Times*, 14 September 2000).

Speight's Coup

George Speight actively sought to fan the flames of opposition to the government and, dangling prospects of sharing in mahogany megaprofits, agitated among petty chiefs and their supporters for an end to government influence over Fijian land, and a return to direct control by the indigenous owners.

On Wednesday 17 May 2000, the *Sydney Morning Herald* ran a story about rumors of a coup in Fiji. Two days later, on Friday 19 May, George Speight and seven members of the aptly named Counter Revolutionary Warfare Unit drove up to the parliamentary complex in the luxuriant foothills above Suva with a large cache of arms, and took Chaudry and most of his government hostage. Shortly afterwards, plebeian Taukei mobs began looting and burning Indo-Fijian commercial premises in downtown Suva.

When Rabuka launched his coup thirteen years earlier, he had bussed the ousted government to jail and immediately set up his own administration, including several established figures, in the parliament buildings. But Speight had few forces at his command, and his coup turned into a prolonged 56-day hostage drama. His actions did, however, provide the aristocracy with an opportunity to work out among themselves the terms of their own counter-coup.

The real power behind the coup was Major Ilison Ligairi, a 20-year veteran of the British Special Air Service, who, af-

ter his retirement and return to Fiji in the mid-1980s, was asked by Rabuka to set up the elite Counter Revolutionary Warfare Unit.

Ligairi and Speight had apparently been in contact only an hour before Speight appeared at parliament. Ligairi kept a very low profile while Speight, the "communicator," took center stage, claiming to be in control of everything. Self-confident, untiring, moody, manic, Speight negotiated with the military and the chiefs. He handled the media well, even if he sometimes seemed a tad ridiculous, referring to himself in the third person: "George Speight is the repository of the will of the Fijian people" (*Time International*, 5 June 2000). His stance was offensively Taukei: indigenous Fijians should rule. If Indo-Fijians don't like it, they should go home: "They don't look like us, they don't eat like us and they don't smell like us" (*Sunday Star Times*, Auckland, 28 May 2000).

Initially, as many as two thousand supporters of the coup straggled into the parliamentary complex, but by the end, their numbers had slowly dwindled to a few hundred—predominantly followers of the most disaffected branch of the Cakobau family and a few lumpenized urbanites. They passed their time drinking kava, cooking pork and singing Methodist hymns—all thoroughly documented by a pack of international journalists.

Speight claimed to be fighting for the authority of the chiefs. Two days after his coup, the most senior available chief, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau—son-in-law of the president, former head of the military, former chief diplomat of Fiji, direct descendant of Ratu Seru Cakobau, grandson of King George II of Tonga, senior contender for the position of paramount chief of the Bau confederacy—sat on the lawn and drank kava with this bourgeois upstart. They talked, and then Ratu Nailatikau departed, leaving his wife (the president's daughter) a hostage inside along with the rest of the government.

The outcome of the coup had not yet been determined, but it was clear that there would be no accommodation between the Mara-Nailatikau wing of the aristocracy and George Speight. The aristocracy was backed by the Indo-Fijian bourgeoisie, and more importantly the various imperialist interests and most of the military. This put it in a strong position, but the aspiring Taukei bourgeoisie also had some cards to play. Speight not only had the hostages and the plebeian masses and junior chiefs of the Taukei movement, but also support in sections of the military. Most importantly, the coup was supported by Ratu Nailatikau's rivals for the position of paramount chief of the Bau confederacy, the two daughters of his Uncle George—Sir George Cakobau, the first Governor-General of Fiji. Adi Samanunu Cakobau is Fijian High Commissioner in Malaysia, and her sister Adi Litia Cakobau is Deputy Chairman of the Great Council of Chiefs. In mobilizing their supporters and a layer of more junior chiefs, they were primarily concerned with asserting their own position within the chiefly caste, but found themselves aligned with Speight against Ratu Mara.

At Government House, the president's official residence, a couple of kilometers from where his daughter was being held hostage, Ratu Mara formally dismissed the Chaudry government, claimed executive authority, and came out in favor of rewriting the constitution to ensure that the indigenous community gained control of the government. But Speight wanted more. His demands and the



Taukei march in Suva

candidates he put forward for office changed during the course of the negotiations, but he was consistent in wanting Mara out, and a share of power for himself.

A Complicated Negotiation

Unwilling, or unable, to attempt a military solution, Mara and Nailatikau engaged Speight in lengthy negotiations, attempting to drive a hard bargain while letting him think he was winning important concessions. The antagonism between Speight and the president complicated the situation, and it became clear that a settlement could be more easily reached with Ratu Mara out of the picture. So ten days into the coup, the head of the Fiji Military Force, Commodore Ratu Voreqe (Frank) Bainimarama, set the constitution aside and declared martial law. Ratu Mara resigned and returned home to the island of Lau.

The crisis dragged on for six more weeks. The attempt to mobilize the trade unions for the restoration of Chaudry ran into stiff opposition from the interim military government, Speight and the Taukei gangs. Without a program to address the concerns of the unemployed and other layers of plebeian indigenous Fijians, the labor movement was marginalized.

The prolonged negotiating process was punctuated by Taukei mob attacks on various Indo-Fijian businesses and homes. During these outbursts, there were many instances in which ethnic Fijians sheltered their Indo-Fijian neighbors. As it became apparent that the central issues involved political control of the indigenous community, the focus of Taukei lawlessness shifted from Indo-Fijians to police stations, some of which were occupied.

The prime ministers and foreign ministers of Australia and New Zealand imposed economic sanctions on Fiji and delivered sanctimonious lectures on democracy. The Fijian aristocracy accords considerable weight to pronouncements from Canberra and Wellington—they understand that accommodating the interests of the regional imperialist powers is ultimately crucial to their survival. They also shared with the imperialists a desire to be rid of Speight, his grubby clique of parvenus and their thugs. But the aristocracy's immediate priority was to settle some questions regarding the relative status of various chiefs.

To the world, it appeared that George Speight was nego-

tiating with the army, but a number of senior chiefs were also present throughout the talks. All sides agreed from the outset that in the next government representatives of the Taukei leadership would considerably outnumber Indo-Fijians. All agreed that the new government would be openly hostile to the trade unions. And all agreed that key portfolios had to go to the aristocracy. What had to be sorted out were questions of exactly how much weight the commoners from the Taukei movement would get, and which faction of the chiefly aristocracy was to be put in charge—the Mara-Nailatikau wing, or the Cakobau sisters.

At this point, Nailatikau had a lucky break—his half-brother, Ratu Viliame Dreunimisisimi, died. The funeral was a major event, attended by members of the Tongan royalty, as well as all wings of the Bau confederacy. Even the Cakobau sisters had to support the release of Ratu Nailatikau's wife, Adi Koila Mara Nailatikau, for the occasion. Speight therefore lost his most valuable hostage, and his opponents could be even more relaxed about the time frame of the negotiations, thus considerably expanding their range of military options.

Nailatikau himself was briefly appointed acting prime minister, but he could no more play the mediator than Mara, and the military replaced him with a colorless commoner banker, Laisenia Qarase. Qarase sought to undercut Speight's support by announcing a list of cabinet ministers from business, the chiefly caste and Taukei leaders, and by proposing a program of preferential economic treatment for indigenous Fijians.

The negotiations continued, brokered by Mara's former vice-president, Ratu Josefa Iloilo, a senior chief from the west, who, like Mara, is 80 years old, but frail, manifestly ill and apparently pliable. Eventually a formal agreement was reached: Speight would release the remaining hostages and relinquish his weapons; he and his collaborators would be amnestied; and the Great Council of Chiefs would meet to appoint a new president who would in turn appoint a new government. It was widely assumed that Ratu Iloilo would be president, and that the Great Council of Chiefs would play an important role in determining the personnel of the new government.

Speight, supported by the Cakobau sisters, had wanted the meeting to take place in his presence at the parliamentary complex without Ratu Mara, while hanging onto the arms and hostages. But the meeting was held at the military headquarters, the Queen Elizabeth Barracks, with Ratu Mara in attendance (courtesy of a patrol boat supplied by the Australian government). After the formalities, the Great Council of Chiefs adjourned and sent a delegation to Speight instructing him to hurry up and release the hostages before they proceeded to business. Exquisitely, they appointed Adi Samanunu Cakobau to lead that delegation.

Just to rub in a little more salt, Ratu Nailatikau then announced that he would shortly convene a gathering to select the paramount chief of Bau, and added, incidentally, that women were ineligible to be paramount chief in his confederacy.

The hostages were released, most of the arms returned, Ratu Iloilo appointed president, and Laisenia Qarase was confirmed as interim prime minister.

Endgame for Speight

Negotiations continued about the composition of the new government, with Speight trying to make his mark on it. Speight still hoped that Adi Samanunu Cakobau could

be prime minister, but the narrowness of her base had been demonstrated. Without significant support in the aristocracy she would be too dependent on the rabble. Speight wouldn't have minded, but it's not what Adi Samanunu had in mind, and at the end of the game, she declared her willingness to serve in any capacity. Furious, Speight stormed out and with his bodyguards walked to the village school on the edge of Suva where his supporters were holed up.

For several days he continued to threaten new coups, but he was bluffing, since his support had been reduced to a handful of lumpens and a gang of unemployed former military personnel. On the night of 26 July, he and 368 supporters were arrested at their base, on the grounds that they had not honored their pledge to return all the weapons. George Speight is currently living under guard on a usually uninhabited island off Suva—an island that was used for the processing of Indian indentured laborers in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. With him in that island jail are Major Ilison Ligairi and Metuisela Mua, former FIS director.

Qarase has been confirmed as Prime Minister. His "deputy" is Ratu Nailatikau. For good measure, Ratu Tu'akitau Cokanauto, Ratu Nailatikau's younger brother (but doubtless also playing his own game), is in the cabinet too.

After his release, Mahendra Chaudry fruitlessly demanded his restoration, went off on an overseas trip, and tried with little success to gather international support. His first stop was Malaysia. On the same airplane was Adi Samanunu Cakobau, returning to her post as High Commissioner.

For three months there was an appearance of stability. Civil servants' wages were cut 12.5 percent and preparations were underway for harsher measures, including more paycuts, tighter media censorship and a crackdown on union activity. Emigration by Indo-Fijian professionals and skilled workers accelerated.

On 2 November, a rebellion erupted in the Queen Elizabeth Barracks, spearheaded by 40 members of the Counter Revolutionary Warfare Unit and involving the FIS. Their apparent objective was to replace the commander of the military, Commodore Bainimarama, with Steve Rabuka, to lay the basis for a Speight/Cakobau government. While Speight's coup in May had dragged on for two months, the November rebellion was suppressed immediately in a firefight in which three loyalists and five rebels were killed.

Rabuka's role and those of certain senior military figures, remain obscure to outside observers. Bainimarama, who emerged from this latest round in a strengthened position, was reported by the *Fiji Times* (9 November 2000) as saying, "the only thing that united indigenous Fijians [is] their dislike for Indians," that the instability "would not have happened if the chiefs had been united," and that the chiefs should be "more honest and open to each other." His comments reflect the growing frustration of plebeian and middle-class Fijians with their chiefs.

Fiji today is a deeply divided society without a national bourgeoisie or any potential configuration of rulers with sufficient social roots and political authority to maintain a stable capitalist regime. Immense nervousness remains in ruling circles that the judiciary may declare the Ilolo-Qarase government illegitimate. The Court of Appeal (consisting of judges from New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Australia) is to consider this question shortly. Commodore Bainimarama has pledged in advance to accept the de-

cision of the court (*Fiji Government Online*, 15 November 2000).

The regime not only lacks the social base necessary to ensure stability, but is also without a coherent ideological or constitutional foundation. It can neither dismiss the court, nor trust it. There are no historically progressive solutions to Fiji's seemingly intractable social divisions to be found among the chiefs, colonels, bankers or judges at the top of society. The solution can only be found at the bottom, among the oppressed and exploited, through the mechanism of a party of the working class, rooted among both indigenous and Indo-Fijians standing against both capitalists and chiefs. The struggle for democracy in Fiji—necessarily a struggle against the power of the chiefs—must be combined with the fight for social equality, which must necessarily be a struggle against the power of capital.

Class Struggle Perspective vs. Communalism

The experience of the Fiji Labour Party demonstrates that it is possible to create political organizations with support among the working class of both communities. The Labour Party was only able to do this episodically, largely because it was too cowardly to seriously encroach on the prerogatives of either chiefs or capitalists. A revolutionary labor party willing to draw clear class lines, and oppose crypto-feudal as well as capitalist privilege, would be able to achieve a great deal more.

Such a party would advocate the nationalization of land, as well as all other means of production. It would seek to implant its cadres in every union and fight to break down ethnic hostilities by actively championing the struggles of working people and the oppressed from each community. It would build on the decent instincts of ordinary people who have always protected their neighbors from rampaging mobs, by creating integrated workers' defense guards to enforce picket lines and put an end to racial attacks. It would seek to address the needs of all the oppressed, not only employees, but also working farmers, the village poor and the urban unemployed.

The obstacles to working-class struggle in Fiji—communal conflict and indigenism—are posed with extreme sharpness, but they are hardly unique. And precisely because they are posed so sharply and the existing social order is so brittle, the connection between ethnic conflict and social oppression may prove to be more transparent and thus more directly addressed in Fiji than elsewhere. A revolutionary workers' party with an anti-communist perspective could profoundly impact the class struggle internationally by providing a model for other societies in which similar questions are posed.

Fiji cannot return to pre-European village communalism, and the imperialist world order offers neither a secure future, nor a viable way of living for either indigenous or Indo-Fijian working people. Fiji is a small place, and a socialist overturn could not long survive in isolation. But proletarian revolutionaries in Fiji must see their activities in an international context. Revolutionary struggle anywhere serves as a beacon for the working class internationally. A workers' victory in Fiji would resonate throughout the region and could have a major impact on the potentially powerful workers' movement in Indonesia as well as in Australia, New Zealand and beyond.

For a Workers' Republic of Fiji, in a Socialist Federation of East Asia and the Pacific!

Zimbabwe...

continued from page 32

Zimbabwe's IMF restructuring involved privatization of state-owned enterprises ("parastatals"), lowering corporate and luxury taxes, slashing social spending and removing tariff protection for local manufacturers in order to reorient the economy to the production of a narrow range of export goods. This represented a particularly significant turn for Zimbabwe's relatively advanced manufacturing sector which, when faced with international sanctions in the mid-1960s:

"suddenly produced its own breakfast cereals, cube sugar, high quality furniture, lollipop sticks, canned asparagus, bird seed, fifteen varieties of hair shampoo, ten different hand cleaners, five lipsticks, seven varieties of swimming pool paints, and ten varieties of pet foods....the number of different products increased from 1,059 in 1967 to 3,837 in 1970....By 1971 it was said that the homes of even high-income whites could be entirely furnished with Rhodesian-made goods."

—*Uneven Zimbabwe*, Patrick Bond

In Zimbabwe, as in every other neo-colony the IMF has "restructured," increasing the supply of a few export commodities has tended to depress their prices, while simultaneously deepening the country's dependency on imperialist finance, increasing social inequality and reducing living standards for the majority. Under ESAP the volume of manufacturing output dropped 40 percent between 1991 and 1995 as real wages also fell:

"The major factors in lowering real wages were soaring inflation and rising unemployment. Inflation ravaged workers, with the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions reporting in 1996 that their members found themselves on average 38% poorer than in 1980 and 40% poorer than in 1990....Adding this to the falling 'social wage'—thanks largely to new cost recovery policies for health, education and many other social services, as well as the unprecedented interest rates on consumer credit—workers and poor people faced an unprecedented financial crisis during the early 1990s.

"But dramatically lower wages did not, as orthodox theory would suggest, translate into more jobs. Unemployment remained rampant...."

—*Ibid.*

Tax cuts for the wealthy reduced government revenues which produced a rapid rise in the national debt. Mugabe attempted to counter this by slashing public sector spending, which sharply reduced access to healthcare and education (two areas that ZANU had expanded considerably in the early 1980s). Healthcare spending per capita fell 37 percent between 1990 and 1994 while the proportion of the population infected with HIV has soared from 10 percent in 1990 to 25 percent today.

John Peck provided the following summary of the effects of ESAP:

"Having swallowed all these recommended 'free market' remedies, Zimbabwe's situation still deteriorated as its terms of trade plummeted and domestic growth stagnated. Worse yet there was a 20 percent drop in elementary school attendance for girls, 27 percent decline in public visits to hospitals and clinics, 45 percent interest rates for peasant farmers and small entrepreneurs, 50 percent unemployment for high school graduates, 60 percent decline in real wage income over 1980 levels, etc. Due to

World Bank/IMF-imposed cutbacks...over 260 rangers [were fired] in 1993, triggering a poaching 'free-for-all' of Zimbabwe's already endangered black rhino population. Land reform has been effectively stalled as the western superpowers and their multilateral loan sharks threaten to hold future credit hostage if private property rights are not respected in Zimbabwe. Political backtracking on revolutionary promises and full blown corruption within the inner circles of President Robert Mugabe's administration have only exacerbated the situation."

—*ZMagazine*, September 1998

The powerful Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), previously tightly linked to ZANU, emerged as a major political factor in the mid-1990s when the national leadership lost control of their base as waves of increasingly militant strikes swept the country, culminating in a five-day "stayaway" (general strike) in 1998. The regime initially reacted with brutal police repression, but failed to reestablish control. Faced with growing broad-based popular opposition, Mugabe tacked to the left, imposing price controls on basic food items, raising taxes on luxury imports and forcing businesses to convert their foreign exchange holdings into Zimbabwean dollars. This enraged the IMF, and in November 1999, it sought to destabilize the regime by abruptly suspending all credits, a move soon followed by all the big international banks.

Mugabe had also offended the imperialist godfathers by intervening in the Congo to back Laurent-Désiré Kabila's regime against rebel insurgents. In exchange for this support (which to date has cost Zimbabwe an estimated US\$200 million and involved a third of its armed forces) Kabila gave valuable diamond mining concessions to several companies controlled by ZANU ministers and senior military officers (*Africa-Confidential*, 26 May 2000).

Mugabe Plays the Land Card

In February 2000, Mugabe attempted to strengthen his grip on power with a referendum on a constitutional "reform" package that included measures to extend his presidency by a decade, allow him to dissolve parliament and ban strikes, and guarantee that members of his entourage would have immunity from future legal prosecution. When it became clear that he was headed toward defeat, Mugabe added a provision for distributing white farmland to landless blacks.

Prior to the British conquest, the indigenous black tribes had over half a million acres under cultivation. In 1890 Cecil Rhodes organized the invasion of the territory now known as Zimbabwe by the British South Africa Company, and by 1902, after crushing native resistance, three-quarters of the best agricultural land had been "legally" expropriated by whites. Today their descendants employ 250,000 black workers on 4,000-odd commercial farms whose produce (chiefly tobacco) accounts for 40 percent of Zimbabwe's annual export earnings. The millions of land-hungry blacks whose ancestors were driven onto tiny plots in the least fertile and driest regions of the country are left to eke out a miserable existence as subsistence farmers.

The issue of access to land remains of vital concern to millions of rural blacks, but Mugabe's ploy failed because his record of repeatedly breaking similar promises in the past had sapped his credibility with his traditional peasant base. They were well aware that almost all the good land "redistributed" by ZANU in its 20 years in power had gone

to Mugabe's cronies. The referendum results were a humiliating defeat for the government and a huge boost to the opposition.

To regain its base in the countryside ZANU sponsored a series of invasions of white-owned commercial farms. Within weeks of the referendum 1,000 estates were occupied by squatters led by members of the National Liberation War Veterans' Association and ZANU's youth brigade. The Movement for Democratic Change immediately condemned these actions and pledged to "respect the rule of law and respect private property." This provided Mugabe with the issue he needed to regain enough support to win a narrow victory in June's parliamentary elections. The MDC swept the cities, but ZANU held onto the countryside and retained its majority in parliament.

Mugabe's threats to expropriate the lands of the white colons (whose grandparents stole it in the first place) were entirely motivated by political expediency. But this did not make them any less alarming for imperialist strategists in London and Washington, who fear that expropriations in Zimbabwe could touch off a similar movement in South Africa (where polls showed support for the land invasions to be higher than in Zimbabwe itself). The reappropriation of land could soon spread to mines and other capitalist property throughout the region.

Rise of the MDC

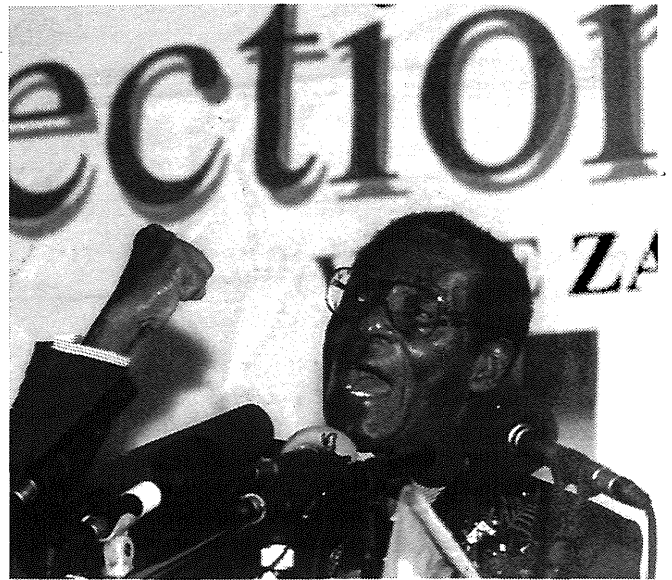
Perhaps the single most important development in Zimbabwean politics in the past several years has been the white bourgeoisie's success in controlling the groundswell of popular opposition to the regime touched off by the wave of union struggles in the mid-1990s. Munyaradzi Gwisai, a leading member of Zimbabwe's International Socialist Organisation (ISO—affiliated with the late Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers' Party in Britain [SWP/B]), described how this occurred. In reviewing the rise of mass struggles in the 1990s, he explained that the MDC was created as an *alternative* to a workers' party:

"In the labour forums being held in Harare and Bulawayo a minority of workers would call for a party, and the standard response would be, 'The ZCTU represents all workers from all parties.' But there were the stayaways of 1998—including the five-day stayaway that was stopped—and the formation of the National Constitutional Assembly [NCA], and also the crisis in the economy. It was then that those around [head of the ZCTU, Morgan] Tsvangirai began to think about it. There was the pressure from below from the workers, but also, and in many ways as a consequence of this, from the post-independence professionals, and this gave confidence to Tsvangirai."

—*Socialist Review*, September 2000

Gwisai described the role of the petty-bourgeois NCA as the core of what was to become the MDC:

"The NCA was centred around the constitutional question. This brought together the radical students of the late 1980s who were now holding professional jobs—NGO people, lawyers, economists and so forth....I think it was felt that there was a danger of radicalisation of the working class, particularly with [the strike wave of] 1997, and this is how Morgan [Tsvangirai] was then brought in as the figurehead leader of the NCA (without anybody else from the ZCTU). He lent credibility to the NCA, which was very well funded, run by young professionals with a



Mugabe on the campaign trail

lot of energy. The NCA played a role in delaying, and ultimately in preventing, the formation of a labour party. It became a real force, the other half of the MDC."

—*Ibid.*

The ISO was banned from the February 1999 "Working People's Convention" held to organize the developing national political opposition:

"The delegates came from provinces, mainly drawn from ZCTU activists in the regions. But the leadership—in terms of delivering papers, chairing sessions and writing the manifesto—was dominated by the NCA people, liberal and left-liberal academics from the university and one or two business people. Already by then Morgan was pushing for what he called a broad-based party....

"There was a loose leadership from the convention, with each organisation given one representative. But how do you equate the ZCTU with the Zimbabwe Human Rights Lawyers' Association? This is how middle class control arose. Still, until the official launch of the party in September [1999], the MDC structures were built in the various towns, and these were based on the ZCTU structures. To start with, there were even factory branches. The petty bourgeoisie were non-existent on the ground, especially outside Harare. The entire leadership of the regions was worker-led."

—*Ibid.*

Yet, when the MDC was launched in September 1999, the working-class activists were pushed aside:

"The regional leaders were assuming that, on the basis of having built the movement since February, they would be in the national leadership. Then, at the rally, a list of people was just announced."

—*Ibid.*

By the time of its founding congress in January 2000, the MDC claimed a million members—almost ten percent of Zimbabwe's population. While the MDC membership is overwhelmingly black and working class, its leadership is effectively controlled by white commercial farmers and business people. Tsvangirai is the MDC's president, while a former ISO leader, Tendai Biti, is the official MDC spokesperson on the land question. It is his job to put a "progressive" spin on the defense of the privileges of the white land-



ERIC MILLER—IMPACT VISUALS

MDC rally: Harare, 15 April 2000

owners.

Eddie Cross of the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries, the MDC's Secretary of Economic Affairs, gets credit for the "MDC Privatisation & Outsourcing Policy for Zimbabwe," which spells out how an MDC government would, "ensure completion of the restructuring and privatisation of parastatals within 24 months." While promising "new opportunities for Zimbabwean entrepreneurs" the statement also makes it clear that, "foreign strategic investors will be encouraged to bid for a majority stake in the enterprises being privatised." As a sop to the ZCTU brass, a proposal is also floated to help "trade unions to buy stakes in privatised companies."

CPGB: Reinventing Menshevism

Gwisai ran on the MDC ticket in Highfield, a working-class suburb of Harare (Zimbabwe's capital) and a traditional stronghold for radical black nationalist sentiment. He won 73 percent of the vote (a figure matched by many other MDC candidates in Harare). Gwisai is the first member of the International Socialist tendency to be elected to national office anywhere. Yet, in an implicit acknowledgment that the "victory" was badly tainted, the ISO's mentors in the SWP/B were remarkably reserved about their comrade's spectacular electoral success.

Others on the left were less circumspect. The penny-ante popular frontists of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), for example, who are currently snuggling up to the British Cliffites in the Socialist Alliance electoral bloc, proclaimed:

"the election of a revolutionary MP [i.e., Gwisai] in last month's general election in Zimbabwe represents a valuable boost for the working class—not only in that country but worldwide."

—*Weekly Worker*, 13 July 2000

While conceding that the MDC's program is "oriented towards international capital," the CPGB tailists nonetheless insist:

"It was the duty of all revolutionaries to back comrade Gwisai and to give critical support to the other working class MDC candidates."

—*Ibid.*

Readers of *Weekly Worker* disturbed by the thought of politically backing the party of the white bourgeoisie won't find much solace in the CPGB's "critical" figleaf. A vote is a vote and, for the moment, Zimbabwe's white elite welcomes the support of any and all "revolutionary" muddleheads.

In the extremely volatile and potentially revolutionary situation existing today in Zimbabwe, the Little England reformists of the CPGB are inordinately concerned with tinkering with the constitutional mechanisms of neo-colonial rule:

"Socialists must demand the abolition of the presidential system and a single-chamber assembly with full powers, consisting of fully elected, recallable representatives."

—*Ibid.*

The CPGB's chief propagandist on the question went so far as to explicitly *oppose* demands for expropriating bourgeois property in Zimbabwe, arguing:

"There are many cases where it is not so simple, where key productive forces in a given industry depend on elements that are physically located outside the country, or are certain to disappear abroad if an attempt is made to simply expropriate them."

—*Weekly Worker*, 22 June 2000

The "key productive forces" in every capitalist country depend, to one extent or another, on international inputs. British industry, for example, is entirely dependent "on elements that are physically located outside the country." And British capitalists would certainly make every effort to remove their assets if they feared expropriation. What conclusions does the CPGB draw from that?

To the Leninist program of expropriation, the CPGB cretins counterpose a social-democratic fantasy in which Zimbabwe's embattled workers somehow obtain lasting "control" of capitalist production:

"The key to all this is workers' control...as a potential weapon of the working class in countries where the dictatorship of the proletariat has not yet been established....Simple expropriation in such circumstances, on the other hand, on the principle of national autarchy, would simply lead to economic decline, and a decline of the influence of the workers' state on the workers of the capitalist states concerned."

—*Ibid.*

The Mensheviks issued similar warnings to the Russian workers in 1917, explaining that if they followed the wicked Bolsheviks and expropriated the capitalists, the result would be economic catastrophe.

Horses and Riders

Leon Trotsky once compared a bloc between workers and capitalists to that between a horse and rider. There is certainly no question about who is riding whom in the MDC. The white capitalists are happy to participate in a party fronted by black trade-union officials, with the "revolutionaries" of the ISO tagging along behind, because they want to use the power of black labor as a battering ram to bring down Mugabe. Once ZANU is out of the way and the bourgeoisie and their allies have secured their grip on the army and police, they will then be in a position to crush the unions at will.

The presence of the top trade-union bureaucrats in the leadership of the MDC helps reassure the rank and file that its blatantly Thatcherite class program will somehow work to their advantage. The "revolutionary" ISO, in turn, provides left cover for the ZCTU bureaucrats, who can point to the presence of "Marxists" on the MDC ticket as evidence that it cannot be so right-wing after all.

Initially the Cliffites tried to skirt the issue of the MDC's class character by talking vaguely of it as a "movement" of "anti-Mugabe activists" based on the unions:

"Mass opposition has grown steadily during the last four years. Last year anti-Mugabe activists came together to found the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The MDC is based on the trade union leaders...."

—*Socialist Worker* (Britain), 26 February 2000

To keep a bit of political distance from this "mass opposition," *Socialist Worker* included a few observations by a Zimbabwean ISO member:

"Many people hoped this [the MDC] was going to be a workers' party. It was a step forward which we welcomed. We wanted to push the movement leftwards and

make it a forum for left wing ideas. But there are now very serious questions being asked about what the MDC offers. It has worked to attract the support of those capitalists who have not prospered under Mugabe, and has recruited sections of the wealthy white population."

—*Ibid.*

An accompanying article entitled "Which way for Zimbabwe's working class?" maintained the same studied naiveté toward the MDC:

"Any serious change requires as a minimum the seizure of land from the big farmers (mostly whites)...and nationalisation of key industries. But the Movement for Democratic Change proposes nothing like this. The MDC would be nothing without the courage of the workers and peasants. But it is not leading them towards real liberation."

In fact it is leading them toward a crushing defeat, something *Socialist Worker* deliberately seeks to obscure. Alex Callinicos, who runs much of the SWP/B's international work, published an article a few days prior to the June election which entirely ignored Gwisai's candidacy and characterized the MDC as, "a coalition that cuts across the lines of both class and race—from white bosses and farmers...to the trade unionists of ZCTU." He observed that the MDC had "promised to implement an IMF dictated emergency programme," and noted the "devastating effect" of earlier IMF reforms, but nevertheless concluded that, "the best outcome this weekend would be an MDC victory" (*Socialist Worker*, 24 June 2000).

In its post-election analysis, *Socialist Worker* blandly observed that the MDC's economic policy "favoured the bosses," and suggested:

"The MDC could have called for the land occupations to be extended and could have attacked Mugabe for taking 20 years to begin any sort of land reform. Instead it called for 'law and order' to be restored and backed the white farmers."

—*Socialist Worker*, 1 July 2000

If pigs could fly! *Socialist Worker* also marvelled that:

"The movement's contradictory nature means its MPs include Munyaradzi Gwisai, on the one side, and Eddie

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Anti-Mugabe protest

Cross, a former chairman of the industrial employers' association on the other."

—*Ibid.*

The MDC is entirely *bourgeois*, a reality that Gwisai and the MDC's various other leftist publicists studiously ignore. Instead they imagine (or pretend to imagine) that this capitalist political machine may someday, somehow, turn itself into a vehicle for socialism. The bourgeoisie cannot be tricked, pressured or talked into acting against their own class interests, as the Cliffites well know. In fact the ISO and their mentors in the SWP /B leadership suffer from a different, but related, illusion—the belief that they "have major opportunities to use the MDC," as Gwisai explained in an interview with the *Weekly Worker*. Joining the MDC, he said, would enable the ISO:

"to be closer to the working class in the key towns. The danger had been that we would remain on the sidelines. "Our main reason for working in the MDC was to stay relevant and grow from there. We are a small group, but we hope to influence events where we are organised."

—*Weekly Worker*, 6 July 2000

The ISO's activity will indeed "influence events," but not as they imagine. By helping to channel the anger of Zimbabwe's black workers at Mugabe into support for the white *colons*, the ISO is paving the way for reaction. The glib renunciation of the first principle of socialism—the necessity for the *political independence* of the working class—in order to "stay relevant and grow" demonstrates once again the abyss that separates the International Socialist tendency from the Trotskyist tradition they claim.

From KMT to MDC: Class-Collaboration Means Defeat

The ISO's participation in the MDC is a replay of the Chinese Communist Party's disastrous entry in the bourgeois Kuomintang (KMT) in the 1920s, a critical issue in the struggle led by Leon Trotsky against the Stalinist corruption of the Communist International. Trotsky's description of the "bloc" of the Chinese Communists with the bourgeois Kuomintang at the Eighth Plenum of the Comintern Execu-

tive (ECCI) in May 1927 is entirely applicable to the ISO's dalliance with the MDC:

"If the bourgeoisie leads the oppressed masses of the people under the bourgeois banner, and takes hold of the state power through its leadership, then this is no bloc but the political exploitation of the oppressed masses by the bourgeoisie."

—"First Speech on the Chinese Question"

While Alex Callinicos et al, following Stalin, imagine that class-collaboration offers a shortcut to mass influence, Trotsky described it as literally suicidal:

"Such 'blocs' abound in the revolutionary as well as the parliamentary history of bourgeois countries: the big bourgeoisie leads the petty bourgeois democrats, the phrasemongers of the national united front, behind it, and the latter, in turn, confuse the workers and drag them along behind the bourgeoisie. When the proletarian 'tail,' despite the efforts of the petty bourgeois phrasemongers, begins to stir too violently, the bourgeoisie orders its generals to stamp on it. Then the opportunists observe with an air of profundity that the bourgeoisie has 'betrayed' the national cause."

—"The Chinese Revolution and the Theses of Comrade Stalin," 17 May 1927

Gwisai explained the ISO's reason for running on the MDC slate:

"After we joined the MDC we felt that we would be able to use the [election] campaign—and then possibly, if we won—as a platform for building a revolutionary alternative."

—*Socialist Review*, September 2000

Trotsky categorically rejected such notions:

"Communists in a bourgeois government become impotent hostages, if not a direct mask for the preparation of a new blow against the working masses."

—"Second Speech on the Chinese Question" delivered at the Eighth Plenum of the ECCI

Instead of liquidating into the bourgeois KMT, Trotsky called for a complete break with it and a program of hard class struggle:

"build up your workers' Soviets, ally them with the peasant Soviets, arm yourselves through the Soviets, draw soldiers' representatives into the Soviets, shoot the generals who do not recognize the Soviets, shoot the bureaucrats and bourgeois liberals who will organize uprisings against the Soviets. Only through peasants' and soldiers' Soviets will you win over the majority of Chiang Kai-Shek's soldiers to your side."

—*Ibid.*

The ISO talks about eventually building a "revolutionary alternative" to the MDC, but clearly intends to go along for the ride as long as possible. Gwisai told the *Weekly Worker*: "Workers feel good about the elections, but the MDC did not win and so the pressure to deliver will not be so high." He also speculated: "There will be presidential elections in 2002, which will tend to hold the party [i.e., the MDC] together."

The ISO recognizes that sooner or later the MDC must break apart, and when it inevitably does, they will doubtless claim to have anticipated such a development. But their practical activity is not oriented toward a break with the bourgeoisie, but rather celebrates the breadth of the "anti-Mugabe movement." In this it is exactly counterposed to:

"The Bolshevik way...[which] consists of an unconditional political and organizational demarcation from the bourgeoisie, of a relentless exposure of the bourgeoisie from the very first steps of the revolution, of a destruction of all petty bourgeois illusions about the united front with the bourgeoisie, of tireless struggle with the bourgeoisie for leadership of the masses...."

—"The Chinese Revolution and the Theses of Comrade Stalin," 17 May 1927

The Cliffites' orientation to the MDC derives from an entirely different tradition:

"The Menshevik policy in foreseeing the so-called departure of the bourgeoisie is directed towards postponing this moment as long as possible, while the independence of policy and organization of the proletariat is sacrificed to this aim, the workers are instilled with confidence in the progressive rôle of the bourgeoisie and the necessity of political self-restraint is preached."

—"First Speech on the Chinese Question" delivered at the Eighth Plenum of the ECCI

But the strategy of political adaptation to the "progressive" wing of the capitalists is fatal for the working class:

"Yes, the moment of the departure of the bourgeoisie can thereby be postponed. But this postponement is utilized by the bourgeoisie against the proletariat: It seizes hold of the leadership thanks to its great social advantages, it arms its loyal troops, it prevents the arming of the proletariat, political as well as military, and after it has acquired the upper hand it organizes the counter-revolutionary massacre at the first serious collision."

—*Ibid.*

In truth the Cliffites' current policy in Zimbabwe is in many senses *worse* than Stalin's in China in the 1920s. For one thing, the KMT stood quantitatively to the left of the imperialist-backed warlords, while the MDC is clearly positioned to the right of ZANU. In China, the working class, while strategically important, constituted only a tiny percentage of the population; but in Zimbabwe today the working class has immensely more social weight, and almost half the population lives in urban areas. Finally, events in China were historically unprecedented. It was only on the basis of this historical experience that Trotsky concluded:

"the general trend of revolutionary development in all backward countries can be determined by the formula of the *permanent revolution* in the sense definitely imparted to it by the three revolutions in Russia (1905, February 1917, October 1917)."

—*Transitional Program*

The Road to Victory

Both ZANU and the MDC are enemies of Zimbabwe's embattled workers and peasants. The cynicism of Mugabe's leftist posturing is clearly exposed by the record of his two decades in power, while the MDC, for its part, is eager to assume the role of taskmaster for the IMF. For Zimbabwe's poor and working people—both urban and rural—the only chance for a decent life lies through the expropriation of the capitalist parasites.

A key objective for revolutionaries must be to break workers' illusions in the nationalist demagoguery of ZANU and the "democratic" austerity preached by the bourgeois MDC. Only a revolutionary workers' party committed to a program of uprooting the whole system of neo-colonialism

and capitalist exploitation can open a road forward. A key element in this strategy must be to break Mugabe's grip on his plebeian base by championing the interests of rural proletarians, poor peasants and the unemployed.

Victory cannot be guaranteed, but defeat is certain with the ISO's policy of class-collaboration. While claiming the mantle of Lenin and Trotsky, the ISO, in fact, stands in the tradition of the "socialism" of the right wing of the Second International—the French "possibilists," Millerand and Bernstein. Like their opportunist forbearers, the Cliffites are hypnotized by the "reality" of a movement with hundreds of thousands of members, a big apparatus and deputies in parliament. They fear that making any serious criticism of the MDC risks "alienating" the masses who follow it. So the ISO opts for a policy of passive adaptation to the illusions of the workers, covered by paeans to the beauties of the glorious socialist future and declarations of abstract fidelity to a revolutionary tradition they clearly do not consider to be of any practical value.

In Zimbabwe today, as in China three-quarters of a century ago, genuine Marxists are distinguished by their irreconcilable hostility to all wings of the capitalist class:

"The deepening of the agrarian revolution, the immediate seizure of the land by the peasants, will weaken Chiang Kai-Shek on the spot, bring confusion into the ranks of his soldiers, and set the peasant hinterland in motion. There is no other road to victory and there can be none."

—"The Chinese Revolution and the Theses of Comrade Stalin," 17 May 1927

The policy of political subordination to the MDC is exactly *counterposed* to this. Whatever the subjective intent of the ISO cadres, the path they have chosen can only *deepen* the division between rural and urban workers, shore up Mugabe's grip on the land-hungry peasantry and set up the unions for destruction. Trotsky's critique of the Stalinized Chinese Communist Party of the late 1920s is fully applicable to the International Socialist Tendency today:

"Chinese Bolshevism can arise only under a merciless self-criticism by the best elements of the Communist party....The attempt to cover up the mistakes of the past by artificially curbing a discussion of them, will cause enormous harm....If we do not help it to purge itself, in the shortest period, from Menshevism and the Mensheviks, it will enter a prolonged crisis, with splits, desertions, and an embittered struggle of various groups."

—*Ibid.*

The possibility of an outbreak of revolutionary struggle has been acutely posed in Zimbabwe for several years now. The precipitous fall in living standards has deeply discredited both the IMF/MDC austerity programs and the demagogic "anti-imperialism" of the Mugabe regime. Millions of working people have learned, through participating in mass struggles, that collectively they can wield immense social power. A revolutionary explosion in Zimbabwe could immediately spread to South Africa and reverberate around the world.

Every precondition for a revolutionary breakthrough is present, save one—the existence of a nucleus of cadres committed to directing the anger of the masses toward the expropriation of their oppressors. Such a leadership can only be created through hard political struggle against all those who advocate the "tactic" of helping the white planters slip a noose around the neck of the black proletariat. ■

Zimbabwe: Cliffites' Poisoned 'Victory' 'No Greater Crime'



"There can be no greater crime than coalition with the bourgeoisie in a period of socialist revolution."

—Leon Trotsky, 15 July 1939

Events in Zimbabwe appear to be moving toward a head as pressure mounts on populist demagogue Robert Mugabe's beleaguered Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) government. Mugabe, who spent a decade in prison during the 1960s and early 70s for his role in the 15-year guerrilla struggle against Ian Smith's white minority regime, easily won election in 1980 as Zimbabwe's first president. He has remained president ever since.

Two decades ago Mugabe was praised by the Western media as a great statesman. The U.S. and Britain accorded considerable importance to Zimbabwe's integration into the "free world" as a means of containing Soviet influence in a strategically important region. Mugabe's officially "Marxist-Leninist" regime carefully honored the terms of the imperialist-brokered 1979 "Lancaster House Agreement" with Smith's rogue regime. These included safeguarding the lives and property of the white settlers and even agreeing to repay the debts run up by the white supremacists in waging their racist war. Mugabe's patrons in London and Washington were less scrupulous—a £750 million World Bank "Zimbabwe Development Fund" which was promised to rebuild the country never materialized.

Many things have changed in Zimbabwe since 1979. Mugabe, like Saddam Hussein, lost much of his value to the imperialists with the end of the Cold War. While brutal dictatorships were once prized as champions of the "free

world," they are now regarded as costly and inefficient anachronisms. In the post-Soviet era imperial control can be exercised more flexibly and cheaply through elections in which various sectors of the local elite compete for the job of implementing the requirements of the metropolitan transnationals.

Mugabe's corrupt and discredited regime succeeded in "Africanizing" the neo-colonial state, but now appears to have run out its string. Zimbabwe's economy is expected to shrink by ten percent this year. Fifty-five percent of the workforce is unemployed and inflation is over 60 percent and rising as the government desperately attempts to cover shortfalls by printing money. During the past several years popular opposition to ZANU has mushroomed. It is spearheaded by the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), an unnatural alliance of black trade unionists and white capitalists actively backed by Britain and the U.S.

'Eternal Suffering for African People'

Mugabe is still spouting anti-imperialist rhetoric and is one of the International Monetary Fund's most virulent Third World critics, despite his record of routinely bowing to its dictates at home. In 1991 ZANU accepted an IMF Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP—popularly dubbed "Eternal Suffering for African People"). Advertised as a sure path to economic development and rising living standards, the IMF's prescriptions are in reality designed to integrate the economies of the neo-colonies into a global division of labor on terms favorable to the banks and multi-national corporations of the "developed" world.

continued on page 26