



## IC 2003

# Solidarity with Chinese workers

## 14 May 2003

The decision of the Court was read the 9th of May without the presence of their attorneys because of restrictions imposed to curb the SARS epidemic. Twenty-four hours before, the government of the Peoples Republic of China announced new economic measures against the SARS epidemic and banned state owned companies from "firing employees at will in order to stabilize the employment situation".

Liaoyang is the capital of the Northeast province of Liaoning, once the proud industrial heart of the Chinese working class and now a rust belt of obsolete state owned factories, bankrupted by the pro-capitalist economic policies of the Beijing government. More than 60% of the city's workers are unemployed and in poverty due to the lack of any kind of social protection. Since 1998, more than 25 million state sector workers have been laid off through the country in a restructuring process linked to Chinas WTO membership.

The workers' protests in Liaoning started March 1, 2002 in Daqing oilfields, once the model of Maoist industrialization in the 60s. Tens of thousands demonstrated for their salaries, pensions and labour rights and elected their own independent trade union delegates. Their example was soon followed by the laid-off

workers of the Liaoyang Ferro-Alloy Factory, where Yao Fuxin and Xiao Yunliang have been employed. On March 11, 2002 more than 5,000 workers came in front of the City Hall to demand the immediate payment of more than two years of unemployment benefits owed to them, and denounced the corruption and the embezzlement of the money by the factory management and the local authorities under the banner "To steal the money of the pensioners is a crime".

Delegates were elected and the movement spread to the whole city. On March 18, 2002, 30,000 workers from 20 factories demonstrated again to demand the release of Yao Fuxin and Xiao Yunliang, detained by secret police the evening before. The protests continued nearly everyday until March 28, when the local authorities rejected any dialogue with the workers, ordered the evacuation of occupied buildings, arrested three other delegates, and deployed thousands of armed police and soldiers in the city. Even in this situation, 600 workers went back to City Hall on March 28 to demand the liberation of their delegates.

Yao Fuxin and Xiao Yunliang have been under detention since then. Their trial took place in January and they were accused of sedition. Pending the

sentence, they remained in custody at the Liaoyang Municipal Detention Center where their health situation has been a matter of great concern to their families and friends. Due to the illness caused by the poor conditions and the brutal treatment, Xiao Yunliang started spitting blood. On March 20, 2003, his wife Su Anhua and 20 worker delegates tried to have a meeting with the local authorities to protest about their health and legal situation. They could not cross the door of Liaoyang's City Hall. The official answer came in the form of the May 9 sentences.

This is how the pro-capitalist Chinese government treats labour activists in the so-called 'People's Republic'! The facts speak for themselves.

We demand immediate freedom for Yao Fuxin and Xiao Yunliang! We hold the Chinese authorities responsible for their well-being!

We call on the movement for global justice and the international trade union movement to express their solidarity with these Chinese labour activists and the democratic and labour rights of the Chinese working class.

By the Bureau of the Fourth International

# Statement on Cuba

**14 May 2003**

For our part, the Fourth International recalls that we have taken the side of the Cuban revolution ever since 1959; and that we have defended crucial decisions made by the Cuban leaders from criticisms and attacks, not only from the ruling classes and their governments but also from most Communist and social-democratic parties and from leaders of the so-called 'really existing socialist countries'. We have highlighted the original aspects of the Cuban revolution, as well as the aid that it has given in an internationalist spirit to revolutionary movements. But when we have considered it necessary to make criticisms - particularly of the Cuban government's attitude towards the leaderships in the Soviet Union and other non-capitalist countries or towards the Mexican PRI government, or of the bureaucratization of the Cuban regime - we have done so openly.

Today, the methods adopted during the recent tragic events are

unacceptable from a revolutionary democratic point of view and unacceptable for the defence of the revolution and its social and cultural conquests. Our response is unambiguous. The Cuban government adopted by the way an entirely different attitude on other occasions, particularly during the attempts at massive, illegal emigration in 1980 and 1994.

It is true, as the Cuban CP's letter indicates, that "the Bush Administration's hostility towards Cuba has exceeded that of all previous administrations". The ruling classes, the US ruling classes first and foremost, have always used barbarous methods; but fighting against these policies cannot justify the use of undemocratic methods, including the unacceptable death penalty, by a government that claims to be socialist. Precisely because certain methods are characteristic of the exploiting classes, revolutionaries must not resort to them.

Undeniably, Cuba is in an even more difficult situation than in the past. Bush and his gang have demonstrated that they are prepared to use any means at all to impose their hegemony still more on the whole world. Cuba's best defence is to ensure the active, more and more democratic participation of the broadest layers of the population in the arduous tasks of defending the revolution, with full rights of self-expression and criticism. The best defence consists at the same time in the broadest solidarity from friendly parties and organizations and the peoples of other countries. But recourse by the Cuban leadership to extreme repressive methods makes this kind of solidarity much more difficult.

Once again, while criticizing unambiguously the recent measures taken by the Cuban leadership, we reaffirm our solidarity with the Cuban people against the US-imposed embargo.

# Solidarity with Brukman workers

**24 April 2003**

The Brukman workers occupied the factory 17 months ago as the bosses abandoned it. Since then they have managed it under their control, won back the clients, paid debts to public services unpaid by the bosses, repaired the machines and put them into operation. In little over a year and a half, they have become a symbol of dignity and the winning back of sources of employment, along with almost 150 other companies taken over by their workers.

The judge who ordered the evacuation said: "There is no supremacy of life and physical integrity over economic interests." This is the true reason for so much deep repression, because the workers defending their sources of work, threatened by the depth of the capitalist crisis in Argentina, end up opposing the sacrosanct principle of private property.

Workers of the taken-over factories in Argentina demonstrate every day that the companies can work without

bosses, although the bosses cannot make them work without their workers.

The Fourth International condemns the evacuation and the repression of the workers of the Brukman textile works of Argentina.

The Fourth International calls on all the unions of the different countries to express their class solidarity and develop activities in support to workers of the Brukman textile factory in Argentina.

Long live the fight of the Brukman  
textile workers!

Solidarity with the factories taken

over by workers in Argentina!

# Venezuela - Halt the coup of the right and imperialism

## 4 January 2003

This escalation assumes a criminal character due to the continuous murders of political and social activists, the provocations of fascist groups, and the sabotage of oil production, initiated in early December by the PDVSA [the state oil company -ed] mafias and the corrupt leaders of the CTV [the trade union federation allied with the traditional governing parties - ed].

With the support of the media, in particular television, the bourgeoisie's destabilizing operation aims at political manipulation, fear, economic chaos, and the division of the military who until now have supported the government of Chávez.

2. The same Bush administration that is preparing a new genocide against Iraq is playing a decisive role in this counter-revolutionary escalation. Not only through its open political and financial support for the coup participants, but also through the servile instrument of the OAS [Organization of American States -ed] pushing - with the complicity of most of the neo-liberal governments of the region, the European Union, and the Carter Foundation - a 'diplomatic' intervention with the objective of ending the democratic government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The declarations by Richard Boucher, spokesperson of the US State Department, leave no room for doubt: "we have emphasized the importance of the mission of the Secretary General of the OAS, Caesar Gaviria, and that two parties should cooperate with him to resolve their political differences". In the language of imperialist interests, that

'cooperation' can only be understood as blackmailing the Venezuelan government into accepting a 'democratic dialogue' as a precursor to its political capitulation.

The 'mission' of Caesar Gaviria - former president of Colombia, executor of the counter-insurgency, promoter of the paramilitary groups and responsible for the systematic violation of human rights in his country - must be thoroughly denounced and condemned.

The OAS seeks to go down the road of its 'democratic charter', which the imperialist-big business counter-revolution did not achieve on April 11, 2002. Therefore, as the left and Bolivarian popular organizations have affirmed, there can be no 'dialogue' with the right wing coup participants and big business.

3. In Venezuela a decisive anti-imperialist battle is being fought. Beyond the limitations and hesitations of the Chávez government, the Bolivarian people has taken to the streets, deepening a process of rupture with the bourgeoisie and taking measures to disrupt the coup operation. It is not only the democratic destiny of the country which is at stake, but also the relationship of forces with imperialism in the region.

After the electoral victories of Lula in Brazil, and Gutiérrez in Ecuador, the prolongation of the 'argentinazo' as a process of popular rebellion, the growth of the anti-neo-liberal resistance of the social movements, and the continental rejection both to Plan Colombia and the re-colonizing

project of the FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas), the United States is trying to create a 'preventive' wall against the winds of change blowing through South America.

The defeat of the Chávez government and the crushing of the radical movement of people and workers that is developing is becoming a priority in Washington's counter-revolutionary strategy. The survival of the Chávez government - and the dynamic of class struggle that has developed - does not fit in with the regional control that Plan Colombia and the FTAA imply for the Pentagon and the State Department.

At the same time, a victory for the coup and imperialist interests in Venezuela, would still more reduce the political and economic room for manoeuvre of governments like those of Lula and Gutiérrez, increase the unfavourable conditions for the armed insurgency in Colombia, and reinforce the blockade against Cuba.

4. It is in this context that internationalist solidarity with the popular struggle in Venezuela must be broad, active and militant. The struggle of the workers and students, class conscious trade unions and popular organizations, Bolivarian circles and parties of the left in Venezuela, is the struggle of the Latin American peoples against the governing elites, neo-liberalism, the IMF, the World Bank, the InterAmerican Development Bank, and the foreign debt. It is a democratic struggle for sovereignty and the right of the peoples to decide their own destiny. It is an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggle.

The forces of the Fourth International are part of this struggle. Promoting in various countries public activities of solidarity, demonstrations, street

marches, and political declarations. Participating and supporting unconditionally campaigns of action and protest organized by democratic, anti-imperialist and revolutionary

movements and currents.

By the Bureau of the Fourth International