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***Internationalist Notes***

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*Internationalist Notes is the Journal of the Internationalist Workers Group/Groupe Internationaliste Ouvrier, an organization of Internationalist Communists in the USA and Canada that is affiliated in its activity with the International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party.*

***What's in our name?***

We are internationalist in that we support and call for a world revolution. We are workers. We are a group. Our political tendency comes from those groups on the left of the Communist International that were expelled forming the first opposition in struggle against the counterrevolution today embodied in Stalinism or "Marxism-Leninism".

Internationalist Notes was originally taken as a name from an IBRP publication in Farsi. The International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party grew out of a series of conferences that began in the late seventies, called the International Conferences of the Communist Left. The conferences initiated by Partito Comunista Internazionale (Battaglia Comunista), known by their paper Battaglia Comunista and their journal Prometeo. The International Bureau harkens back to the original International Bureau of Fractions of the Communist Left, which was based in Brussels and whose theoretical journal was Prometeo. The term International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party is a way of indicating that we are not a "fraction" of a communist movement that ceased to exist when the centrists around Stalin killed the last remnants of it off. Our preamble and positions can be found in the back of each issue.

## *Acknowledgements, Apologia, Errata...*

Internationalist Notes is undergoing some changes in style and content. Currently we are aiming to improve quality and broaden the publication's exposure and distribution with a higher degree of professionalism. An online journal formatted website for Internationalist Notes is also being planned. There has been a good deal of financial strain on the publication but the publication will continue. To alleviate this problem we have had to raise our subscription rates and "street sale" prices. We apologize for our infrequency of publication and appeal for our readers support.

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## **Barack Obama: Bourgeois Savior, Middle Class Messiah**

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*This issue comes out very late and we apologize to our readers. There will be no Summer issue and we are commencing numbering with this current Fall issue.*

The election of Barack Obama to the presidency of the United States has come for many as a welcome change from the politics of the last eight years. Many would have people believe that this Democrat will be fundamentally different from a Republican. Many liberal left elements, the editors of such publications as the Nation or the Progressive Magazine (and even Naomi Klein) present Obama as a president who can be “pressured” to carry out a classic liberal reform program. For many young people this election represented their first break with the Republican politics they were raised with. For workers Obama represents a better deal, or the best alternative that can be hoped for in the realm of what is possible in American political life. The perceptions of this candidate as representing real change were the carefully cultivated product of the media and the capitalist class that exploit the expectant optimism of masses of citizens from every social class in US society. This deluded thinking willfully looks away and refuses to see or even acknowledge the nature of this candidate who appears as a liberal democratic capitalist only in the wishful thinking of those who are ideologically indentured to the Democratic Party. The middle layers of society want a great man to follow so that they can go back

to sleep and not worry about being squeezed into the growing ranks of the impoverished proletariat.

### ***The Grooming of a Contender***

What does this victory really represent to workers? It represents a new face on the same old policies. He represents a facelift for American capitalism. As he said himself “putting lipstick on a pig does not change the pig”. In Obama’s first major campaign bid he ran against former Black Panther, Bobby Rush. Obama’s campaign slogan was “from protest to progress”. It was an explicit slap at the protest politics of the sixties, against civil rights and black power. Obama was calling on his constituents to stop protesting, and start getting more conservative in order to get elected, and be politically relevant in a capitalist society. It was an insult to his “own” constituents, one that made the white capitalists of the Democratic Party actually stand up and take notice him as being a serious presidential hopeful, and someone they could groom for power.

This layer of African American bourgeois politicians enriched themselves over a period of more than three decades of decline in African American workers living standards. They have far more in common with the white capitalists who live in Chicago’s elite neighborhood, the Gold Coast, than they do with their fellow African American workers. The irony of this illusion is that it is one that profits white capitalists first and foremost. This segment of the capitalist class has overseen the exploitation of the very constituents that they supposedly represent according to the folklore of democratic capitalism. This was a conscious political decision taken by the Democratic Party as far back as George McGovern’s failed 1972 presidential bid. The idea was to present US capitalism as something that had no

inherent problems, but rather a series of constituencies who only needed a little reformist fix here and there. The idea pushed was that the US would be fine if only racism, sexism and homophobia could be legislated away peacefully, as if these issues had no context in the social disaster represented by capitalism.

### **Promises, Promises**

Obama is still promising to shut down the concentration camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He also promises to stop the policies of torture that have been carried out by the military. He is not proposing to eliminate the other torture camps at places like the Bagram Airbase in Afghanistan, or on Diego Garcia, or shut down any of the prison ships. Torture won't stop because the roots of the current US torture regime were copied from Soviet torture techniques and introduced into military training regimes during the fifties and the sixties and were explicitly based on North Korean and Vietnamese varieties of torture. He still promises to draw down troops in Iraq so he can move them to Afghanistan. This promise has already gone out the window with the law that the Iraqi parliament signed that allows US Armed Forces to remain in Iraq for another 3 years. He will not end the use of mercenaries in Iraq because they will be needed in greater numbers just to draw the troop levels down from where they currently stand. Workers cannot expect his presidency to be less belligerent when it comes to Iran, or less supportive of its Israeli puppet state, Uncle Sam's "little loyal Jewish Ulster" in the Middle East. His foreign policy, guided by Zbigniew Brzezinski, will not differ at all from that of commonly established foreign policy aims and objectives of American imperialism. Obama's economic consultant and capitalist guru, Warren Buffett, is not about to bring any positive

changes for workers.\* Under this regime one can expect nothing more than a slightly more articulate and intelligently carried out version of the exact same belligerent militarism of the last eight years. This militarism wasn't policy driven, but rather was driven by the US capitalists' fear of decline of their power in the world. Not once has Obama or the Democratic Party ever challenged the basis of the Iraq War or the "War on Terror" [*nor could they ever be expected to.* –ed.].

### **Giving Vermin a Bad Name**

Obama is a creature of the Democratic Party political machine in Chicago. He is surrounded by real estate company executives who have profited from dealing in slum properties and robbing the poorest workers in Chicago of their meager pay. All his political life, Obama has supported massive subsidies to these slumlords. This isn't just rhetoric here, nor does this solely concern Tony Rezko, a convicted slumlord and conman that the Republican supporters spent so much time talking about in the recent presidential election campaign. Obama has even worse slumlords in his corner than Rezko. Obama has always endorsed subsidies of public money to real estate and property management firms, which have learned to extract subsidies from the city to "maintain" (we use the term extremely loosely here) low-income housing. These same slumlords then turn around to solicit more funds from the city to "renovate" the housing and then turn around to push out the poor, raise the rent and move in the middle classes. Obama supported the redevelopment of areas around Chicago's downtown, the Loop. These developments explicitly drove out some of the poorest workers in Chicago so that "mixed income" units could be put in. Senior advisor to Obama, Valerie Jarrett is a chief executive

of the Habitat Company, one of the worst property management companies in Chicago. Obama's friends and contributors and even advisors are slumlords, namely, Valerie Jarrett, Cecil Butler (former civil rights activist turned capitalist slumlord), Allison Davis, and last and probably the least of all of these was the infamous Tony Rezko, the Syrian-born convicted slumlord, whose shady dealings the media by in large dutifully ignored.

The class of politicians that clings to Obama's coattails is a parasitic Finance/ Insurance/Real Estate economy bourgeoisie. For one example of just how cheap these capitalists are, the Habitat Company is notorious for not even bothering to spend money on steel wool, steel wire scrub pads, that are commonly used as temporary plugs on rat holes that rats won't chew through because they won't eat metal wire. That is to say, too cheap to give their janitors a raise and too cheap to even spend a few dollars on some steel wool to stop up rat holes in apartment blocks infested with rats. To call these real estate moguls vermin gives vermin a bad name.

### ***And for the Working Class?***

With Robert Reich tipped to be Obama's Secretary of Labor, we can expect no more than the same for "labor" (i.e. Unions like the AFL-CIO and the Change to Win unions) that labor received under the Clinton presidency. In fact Obama's administration is starting to look almost exactly like a new synthesis of the Clinton and Carter administrations. Reich is a supporter of further cutbacks in wages, benefits and pensions for Autoworkers while supporting the Automakers with subsidies. For much of the state of Michigan, a reduction in pensions for retired workers is the only segment of workers wages that they haven't yet gotten to substantially cut.

"Legacy costs", pensions and healthcare must be cut and the unions can't deliver enough of the cuts. Thus the government bailout will force the concessions on the autoworkers, in what is called a "bailout". The bailout for the auto industry will be exacted by the government at such a cost as to ensure that it will be little more than a bankruptcy proceeding. The need for "shared sacrifice" for the "good of the country" applies, as always, only to the proletariat.

For decades now the decline in workers living standards in the biggest cities in the US has been overseen almost entirely by the Democratic Party politicians on the municipal level. Many of these DP politicians have been African American politicians, while poverty and hardship for African American workers hasn't diminished at all. Nor have these politicians ever once stopped the "war on drugs" from being a one-sided war focused largely on African American proletarians.

There will be no "New Deal". Obama isn't going to act in a "Rooseveltian" way at all, despite the pipedreams of "progressives". In major cities around the US, it is often just these liberal-progressives that support gentrification and redevelopment projects because they despise the working class just as much as any Republican party aligned capitalist does. There will be no National Health Insurance program worthy of the name. Budgets will be cut to the bone, particularly on the state and municipal levels, and the military will continue to grow and fight new wars. While the ruling parties can successfully manipulate the tool of media with their own sleight of hand by distracting workers with the vague promise of trivial micro-reforms the reality will be that workers living standards will continue to slide and the war will not end.

Those who stand to be most disappointed by the course of Obama's administration stand to be US workers and foreign capitalists, who both labor under the illusion that Obama is going to be different and or better. They will find no "hope" or "change" with Obama, no more than they would find with any figurehead of American politics. There is no reason to take the word of revolutionary political minorities for this. It does not require a crystal ball to see that nothing will change. For proletarians who really want "change they can believe in", they will have to look elsewhere. Putting a black man in the White House in the middle of the biggest capitalist crisis since 1929 is not going to change anything but it will buy time for our exploiters. Our real "hope" can only be achieved through working for the one real change that can improve our lives – a worldwide proletarian revolution.

\* Obama has since named Paul Volcker to head the White House advisory board that will oversee administration policies for "stabilizing" financial markets." Volcker carried out policies under the Carter and Reagan administrations that suppressed wages and increased unemployment. —ed.

Internationalist Workers Group—US



## **A "National Special Security Event" Repression from the Convention to the Election...and Beyond**

*This was originally written during the political conventions before Obama had become president. We publish this as a reminder of the true unity of all capitalist factions when it comes to crushing any expression of protest.*

Here in the US the two ruling parties have finally held their elections. It might do well to reflect on what occurred at the Democratic and Republican national conventions as it showed the common nature of both capitalist parties and the true relationship of workers to the regime of capital.

On occasion of the two parties' political conventions during an election year, the political base of these ruling parties becomes glaringly evident. The votes of actual people matter little, when it is the votes of the media in the hall and the dollars of the donors that do the real voting. First there was the nauseating display of backslapping

at the Democratic National Convention in Denver after Obama's choice of Senator Biden. In a patronizing way, US politics, which never discusses the working class at all, began talking about how the choice of Senator Biden as Obama's Vice-Presidential running mate would help win over the "white working class". As if the conservative reactionary centrist pro-war Biden had any sort of connection to the proletariat. The elections function as a means of coercing the working class, the main body of the voting public, into participating in an epic act of capitalist political theater. The very fact that a "white working class" had become a topic of dominant media discourse indicates a great deal of discomfort among ruling circles here in regards to their own ability to widely mobilize the working class behind the capitalist program. Usually the politicians and the capitalist media allow themselves to speak only of the amorphous "middle class". Workers themselves can vote for whoever they want, but in the end it is the press, the financiers and the Pentagon whose votes really count. This political spectacle is not a sign of the strength of American capitalism but a result of a profound weakness. The apparatus has generated its own paranoia to the point where it is spying on vegans at potluck dinners supposedly to track down terrorists.

At both convention protests, it should be noted that police seized items of protesters property that in both cases they said were used to store urine or feces to attack police with; evincing a strange fecal obsession with bowel movements that those outside the security apparatus simply cannot comprehend. But the paranoia and political repression didn't stop with the police looking for feces. Highlights of the Minneapolis protest included the arrest of a 78-year-old pacifist nun, who presumably was one of the dangerous anarchists about which the

local law enforcement were regularly scaring people in their press conferences throughout the convention. At the Denver convention the protest also included the beating and arrest of an eighty-year-old man.

Protests at both the Democratic and Republican conventions attracted similar numbers of people. From around 8,000 at the first DNC protest to around 10,000 at the first RNC protest according to official figures. The smaller numbers for the Denver DNC protest may reflect the ability of the Democrats to better exploit popular anger at the present time. The two parties are able to absorb multiple constituencies, from the Dominionist/Calvinist/Pentacostal theocrats in the GOP to the Social Democrats of America list in the Democratic Party. All those who cannot be absorbed into the two parties they attempt to ignore and or destroy. The brain dead propaganda of the capitalist media found it almost impossible to cover the protest at the DNC in Denver but found the same protests at the RNC in Minneapolis to be worthy of media attention. Likewise, both protests were led by people, ranging variously from self-described anarchists to Iraq Veterans Against the War, to Code Pink (a middle class women's pacifist outfit), and chapters of the new "Students for a Democratic Society", chapters of the IWW, and supported by a list of dozens of other activist groups from around the country. The protest, despite the reformism, the American flags and the chants about democracy, was an explicitly anti-war protest in both cases, but the media, now allied to their new messiah Obama refused to acknowledge that those protesting the Democratic National Convention were in fact opposing the war. The media outlets willfully pretended that they didn't understand what the protest was about. The same protests in Minneapolis against the Republican National Convention were found worthy of



coverage on CNN, while the pictures on CNN of the convention inside the hall looked as if the Republican Party was attending its own wake. Why? The capitalists and their media had chosen a new master and all that remained was to convince enough people that they support the DP candidate in order to make the election look like a popular mandate of the “citizens” of the US republic. Only writers in magazines like The Nation, that Trotsky once so aptly referred to as a “reptile breed”, can pretend that the media is somehow in love with McCain. So, arbitrary attention was paid to the second convention protest that would not have been paid if the capitalists in the media hadn’t decided that their “vote”, their capital, was going with Obama.

Security measures at these conventions are outrageous. The sense of self-importance that these capitalists must carry around with them to justify the presence of armies of cops, Secret Service agents and the National Guard in such numbers, borders on extreme delusional arrogance. U-shaped bicycle locks are considered weapons by the police. Standing on the sidewalk is an “act of violence”. Kicking a smoke bomb, fired by the police, back at the police is an act of violence. Wearing helmets of any kind, be they football, baseball, construction, or motorcycle helmets is also considered an act of violence against the authorities. The police in both Denver and Minneapolis were under the direct thumb of the Secret Service agents who have no enforceable legal responsibility to even identify themselves with badges or identification of any kind. Vehicles called “mobile command centers” crawled through the streets manned by the Office of Homeland Security and overseen by the Secret Service to monitor the protests. As far back as last May [1], it came out that the FBI was soliciting help from University of Minnesota students to infiltrate the

Republican National Convention welcoming committee and spy on their plans to protest the convention.

This was followed up by the arrests and preventative detentions of protest organizers. It is perfectly legal to detain a person for “thirty six hours” not including the weekends, thus allowing police to detain you for up to five days without charges if, for example, you are arrested towards the end of the workweek. The items that were seized from the “convergence center” that was serving as a protest headquarters, were all household items. Empty bottles and rags were found so the police screamed to the media that the protesters were planning to make Molotov cocktails. Likewise, reports of knives and other household items were claimed to be weapons by the cops. The warrant itself was a warrant based on suspicion and not on any classic legal idea of “criminal intent”. This was the modus operandi of the police through the entire convention period. In essence, it was a fishing expedition for the cops to detain the organizers. The arrests allowed the police to then shut down and completely board up the Convergence Center.

Over the following Labor Day weekend and into the week, the police continued invading the homes of organizers and searching them with guns drawn. Minneapolis police began by attacking an officially permitted march before it even began, by firing concussion grenades at them, creating panic and then chasing people through the streets. This was called a riot. Stories of elderly convention goers being attacked by violent anarchists were circulated. I-Witness Video, which collects video evidence of police brutality at protests, was the subject of an attempted police raid of their temporary Minneapolis offices. There, the police outrageously claimed “anarchists” were holding people hostage. A few incidents of windows

being smashed occurred, perhaps at the encouragement of the police. It was being said often that the police weren't wearing any badges. Police departments get around this requirement by having the badge number printed on the backs of their riot helmets where they won't be seen. Lies were spread among the police that cops were actually killed during the first WTO protests in Seattle in order to deliberately make the bosses' dogs angry. Around 21 people in Minneapolis were charged with felonies in relation to planning the protests. Total arrests during the Republican convention were well over 400, with over 100 felony arrests in all. Eight of the organizers are charged with "conspiracy to riot in furtherance of terrorism", a charge that carries a seven-and-a-half year sentence. County prosecutors as of writing this, declined to prosecute at least 44 felony cases, further underlining the fraudulent and repressive nature of these arrests. [2]

The protests have been attacked by the police repeatedly, not in response to any actual violence but because even holding a march is a criminal activity in an area deemed officially by the security apparatus as the site of a "National Special Security Event". Local officials almost all of whom, in Denver and Minneapolis, are Democratic Party politicians actively assisted with this repression. For the local bourgeoisie, the conventions also represent a means to bring capital into their cities, so absolute cooperation with the Secret Service and federal authorities is assured.

The double layered fencing of the free speech zone areas of legal protest are now commonly referred to as "freedom cages". The repression is an expression of fear on the part of capitalism, where the denizens of the two-party state spout their limousine populism to assuage their own fear and absorb or crush all expressions of discontent. The fact that these protests have

not gone away scares them and above all, they did not want a repeat of what happened in Seattle at the WTO protests.

By the time the debates came, both candidates were in firm agreement on the need for sacrifices on the part of workers. Namely, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, infrastructure spending will all have to be severely cut back. Obama was credited even with swaying several Democratic Senators behind the \$700 billion dollar bailout. The bailout contains \$150 billion in tax breaks making the entire package cost \$850 billion dollars. This is indeed the proverbial golden parachute. All the bad debt will be taken out of workers hides while the capitalists blame workers for living beyond their means and demand that they make sacrifices. Brad Sherman, House Rep. from California in a fit of hyperbole even spoke of "martial law" being declared if the bill was not passed. During the debates both candidates adopted threatening posture and rhetoric aimed at: Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia and Venezuela. Obama called for a draft, euphemistically termed in political circles as "national service".

In reaction to workers' passivity and silence the most vile, arrogant and smug attitudes towards workers have been allowed to go unchallenged and have become commonplace. This can be seen reflected back in the attitudes of the middle layers of society, the professions, academia and the popular media, for whom workers are either considered stupid, threatening, pitiful, or non-existent at best. The two dominant parties in the US, like ruling parties everywhere, are identical as they always turn out to be after the election is done. While the political theater of the capitalists continues unabated, to the elections and beyond, the message to workers is to get back into your "freedom cage".

AS

## Notes

[1] Snyders, Matt. "Moles Wanted".

Citipages. May 21, 2008.

<http://www.citypages.com/2008-05-21/news/holes-wanted/>

[2] Farnham, T. W. Wall Street Journal.

September 4, 2008, pg. A6

[http://online.wsj.com/public/article/SB122048791794897339.html?mod=special\\_page\\_campaign2008\\_leftbox](http://online.wsj.com/public/article/SB122048791794897339.html?mod=special_page_campaign2008_leftbox)

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## **Origins of the “Progressives” The Death of Third Party Reformism in the US, Part 1**

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Each year, the left reformist party Progressive Dane, whose power base is located in Madison, Wisconsin and in the surrounding County of Dane, hosts a political conference called “Fighting Bob Fest”. What is it about “progressivism” that leftists love so much? Bob LaFollette Jr, the “non-fighting Bob”, took his father’s political fiefdom into the Republican Party in 1946 and was trounced by Joe McCarthy for the nomination as candidate in his own Republican bid for the US Senate. It was the Milwaukee Journal newspaper that supported the Progressive Party, that once wrote of “progressivism” as a way of combating the spread of the Socialist Party of America. [1]



*“Fighting” Bob in a classic fighting Bob pose*

For Progressive Dane, a political coalition with an electoral list comprising a variety of local left parties has up to a third of the list going to “progressive” democrats. While the local Democratic Party machine sees as its mission to destroy or absorb anything to the left of themselves in order to eliminate the threat to their vote tallies. It is thus politically convenient for PD to use the cover of a classically “American” populist movement, emasculated so that terms like “labor”, “socialist” or “left” won’t start conjuring nightmares of red terror among the middle class, petit-bourgeois elements, for whom even the barest hint of anything proletarian sparks their fear and contempt. The term

progressive, as it is used works towards the total eclipse of working class politics of the most tepid reformist variety from our history. The fates of the original Wisconsin Progressive Party and the Farmer-Labor Party in Minnesota both show what became of reformism in the US.\* They signaled the demise of third parties in power in the US and became another gravestone in the history of the left.

The Farmer-Labor Party arose out of the Nonpartisan League, an organization initiated by the Socialist Party of America among farmers in the Midwest. Up until the final dissolution of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party in 1944, the party was still polling 38 percent of the electorate and was a serious political contender in Minnesota State politics. The Stalinists in the CPUSA were behind the final merger of the Farmer-Labor Party into the Democratic machine as the Democratic Farmer-Labor Party, still the dominant capitalist party in state politics. This was a part of the CP’s maneuvering in proving themselves loyal to the Roosevelt administration and to

their political masters in Moscow, in line with United Front period policy. [2] In great irony, the CPUSA also engineered the scuttling of the left-reformist and labor union based reinvention of the grand “party of labor” idea, Tony Mazzochi’s Labor Party, by making sure in the 1990s that they wouldn’t run candidates in elections lest they be seen as wavering in their support for the Democratic Party. Unsurprisingly, the Republicans won anyway.

In the political history of the US it was the economic depression of the 1870s that brought about the great political upheavals that created the forebears of the main left parties in the US. The “Greenback”

movement of populism and reformism, the “Grange” movement, the Populist Party and finally the Progressive Party each grew out of the discontent of farmers of that time. The final electoral gasp of progressivism came in the form of Henry Wallace’s Progressive Party campaign of 1948, where the Social Democrats, Communists and “Progressives” came together on the electoral field for the last time. Use of the term today expresses nostalgia for a lost epoch of political relevance and an apologia of the petty-bourgeoisie for their servitude to their Democratic Party masters. It is important that later-day progressives chose to remember the fallen political fiefdom of “Fighting Bob” rather than the equally reformist, Frank P. Zeidler, the Socialist Party of Wisconsin’s last Mayor of Milwaukee, who left office in 1960.

Save for the Anti-Terror legislation of the outgoing Bush regime, it has been the “liberals” of US politics that have committed most of the greatest violations of classical bourgeois liberties: Woodrow Wilson and Attorney General Palmer in the Palmer Raids, Roosevelt and the Smith Act, and President Truman and the loyalty oath purge. Franklin Roosevelt, whose uncle Teddy took the Progressive Party nomination from “Fighting Bob” in 1912, effectively used the rhetoric of progressivism against “economic royalists” for his own political ends. From the Spanish-American War to the final defeat of Wallace in 1948, the “progressive” movement supported preparations for every war. Even to the point of supporting cold-war preparations for WWII. [3] “Progressivism” as channeled into the Democratic Party, emptied of reform, a reformism of indignation and obeisance to a capitalist party committed to permanent warfare and economic austerity, is in perfect continuity with the war supporting “progressives” of yesteryear.

AS

\* *We’ll deal with Social Democracy and the Socialist Party of Wisconsin in a future article—ed.*

#### Notes

[1] Zinn, Howard. *The People’s History of the United States: 1492-Present*. HarperCollins. 2001. p. 353

[2] Creel, Warren. *The Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party*. *The Fourth International*, March 1946, Volume 7, No. 23, p. 77-81

Creel was an F-LP member and served as Secretary of the Educational Bureau of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Association.

<<http://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/fi/vol07/no03/flp.htm>>

[3] Novack, George. *The Rise and Fall of Progressivism*. *International Socialist Review*. Vol. 18, No. 3, Summer 1957. p. 83-88

<<http://www.marxists.org/archive/novack/works/1957/x01.htm>>

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## **October 14th Canadian Elections Not a single vote for capitalism!**

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*We are publishing this on the Canadian elections of last October.*

The October 14th federal elections are taking place in a particularly serious and complex political context. The financial meltdown that has been shaking the whole world shows no sign of letting up. During the past week, the stock markets have experienced their greatest devaluations of share prices since the 1929 Crash. While the bourgeois economists are unsure of whether we are already in a recession or not, it is the shadow of a depression that looms on the horizon of this casino economy. In contrast to the crisis of the 30's, the present tremor is leaving no part of the planet unscathed. Even if we don't know what the effect that the emergency meeting of the G7 will have on the situation, it is obvious that the bankruptcies, the takeovers and the mayhem of the last few weeks are the product of an exacerbation of the already profound crisis of the cycle of accumulation of capital that has been going on for the past few decades. Today, the Saudi Arabian Stock Exchange, the most important in the Arab world in terms of capitalization, fell by 6%. Yesterday, the Hang Seng Index of Hong Kong fell by 7.2%, the CAC-40 of Paris by 6.8%, the DAX 30 of Germany by 7% and Toronto's TSX by 7.9%. The last of the great banks of Iceland has now collapsed and had to be nationalized just as the two preceding ones, while its stock market had to suspend trading as was also the case in Austria, Italy and Russia.

In the last week alone, the Nikkei Index of Japan lost 24% of its value, while the Composite Index of Shanghai dropped 14%. Sign of the times: the great Asian steelworks such as Nippon and JFE Holdings Inc. of Japan are suffering enormously due to fears of an economic slowdown and the Chinese steel giant Baosteel has lost 63% of its value in the last year. In the United States, the Dow Jones Index has lost 18.2% this week, a number higher than the one from the week of July 22nd 1933, at the height of the Great Depression. The MSCI World Index, that evaluates the value of world stock market exchanges, puts the loss of value during the last week at 19%.

The international political situation is no better than the economic one. The war continues in Iraq and in Afghanistan [1] and it is quite possible that it will extend itself to Iran. In the month of June, the State of Israel completed a preparatory military exercise with this in mind. Acts of provocation between the US and Iranian air forces are multiplying all along the Iraq border. We shouldn't forget that history teaches us that economic and financial crises tend to exacerbate inter-imperialist tensions and encourages the push towards global war. The bloody confrontations of the month of August in Ossetia and Georgia and the threat of their future extension to Crimea are but further proof of this.

Furthermore, the quest to find new paths towards the valorization of capital has created a fictitious demand on the strategic resources and the staple food product markets. Consequently, this has led to an artificial rise in the cost of gas and the price of food. Food riots have broken out in many countries and have often been brutally suppressed. [2] These riots bear witness to the increasingly intolerable misery in the countries of the capitalist periphery. But now the difficulties are also increasing in the

heartlands of the imperialist centers. Here in Canada, rising consumer prices are being felt harshly. The crisis of fictitious capital is having a very real effect on Canadian workers. This impact is expected to get worse. The difficulties and the crises of capitalism always produce cutbacks to the social wage (social programs), real wages and a rise of the rate of exploitation. As always, the ruling class intends to make the working class pay for its crisis.

Crises, poverty and war, that is the present context of this electoral period. And we must not forget the continued degradation of our very means of existence through the environmental crisis. It is in this context that we are called upon to take part in the democratic “game”, to support the parliamentary process by giving a vote in favor of a program or a person, or at the very least try to ward off the greater of evils by keeping the least desirable people out of the corridors of power. The latter is what is now called strategic voting. What follows are our thoughts on the different electoral options as well as the parliamentary process itself.

The Conservative Party is historically one of the twin parties of the Canadian ruling class. During its mandate (that it ended prematurely against the letter of its own law), as a bourgeois party leading a minority government, it has loyally served the cause of our masters, both domestically as on the international level. Thus, it has fought to defend the interests of and assure an advantageous geo-strategic position for the Canadian bourgeoisie – complementary but distinct from the US policies – in the Middle East as well as the Canadian North. Even though the nuance of some of its ideological positions repulse us particularly, be they on the treatment of criminality, cultural issues, the question of contraception or its positions on environment, we think this party must be fought ferociously, not for this or that

particular policy, but because it is a party of exploiters and vultures that weighs very negatively on the balance scales of the future of humanity.

The Liberal Party is the other historical twin party of the bosses. In this campaign, it benefits from the demonization of its conservative alter ego. However, giving them the credit of a strategic vote in certain ridings, as suggested by the press release of the “left nationalists” of Québec Solidaire and by quite a few ecologists, is to demonstrate an incredible historic ignorance and a fundamental incomprehension of the historical and societal stakes at play. We need only remember the War Measures Act imposed by this party in 1970, the wage freeze the Liberals had promised it would not support, only to do so once in power in 1976, or Chrétien’s broken promises on the Free Trade Agreement and the GST. Have these people already forgotten that it was the Liberals that sent the Canadian Armed Forces to Yugoslavia in 1999 and in Afghanistan during the autumn of 2002 – two imperialist interventions in three years!? Have they also wiped the board clean on the Axworthy reforms and the so-called struggle to eliminate the deficit, that produced the largest cutbacks in social program expenses in the history of Canada and that took away the right to unemployment benefits from the majority of unemployed workers, even if all the workers must pay contributions? Fighting the Conservatives by supporting the Liberals is like boxing with an adversary while punching oneself in the face.

Finally, what can we say about the two other parties aspiring to govern the capitalist state in Canada – the NDP and the Green Party- and the Bloc Québécois, that wishes a renegotiation of the terms of Confederation in favor of the particular interests of the Québec bourgeoisie? Firstly, we must point out that in every case, the exercise

of power by green and social-democratic parties these last few years have been particularly enlightening in so far as to what their real intentions are and the narrow limits of their quest for true change. Be it the ultra-militaristic policies of the Green Party in Germany and their enthusiastic support for all the austerity programs aimed

at the working class, or the similar practices of the British Labour Party, all the instances of reformist parties in power have demonstrated without exception that they are loyal and competent managers of their respective capitalist

states. Moreover, the Green Party, the NDP and the Bloc [3] have all pledged themselves to maintain balanced budgets and we all know what that means, especially in times of crisis. To take on the administration of the capitalist state is to assume responsibility for running the system of capitalist exploitation; in effect, stoking the fires of the capitalist inferno.

On Afghanistan, we should recall that the Bloc and the NDP both supported intervention from the beginning and that their differences with the Conservatives and the Liberals lie only on the length of the mandate and its tactical transformation, not on the underlying mission, which remains a “noble cause” to quote Bloc leader Duceppe. We should also recall that these are the nuances put forth by bourgeois political parties that are in the opposition, subtleties that are rapidly forgotten once these parties are in power. As for the Green Party, their 3 D approach – diplomacy, development and defense – varies little from the rhetoric of their political rivals and is in step with the Liberals, the NDP and the Bloc in their preference to cover the future Canadian gunboat expeditions under the UN banner, that “den of thieves”.

*“Not a single vote for capitalism! Rather than vote, assemble with comrades in the workplaces, in the neighborhoods and in your homes to discuss these perspectives. This is a call not to abstention and indifference, but an appeal to struggle!”*

Finally, on the environmental question, the only political debate in this electoral campaign is on the usefulness of carbon exchange and carbon taxes. Hence, the competing parties either refuse to act rapidly on this question for reasons of economic competitiveness as do the Conservatives, or they just rely on capitalist methods that

are acceptable to the ruling class (see Conference Board of Canada on the carbon tax), in view of “regulating” certain symptoms of the environmental crisis. However, at the root of this crisis lies the actual ultra-productivist nature

of capitalism itself. We need to break with the profit motive, which expresses itself by the fierce rivalry of the imperialist blocs who fight tooth and nail for the control of markets, resources and even human capital. As long as the profit system remains unchanged and we do not replace it by a system based on social need, the environment will continue to deteriorate. By focusing on the short-term and deluding themselves with treating the symptoms (with capitalists methods – taxes and exchanges – by the way), rather than intervening at the root level and attacking the causes, all the parliamentary parties demonstrate that they are very poor ecologists.

So what is to be done? A vote in favor of the candidates of the parties of a Stalinist heritage (CPC and MLPC) is not an option. They understand nothing about the crisis of capitalism or how to fight it, because they have yet to understand the defeat of state capitalism in Russia, China or elsewhere to which they were closely associated. The “Communist” Party of Quebec, some anarchists and a few Trotskyist groups are calling for a strategic vote for the Bloc or the NDP. We have just demonstrated how this vote makes no sense and can only foster



illusions on these so-called “progressive” parties. Must we remind these people that historically, this slippery slope is a fast track to nowhere? Some comrades and close contacts have questioned on the advisability of spoiling their ballots. They are preoccupied with the idea of losing their vote or having it stolen from them in some sort of fraudulent electoral maneuver.

As internationalist communists, even though we respect the comrades who are planning to spoil their ballots, we do not share their fear because a vote cast in the capitalist electoral framework is always a vote wasted and a waste of workers’ time. Because the whole electoral machinery is based on the sham of “bourgeois democracy”, it seems evident that votes stolen by one party or another don’t really matter, because it is the election itself that is contrary to our interests and that all the political parties are part of the problem, not the solution. We are convinced that neither critical support for a reformist party, a strategic vote, a vote for a post or crypto-Stalinist sect, nor even spoiling the ballot leads anywhere. In fact, we should underline that the question of state power is not limited to a government, a party or a coalition of parties that represent it. A state is composed of much more than that, notably its non-elected components.

In a world dominated by property relations and by daily exploitation and oppression, we believe that the only positive solution to the crisis of humanity lies in the overthrow of the inhumane, backward and destructive capitalist system and all the institutions on which it is based, notably parliamentary cretinism in all its forms and all of its parties. We call for the complete boycott of the October 14th elections, as well as we call on all Canadian workers to fight back. Indeed, in this very grave world situation with which we are confronted, we need to rapidly

organize a serious resistance to the crisis measures that the ruling class will inevitably try to impose on us, whichever party takes office and whatever the government may be, minority or majority. We also need to call for the international fraternization of all workers against the war drive, i.e. proletarian internationalism. At the same time, we will need to build new organizations of unified struggle and an international political workers’ organization capable of overthrowing the system of wage slavery that is the source of wars, the generator of oppressions and a lethal threat to our mother Earth.

On October 14: Not a single vote for capitalism! Rather than vote, assemble with comrades in the workplaces, in the neighborhoods and in your homes to discuss these perspectives. This is a call not to abstention and indifference, but an appeal to struggle!

Internationalist Workers Group – Canada  
October 11th, 2008

[1] Canada is an active participant in the war in Afghanistan, which is now estimated to cost between 14 and 18 billion dollars, if the mission ends as it is supposed to in 2011. About 100 Canadians have been killed so far in a war that has devastated the country and massacred tens of thousands of its inhabitants.

[2] We must not forget that the police that shot at the hunger driven crowd and who killed many in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, is for the most part trained and led by a contingent of 100 Canadian police officers, of which a good number occupy important posts in the hierarchy of the Haitian repressive apparatus. Not a single one of the main parties contesting these elections, including the “progressive” ones, had a word to say about this tragedy.

[3] In the case of the Bloc, it is worthwhile noting that though it has always criticized cutbacks to unemployment insurance in Ottawa, it has always remained mute when similar cuts were made to the welfare roles and “benefits” in Québec. In the same way, it protested the Axworthy reforms in Ottawa, but not the Zero Deficit operation in Québec.

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## **Janesville GM: The End of a Long Decline**

Janesville GM is set to close its doors in January, 2009. In 1970, when its’ workforce was at its largest, GM employed around 7000 workers at the Janesville plant.

The regional economy is faced with a serious economic crisis, where the state teeters on the edge of bankruptcy and thirty regional banks having posted losses in the second financial quarter of 2008. Most spectacularly is the Marshal & Isley Bank of Milwaukee, which lost \$388 million dollars, more than all the other banks combined. [1] This was the product of their exposure to bad real estate boom related debt.

At its peak, GM employed some 600,000 United Auto Workers union members. Today there are about 60,000 UAW members working for GM. The entire leadership of the UAW has been assisting in this process and benefiting from it at the expense of its diminishing membership. The payoff for them has come, among other things, in the form of the “Voluntary Employee’s Beneficiary Association”, where the union leadership was granted in the course of negotiating the poison contracts with the company, the health and retirement benefits that the automakers once provided and are now held by the union in the form of a trust they

can gamble on the markets. In this respect VEBA money will assure the apparatus the continuation of their own salaries. The power of the union, as personified in the likes of Ron Gettelfinger, is power delegated to the union by the capitalists themselves. It represents a form of capitalist management. The union has exacted the cost of its own survival on the backs of workers.



Janesville used to be something of a company town with a local municipal government and police very close to GM employers. There was even a seven-hour sit-down strike in sympathy with the Flint Sit-down Strike, in 1937. During the Second World War the plant was converted to making artillery for the US Armed Forces. Workers at this plant have produced everything from tractors to artillery to SUVs.

A history of production at that plant over the last thirty years is a history of periods of decline, followed by periods of drastic decline, even with the relative successes of production models like the Chevy Cavalier, Suburban and Tahoe. The peak period of production at the plant occurred in 1985, when workers produced 385,856 Chevy Cavaliers, Cadillac Cimarrons, CK pickups and GMC Sierras. When this plant was in its period of peak production, the size of its workforce was in its fifteenth straight year of decline.

The plant is commonly said to be one of the largest plants under one roof in the US. It is located near the major distribution hub of Chicago and is relatively close to the Detroit headquarters. Aside from GM, the next four largest employers in Janesville today are a health insurance company, the county government, the state government and a medical supply company. As of last April, Mercy Health System was the largest employer with 2,635 workers, the School District of Janesville has 1,515, the Rock County government has 1,189, and Lab Safety Supply has 920 workers. [2] These employers do not employ the numbers of workers or pay them what GM once paid its workers. Janesville is small, with an official population of 62,000 people. So this decline has produced a profound impact on people's lives and livelihoods and upon municipal services. GM Assembly plants in Toluca Mexico, Moraine Ohio and Oshawa Ontario are also slated to close; still further plants will have whole shifts eliminated. Everything is on the block and when those cuts are made the capitalists will shout for more.

Some left groups would call for the nationalization of the auto industry. This course would no more assure job security than lighting a votive candle in a church. Neither nationalization nor privatization ever managed to halt or arrest Rover's decline as an auto manufacturer. Nationalization has never halted a declining rate of profit. That it is now no longer possible to produce anything at a plant the size of GM Janesville is a testament to inherent systemic failure and waste embodied in capitalism.

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Notes

[1] Balousek, Mary. 30 banks reporting losses. Wisconsin State Journal. August 28, 2008

[2] Bona, Thomas V. Janesville residents: GM plant's closure will hurt everybody. Rockford Register Star/BusinessRockford.com. June 3, 2008.

<http://www.rrstar.com/archive/x670784803/GM-could-announce-Janesville-plant-closure-today?view=print>

## ***Worker's Struggle***

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## While Union Leaders and Democrats Make Speeches

Last August the final word went out that



*South Central Federation of Labor (AFL-CIO) President Jim Kavanaugh speaking October 2 at the Wisconsin State Capitol building. "Gingerbelle" and "Sweet Lorraine" referred to on the signs are the names given to their two newest multi-billion dollar papermaking machines.*

the Kimberly paper mill, built in 1889, was closing. The town of Kimberly, Wisconsin was named after the company and the family that founded it. Now the company, which has changed hands three times since the Kimberly-Clark Corporation, has ceased operations at the paper mill. The company, who owns four other mills in Wisconsin, cannot continue production profitably and thus must do as capitalists must do, stop production. Not only is production there unprofitable for the current owners, the Ohio based company NewPage, it would be unprofitable for the company even to sell the property and the machinery. From a capitalist point of view it is far better to let it rust in true "rust belt" fashion.

October 2, the United Steelworkers of America local 2-9, held a rally for the mill

workers, their families and their supporters on the steps of the State Capitol building in Madison, calling upon the state government to pressure the company to sell or restart production. The speakers at the rally included two Democratic Party politicians from the House of Representatives, Rep. Tom Nelson of Appleton, and Rep. Spencer Black of Madison in addition to USWA local 2-9 president Andy Nirschl, Michael Bolton, USWA District 2 President, and Phil Neuenfeld, the Secretary Treasurer of the Wisconsin AFL-CIO. The unions and the Democratic Party are lining up to verbally support workers while doing nothing to stop the loss of 600 mill jobs.

Unions target cheap foreign exports from illegal logging done in Indonesia as the culprit for why profits are so terrible that the company would rather let the place rust than produce anything at the mill or even sell it. The protest itself encourages workers to engage in magical thinking when it comes to petitioning "their" elected officials. Another company will face the same markets NewPage, Consolidated Paper, Repap, and Kimberly-Clark each faced in turn since Kimberly-Clark first sold the plant off in 1976.

While targeting cheap imports, as the USWA do, the union diverts attention from the truth that lies at the heart of the mill closing. NewPage company spokeswoman Amber Garwood, stating company thinking on the matter, maintains that selling the mill is not an option because to sell to a competitor would overload the supply for the grade of paper produced there. In short, the company blames a flooded market and overproduction for the reasons the mill must close. Overproduction in this case is driven by a crisis of profit that could be seen coming into play openly every time the mill has changed owners. NewPage has also shut down its Niagara plant in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, shedding the jobs of

some 319 workers in the process. NewPage still owns four mills in Wisconsin.

An extraordinary amount of capital has gone into the two newest machines in the plant, which cost around one billion dollars. The company has long been buying pulp on the markets rather than producing its own fiber pulp. This had advantages when the prices on the markets for paper pulp were good, but now things have changed. Not the least of which are the prices of transportation and rising commodity prices. Kimberly-Clark went into crisis in the seventies and in 1976 it sold the place to a Montreal based company called Repap (paper spelled backwards). Repap bought the place and ran up huge debts by purchasing the newest equipment and set company production records. In 1989, Repap President George S. Petty began selling shares of company stock to Kimberly mill workers. The stock turned out to be a big loser and served to wipe out the retirement savings of many of the workers who were gullible enough to be convinced to buy the company's stock. In 1997, Consolidated Paper bought the mill, which was employing at that time a peak of between 1,100 to 1,200 workers. They again set production records for the mill. Consolidated then shifted all coated web-offset production (coated paper) to a mill in Wisconsin Rapids and shed 114 jobs in the process. In late 1999, Consolidated Paper sold its entire asset base to Stora Enso, a Swedish-Finnish conglomerate based in Helsinki. Stora Enso was then looking to break into the North American paper market. Stora Enso paid some \$4.8 billion for Consolidated Paper's assets and then sold it to NewPage for a mere \$2.5 billion. [1]

Instead of calls to our government to take action, workers might be better served by calling on workers at NewPage's other mills to support them and go out on strike. If any one mill was shut down, workers

could respond by shutting the others down as well. Petitioning government officials to influence capitalists is humiliating. Workers' collective instinct to help each other to fight back in situations of plant closings is made meaningless by expecting the unions and the state to play a neutral or sympathetic role in defending their interests. One way to start putting real pressure on the mill owners would be to organize industry-wide strikes at all the mills, something neither the unions nor the state would ever agree to.



*Workers Rallying in front of Republic Windows and Doors in Chicago—December 2008*

Contrasted to this, the factory occupation by the former employees of Republic Windows and Doors was far less servile. The factory occupation by 250 in Chicago ended after five days this December with a minor victory for workers who managed to win around \$6000 back pay each, accrued vacation time, severance pay and two months of extended health insurance coverage. This was the first such factory occupation since the 1970s not the 1930s as many ill-informed media pundits had said. Unions and their leaders jumped forward to posture in support of the workers. Politicians like President

Elect Barack Obama, Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich, and Jesse Jackson all spoke in support of the workers and their struggle. These politicians certainly didn't suddenly start caring about the fate of a few workers. They were solely interested in containing the struggle and limiting it to the bounds of unionism and its masters in the ruling Democratic Party. Where were the national leaders of the unions in this struggle? Where was the Central Federation of Labor? They largely did nothing. The struggle gave a bittersweet victory to the laid-off workers while allowing the unions to pose, again, as defenders of workers.

No victory was expected by the workers that started the occupation. Republic Window and Door workers instead expected to be hauled off to jail, not to gain national notoriety or win even the smallest victory. Such a struggle, if it began to break free from the union orbit and started to move to actually take over the factories, would be a more concrete way of saving jobs. The unions and politicians during the struggle actually did very little for the workers. Even in a victorious struggle union apparatuses do little more than negotiate the sale of labor power with the capitalists, which is why capitalists won total control of the unions over the course of the first decades of the twentieth century. Where the legalistic statements by union officials and "sympathetic" politicians contrasted with statements by workers it was almost possible to believe that they were talking about two different strikes. The basic difference between the union labor management apparatus and the workers was quite clear. Democrats may make speeches and unions may bargain "the best possible" deals with the capitalists, but it is workers that have to actually wage the struggles from start to finish. As workers gain experience in struggles and they see them happening, they

may hopefully gain the confidence needed to keep struggling, if it goes far enough it might break free from union and Democratic Party control. The unions however will seek to promote this and use it to their advantage as a token struggle that makes the unions look good without sacrificing much on the part of their union leaderships. This struggle highlights the latent strength of workers and their will to resist even where their "leaderships" have an almost unbroken track record of betraying them for the last thirty years. When workers gain enough confidence in their strength take up struggle on their own behalf even a simple old strike tactic can take on threatening proportions in the minds of the capitalists.

For workers, who naturally want more than just severance pay, this struggle is a starting point. Ultimately, however, workers will have to do more than wage a defensive struggle bounded by the unions and the ruling parties. They will have to gain confidence in their own power, build their own revolutionary party and wage a death struggle against the system that exploits them and then throws them away.

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Notes

[1] Bach, Pete. NewPage unlikely to sell Kimberly mill after Sept. 8 closing. Green Bay Press Gazette. August 26, 2008 <<http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080826/GPG03/808260559>>

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## On Certain Recent Developments in Canadian Trade-Unionism

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Last April 28th, the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) announced that they had just signed an agreement in principle with Ford, renewing the collective agreement for three years, five months before the current one was to expire. This agreement provides for a three year wage freeze, a freeze of the cost of living allowance for four years, the loss of 40 hours of vacation per year, a reduction in pensions, cuts to drug insurance and other health programs and perhaps worst of all, it puts in place a two tier system by which new employees will start working at seventy percent of the base salary and will only receive the base salary itself after three years of work. Also, certain clauses open the door to new layoffs, which is a bad omen in an industrial sector where layoffs are the order of the day and are splashed regularly over the economic pages of the major media. Witness to this on May 12th, while it was also in negotiations for the renewal of the collective agreement with the CAW, General Motors announced that in the second trimester of 2010, it would close down its transmission manufacturing plant in Windsor, Ontario, thus throwing 1400 workers into the streets of a town already suffering heavily from an unemployment rate of eight percent. In the last two years alone, this once prosperous town which used to be called “Motor City” or the Canadian Detroit had already lost more than two thousand five hundred jobs, including more than two thousand in its Ford and Chrysler plants. Finally this “master contract” concluded with Ford and which is traditionally also agreed to in principle by the other two members of the “Big Three” (General Motors and Chrysler)

also contains clauses which progressively transfer the administration of the pension fund to the union, which will gradually become its sole owner and manager and thus in charge of future cuts that are likely to happen. Buzz Hargrove, the head of the CAW, whose tremendously inflated ego sometimes reminds us of a certain Louis Laberge [1]—and who not ten years ago was still the hero of the Canadian capitalist left – congratulated himself for having limited the damage, notably with the two tier system, compared to his American “brothers” in the UAW. But Hargrove benefited from a clear advantage over his fellow bureaucrats of the American union since health insurance is covered by the state in Canada, which is not the case in the United States where the three automobile giants have to contribute a good part of the cost which represents a considerable percentage of their manpower expenses. Despite these huge cutbacks and the unprecedented resistance from the workers of Ford Canada (a notable example would be the rejection by 56% of the workers at the major plant in Oakville near Toronto), the union and the company were able to push the agreement through by way of blackmail, lies, maneuvers and threats.

But why do we say “the union and the company”? We will use two recent examples of corporate/union collaboration to explain why we associate them in such a negative manner.

Let’s first examine the case of the ArcelorMittal Dofasco steelworks in Hamilton. During the thirties, in the heroic years of Canadian trade-unionism, the owners (the Sherman family) did everything they could to crush one of the first steelworkers unions that had briefly established a foothold at Dofasco. It was a period marked by great struggles for union recognition. We need only refer for example to the great Kirkland Lake miners’ strike of

1941-42, which rallied thousands of hard rock miners against an alliance of greedy mine owners. The Kirkland Lake miners were ultimately defeated and the town of Kirkland Lake never really recovered from the conflict, but a majority of the ruling class was shaken enough by this strike, as with many others of the same kind, that they came to the conclusion that they might be better off recognizing a role for the unions in labor relations. And in fact less than a few years later the unions made their entry with little fuss or major confrontation into the mines of Kirkland Lake as they would also do so in thousands of other mines, factories and other workplaces across the country. But the Dofasco owners were of the old school. They fought like hell throughout the 20th century and successfully beat back all attempts to establish a union at their Hamilton facility. Dofasco was the anti-union bastion in the union town stronghold of Hamilton. Or at least until the 20th of March of this year, when the local newspaper The Spectator announced the unimaginable: the company was openly inviting the United Steelworkers of America to meet with its 4000 employees directly on the shop floor to invite them to join their union! Moreover, Andy Harshaw the vice president of the company circulated a letter to all the workers in the plant saying that he “strongly encourages consideration of the union offer”. The understanding between the company and the union openly aimed to favor the unionization of the facility as is the case in the United States between the United Steelworkers of America and ArcelorMittal regarding their 16,000 American employees. However on March 27th, Wayne Fraser, the Steelworkers director for the Atlantic/Ontario region, issued a press release announcing the failure of this joint union-corporate operation. The ArcelorMittal Dofasco workers had in majority refused to join this very strange unionization drive.

But there is something stranger still in the Canadian trade-union landscape today. We refer to the agreement concluded between the CAW and the Canadian auto parts giant Magna, owned by the Stronach family. With this agreement, named “Framework for Fairness”, the Stronachs have invited the CAW to “organize” the 18,000 people working in their 45 plants. This agreement has now been ratified by a crushing majority of the CAW council. The agreement provides for the election of a single candidate to the post of Employee Advocate, chosen through a nomination process of candidacy and selection, which for the moment is totally incomprehensible. These employee advocates would then form a union council for all of the concerned factories and would directly elect their executive officers without any form of candidacy or direct elections by the grassroots. The whole project aims to develop “non-antagonistic” relations with the bosses. The agreement would ban the right to strike or lockout and all disputes not resolved by negotiations would be submitted to outside arbitration, i.e. the state. We are now very far from the epic struggles of past decades that sought to force union recognition on the bosses. Something has changed in the exploitation system, but unfortunately the capitalist left as well as the vast majority of workers have not caught on to it yet, at least not as much as the majority of the capitalists and their state has. Our exploiters have no doubt read with interest Buzz Hargrove’s 1998 book, Labour of Love. In this book, Hargrove reveals the secrets and is very honest in his description of the theory and practice of trade-unionism in this epoch of state capitalism and monopolies:



*\*“Unions probably prevent more strikes than they precipitate”. (...)”Good unions work to defuse that anger – and they do it effectively. Without unions, there would be anarchy in the workplace.” He concluded his tale with an appeal to his capitalist partners and their mouthpieces: “If our critics understood what really goes on behind the labor scenes, they would be thankful that union leaders are as effective as they are in averting strikes. In my view, the wonder of the collective bargaining process in Canada is that we have so few strikes.”*

The vast majority of the ruling class in Canada, as in other countries, have understood Buzz Hargrove’s message. From the workers defense organizations that they were at their inception, the trade unions were called to become in the imperialist stage of the wage slave system:

“...an essential tool for the preservation of capitalism and thus to assume the precise functions of a state organism” [Conference on the trade-unions of the Internationalist Communist Party of Italy, 1947].

In short, trade unionism has become a cog in the mechanism of our exploitation.

Internationalist Workers Group (Montreal)

Notes

[1] Quebec labor bureaucrat who ruled the Quebec Federation of Labour for more than a quarter of a century. See Not a Single Tear! , Internationalist Notes, November 2002.

*\*[editor’s note: This is wholly in line with many similar statements from union leaders in the US, from John L. Lewis to Andy Stern]*

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## **The Bureau After 25 years: Balance Sheet and Perspectives**

### **Presented by the comrades of the Internationalist Communist Party (Battaglia Comunista) to the Bureau meeting of May 10th 2008 and amended by the meeting**

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The Bureau has now existed for 25 years, long enough for us to draw up a political balance sheet and to attempt to identify its achievements and strengths, but above all, the limitations of this experience. We don’t intend to hold a celebration for reaching a quarter of a century as for revolutionaries it is our duty to read and interpret the ever more complex reality which capitalism lays before us and to seek at the same time to represent a reference point for the continuously pummeled international working class.

A revolutionary vanguard, which doesn’t critically review its own experience is not worthy of the name and is destined to be swept away in the contradictory dynamic of capitalism. Only twenty five years have passed but all the changes in international imperialist rivalries, in the composition of the world proletariat, and in the disappearance of revolutionary vanguards of the so-called proletarian political camp, which have taken place makes it seem more like a century. Today the IBRP works in a totally different context from the period of its birth so for this reason we consider that a fundamental and thorough evaluation of our experience is essential in order to give a new impulse to the activity of the International Bureau.

The International Bureau was formed as a common initiative of the Internationalist Communist Party (PCInt – Battaglia Comunista) and the Communist Workers Organisation (CWO) in 1983. The idea of giving birth to an international organization

did not come from nowhere but matured in the course of the international conferences called by the Internationalist Communist Party in the second half of the 1970s. If the discussions which took place in the course of the first three international conferences allowed for a complete political clarification on our side, it also underlined a clear methodological divergence in analysis and perspectives with the other groups participating in this international initiative. The tendency towards a common political activity between the two organizations, the PCInt and the CWO was plainly seen in the Third International Conference when the seven discriminating points (now enshrined in the Bureau's Platform) for participation in future conferences were fixed. These qualifying points went from acceptance of the October Revolution as a proletarian revolution to the rejection of any political line which subordinated the proletariat to the national bourgeoisie, up to the acceptance of the principle according to which the international conferences were seen as an important moment in the work of discussion between the different revolutionary groups with the final aim of contributing to the formation of the future international party of the proletariat. These points were the basis for the Fourth International Conference, which was attended by the PCInt, the CWO and the Iranian Supporters of the Unity of Communist Militants. Whilst the latter falsely, as it later turned out, claimed to defend the discriminating points established by the first three conferences, the discussion became one which consolidated the methodological confluence of the CWO and PCInt in attempting to unravel the contradictions of the SUCM. This failed and the latter went on to join in the ultimately abortive attempt to found a Communist Party of Iran based on a bizarre kind of humanized Stalinism. The PCInt and the CWO now considered

the experience of the conferences was over and it was now time to make a qualitative leap in the nature of discussions between revolutionaries. This qualitative leap gave birth of the IBRP.

If the international conferences had the merit of breaking the deafening isolation to which the various anti-stalinist groups which claimed to be revolutionary and Marxist had succumbed, on the other it showed up profound differences between the participating groups, in particular between the PCInt and CWO, and the ICC. At this point to continue organizing international conferences would not have led to political clarification but would have perpetuated a sterile and academic discussion between organizations which were politically very far apart. The International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party was formed with the clear aim of trying to establish in an international context a reference point for those sharing the perspective of the need to build an international party of the proletariat.

To understand the expectations which animated the early years of the Bureau it is important even if only in condensed form to remember the international context in which the Bureau was formed. At the beginning of the Eighties the imperialist framework was still the bipolar set up formed at the end of the Second World War with the USA leading one side and the Soviet Union the other. The economic crisis, which had affected the entire capitalist system, had started at the beginning of the Seventies and was made explicit when the US Administration broke the Bretton Woods Agreement. The bourgeoisie responded with a massive restructuring of its industrial apparatus. In every major advanced capitalist country important sections of the working class were expelled from production to join the ranks of the unemployed. If on one side the bourgeoisie, in order to face up to the crisis

brought about by the fall in the average rate of profit, and in order to recover some marginal competitive advantage restructured manufacturing industry, on the other, in the UK and immediately afterwards in the USA a new phase opened in which financial activity took on a central role. This brought about a massive break in the system of fixed exchange rates freeing the movement of capital on an international scale and thanks to the global standing of the dollar the USA played a fundamental and central role in monetary and financial circuit. From being the world's leading creditor country the USA was transformed, in the space of a few years, into the most indebted country in history. Such a process was made possible by the function played by the dollar and allowed the USA to enjoy the financial revenue needed to compensate for the low rate of profit in its productive activities.

Despite the massive attacks on its living and working conditions on an international scale, the world working class has really only been able to express itself in very few struggles. The British miners' strike in 1984-5, the Polish strikes, and the Spanish dockworkers strikes, are amongst the most significant episodes of real opposition by the international working class to the attacks launched by capital in the Eighties. But such episodes, though important, were unfortunately isolated in their national, or even sectional, contexts. And it could not have been otherwise given the lack of a clear revolutionary reference point inside the class. In this largely passive framework, despite the massive attacks on the working class, the Bureau in its early years had its analysis of the economic crisis confirmed, and its organizational structure, though tiny, was consolidated. Subsequently the relationship between the two founding organizations was reinforced but at the same time the numerous contacts with other

groups during the Eighties and the early Nineties weren't translated into a shared acceptance of the political platform of the Bureau and thus to their adhesion.

From its formation the two organizations, which founded the Bureau have made it clear that the Bureau did not claim to be the international party of the proletariat but neither are we a mere academic discussion circle. It follows from this that the activity of the Bureau, in total coherence with its Platform and its own strategic aims, has always aimed to encourage discussions between different groups at an international level, concretely aimed at the rebuilding of a real revolutionary international party. The entire activity of the Bureau, though not claiming to be the party nor the original nucleus of the future party has been taken up with the theoretical and political debate with other groups. International correspondence in various languages, meetings and discussions with elements who have contacted us and the publication of an English review Internationalist Communist (though unfortunately now suspended for financial reasons) have been for many years our daily work. Despite the best efforts of our comrades – and in this regard we should remember the immense international work carried out for very many years by our unforgettable and unforgotten Mauro—the results were not exciting. For a whole historical period we could record no new adherents to our organization. Only toward the end of the Nineties did new elements enter the Bureau, adhesions which were almost always on an individual basis or by groups of very small size. In any case these are positive signs, which have to be noted and which must push us in the direction of a continuous improvement in our political activity.

But the new adhesions in France, Germany and North America are not enough

to enable us to draw up a positive balance sheet of the last twenty-five years of the Bureau's existence. We have had to face many difficulties and in recent years largely by virtue of the worsening of the international capitalist crisis, it has become more obvious that our political actions don't in the least correspond to the present conditions of class struggle.

The difficulties of the Bureau in widening its own base can be explained by various factors. In the first place it is once again necessary to underline the passivity of the world working class in relation to the depths of the attacks it has suffered from the bourgeoisie in the last few decades. The devastating attacks launched by the bourgeoisie against the world working class has led to episodes in which the class has occasionally become the protagonist of struggle. The most important of these was certainly those where we saw the Argentine working class taking up the fight at the beginning of the new millennium. However the scattered revolutionary vanguards, amongst them the Bureau, pay a very high price in terms of the impact of their political actions due to the totally overwhelming power of the bourgeoisie, a dominant class which has succeeded in making the workers pay the costs of its own crisis without having to face a proletarian counter-attack. The largely passive working class accentuates the difficulties of revolutionary activity in linking up with the working class pushing it into a distant corner, unable to make an impression in this permanent class conflict.

A second fact, which we shouldn't underestimate, is the impact that the collapse of the USSR has had on the various international revolutionary groups. Following the demise of the Soviet Union and the collapse of "really existing socialism" even some groups of the communist left have been buried in the rubble of this collapse.

Some had made anti-Stalinism their sole reason for existence and so lost their political identity and their reason to exist. It has also made itself felt in the so-called proletarian political camp, which was already in crisis at the end of the Eighties through the theoretical and political inadequacy of some of its formations. Finally the worsening of the economic crisis has brought the scattered revolutionary vanguards face to face with notable theoretical difficulties in understanding the contradictory dynamics of modern capitalism. Many groups, in an attempt to understand the crisis of the cycle of accumulation which started in the Seventies, have returned to the methodological schema used to analyze the Great Crash of 1929, not taking into account the fundamental differences which exist between it and the present day situation. When things turn out differently the difficulties begin and that is what has happened to some of the groups of the ex-proletarian political camp who, over time, have disappeared

The disappearance of elements which should have been our possible interlocutors in the perspective of growth of the Bureau force us to rethink our role, which cannot be that put forward when we were founded in 1983. This is a task, which has become more serious and unavoidable through the advance of an economic crisis which has no equal in the modern history of capitalism.

## **Perspectives**

### **The Sub-prime Crisis**

It is now obvious that the mortgage crisis is going to be a protracted one that it will have repercussions throughout the entire world economy. Recently even the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund [IMF] and the G7 Finance Ministers, have all recognized

this. Estimating a current loss of \$1000 billion, the IMF has predicted that this crisis will go on throughout 2008 and into the first half of 2009. The European Central Bank [ECB] is more optimistic, predicting that the crisis will be over by the final quarter of this year. Basically all the economists and bourgeois analysts are agreed that, despite the seriousness of the crisis, it can be overcome through an opportune maneuver or two in monetary policy by central banks, and by new regulations, which set limits on the uncontrolled production of fictitious capital. For bourgeois economy in fact, because in the present stage of capitalist development production of surplus value takes place in the phase of circulation of capital and not in that of production of commodities, the crisis has always had a super-structural character, which can easily be overcome even in this latest instance, like those in 1987, 1997 and 2000. Revolutionary Marxism instead makes a distinction between the conjunctural crisis, and the structural crisis or crisis of the cycle of accumulation.

The former arises from the physiological imbalance between supply and demand which periodically occurs in the market. This can be solved through the appropriate policy to bolster either supply or demand. The latter though, is the result of the immanent contradictions in the process of accumulation, which cyclically determines an insufficient production of surplus value, or a decreasing rate of profit. It can only really be overcome in the opening up of a new cycle of accumulation through the massive destruction of excess capital. So whilst for the bourgeois economy the abnormal growth



of the financial sphere which took place from the second half of the 1970s and the early Eighties was the old dream of being able to produce wealth from nothing, from the point of view of revolutionary Marxism we were dealing with a response forced on the bourgeoisie, in particular in the USA and Great Britain, to the crisis of the third cycle of accumulation of capital which began in the early Seventies as a result of the fall in the average rate of profit. With the liberalization of the financial markets and the production of fictitious capital it was possible to drain surplus value from every corner of the planet to the metropolitan areas in compensation for the reduction of its production there.

Thus developed a gigantic process of parasitic appropriation centered on the dollar (and its financial derivatives) monopoly in the system of international financial payments not least in the iron control of the formation of the prices of all primary products of strategic importance, especially oil.

The fact that in the epoch of imperialism financial capital has assumed the command of the process of capital accumulation to the point where it has become possible to appropriate surplus value through production of fictitious capital and without direct correspondence with its production seems to be the best confirmation of the monetarist theory where the production of money is the real motor of the production of wealth. But this would have remained just a dream without the profound modification of intervention in the market and international division of labor that the liberalization of capital circulation and the introduction of the

microprocessor in the productive process has made possible. This allowed the shift of production of commodities of a high labor power content to areas of the periphery where labor power costs are very low. At the same time the growing competition amongst workers which resulted from it and the decisive presence of the unions, above all in the more capitalistically advanced countries, has shaped the acceleration and generalization of tendency to devalue labor power and a fall in real wages, which has given breathing space to the process of capitalist accumulation allowing the crisis to be spread out both in time and space.

### ***New Attacks Unleashed on the World of Labor***

Having gone around the world, and having sustained endless horrible wars, leaving behind a sea of poverty and destruction, the crisis has returned to its starting point. This time it is striking the credit system of the leading world power and his majesty, the dollar – the pulsating heart of the process of production of fictitious capital which has given the world economy such leverage over the last thirty years. For this reason the risk of the collapse of the entire international banking system is very high as the monetary policy pursued by the Federal Reserve and the leading central banks has failed. In fact the abundant issue of liquidity on to the market—confirmation that the big financial capitals are facing insurmountable difficulties in realizing sufficient surplus value needed to compensate for the mass of capital invested in direct production of commodities – thus favoring the re-launch of the so-called real economy, has opened the door to a new speculative bubble.

Thanks to this greater liquidity, a fictitious demand has been created in the markets for primary strategic products and basic

foodstuffs which added to the real demand has increased inflationary pressures that have already been present for some time. For example oil was \$69.4 a barrel at the end of 2007 is now (at the time of writing [May 2008 – ed.]) \$120. In four months its price has increased by 70% and this notwithstanding the decline in industrial production and the fact that real supply and demand has remained stable. In reality, for every barrel of oil produced and consumed a good 200 are counted as bought and sold only on paper, but they take part however in the formation of the higher price of oil as if they were real barrels.

The same thing is happening in the market for basic foodstuffs. Rice, which was \$365 a ton at the end of 2007, is now \$760. Since last August wheat prices have gone up a further 40%, and the FAO forecasts food costs in 2008 will be on average 50% more than in 2007, double five years ago. In class terms we are witnessing a new assault on the value of labor power and the very existence of thousands of individuals has been put in question.

### ***Bread Revolts***

Recent bread revolts have gone from Egypt through the most populous countries of North Africa to finally reach the Indian Ocean, Haiti and some of the poorest countries in Latin America. These revolts signal that the proletarians there have reached the end of their tether. It's not a lot better in the metropolitan countries. 28 million US citizens, who haven't sufficient means to pay, receive stamps worth \$100 a month for food. Millions are homeless and live below the poverty line. In Los Angeles alone there are now more than 200,000 people who having failed to pay the interest on their mortgages or to finance their consumption have lost their homes and live

in a huge tent city. In Europe despite the super-euro, inflation is causing a real drain on the incomes of those who live on wages and pensions. Even here they face rising prices in basic necessities.

### ***From the IBRP to the New International***

We are thus facing, in many ways, a new reality, which we cannot afford to ignore. If confirmed it would indeed open up a perspective in which the possibility that the demands of workers in the periphery could find a common cause with the social discontent of workers in the metropolises giving an enormous boost to proletarian internationalism. What was previously just an aspiration could become concrete political praxis.

The new wave of crisis and the decline of the dollar, challenged by the success of the euro and probably other currencies, can only deepen imperialist rivalry between the main imperialist powers that dominate the world.

Modern military technology has such a destructive ability that it could historically hurl entire countries back several centuries in a matter of days. The clear military gulf between the USA and the other imperialist centers that are competing with it leads us to assume that, at least in the short to medium term, it would be difficult to imagine that we will see an explosion of a new world war as we have classically known it. Rather we are more likely to have the cancerous so-called permanent imperialist war a bit like an international Thirty Years War ending up in the heart of the metropolitan capitalist powers themselves. The ideological justifications to hide the nature of imperialist war even when it is seen in terrorist actions or in the so-called asymmetrical war are already being used; the clash of civilizations with all its adjuncts (democracy against terrorism, religion against religion etc.) and

also the failure of “real” socialism which shows that the capitalist society has no alternatives to offer.

The only possible concrete opposition to the extension of generalized poverty and war is revolutionary defeatism. By rigorous and full application of the formula its obvious that we need to accelerate the process of building the international and internationalist revolutionary party and this it is not possible without a clear act of will carried out by the revolutionary vanguards. We must develop our capacity to intervene.

The establishment of the Bureau 25 years ago was a political inspiration which has allowed us to build up an experience and a theoretical patrimony which today can be the political reference point for re-launching the process of building a revolutionary organization of the proletariat but in order to do it we need a decisive leap forward both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Today unfortunately though having a political organization, which has a sufficient degree of political homogeneity, the Bureau continues to operate largely as a simple instrument of coordination between its constituent organizations and thus its operations are greatly limited.

The proposal of the comrades of the CWO for a sort of International Secretariat, with executive tasks and, despite being the product of different groups, would have a definite form and a capacity for autonomous action, merits serious attention to see whether it is practicable.

To have the necessary agility and rapidity of response it should be made up of a reduced number of comrades (not more than 5) specifically assigned by the adhering groups. Its fundamental tasks would be in addition to relations between adhering organizations, finding new contacts both as groups and individuals, in the course of time assessing the situation of the various

elements of the proletarian political camp.  
We are talking about a constant activity  
of theoretical elaboration of documents,  
articles, and propaganda material to  
overcome the present isolation, and to open  
the way as quickly as possible to a cycle of  
international conferences with the explicit  
objective of constituting the new International  
without which capitalism's mad dash towards  
barbarism will not be halted.

*IBRP*

*May 2008*



## **Platform of the IWG/GIO**

### **Who we are**

In April of 2002 the publishers of Internationalist Notes (US) and Notes Internationalistes/ Internationalist Notes (Canada) decided to unify their efforts and constitute themselves as the Internationalist Worker's Group/Groupe Internationaliste Ouvrier. The IWG is currently the organizing committee of the International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party in the US and Canada. This came as the result of years of contact and familiarization with the positions of the IBRP. The comrades of Battaglia Comunista (Partito Comunista Internazionale) in Italy and the Communist Worker's Organisation in Britain came together in 1984 to form the IBRP and were joined by Bilan et Perspectives (France) in 2000.

### **What defines us as Internationalist Communists**

We believe that the world revolutionary party is indispensable for the overthrow of the dictatorship of capital. This party must be the product of worker's struggles and represent the most conscious vanguard elements of the working class. This vanguard is not in any sense an elite group standing above and apart from the struggles of the class. It is not a party of generals giving orders rather it is on the frontlines of the class struggle. The party draws out the lessons of these struggles and points the way forward for the class. It has always been our position that the emancipation of the working class is the task of the workers themselves. It is a task that cannot be delegated, not even to the most conscious and prepared revolutionary party.

The foundations for this revolutionary party must be prepared for, before the revolution arises; when the revolutionary crisis arises it will be too late. History teaches us that there will be no successful revolution without a revolutionary party in the vanguard of class struggle. This revolutionary party will not arise spontaneously. It requires the conscious effort of the most conscious layers of the working class to bring it into being. Although the IWG-GIO supports laying the groundwork for a world revolutionary party of the proletariat it does not claim to be that party. We work, within the common framework of the IBRP, towards this goal.

### **Bourgeois Parties**

All parties and groups that have claimed to be parties and organizations of the proletariat (Social Democrats, Stalinists, Maoists, Trotskyists, etc.) are enemies of the proletariat and today act as the left arm of the bourgeoisie. They pose as defenders of the working class when in fact they are precisely the opposite. All states that call themselves "socialist" or were once called "socialist" were in fact state-capitalist formations. The organizations that supported these states or cooperated with those that supported those states supported a highly centralized form of state-capitalism. However, the Russian Revolution of 1917-1918 still remains a brilliant inspiration to us. This revolution represents the only overthrow of the capitalist class that achieved any degree of success. This revolution was crushed through civil war (1918-1921) imposed from without and destroyed through counterrevolution from within. As yet there have been no socialist "states" in the world.

### **Imperialism**

Capitalism is imperialism and imperialism means war. From its very outset, the rule of capital began to penetrate into every sphere of social life, into every corner of the globe. This process cannot be altered or reformed. Imperialism represents the most advanced stage of development reached by capitalism, it is not a political or military policy carried out by a government. The imperialist phase of capitalism opened with the outbreak of the First World War. This signified that the division of the world among the centers of imperialist power was finished. From this time onwards the bourgeoisie could only expand at the expense of their rival capitalists in a brutal struggle for the re-division of the planet. Hence, we as revolutionaries do not side with any imperialism great or small. We do not enter into united fronts with bourgeois parties nor do we mix the interests of the proletariat with any faction of the bourgeoisie.

## **National Liberation Movements**

We do not call for the support of national liberation movements or for national self-defense because these movements mix the interests of the proletariat with the interests of their oppressors. Any calls for the support of movements of national liberation serve the capitalist class by mobilizing workers in the support of the re-division of the world in favor of one faction of the bourgeoisie or another.

## **Anti-fascism**

Anti-fascism is an ideological tool the capitalists use to get workers to defend one faction of the bourgeoisie over another. Fascism is a form of the rule of the bourgeoisie, like Stalinism or Democratic Capitalism. The support for and defense of democratic capitalism will not help workers in their task of overthrowing the rule of capital regardless of the political cloak that the capitalist class wears. We fight capitalism in whatever form it takes.

## **Elections**

Elections serve to suck workers into voting in a system created by the capitalists which gives their oppressors the appearance of a popular mandate. Elections cannot be used to win reforms on the behalf of workers nor can they be used as a platform for spreading revolutionary propaganda.

## **Unions**

In the epoch of imperialism unions have been transformed from organizations for the defense of workers immediate interests into organizations for the control of workers by the bourgeoisie. They serve the interests of capital by disciplining workers and sabotaging their struggles at every turn. Unions cannot defend workers nor can they overthrow the capitalist class. They cannot be made revolutionary through a change of leadership nor can they be reborn as revolutionary unions.

## **Bourgeois Issue Movements**

We stand against the petty sectionalism and self-absorbed narrow-minded focus of petty-bourgeois issue movements. The many facets of capitalist oppression must be understood in their proper historical-material context. We stand against all forms of exploitation and oppression but without the overthrow of the capitalist class the system that breeds exploitation and oppression will remain intact.

## **Our tasks**

As Internationalist Communists our primary tasks are to agitate among workers wherever and whenever possible, to develop and spread the revolutionary press and to lay the groundwork for a theoretically prepared and centralized revolutionary organization. It is through debate and confrontation, the clarification of theory, that revolutionaries are defined from the left swamp.

Our theoretical positions arise from our historical experience as a political tendency. Organizationally we draw our experience from the Internationalists of the Italian Communist Left in its struggles against capitalist counterrevolution – Stalinism, fascism and democracy. This political tendency provides us with a theoretical perspective that is unique when compared to the sterile political tendencies that many of us are familiar with. In the pages of our press we shall attempt to clarify our positions. We ask that you support us in this work.

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## Support Our Effort

Not only are we against capital, we don't have any. We are simply a group of internationalist workers seeking to build an Internationalist (Left-Communist) voice in North America. We are asking for your support, please send donations to our US address payable to IWG Publications.

## **IWG-GIO Pamphlets**

***#1 Holocaust & Hiroshima – Mass Murder and Imperialism in the Twentieth Century***

***#2 1921: Beginning of the Counter-revolution?***

***#3 Terrorism & Democracy: Imperialism's Final Frontier***

***#4 Stalin & Communism: Stalinism is Anti-Communism***



