

Imperialists Hands Off Iran!

Down With the Clerical Regime! No Support to “Reform” Mullahs!



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JUNE 29—A few short months after celebrating the 30th anniversary of its bloody and oppressive rule, Iran’s Islamic Republic has been convulsed by the largest protests since the “Iranian revolution” of 1978-79. The massive demonstrations were sparked by the widespread belief that incumbent president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, supported by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, had stolen the June 12 presidential election from opposition candidate Mir Hussein Moussavi. After a week in which hundreds of thousands filled the streets of Tehran and other cities chanting “Death to the dictator” and “Allah Akbar” (“God is great”), the regime struck back. Scores of demonstrators were reportedly shot by the hated paramilitary Basij militias, linked to the elite Revolutionary Guard, as well as by police, while hundreds have been locked up in the notorious Evin Prison. The International Communist League, of which the Spartacist League is the U.S. section, calls on the international workers’ movement to demand: **Free all anti-government protesters!**

The fraud surrounding Ahmadinejad’s re-election became a focus for the broad discontents felt across Iranian society, from women compelled to wear the *hijab* (veil) and youth punished for public displays of affection to widespread poverty and growing unemployment. Hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets demanding new elections. Certainly, plenty of signs indicate voter fraud. But the elections—vote-rigging or not—were themselves a fraud, controlled by the mullahs, who approved all candidates in advance.

Part of the basis of support for Moussavi is his call for vague “reforms” on women’s rights and other social questions. But Moussavi, one of the founders of the Islamic Republic, is no less a butcher than his opponents in the current regime. Under Moussavi’s reign as prime minister from 1981 to 1989, untold thousands of leftists, Kurds and women’s rights activists were slaughtered in Iran’s

prisons and buried in mass graves. Hundreds of thousands more died in the bloody war with Iraq in the 1980s. In 1999, militant student protests were drowned in blood by the “reform” government of then-president Mohammad Khatami, a current ally of Moussavi.

and Rafsanjani have called to further “open up” the economy through privatizations and foreign investment. They have also sought to tone down the “anti-imperialist” demagoguery associated with Ahmadinejad. Abroad, the protests are being cheered by a spectrum of Iranian

he was “appalled and outraged” by the crackdown in Iran. Meanwhile, nearly 200,000 U.S. troops continue to ravage Iraq and Afghanistan on Iran’s eastern and western borders, while U.S. special forces carry out clandestine operations within Iran itself. After 30 years of the oppressive rule of the mullahs, there are doubtless many in Iran who have illusions in Western bourgeois democracy or see the “democratic” imperialists as a potential ally. Such illusions may have been further fueled by the initial softer (than the war-crazed Bush gang) tone adopted by Obama toward Tehran upon taking office.

Whether administered by Democrats or Republicans, U.S. imperialism is the deadliest enemy of working people around the globe. It was the CIA, in collaboration with the British, that organized the 1953 coup that overthrew then-prime minister Mohammad Mossadeq to reverse his nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. The imperialists then reinstalled the Shah into power and backed the tyrannical, blood-drenched Pahlavi dynasty until its overthrow in 1979. Down with the imperialist occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq! U.S. out of Pakistan and Central Asia! Imperialists hands off Iran!

The U.S. imperialists and their nuclear-armed Israeli allies have repeatedly threatened military action against Iran’s nuclear program. In the face of such threats, we say that Iran needs nukes to deter such an attack. Neighboring Iraq’s lack of “weapons of mass destruction,” including nukes, emboldened the U.S. to invade and occupy the country, leading to the horrific carnage and occupation of the last six years. While calling for military defense of neocolonial countries like Iraq and Iran against imperialist attack, we do not give an iota of political support to their rulers, who lord it over their “own” oppressed masses. We say: Down with all the sheiks, colonels, mullahs and Zionist

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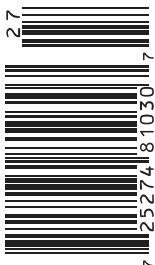
Top: Iranian riot police assault Moussavi supporters at Tehran University, June 14. Above: Mass demonstration in Tehran protests election results, June 18.

While the forces demonstrating in the streets of Iranian cities are heterogeneous, they are politically subordinate to one side of what is essentially a falling out between rival factions within the ruling clerical elite. A key ally of Moussavi is the notoriously corrupt former president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani; known as the “pistachio king,” he may well be the richest man in Iran. Moussavi

political forces ranging from royalists to bourgeois democrats and the remnants of the left. The workers and oppressed of Iran have **no interest** in supporting *either* of the cabals fighting over how best to pursue the mullahs’ bloody rule.

The U.S. and British imperialists have sought to intervene in the political turmoil, beefing up their radio broadcasts into Iran. Obama declared that

For a Leninist-Trotskyist Party in Iran to Fight for Workers Revolution!



Defend Orange County Teacher James Corbett!

For the Teaching of Science! Down With Religious Obscurantism!

LOS ANGELES—On May 1, a federal judge ruled that James Corbett, a 20-year history teacher at Capistrano Valley High School in Orange County, California, violated the establishment clause of the First Amendment—i.e., the separation of church and state. Corbett’s “transgression” was to denounce another teacher at the school, John Peloza, for his efforts to block the teaching of evolution in favor of anti-science “creationism,” which Corbett accurately described as “religious, superstitious nonsense.” The judge outrageously ruled, “Corbett states an unequivocal belief that creationism is ‘superstitious nonsense.’ The Court cannot discern a legitimate secular purpose in this statement, even when considered in context.”

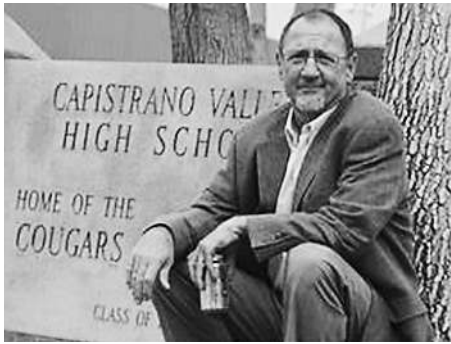
The obvious secular purpose is scientific truth, and the court’s ruling is a dangerous attack on science, free speech and the separation of church and state. It can only embolden the Christian fundamentalists while having a chilling effect on teachers opposed to the promotion of religious obscurantism. As one student said at a 300-strong rally to support Dr. Corbett in December 2007, “It’s hard

to teach European history without being somewhat critical of organized religion.” The lawsuit was brought by Corbett’s former student Chad Farnan and his family. It was planned well in advance, as Farnan secretly recorded many hours of class discussion. Farnan’s family was represented by Advocates for Faith and Freedom, a dubious outfit that seeks out cases specifically to push their goal of an American society with an unquestioning, God-fearing citizenry under the strait-jacket of the Puritanical family, where women have no rights that men are required to respect. This group has advocated strongly for Proposition 8 and the Bill Clinton-era Defense of Marriage Act, which ban gay marriage in California and federally respectively. They have filed another case in California to deny the right of transgender students to be recognized by their gender identity as opposed to their genitalia. In its mission statement, Advocates for Faith and Freedom concludes: “We recognize that America was founded on Judeo-Christian principles. In today’s culture, that foundation is slowly being eroded by legal challenges to traditional family structure, religious

freedom, basic property rights, and parental rights, and by other court decisions that have created a society increasingly devoid of the message and influence of God.” These religious bigots to the contrary, many of the “founding fathers” (those who owned slaves and those who didn’t) were products of the Enlightenment and deists who, while believing that a god created the universe, rejected the Judeo-Christian concepts of faith, miracles and divine intervention. In an opinion piece printed in the *Orange County Register* (8 May), Dr. Corbett quoted James Madison, coauthor of the U.S. Constitution, “Religious bondage shackles and debilitates the mind and unfits it for every noble enterprise, every expanded prospect.” But the bourgeoisie the world over has long ceased being the revolutionary class it once was. One can look at Barack Obama, who, while promising to “restore science to its rightful place,” peppered his Cairo speech with references to the Bible, Talmud and Koran, and concluded, “May God’s peace be upon you.” An opponent of gay marriage, Obama has also made clear his support to the Defense of Marriage Act.

While the teaching of evolution in the schools has been under attack since the infamous 1925 Scopes trial, it was the efforts to regiment the population into social conformity during the Reagan years of the 1980s that have ushered in nearly 30 years of attacks on science and the gains of the Enlightenment. This picked up further steam with the election of George W. Bush in 2000, leading to challenges to the teaching of evolution in 43 states.

Against such reactionary efforts, the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee submitted an *amici curiae* brief in 1985 to the United States Supreme Court against a Louisiana law mandating the teaching of creationism. We wrote: “This country used to be notable for the relatively democratic nature of public education—largely a product of the Civil War and struggles by an ethnically diverse working class for social reform.



James Corbett

Keith May

Today there is an all sided assault on public education, of which the current attack, if successful, will render future generations ignorant and prey to the superstitions of our ancestors.”

In the brief, we pointed to a statement by historic American Trotskyist James P. Cannon, who wrote in 1951, on the occasion of a proposal to appoint a U.S. ambassador to the Vatican:

“Under...the First Amendment, free thinkers and atheists, heathens and public sinners, who are very numerous in this country, have had a chance to breathe and spread enlightenment without fear of the dungeon and the rack. The First Amendment has been a protecting shield for the Children of Light and has enabled them to make their great contributions to literature, art and science. A breach in this provision of the Constitution, leading to its eventual repeal, would be an unspeakable calamity aiding and strengthening the forces of reaction and obscurantism here and all over the world.”
—“Church and State,” reprinted in *Notebook of an Agitator* (1958)

Under capitalism, the schools are supposed to inculcate the views of the ruling class in the next generation and help promote their regimentation in bourgeois society. What the judge really meant when he ruled that Dr. Corbett violated the separation of church and state is that he deviated from this judge’s view of the means by which teachers are supposed to carry out this function. Dr. Corbett, who may still appeal the ruling, faces possible monetary damages and an injunction against making any future statements disparaging religion. Furthermore, he might still face discipline from the campus administration. We demand: **Drop all charges against Dr. James Corbett! For the teaching of evolution, not “creationism”—or its PC guise, “intelligent design”—in public schools! ■**



TROTSKY

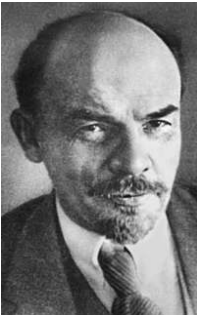
Lenin on the Struggle Against Opportunism

In his struggle against opportunism, which represents the pernicious influence of bourgeois ideology in the workers movement, V.I. Lenin led what became a historic fight at the 1903 Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, resulting in a split in the Russian Marxist movement. The majority (the Bolsheviks), led by Lenin, and the minority (the Mensheviks), led by Julius Martov, broke nominally over the definition of party membership. However, as

Lenin emphasizes in the excerpt below from One Step Forward, Two Steps Back (1904), a key component of the fight was over opportunism. The 1903 split bore world-historic fruit when in opposition to the Mensheviks, Lenin’s Bolshevik Party led the Russian workers to the seizure of power in the October Revolution of 1917.

One step forward, two steps back.... It happens in the lives of individuals, and it happens in the history of nations and in the development of parties. It would be the most criminal cowardice to doubt even for a moment the inevitable and complete triumph of the principles of revolutionary Social-Democracy, of proletarian organisation and Party discipline. We have already won a great deal, and we must go on fighting, undismayed by reverses, fighting steadfastly, scorning the philistine methods of circle wrangling, doing our very utmost to preserve the hard-won single Party tie linking all Russian Social-Democrats, and striving by dint of persistent and systematic work to give all Party members, and the workers in particular, a full and conscious understanding of the duties of Party members, of the struggle at the Second Party Congress, of all the causes and all the stages of our divergence, and of the utter disastrousness of opportunism, which, in the sphere of organisation as in the sphere of our programme and our tactics, helplessly surrenders to the bourgeois psychology, uncritically adopts the point of view of bourgeois democracy, and blunts the weapon of the class struggle of the proletariat.

—V.I. Lenin, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* (The Crisis in Our Party) (1904)



LENIN

Drop the Charges Against the SF8 Now!

The following June 6 protest letter was sent by the Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—to California Attorney General Jerry Brown.

The Partisan Defense Committee demands an immediate end to the state’s vindictive prosecution of the San Francisco 8—Richard Brown, Francisco Torres, Ray Boudreaux, Henry “Hank” Jones, Harold Taylor, Herman Bell and Jalil Muntagim (Anthony Bottom)—who were arrested in 2007 on frame-up charges of murder and conspiracy in relation to the 1971 death of San Francisco police officer John Young. In more than two years of court hearings, the prosecution has not produced a shred of evidence against these former Black Panthers. Now they face another three months of preliminary hearings, beginning on June 8, to determine if the case will go to trial. The relentless persecution of these men, all of them in their late 50s or older, is a continuation of the government’s decades-long vendetta against the Black Liberation Army and other former Panthers. We demand that all the charges

against the SF8 be dropped **now!** For close to 40 years, the police have tried to pin the killing of Young on these men. In 1973, two San Francisco police inspectors interrogated three Panther members including one of the current defendants, Harold Taylor, who had been arrested by the New Orleans cops. The three were tortured for several days—stripped naked, blindfolded and beaten, covered with blankets soaked in boiling water, shocked with electric cattle prods on their genitals and anus—until they “confessed.” In 1975, the charges were thrown out of court on the basis that their confessions had been coerced through torture. Thirty years later, the police and government prosecutors were still unsuccessful in obtaining indictments of any of these men despite convening California state and federal grand juries—first in 2003-2004 and later in May and August 2005. But this frame-up was revived again in 2007 when the SF8 were rounded up and arrested on orders from your office of California State Attorney General. More than two years of court hearings have produced no evidence tying these
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WORKERS VANGUARD

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“War on Terror” Targets Immigrants, Workers

The following article is reprinted from Workers Hammer No. 206 (Spring 2009), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

WORKERS HAMMER

Since the time of his arrest in Pakistan in April 2002, Binyam Mohamed has been chained, beaten, slashed with scalpels, sleep deprived, held for weeks on end in darkness and hauled from one prison to the next, from Pakistan to Morocco to Afghanistan. Caged at Guantánamo Bay for the past four years, he was finally released and arrived back in Britain on February 23. There has never been a shred of evidence against him of any crime. Mohamed’s U.S. military-appointed lawyer, Lieutenant Colonel Yvonne Bradley, told a press conference that his treatment “would make waterboarding seem like child’s play” (*Guardian Unlimited*, 11 February).

As Mohamed courageously exposes his torture at the hands of the CIA and their stooges and pursues legal actions in British and U.S. courts, the complicity of the British state in his “rendition” and torture is being dragged into the light of day. “We unreservedly condemn any practice of ‘extraordinary rendition’ to torture. We have always condemned torture,” proclaimed the Foreign Office (*Independent*, 10 March), while the whole world can observe the bloody fingerprints of MI5 all over the story of Binyam Mohamed. A special UN report issued on 9 March named Britain as among countries that have aided the U.S. “through providing intelligence or seizing suspects” (*BBC News* online, 10 March). The report says, “UK intelligence personnel, for instance, conducted or witnessed just over 2,000 interviews in Afghanistan, Guantanamo Bay and Iraq” (*independent.co.uk*, 10 March).

Having fled Ethiopia in 1992 as a teenager, Mohamed sought asylum in Britain and was eventually granted legal right to remain. He was swept up by the U.S. “anti-terror” frenzy while travelling in Pakistan a few months after 9/11 and interrogated by MI5 there before being “rendered” by the CIA to a prison in Morocco. During 18 months there he was tortured by his U.S.-instructed interrogators who repeatedly slashed his chest and genitals with a scalpel. The Americans were bent on extracting Mohamed’s confession to a web of “terror” crimes including a nuclear “dirty bomb” plot. They claimed he conspired in the bomb plot with Jose Padilla, a U.S. citizen who was kidnapped in 2002 by the U.S. government, framed and tortured as a “terror suspect.” “They had fed me enough through their questions for me to make up what they wanted to hear,” Mohamed told



February 23: Binyam Mohamed arriving in London from Guantánamo Bay after seven years of confinement and torture.

Binyam Mohamed, British Imperialism and Torture

the *Mail on Sunday* (8 March). “I confessed to it all.” In January 2004 he was again moved, to the CIA prison in Kabul, Afghanistan, where his tortures included being chained, able to neither stand fully nor sit, for eight days continuously.

“The very worst moment came when I realised in Morocco that the people who were torturing me were receiving questions and materials from British intelligence,” said Mohamed (*Guardian Unlimited*, 23 February). According to his attorneys from the civil rights law group Reprieve, in one memo disclosed in U.S. court hearings, MI5 told the CIA: “We believe that our knowledge of the UK scene may provide contextual background useful during any continuing interview process” (*Guardian*, 9 March). It continues, “This will place the detainee under more direct pressure and would seem to be the most effective way of obtaining intelligence on Mohamed’s activities/plans concerning the UK.” The government’s attempt to cover up British support to torture failed when it was exposed that foreign secretary David Miliband

blocked the release of 42 secret documents necessary to Mohamed’s *habeas corpus* case (challenging his detention) in the courts. According to the *Guardian* website (16 February), Miliband’s office “solicited a letter from the US state department to back up his claim that if the evidence was disclosed, Washington might stop sharing intelligence with Britain. The claim persuaded the high court judges to suppress what they called ‘powerful evidence’ relating to Mohamed’s ill-treatment.”

Revelations of British participation in torture predictably elicit “shocked” calls for investigations from all quarters. Behind such calls lies panic that British “democracy” is besmirched by the torture revelations. Just as the Obama regime is charged by the U.S. bourgeoisie with the task of restoring the myth of mass-murdering American imperialism as upholder of “human rights,” elements of the British bourgeoisie need the moral credibility of British imperialism whitewashed, and fast. A spokesman for Human Rights Watch, speaking after British de-

fence secretary John Hutton publicly admitted that Britain has handed over “terror suspects” in Iraq to the U.S., said: “The drip, drip of allegations and admissions does huge damage to the international reputation of the UK and the ability of our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan to say they are fighting on the side of justice and truth” (*Guardian*, 27 February).

But from the Indian subcontinent to its African colonies, from the occupation of Palestine after World War I to Iraq today, British imperialism, under both Tory and Labour governments, has always used torture, an indispensable tool for the subjugation of a people. In Northern Ireland, Republican prisoners interned without trial were routinely tortured by the RUC: hooded, beaten, forced to run obstacle courses over broken glass. Thousands died from starvation and torture in British concentration camps during the suppression of the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya in the 1950s. As Seumas Milne wrote in the *Guardian* (27 January 2005), British soldiers “nailed the limbs of Kikuyu guerrillas [in Kenya] to crossroads posts and had themselves photographed with the heads of Malayan ‘terrorists’ in a war that cost 10,000 lives.... Britain’s empire was built on vast ethnic cleansing, enslavement, enforced racial hierarchy, land theft and merciless exploitation.”

In Germany between 1945 and 1947, Britain ran a secret torture camp at Bad Nenndorf where suspected communists as well as Nazi and SS prisoners were beaten, starved and frozen—evidence of which was buried in government files until 2005 when the *Guardian* secured a report on the torture centre under the Freedom of Information Act. Some of the subsequently released photos showed suspected communists whom the British tortured in their efforts to obtain information about Soviet military plans.

Another form of torture continues today within Britain against 15 Muslim men among those rounded up and interned as suspected “terrorists” after 9/11. They cannot legally be deported and in 2004 were ordered released from Belmarsh prison on “control orders.” Introducing her article “Besieged in Britain” (*Race & Class*, January 2009), Victoria Brittain describes their shattered lives:

“Held for years without charge, under restricted regimes of twelve to twenty-four hour curfews, with virtually no access to the wider world and kept in ignorance of the alleged evidence against them, the impact on them and their families has been devastating. Many had come to Britain as refugees seeking a safe haven; some have been driven into madness, some have attempted suicide, some have left their families and returned voluntarily to regimes where they may face imprisonment and torture. The mental and physical health impacts on the men and their families, of an inhumanity that beggars belief, masked under the bureaucracy of ‘control orders,’ ‘SIAC deportation bail’ and torturous legal processes, is here unveiled.”

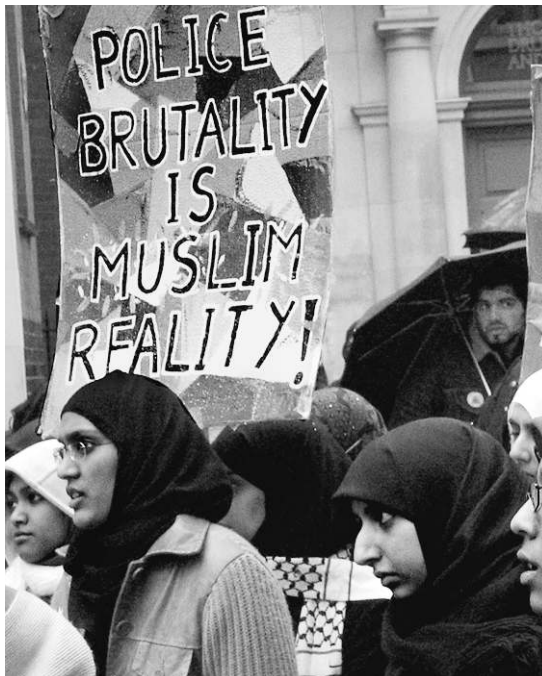
Trade Unions Must Oppose the “War on Terror”

The capitalist state—the core of which is cops, courts, prisons and armed forces—exists to maintain the property and profits of the bourgeoisie through the suppression of the working class and oppressed. Stigmatising Muslims and immigrants as the “enemy within,” the Labour government has fuelled racism which divides and weakens the working class. In its “war on terror” the government has calculated it can get away with massively augmenting the state’s machinery for repression, and in this it has so far been correct thanks to the cowardly chauvinist leaders of the trade unions. As the organised battalions of the proletariat, the trade unions have the social power to put some teeth into the fight against the racist “war on terror.” But their ability to fight is hampered by the Labourite trade-union leaders

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Chapman/Guzelian



Workers Hammer

Labour government’s “war on terror” fuels attacks on Muslims. Left: Muslim-owned store firebombed in Leeds, July 2005. Right: March 2005 protest against planned extradition of Babar Ahmad, victim of “anti-terror” witchhunt.

Recession Australia: Unemployment, Racism, Militarism

The following article is reprinted from Australasian Spartacist No. 205 (Winter 2009), newspaper of the Spartacist League of Australia, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

**Australasian
SPARTACIST**

MAY 30—As the capitalist economic crisis unfolds, millions around the world are facing immiseration. In Australia, over 600,000 are now officially unemployed and this figure is expected to double before the year's end. In its attempts to "save capitalism," the federal ALP [Australian Labor Party] government has spent more than \$80 billion in the past year. This, along with plummeting tax revenues, will contribute to a projected \$300 billion national debt within five years. While government ministers claim they are spending to save jobs, their real concern is kick-starting capitalist investment.

The May federal budget continues the onslaught against workers and the poor. Impoverished aged pensioners received a few extra dollars, to be paid for by raising the pension age by two years. While the employed are expected to work harder for less, the unemployed and others on pensions such as single mothers got no increase to their meagre payments. Meanwhile unemployed youth under 20 who haven't completed high school will lose their unemployment benefits, and their parents will have their family tax benefits slashed, if they don't pursue some form of "education"!

Under the reactionary rubric of "nation building," the prime minister, Kevin Rudd, cynically trumpets the budget's projected \$22 billion infrastructure expenditure as a pro-working-class measure to create jobs. In reality, it simply fulfils Labor's pre-election commitment to big business to make Australian capitalism more competitive by reversing the former Howard government's neglect of key communications, transport and port facilities. Meanwhile, the budget allocates a comparative pittance to the crumbling health and education systems which, along with public transport, have fallen into decay through years of capitalist neglect.

The Laborite trade-union tops, who view the world through the lens of the bourgeoisie, are working overtime with their parliamentary "mates" to rebuild confidence in the capitalist system. Imbibing in Rudd's "nation building," in response to growing unemployment they are calling to bail out the bosses' industries using workers' taxes while telling workers to sacrifice in the "national interest," i.e., for the bosses' profits. For example, in April, General Motors Holden management and union tops cooked up a deal that halved shift times, cutting penalty rates [overtime] for workers. Described by the federal ALP government as "a model," such deals slash wages, undermine hard-won union conditions and devastate the livelihoods of workers.

Alongside this, the government is slashing the immigration intake and heavily funding and enforcing xenophobic "border control" measures. They are expanding the cop and military takeover of Aboriginal lands to town camps around Alice Springs and continuing to enforce racist welfare "quarantining" against besieged Aboriginal people. This all-sided reaction is buttressed by draconian



Above: Labor prime minister Kevin Rudd announces plans for massive armed forces buildup, Sydney, May 2. Below: Australian navy intercepts desperate Afghan asylum seekers in April. Earlier, five drowned and scores were injured when another Afghan refugee boat, seized by navy, exploded.



Chantal Parslow

"anti-terror" and anti-union laws, the latter almost identical to those of the [previous John] Howard government apart from the name. The Labor government's despicable anti-immigrant measures include using the navy to target refugees fleeing the horrors of the imperialist occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and the genocidal war against the oppressed Tamil minority in Sri Lanka. Prevented from landing in

masses from the yoke of bloody imperialism, and led to the development of a collectivised economy that laid the basis for massive social progress. However, the workers state was deformed from its inception under the rule of Mao Zedong's peasant-based Chinese Communist Party regime, a Stalinist-nationalist bureaucratic caste resting atop the workers state. Despite capitalist inroads under decades

For a Revolutionary, Internationalist Workers Party!

the country, refugees have been intercepted off shore and dumped at the government's Indian Ocean Christmas Island detention centre where many await deportation, which can mean death.

Defend the Chinese Deformed Workers State!

We Marxists stress that the future for workers in Australia lies in common struggle with the working masses of Asia against capitalist exploitation. Our fight for a workers republic of Australia is part of our perspective for socialist revolutions throughout Southeast Asia and beyond. Key to this proletarian internationalist perspective is our defence of China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state that issued out of the 1949 Chinese Revolution. This revolution overthrew capitalist class rule, liberating the Chinese

of the bureaucracy's "market reforms," China's economy remains dominated by state-controlled banks and the core of its industry remains collectivised, an historic gain for the world's working class that the imperialists seek to overthrow.

Unlike reformist groups such as the Democratic Socialist Perspective (DSP) who declare China capitalist in order to join counterrevolutionary causes from "Free Tibet" to "independence for Taiwan," we Trotskyists fight for the unconditional military defence of China and the other deformed workers states of North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba against imperialist attack and capitalist counter-revolution from within. In direct opposition to the imperialists' provocative threats against North Korea following its recent missile tests and underground detonation, we note that our defence

of China and North Korea includes *supporting* their testing and possession of nuclear weapons as a necessary deterrent against the threat of annihilation by the nuclear-armed imperialists in Washington, backed by their lackeys in Canberra.

At the same time, we fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist, Stalinist bureaucracies whose appeasement of imperialism and bureaucratic mismanagement pave the way for capitalist restorationist forces. A genuinely communist government in China, based on workers and peasants councils and an internationalist program, would look to the extension of proletarian power through the struggle for socialist revolutions throughout the region, and particularly in the imperialist centres of Japan, North America, Europe and Australia.

While the global economic crisis has slowed China's economy, for decades it has escaped the cyclical crises inherent to capitalism and been growing at a rate unmatched by any capitalist country. As a consequence, over the last 15 years the Australian bourgeoisie has accrued enormous wealth from mineral sales to China, now Australia's largest two-way trading partner. With the Japanese economy currently spiralling deeper into recession, the Australian bourgeoisie's reliance on exports to China has increased markedly such that many bourgeois economists look to China to pull Australian capitalism out of recession.

In this framework, earlier this year a xenophobic anti-China backlash erupted over Chinese state-owned companies seeking to invest in capital-starved and crippled Australian mining companies. This media-driven campaign, saturated with "yellow peril" racism and overlain with "red menace" anti-Communism, targeted China for supposedly using the economic crisis to "seize control" of Australian resources, threatening "national security" including the highly secretive U.S. intelligence base at Pine Gap near Alice Springs. This was the context for the "security scare" whipped up around the ALP defence minister, Joel Fitzgibbon, whose friendship with a Chinese-Australian businesswoman was portrayed as a national security risk. Next, Kevin Rudd was admonished in Murdoch's *Australian* for a lack of transparency in his meetings with China's propaganda chief and for lobbying "for Beijing" because he argued that China should have a bigger say in the IMF. Such was the hysteria over investments, the Chinese ambassador felt compelled to call for "rational" discussion, noting that at the end of 2008 "less than 1 percent of total foreign investment in Australia" came from China (*Australian*, 2 April).

The government quickly made a slavish show of loyalty to the Australian capitalist rulers by denying an application by state-owned China Minmetals to invest in the moribund OZ Minerals' operation at Prominent Hill in South Australia on "security" grounds. Some experts opined that the application was rejected because the Chinese could "spy on" the Pine Gap base. It is not China which is targeting the U.S. and Australia but the opposite! Pine Gap, which collects electronic intelligence from around the world, is part of a string of U.S. military installations and bases from South Korea to Central Asia that assist bloody imperialist interventions and enforce capitalist "stability" in Asia and the Pacific while targeting the

bureaucratically deformed workers states, particularly China.

Down With Australian Imperialist Militarism!

With their strategic aim of capitalist counterrevolution, the imperialists have for years pursued a combination of economic and political subversion while increasing military pressure against China. The recent xenophobic, anti-China hysteria further serves to line up the population here behind the counterrevolutionary aims of U.S. and Australian imperialism. The invention of a Chinese “threat” has been used by the bourgeoisie to legitimise the government’s recently released Defence white paper, which projects a vast program of future military spending and hawkishly targets China. The biggest buildup of the Australian military since World War II, the proposed expansion of the airforce and navy includes up to 100 new fighter jets, more submarines and new classes of warships equipped with long-range cruise missiles.

Commenting on the Defence paper, a 27 April *Australian* editorial expressed the view of a section of the ruling class: “This is a plan for a world where Australia may need to defend its territory and economic interests from attack, and might have to project military power a great distance from home.... It appears the Government wants to cover contingencies from an East Timor-style deployment to fighting a regional power, for which read China, with a blue-water fleet.”

Despite this braggadocio, Australia remains a second-rate jackal imperialist power that looks to the U.S. for protection. As such, they offer their services in dirty murderous operations from the southern Philippines to Afghanistan where Australia has recently sent an additional 450 troops as part of the blood-drenched U.S.-led occupation.

In this sparsely populated, white imperialist enclave in Asia, the counterrevolutionary U.S./Australia military alliance has always had the bipartisan support of the Liberal and Labor parties. Following the surrender of the British and Australian forces in Singapore to Japan in 1942, it was the Labor government of John Curtin which transferred Australian imperialism’s allegiance from British to American imperialism. In response to the post-war nationalist and revolutionary ferment among the Asian masses, anti-communism and anti-Asian racism within the Australian ruling class fused in common fear of the spectre of social revolutions in Asia, particularly after the victory of Mao’s Red Army in China in 1949.

In 1951, during the Korean War, the Liberal government of Robert Menzies signed the ANZUS pact to “contain” communism across Asia. In part the alliance was bought with Australian acquiescence to a peace treaty with Japan, which the U.S. sought to rebuild as an anti-communist bastion, including against the Soviet Union. The ANZUS alliance has seen the U.S. and Australian military act to slaughter millions of workers and peasants in counterrevolutionary wars from Korea to Vietnam. It was the Australian Secret Intelligence Service stationed in Jakarta that collaborated with the

CIA to help orchestrate the 1965-66 anti-Communist bloodbath in Indonesia, which helped “stabilise” Southeast Asia under the imperialist yoke at the cost of more than a million lives.

Australia remains a strategic ally of the U.S., not least through hosting the U.S. military installations and spy bases. With its current police/military occupations of East Timor and the Solomons, Butterworth airforce base in Malaysia, counterterrorism base and training of “special forces” in Indonesia, and training troops in the southern Philippines, Australian imperialism plays an aggressive role in the region as a counterrevolutionary gendarme under the U.S. umbrella, while pursuing its own predatory neocolonial interests. Australia’s projected military buildup is an expression of the *system* of capitalist imperialism. As Russian revolutionary V.I. Lenin explained, under this system the ruling classes of the richest capitalist countries, ever in search of greater resources, new markets and sources of cheap labour, enforce their neocolo-



Australian

Welfare line, Sydney. Capitalism devastates livelihoods of workers.

nial looting and protect their spheres of exploitation through the coercive power of their respective states. It is an elementary principle for Marxists to uncompromisingly oppose the imperialist depredations of their “own” ruling class. An end to imperialism and imperialist wars will only be achieved through the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system internationally.

We Trotskyists, as proletarian internationalists, stand for class-struggle opposition to the Australian imperialist military. In the tradition of our revolutionary communist forebears—Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht and Lenin—we demand not one person, nor one cent for the Australian imperialist military! We say: Down with the U.S./Australia alliance! All U.S. bases and military installations out now! Implacably opposed to Australian imperialism, we demand that U.S./NATO/Australia get out of Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan and that Australia get out of Malaysia, the Philippines, East Timor, the Solomons and keep its bloody hands off the South Pacific!

Down With Nationalist Laborite Protectionist Poison

Such a perspective is anathema to the pro-imperialist Laborite misleaders sitting atop the unions. This bureaucracy is historically based on a thin layer of privileged workers who are bought off by crumbs obtained from the profits from Australian imperialist exploitation abroad. This conditions their loyalty to the Australian imperialist military from the occupation of East Timor to the war in Afghanistan. The bureaucracy’s overall role is to subordinate the interests of the working class to the bourgeoisie.

Illustrating the labour tops’ promotion of collaboration and class peace with the national bourgeoisie is the ACTU’s [Australian Council of Trade Unions] current protectionist “Buy Australian” campaign. They are reportedly proposing at their upcoming national congress that the government give local companies a 25-percent price advantage when bidding for contracts. Meanwhile, the CFMEU construction and mining union is appealing to the Rudd government to only provide “stimulus” monies to those

employers “that give preference to local content” and “local labour” (*Australian*, 26 May).

The bureaucrats’ protectionism was highlighted following the February decision by clothing manufacturer, Pacific Brands, to cut 1,850 jobs and move some operations “off shore.” Rather than defend jobs, the response of the textile union tops was to beg the state to prop up domestic industry. Giving a “militant” cover to this grovelling nationalism, the Federation of Transport Unions (FTU), which includes the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA), Transport Workers Union and the Rail, Tram and Bus Union, organised a union “blockade” should this “iconic” Australian-owned company attempt to shift equipment overseas.

The FTU’s action was backed by construction, firefighters, health services and ambulance unions who called for contracts with Pacific Brands to be cancelled if the move went ahead. Such was the poisonous nationalism associated with this campaign that the Sydney gutter press,

Daily Telegraph, demanded, “Bring on the Blockade.” Support from the *Telegraph* was in turn trumpeted on the MUA website. Falling in behind the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy are reformist opponents of revolutionary Marxism such as the DSP, Socialist Alternative (SAIt) and Solidarity who all wrote about Pacific Brands without a word of criticism of the nationalist protectionism of the union bureaucracy. Taking a slightly different tack, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, in a triumph of historical falsehood and political cowardice, simply disappeared any mention of the trade unions or the blockade from their article on the issue.

The vile nationalist nature of the union tops’ campaign was summed up by the national secretary of the textile union, Michele O’Neil. While addressing a Sydney meeting of Pacific Brands workers in May, O’Neil railed, “Why hasn’t the Government acted to ensure that contracts for the manufacture of uniforms for Government agencies and the Defence Forces are only given to companies that guarantee ethical, Australian production?” She followed this chauvinist appeal to the supposed “superior ethics” of racist Australian capitalism with more of the same: “It’s completely unacceptable that Australian taxpayers pay for our troops to be clothed in uniforms made offshore” (www.tcfua.org.au, 6 May). O’Neil grotesquely seeks to mesh the interests and welfare of the working class to the armed fist of the capitalist state—the military, police, prisons and courts—which serves to defend the private property of the capitalists, with the cops, for example, being used to smash workers picket lines. O’Neil’s statement exemplifies, yet again, the nationalist obeisance of the trade-union tops to capitalist class rule.

Last year, in response to the loss of 600 jobs at South Pacific Tyres, the manufacturing workers union in Victoria declared: “The decision demonstrates a worrying trend of companies taking their work offshore to places like China for cheaper unregulated labour” (AMWU website, 26 June 2008). Anti-China protectionism, so prevalent in the manufacturing union, is particularly pernicious because it lines workers up behind the imperialist rulers *against* the Chinese deformed workers

state. Against the bureaucrats’ attempts to pressure the capitalist rulers to adopt protectionist policies, we Marxists put forward an internationalist class-struggle program to fight job losses at the bosses’ expense.

While elements within the union bureaucracy may, from time to time, be moved to some militancy (for example under pressure from their working-class base), they will attempt at every point to chain workers’ interests to those of their exploiters. We stand on the important but all-too-rare examples of international working-class solidarity, such as the Waterside Workers Federation bans on loading war materiel bound for the imperialist war against the revolutionary struggle of the Vietnamese workers and peasants in the 1960s.

Trade unions are mass organisations to defend the immediate economic interests of the working class against the capitalists and their state. To consistently carry out that role, they must be independent of the capitalists and their state. Stressing this point, Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky noted in “Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay” (1940), “The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat.”

Against the chauvinism of the union tops, and the ALP to which they are connected, it is necessary to forge a new leadership in the labour movement through class struggle, a leadership that begins with the understanding that the interests of labour and capital are irreconcilably counterposed. The ALP is a bourgeois workers party—thoroughly bourgeois in its outlook and program, but based on the trade unions. A revolutionary workers party must be built by splitting the working-class base away from this pro-capitalist leadership.

For Class-Struggle Defence of Immigrants and Refugees

The bureaucrats’ nationalist defence of “Australian jobs” pits workers against their international class brothers and sisters, poisoning the potential for working-class solidarity, and does nothing to save jobs. Blaming overseas workers for the job losses caused by the irrational capitalist system, protectionism also fosters the bosses’ divide-and-rule schemes by scapegoating immigrants and fuelling racist attacks on minorities. Against this we declare with Karl Marx: the workers have no country—workers of the world unite!

The union movement must champion asylum rights for all refugees and oppose deportations. It must stand unequivocally on the side of immigrants, demanding full citizenship rights for all. New layers of immigrants bring into the multi-racial working class valuable experiences from struggles abroad. A class-struggle fight for immigrant rights would help build a bridge to the struggles of workers from Indonesia to the Philippines who are heavily exploited by Australian

continued on page 10

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Number 551 Winter 2009

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We print below, in slightly edited form, the conclusion of a presentation by Don Cane to a Spartacist League educational in the Bay Area on March 14. Part one of this talk, published in WV No. 938 (5 June), focused on the consolidation of an American capitalist-imperialist class during the administration of Ulysses S. Grant. What follows is a discussion of the rise of the American labor movement in the decades following the Civil War (1861-65).

An 1860 pamphlet promoting British investment in American railways made this observation: “The valley of the Mississippi and the basin of the St. Lawrence alone have been truly described as capable of furnishing breadstuffs, coal, iron, and other articles of prime necessity, equal to the consumption of the world.” In 1888 an American writer, William H.



governments could be bought.

These governments, however, represented the competing interests of different factions of exploiters. The Reconstruction governments were alliances of the Republican Party and the freedmen. But the Republican Party was moving quickly away from its historic roots, the alliance of Northern capitalists and small farmers that had dislodged the slave power from the federal authority through the Civil War. The Republican Party became the party of the big capitalists with a fig leaf of interest in the rights and advancement of black people. Under the Republican Party the rights of free blacks in the North were greatly expanded—the right to vote, access to public schools and the protection of the law. (In pre-Civil War days the movement of free blacks was restricted, and kidnapping and being

THE GRANT ADMINISTRATION (1869-1877) AND THE RISE OF U.S. IMPERIALISM

Harrison Jr., wrote a book called *How to Get Rich in the South* that reported that there was “no country that offers such tempting inducements to the capitalist for profitable investments” (quoted in C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New*

PART TWO

South, 1877-1933 [1951]). Both Northern and British capital flowed into the former Confederate South in the period after the Civil War. This great influx of capital found its way not only into cotton production, but more importantly into mining and railroad construction. Of course, banking interests expanded in the South along with the flow of this capital.

It was the construction of a national railroad system that made possible the creation of a national market. The pre-Civil War Southern railroad system could have been described as branches without a trunk. The year 1880 witnessed the first major consolidation movement among Southern railroads, where once independent railroads coalesced into large systems. This consolidation was accomplished by Northern and British capitalist interests. By 1890 more than half the railroad mileage of the South was in the hands of a dozen large companies, mainly centered in New York City. In the process of this consolidation, Southern railroad gauges were adjusted to Northern standards—a difference of three inches involving 13,000 miles of railroad track and significant bottlenecks. The largest railroad company, the Louisville & Nashville, hired 8,000 men who in one day adjusted 2,000 miles of track and the wheels of 300 locomotives and 10,000 pieces of rolling stock to conform to Northern standards.

V.I. Lenin, in the preface to *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), observed: “Railways are a summation of the basic capitalist industries, coal, iron and steel; a summation and the most striking index of the development of world trade and bourgeois-democratic civilization.... The uneven distribution of the railways, their uneven development—sums up, as it were, modern monopolist capitalism on a world-wide scale.” Lenin noted that by 1890 the U.S. had surpassed all of Europe in total railroad mileage. Railroads spread beyond West Europe and North America in the years after 1860; by 1900, Asia, for example, had 34,700 miles of railroad, representing 7.1 percent of the world’s total in that year. Even more dramatic was the replacement of wood and sail by iron, steel and steam in ocean shipping. From the national market to the world market this resulted in a dramatic drop in freight rates.

The U.S. capitalist ruling class profited



Top: National Archives, Above: Harper's Weekly

Top: Final spike for transcontinental railroad was driven on 10 May 1869. Construction of national railroad system was crucial for U.S. national market. Above: Massacre of Chinese coal miners at Rock Springs, Wyoming, 2 September 1885.

handsomely. But this accumulation of profit did not come without bloody resistance. During the 1900 Boxer Rebellion in China, one Boxer poster proclaimed, “The will of heaven is that the telegraph wires be first cut, then the railways torn up, and then shall the foreign devils be decapitated” (quoted in Diana Preston, *The Boxer Rebellion* [1999]). At home, within the U.S., the class struggle was unfolding. This was inevitable at a time when half of the country’s vast wealth was owned by 1 percent of the population—the ruling class that ruled with blatant corruption and violence.

Quoting Friedrich Engels, Lenin’s *The State and Revolution* (1917) established that “in a democratic republic, Engels continues, ‘wealth exercises its power indirectly, but all the more surely,’ first, by

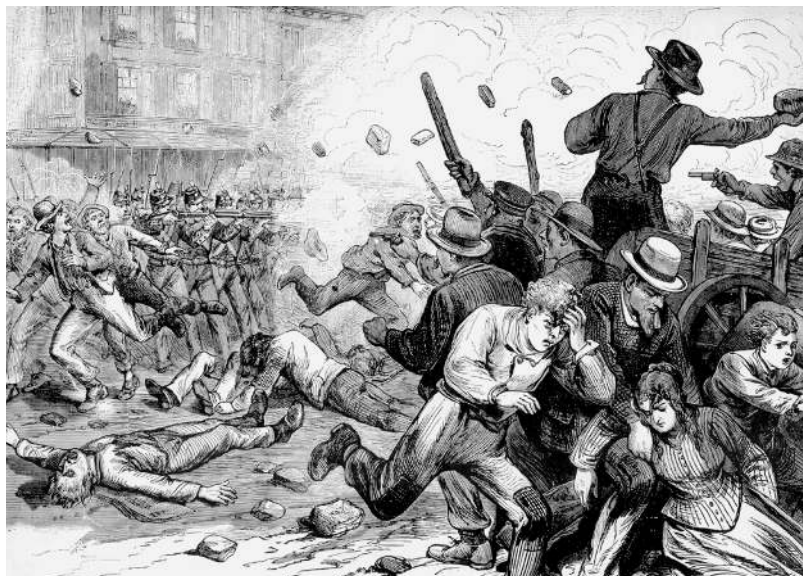
means of the ‘direct corruption of officials’ (America); secondly, by means of an ‘alliance of the government and the Stock Exchange’ (France and America).” Lenin added: “A democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism, and, therefore, once capital has gained possession of this very best shell...it establishes its powers so securely, so firmly, that *no* change of persons, institutions or parties in the bourgeois-democratic republic can shake it.”

In the U.S. South after the Civil War, both the progressive Reconstruction governments and the reactionary post-Reconstruction “Redeemer” governments fit Lenin’s description. Both governments handed out millions of acres of public lands free or at nominal cost to railroad and mining interests. Officials of both

sold into slavery was a constant threat.) It was under Republican Reconstruction governments that social advances were made in the South. Under these circumstances the Democratic Party recuperated by becoming a “big tent” encompassing all those disgruntled with the policies of the big capitalists and hostile to black rights.

The Compromise of 1877, which formally ended Reconstruction by pulling the last Union troops from the South in exchange for allowing Republican Rutherford B. Hayes to become president in the disputed election of 1876, ceded political control of the South to the Democratic Party (see “Defeat of Reconstruction and the Great Rail Strike of 1877: The Shaping of Racist American Capitalism,” WV No. 701, 20 November 1998). The Southern Democratic Party, under the banner of “rule of the taxpayer,” openly constituted themselves champions of the property owner against the propertyless and allegedly untaxed masses. They abolished large numbers of government offices, departments were cut to skeletal staffs, and some public services were simply dropped. One “Redeemer” governor considered public schools “a luxury...to be paid for like any other luxury, by the people who wish their benefits.” Unlike the North, there was no tradition of public schools in the South; it was the Reconstruction governments that brought public schools to the South. The Northern capitalist understood the greater productivity of an educated workforce. The development of the South was to be hindered by high rates of illiteracy. Here are a few examples of how the South’s high illiteracy rate hindered development:

- Deposit banking developed slowly among a population that could not read or write checks;



Culver

Left: State militia fires on striking rail workers in Baltimore during Great Rail Strike of 1877. Right: Haymarket martyrs framed up and hanged in Chicago, 1887, for leading struggle for eight-hour day.



Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper

- The normal business of lawyers and bankers requiring the use of documentation was hindered among the population that could not read or prepare these documents;

- Modern agriculture depended upon many things, including the learning of agricultural colleges; pamphlets and books were of no use among a population that could not read.

The Republican Reconstruction governments and the Democratic “Redeemer” governments were both bourgeois governments, but their particular policies had concrete implications for the historic development of this country and its various regions.

The Emergence of the Working Class

In “Socialist Agitation Among Farmers in America” (1902), German Social Democratic leader Karl Kautsky made this observation:

“Even when a permanent proletariat arose, in which born Americans began to take their places by the side of foreign immigrants and Negroes, the Anglo-Saxons still remained ‘practical politicians.’ They did, indeed, begin to understand that they must go into politics for themselves, but like true practical politicians, they demanded that it should be a shortsighted policy which should take heed only of the moment and regard it more practical to run after a bourgeois swindler who promises real successes for tomorrow, instead of standing by a party of their own class which is honest enough to confess that it has nothing but struggles and sacrifices in store for the next future, and which declares it to be foolish to expect to reap immediately after sowing.

"If at any time Anglo-American workmen had come to the conclusion that they must keep clear of the old capitalist parties, then this ill-starred 'practical' sense would mislead them into founding a party on some single issue, which was supposed to cure at once all evils, free silver, single tax, or the like. But when this agitation did not bring any immediate success, then the masses soon tired of it, and the movement which had grown up over night collapsed quickly. Only the workmen of German origin kept a Socialist movement alive among their countrymen. However, such a movement of immigrants could never hope to become a serious political factor. And as this emigration from Germany decreased considerably...and as the Germans in America soon became anglicized, this German Socialist propaganda not only made no progress, but actually fell off after a certain time."

These “single issues” to “cure at once all evils” were Greenbackism, free silver, bimetallism and the single tax, all of which reflected the pressure of the farm on the worker. I am not an economist so I will give you what I understand to be the broad strokes of these single issues. It was a question of cheap money versus the gold standard. After the Civil War, the federal government was \$1.5 billion in debt; this was mostly held in war bonds. These war bonds when due were payable in gold dollars. To conduct the Civil War the federal government for the first time began printing paper money. What Grant meant by “balancing the budget” was reducing the amount of paper money in circulation.

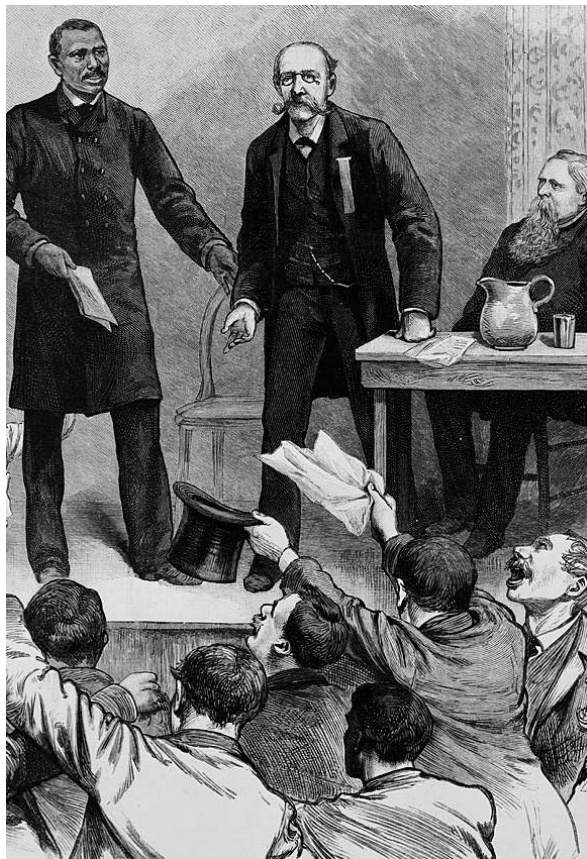
The U.S., however, was actually on two standards—gold and silver. The ruling class favored the European gold standard and felt the necessity to adopt this standard as the one-and-only. The American farmer had already been brought into the capitalist world market where prices were established. It was to the advantage of the farmer to pay his debts with cheap currency—paper and silver. While the European and U.S. ruling classes conducted their business on the gold standard, much of the colonial world was on a silver standard. This raised the costs of maintaining military forces abroad. At home and abroad the U.S. sought to eliminate the use of the silver standard.

At the same time, the American farmer and worker did have one common enemy, the railroads. The privately owned railroad was a powerful means of exploiting the farmer by the capitalist, using higher freight costs. The same railroad owners stood opposed to the railroad workers and the iron workers, the two most important branches of labor. But a labor-farmer alli-

ance was not tenable given the campaign for the eight-hour day, which farmers necessarily opposed.

The Knights of Labor

In 1869, a secret labor organization called the “Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor” was founded by a handful of garment cutters in Philadelphia. The founding leader of the Knights of Labor was Uriah Stephens, a former abolitionist and Lincoln supporter. Early in the Civil War Stephens was described as “one of the first and foremost to urge upon the Lincoln administration the securing of the right to the soil for the liberated freedman of the south” (quoted in Sidney H. Kessler, “The Organization



Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper

of Negroes in the Knights of Labor,” *The Journal of Negro History* [July 1952]). He later left the Republican Party when it became clearly dominated by big capitalists.

The organization Stephens helped to found developed into the first real national trade union and a genuine product of the American workers, encompassing a broad swath of the American working class. The Knights of Labor stood on a modest program. In their own words, they meant "no antagonism to capital." They sought to "create a healthy public opinion on the subject of labor" and aimed to achieve "a full just share of the values or capital it [labor] has created." The bourgeois press hysterically denounced the Knights of Labor as a "dangerous underground political organization." All trade unions were secret organizations by necessity. When the Knights of Labor ended their status as a secret trade union in 1881, their membership experienced steady growth. In 1885 the Knights of Labor won a strike against Jay Gould's Southwest Railway conglomerate. After this victory the Knights of Labor membership mushroomed.

The motto of the Knights of Labor was “an injury to one is the concern of all.” This is the origin of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) slogan, “An injury to one is an injury to all.” The Knights of Labor drew into their ranks tens of thousands of workers who had never been organized before—men and women, black and white, foreign-born and native-born. The Knights of Labor was not organized on an *industrial* but on a *geographical* basis, in the form of assemblies. Each assembly was independently chartered and given a number. All assembly halls featured a reading room with a recommended list of readings. Organizers were appointed by the Grand Master Workman, Terence Powderly, who had superseded the founding leadership by the 1880s.

The Knights of Labor established roots in the South, recruiting blacks and whites alike, skilled labor and unskilled labor. Local assemblies were sometimes inte-

grated and other times segregated, by no particular plan. Some assemblies in the South began as all-black and gradually recruited white members. The biggest demand of the black workers in the Knights of Labor was for black organizers. As one letter writer wrote, "Down in this country the wt. [white] people have set a decoy and fooled the colored people so much it is simply impossible for a wt. organizer to orgze them" (*The Journal of Negro History* [January 1968]). Nonetheless, Powderly appointed very few black organizers. In spite of this, blacks continued to join the Knights of Labor even after it entered a period of decline.

The Knights of Labor, like other labor organizations in the decades after the



New York Public Library

Left: Terence Powderly (center), leader of Knights of Labor, being introduced by Frank Farrell, a black delegate at Knights of Labor's tenth annual convention in Richmond, Virginia, 1886. Above: Henry George, leader of United Labor Party.

Civil War, practiced the reactionary exclusion of Chinese workers. In spite of this ban there were attempts to organize Chinese assemblies of the Knights of Labor in New York and Philadelphia. This pitted the General Executive Board, which refused to grant charters to these assemblies, against local organizers (among whom blacks were represented). Anti-Chinese bigotry was centered in California, where Chinese immigrants made up some 25 percent of the wage workers in the early 1870s. This reactionary ban was a litmus test of labor leadership. It was the IWW that later brought industrial unionism to the American working class, welcoming into its ranks all workers regardless of race.

Powderly, an Irish nationalist, was rumored to have considered petitioning the Pope for his blessing. This was his answer to the reign of terror that fell upon the labor movement after the Haymarket bombing in Chicago in 1886, when working-class leaders, mainly anarchists, were framed up and sentenced to die. Of course, such an effort to gain the blessing of the church aroused distrust among the Protestant members—many of the Knights of Labor leadership were Irish and the pressure of the Catholic church was felt. Powderly was an anti-communist who believed the anarchists were guilty in the Haymarket bombing. But given the enormous support for the Haymarket men among the Knights of Labor workers, it was impossible to openly denounce the anarchists. Powderly fought to keep politics out of the Knights of Labor. But this was difficult as all political currents within the workers movement found expression within the organization.

Henry George was the leader of the United Labor Party and author of a popular book titled *Progress and Poverty* (1879), a central tenet of which was the “single tax.” The single tax was a tax on land values, to replace all other taxes. As a candidate for New York City mayor in 1886, George outpolled Republican Teddy Roosevelt and likely the Democratic candidate as well. But by the tried-

and-true American method of election fraud, he was denied his victory.

Henry George also joined the Knights of Labor. This was the beginning of an uneasy alliance between George and Powderly. Both leaders were anti-communists and believed that the Haymarket martyrs were guilty. But George favored clemency for the convicted Haymarket men, while Powderly opposed even this call. Haymarket martyr Albert Parsons was expelled from the Knights of Labor, and the Knights of Labor General Executive Board refused to endorse the first May Day general strike. This boycott was successful, except in Chicago where the Knights of Labor ranks joined the strike. The differences between George and Powderly were strictly within the bounds of capitalist politics—protectionism (Powderly) or free trade (George). The fortunes of the United Labor Party began to wane and George reversed himself, making a public statement asserting that the violence each Haymarket man had espoused made him guilty of conspiracy under Illinois law. He implied that even if none of them had thrown the bomb, their fates were the logical outcome of their dangerous ideals. In 1887, all United Labor Party members holding dual membership in the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) were expelled.

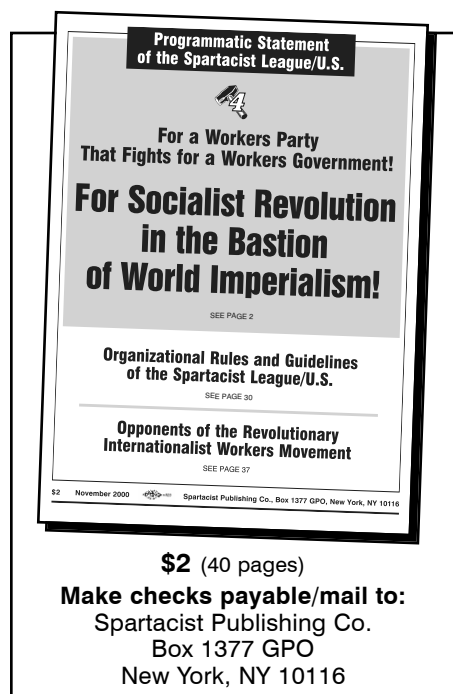
The SLP was the organization of the German socialists in the U.S. to whom both Kautsky and Engels had addressed their remarks. A section of the Socialist Labor Party was to go on to play an important role in the founding of both the American Socialist Party and the IWW later on. Throughout the period that we are discussing the SLP fought to carry out a revolutionary perspective. They stood out as a principled party among labor opportunists of all sorts.

Populism

By 1890 two organizations that stood outside the labor movement claimed over three million members: the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union, based in the South and West, and the Farmers' Alliance, based in the North. In 1892 the two organizations held a joint convention, nominated a candidate for president, and adopted the name of "People's Party," from which they became known as Populists. They declared that "the newspapers are largely subsidized or muzzled; public opinion silenced; business prostrate; our homes covered with mortgages; and the land concentrating in the hands of capitalists.... The fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few."

Having delivered this sweeping indictment, the Populists put forward their remedies: the free coinage of silver, a graduated income tax, postal savings banks and government ownership of railways and telegraphs. At the same time, they called for the popular election of Senators—who at that time were appointed by state legislatures—but not the president, who to this day is still elected by the Electoral College. They also condemned the use of federal troops

continued on page 11





Kaveh Golestan



Anti-Shah demonstrators raise huge portrait of Khomeini, 1979. WV called for workers revolution in Iran, opposing both bloody Shah and Islamic reaction.

Sydney, Australia: Spartacists protest mass executions carried out by bloody Khomeini dictatorship, January 1989.



Australasian Spartacist

Iran...

(continued from page 1)

butchers! For a socialist federation of the Near East!

Reformist Left Bowed to Mullahs

All sides in the tumult shaking Iran today hark back to the 1979 overthrow of the country’s despised autocrat, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, as a model for their political activity. At that time, the convulsive opposition to the monarchy included powerful workers strikes in the oil fields and throughout the country; Iran could have become the cockpit of proletarian revolution in the Near East. However, the mass mobilizations were channeled into a reactionary crusade for an “Islamic Republic,” with virtually the entire left in Iran and internationally cheering on the mullah-dominated opposition led by Ayatollah Khomeini. Uniquely on the left, we called for the proletariat to struggle independently of and against the Islamic hierarchy, to sweep away the Peacock Throne and establish a workers and peasants government.

The establishment of a Shi’ite theocracy following the overthrow of the Shah resulted in the savage repression of Kurds and other minorities; the execution of strikers, homosexuals, adulterers and others accused of “crimes against God”; the stoning of unveiled women, the slaughter of leftists and the suppression of all opposition parties and press. As we wrote in our International Declaration of Principles (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998):

“The 1979 ‘Iranian Revolution’ opened up a period of ascendant political Islam in the historically Muslim world, a development which contributed to and was powerfully reinforced by the counter-revolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. Khomeini’s seizure and consolidation of power in Iran was a defeat akin to Hitler’s crushing of the German proletariat in 1933, albeit on a narrower, regional scale. The international Spartacist tendency’s slogan ‘Down with the Shah! No support to the mullahs!’ and our focus on the woman question (‘No to the veil!’) stood in sharp opposition to the rest of the left’s capitulation to mullah-led reaction.”

Today, much of the reformist left repeats the treacherous policies of 30 years

ago by lining up behind one or another wing of the ruling clergy in Iran. The remnants of Tudeh, the pro-Moscow Communist party that supported Khomeini and then was crushed by him, called for a vote to “reformist candidates,” including Moussavi, whose hands are covered with the blood of their own comrades (*Tudeh News*, June 2009). Meanwhile, the fake Trotskyists of the Iranian Revolutionary Marxists’ Tendency (IRMT), associated with the International Marxist Tendency (IMT) led by Alan Woods, dimly appealed in a June 16 open letter to Mousavi (www.Marxist.com): “You must either side with the people who voted for you or with the *vali-e faghih* [Supreme Leader] (and the repressive apparatus of the state). Being at the service of the people would mean that you should cut your links with the whole state apparatus.” The IRMT describes itself as descended from the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS), which also supported Khomeini’s rise to power.

In the U.S., some left groups have sided with the pro-Ahmadinejad wing of the clerics against the protests, claiming that in this way they are opposing U.S. imperialism. A June 24 article posted on the Workers World Party (WWP) Web site declared, “Revolutionary socialists or communists sharply differentiate themselves from Ahmadinejad on many points. In the current conflict, however, his side is more anti-imperialist.” After three decades of the mullahs’ bloody rule, WWP still proclaims: “The Iranian people have benefited enormously from their revolution and cannot easily be turned back” (*Workers World*, 17 June). Likewise, a June 22 article (pslweb.org) by the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), a split-off from WWP, denounced the protests: “U.S. and British imperialism hope that a victory of this movement would result in the counter-revolutionary overthrow of the anti-colonial 1979 revolution.”

Key to the future of Iran is the proletariat, the only class with the social power and objective interest to lead radicalized youth, women and oppressed nationalities behind it in an assault on the capitalist system itself. While individual workers have no doubt participated in the protest demonstrations, there is no sign as yet that any section of the powerful Iranian proletariat has intervened to assert

its *independent* class interests against the Islamic regime. Two statements by workers groups in Iran have been widely posted on the Internet. One, signed by “Laborers of Iran Khodro” (the largest automotive company in the Near East) called for a 30-minute protest strike in “solidarity with the movement of the people of Iran.” And in a statement by the Vahed Syndicate, representing Tehran bus workers, the union similarly expressed support for “the movement of Iranian people to build a free and independent civil society.”

The fundamental question facing the

Tudeh and other left parties helped bring to power.

For Permanent Revolution!

In 1978-79, the left in Iran and internationally supported the Khomeini-led forces of clerical reaction by claiming that they were leading an “anti-imperialist” revolution. The International Socialist Organization headlined an article: “The Form—Religious, The Spirit—Revolution” (*Socialist Worker*, January 1979). The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the U.S. proclaimed “Victory in Iran: Iranian Masses Show the Way for Workers



Jahangir Razmi

August 1979: Execution of Kurds by Iranian mullah regime, which carried out massacres of leftists, trade unionists and minorities after coming to power. Moussavi (inset), who served as prime minister from 1981 to 1989, was major part of coldblooded killing machine erected by Khomeini.



AFP

Iranian proletariat today is the need to build a Marxist workers party that fights for the class independence of the proletariat—from the clerics, the nationalists and the pro-imperialist elements—and for working-class rule. A key difference between the situation today and that of 1979 is that, before the victory of the “Islamic revolution,” significant sections of the proletariat were led by leftist parties, centrally Tudeh. That generation of left-wing worker cadres was wiped out by the very regime that the leaders of

Around the World” (*Militant*, 23 February 1979). Brian Grogan, a leader of the British group of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec) of the late Ernest Mandel, even boasted that he had joined in chants of “Allah Akbar” during demonstrations in Tehran. The HKS, affiliated with the USec, went so far as to run in 1979 for election to the mullahs’ Assembly of Experts—before joining the ranks of the mullahs’ victims.

While we rushed to the defense of the HKS and other leftists victimized by the mullah regime, the American SWP and the USec, blinded by their grotesque opportunism, for months minimized the danger to their own imprisoned comrades. As we wrote in “SWP/USec Criminal Tailism: History Takes Its Vengeance” (*WV* No. 239, 14 September 1979): “USec, SWP, HKS—Ernest Mandel, Jack Barnes and the rest: you have committed a crime, for which you will be held responsible before the court of history. You must live with it because your own comrades may die for it.”

The so-called “Islamic revolution” of 1979 represented a negative confirmation of Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky’s theory and program of permanent revolution. In the epoch of imperialism, all wings of the bourgeoisie in countries of belated capitalist development like Iran are too dependent on their ties to the imperialists and too fearful of independent working-class action to play any

International Communist League Pamphlet

The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution

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Down With Executive Offices of the Capitalist State!.....56

AUSTRALIA...A22 BRITAIN...L120 CANADA...C092 IRELAND...L130 SOUTH AFRICA...A4 USA...US52

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- **A Trotskyist Critique of Germany 1923 and the Comintern**
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These articles together constitute an introduction to the historically founded principles and program of Trotskyism (i.e., genuine Marxism).

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From Mossadeq's National Front to Khomeini's Reaction
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SPARTACIST SPRING 1982

From Mossadeq's National Front to Khomeini's Reaction

Iran and Permanent Revolution

The bloody dictatorship of the Islamic Republic in Iran is...
...the programmatic basis for their support to Khomeini, which...
...the programmatic basis for their support to Khomeini, which...

Only the revolutionary proletarian can liberate Iran from Islamic dictatorship and medieval backwardness.

SPARTACIST

progressive role. They are incapable of solving the bourgeois-democratic tasks associated with the great European revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries, such as agrarian revolution, national independence, democratic freedoms and women's rights.

The experience of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution showed that it is only the proletariat, leading the peasant and urban plebeian masses, which can liberate the societies of countries of belated capitalist development. In the Near East, only the proletariat can break the chains of reactionary traditionalism and imperialist subjugation. As Trotsky declared in 1928: "The further East we go, the lower and viler becomes the bourgeoisie, the greater are the tasks that fall upon the proletariat" (*The Third International After Lenin*). In seizing state power and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, the workers of the backward countries will be compelled to institute socialist measures, such as the expropriation of the means of production and the establishment of a planned economy. However, these revolutions will survive and flourish only if they are extended to the advanced capitalist countries of the West and Japan.

Rejecting this Marxist perspective, Tudeh, following in the footsteps of the Stalinized Communist International (Comintern), insisted that because of Iran's economic and historical backwardness, the proletariat could not take power in its own name. Instead, they argued that there must be a "two-stage revolution," the first stage of which would be led by the "progressive" or "anti-imperialist" bourgeoisie and limited to solving democratic capitalist tasks. Socialist revolution, they claimed, would come in the distant, unspecified future. As always, the second, proletarian, stage of the revolution never came.

Tudeh and the rest of the Iranian left invested the Islamic clergy with "anti-imperialist" credentials, blinding their working-class base to the grave dangers they faced in the event of a mullah victory and setting the workers up for brutal suppression. In fact, in the early years of the mullah regime, Tudeh cadre went so far as to fight shoulder to shoulder with the murderous pasdaran and the fascistic hezbollahi thugs in killing other Iranian leftists. And during the Iran-Iraq War, which was reactionary on both sides, the Tudeh party told its members to report to their mosques (!) for military duty under the pasdaran.

In promoting the concept of "two-stage revolution," Stalin and his cronies could at least claim that they were giving support to modernizing bourgeois forces. For example, during the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, the Chinese Communist Party was directed by Stalin and his henchmen to subordinate itself to the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang led by Chiang Kai-shek. The Stalinists argued that this step toward consummating the supposed "first stage" of the Chinese Revolution was justified by the fact that Chiang opposed the decaying Manchu Dynasty and decried the binding of women's feet. Nevertheless, the result of this Stalinist betrayal was the slaughter of tens of thousands of Communists and militant workers who were disarmed by Chiang in the Shanghai massacre of April 1927.

What claim to modernism could the retrograde caste of mullahs in Iran possibly have had? The reactionary character of the Islamic opposition was manifest from the outset, above all by its position on the woman question. As we warned in "Down With the Shah! Down With the Mullahs!" (WV No. 219, 17 November 1978):

"The Muslims call for an *Islamic* republic. They support the Constitution of 1906 and particularly the added 1907 clause which explicitly guarantees clerical veto power over all legislation. The mullahs' opposition to the shah is a reactionary one, no matter how it plays on the crimes of the shah's dictatorship. The fanatical hatred of social advances since the time of the prophet Muhammed (the seventh century A.D.!) has its parallels in the military-based regimes of Pakistan or Libya and in the region-wide revival

Socialist Worker

January 1979

THE FORM-RELIGIOUS THE SPIRIT-REVOLUTION!

Iran is a fabulously wealthy country. It carries billions of dollars each year through oil. It earns millions more from natural gas, of which it holds the world's second largest reserves. Yet its people



Iranian woman being prepared for execution by stoning, 2004. Fake leftists hailed and continue to hail Islamic regime that carries out such barbaric practices as "revolutionary."

of religious obscurantism and its vicious oppression of women."

The Islamic Republic has been hell for women. After coming to power, Khomeini reimposed the *hijab* for women in public. Those who flouted the edict were subjected to 74 lashes or a year's imprisonment. Meanwhile, a man's testimony was deemed worth twice that of a woman. Lashings and amputations were applied by the courts, and women convicted of adultery could be subject to stoning. Child marriage was re-introduced, while laws encouraged polygamy and prevented women from leaving abusive husbands. The husband's right of unilateral divorce was reinstated.

Nevertheless, modern practices have seeped into Iran. While child marriage was reintroduced, the average age of first marriages for women has continued to rise from about 19 before 1979 to 24 today. According to the *New York Review of Books* (2 July), literacy rates exceed 95 percent for both sexes. Today, a majority of college students are women. But despite these trends, women constitute only 15 percent of the formal-sector paid labor force. The 2006 Iranian census revealed that only 3.5 million Iranian women were salaried workers, compared with 23.5 million men.

During a wave of protests in Iran six years ago, we laid out our perspective for women's liberation through socialist revolution:

"In the countries of the East, the question of women's oppression is one of the most powerful motor forces of socialist revolution. Indeed, when the Bolsheviks arrived in Central Asia in the years following the October Revolution, it was among women that they found the main point of support for their program and won their key cadres. The same holds true for Iran. A Leninist-Trotskyist party, championing women's rights against the age-old stranglehold of religion and the family, will find its most loyal and courageous fighters among women."

—"For Workers Revolution in Iran!" WV No. 807 (1 August 2003)

WCPI: Apologists for "Democratic" Imperialism

The Worker-communist Party of Iran (WCPI) has denounced both the Ahmadienejad and Moussavi wings of the clerical regime. However, in its opposition to the Islamic Republic, the WCPI has had a long history of appealing to the imperialist powers—far greater enemies of the world's oppressed than the ayatollahs of impoverished neocolonial Iran—as potential allies. Thus a WCPI representative wrote to the London *Evening Standard* (17 June) regarding the protests in Iran: "Now is the time for people in the

Workers World

25 June 2009

back control over its rich resources.

But 2009 is not 1953, when the CIA overthrew Prime Minister Mossadegh and installed the Shah. The Iranian people have benefitted enormously from their revolution and cannot easily be turned back. □

claim that the Soviet Union became "state capitalist" by the mid 1920s.

We Trotskyists unconditionally defended the Soviet degenerated workers state against internal counterrevolution and imperialist attack, while calling for proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy. We said "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" and called for extending the social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples. While warning that the Kremlin bureaucracy was capable of selling out to the imperialists, we pointed out that the Red Army intervention was objectively in defense of the Soviet Union and a blow against the Islamic fundamentalists who threatened to return women to virtual slavery. The Kremlin's withdrawal from Afghanistan led to the victory of the *mujahedin*, with today's hideous consequences for Afghan women, and gave a giant impulse to the forces of capitalist restoration that triumphed in the Soviet Union.

Iran Needs Workers Revolution!

Iran today is a cauldron of contradictions and deepening tensions waiting to erupt. A new generation has grown up—as much as 70 percent of the population is under 30 years of age—that did not experience the 1979 "Islamic revolution" or the savage war with Iraq in the 1980s. These largely well-educated young people, their vision broadened by access to the Internet and other media, are smothered by the medieval strictures imposed by the clerical regime. Meanwhile, Iran remains a prison house of peoples in which Azeris, Kurds, Arabs, Baluchis and others oppressed by the Persian-chauvinist regime constitute nearly half the population.

The current protests have taken place in the midst of a severe economic downturn, made worse by the world financial crisis. Overwhelmingly dependent on oil, Iran's foreign exchange receipts plummeted as the price of oil fell from a high of about \$140 a barrel to around \$70 today. At the same time, the inflation rate is about 24 percent and official unemployment stands at 17 percent. More than 35 percent of the population under the age of 30 is experiencing long-term unemployment.

The only road to genuine social and economic modernization, to liberating Iran from imperialist subjugation, to freeing Iranian women from enslavement, to winning the right of national self-determination for the Kurds and the myriad other oppressed nationalities, lies in the smashing of capitalist class rule in Iran. The Iranian masses urgently need a working-class revolutionary party, capable of leading the struggle against the reactionary clerical regime. To forge such a party, leftist militants in Iran must understand the roots of the betrayals by those misleaders who in 1979 helped prepare a historic defeat by embracing the forces of Islamic reaction as a "progressive" alternative to the Shah. ■

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Australia...

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imperialism. The fight to organise the unorganised, combined with the struggle for jobs for all at equal pay for equal work—including for women, youth and minorities—would strengthen the organised labour movement and help to unify the working class in struggle against the bosses’ attacks. A class-struggle leadership in the unions would fight to mobilise the social power of the working class, with its strategic immigrant component, in a broad struggle against the racist exploitative capitalist system.

This perspective is counterposed to that of the reformist opportunists who seek to pressure the ALP or bourgeois parties like the Greens to act in the interests of the workers and oppressed. A case in point is the Cliffite Solidarity group. Crawling to the ALP, they wrote in the April issue of their paper, “The Rudd government can continue to let the Liberals whip up hysteria, or it can go on the front foot. That means ditching the Liberals’ rhetoric of ‘border protection’ and ‘people smuggling’ and implementing a genuinely humanitarian policy that says ‘refugees are welcome’.” What planet do these people live on? It was the federal Keating ALP government that introduced mandatory detention of refugees in the early 1990s and Rudd’s Labor government aggressively enforces this policy today. Indeed “White Australian” racism has historically been a principal pillar of the ALP. While the White Australia policy has been formally abolished, Australian Laborism continues to identify with the xenophobic fears of its own ruling class.

Meanwhile, posturing as militant anti-racists, SAlt scream “Rudd’s betrayal of refugees” while lamenting that the Greens “have conspicuously avoided explicit calls for mandatory detention to be scrapped” (*Socialist Alternative*, May 2009). SAlt’s hollow outrage at Rudd notwithstanding, the ALP are in fact doing exactly what they promised at the last federal elections. At that time SAlt led the charge in calling for a vote to the capitalist Greens in order to pressure the Labor Party. This truly was an act of class *betrayal*. In contrast, we Marxists told the truth about the objective interests of the working class. Declaring the

elections a bipartisan war on the working class and oppressed we demanded, “No vote to Labor or bourgeois Greens!” (see *Australasian Spartacist* No. 200, Summer 2007/2008).

We Need a Multiracial Revolutionary Workers Party

The economic crisis currently immiserating workers and the oppressed exemplifies the anarchy and decay that besets capitalist production in general, and for which there are no simple trade-union

of society. As the bosses continue to throw hundreds of thousands into the ranks of the unemployed, the fight for jobs becomes equivalent to the fight against the devastation of the working class as a whole. What is necessary is a massive program of public works, with workers paid at union wages, to rebuild the infrastructure of this decaying capitalist system, to tear down and replace the crumbling public schools, hospitals, roads and rail systems. Against layoffs we demand jobs for all by calling for a

from the unions and atomisation of the working class. Internationally the proletariat continues to suffer the effects of the 1991-92 capitalist counterrevolutions in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. This historic defeat for the world’s working class has resulted in a regression of political consciousness which, albeit uneven, means that few workers today identify their struggles with the need for socialism. However, as was seen in the recent mass picket at Melbourne’s Westgate Bridge against the scab-herding union busting of the John Holland company, there is a felt anger and willingness to fight amongst many workers. The capitalist mode of production, which creates the very conditions which grind down the working class and set them one against the other in the fight to survive, also propels the working class to do battle against its exploiters. As long as capitalism exists it will generate the conditions for potential class-struggle opposition to capitalist rule.

Today the working class is at an historically difficult pass. The anger of workers and the poor must be organised around a revolutionary Marxist program and directed against the capitalist class as a whole, not channelled into chauvinist belly-crawling before the ALP. History has repeatedly shown that “unity” with the capitalist rulers or their social-democratic political agents in the workers movement is the road to defeat. It is necessary to break with the politics of Laborism! Workers need a political party that represents their interests against the capitalist class. Integral to the building of this Leninist vanguard party will be forging an internationalist class-struggle leadership within the unions.

The Spartacist League of Australia, as part of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) is committed to building such a revolutionary Marxist party to lead the proletariat, at the head of all the oppressed, in sweeping away the entire capitalist system of wage slavery, repression and war. The only way to allow for the development of the productive forces, assuring a society of abundance, is by ripping them out of the hands of the capitalist class through socialist revolution and the establishment of an international planned economy. If humanity is to have a future, those who labour must rule. For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia!■



Angela Wylie

Melbourne, May 31: Indian students protest ongoing violent racist attacks. Labor government’s xenophobia fuels racist reaction on streets. Multiracial working class must champion rights of all immigrants.

solutions. The key contradiction of capitalism was identified by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: under capitalism production is socialised, that is, concentrated and organised in vast corporations, but the means of production—and the appropriated socially produced wealth—remain the private property of a tiny, rich capitalist class.

In their drive to expand profits, the capitalist rulers have looted the wealth of this country and sabotaged its vital infrastructure. They squander the economic surplus they appropriate through the exploitation of labour on speculative binges, which inevitably end in the idling and destruction of productive forces. To unmask the exploitation, robbery and fraud of the capitalist owners and the swindles of the banks, we demand the bosses open their books to all members

shorter work week at no loss in pay to spread the work around.

We call for free, decent public transport and education, and free 24-hour quality health care and childcare; for fully paid retraining programs and an increase in unemployment benefits equivalent to a living wage. Such demands, the elements of which were laid out in Trotsky’s Transitional Program, the founding document of the Trotskyist Fourth International, will not be granted by the profit-gouging capitalist rulers. Capitalist decay and the catastrophe of mass unemployment, which threatens the disintegration of the working class, can only be effectively fought by a workers movement led by those committed to the liquidation of capitalist wage slavery through socialist revolution.

Years of betrayal by the union misleaders have led to a haemorrhaging

Mohamed...

(continued from page 3)

whose loyalty to “democratic” British imperialism means they have signed on to the government’s witch hunt and uttered hardly a word, much less led any class struggle, against the gutting of hard won rights going back to the English Civil War.

Defence of minorities against grinding racist oppression must go forward with and as part of the struggles of the organised working class, or both struggles lose ground. And Muslims and other minorities are not just helpless victims, they are an integral part of the working class. The power of the multiethnic proletariat was clear in the August 2005 strike which paralysed Heathrow Airport when British

Airways ground crews struck in defence of sacked catering workers, mainly Sikh women. But the TGWU leadership rode to the rescue of the bosses and called off the wildcat strike in deference to the anti-union laws, and the catering workers remained sacked.

The key to unchaining the power of the working class is the forging of a multi-ethnic revolutionary workers party built through hard political combat against Labourism—a party whose purpose is to take the class forward to power through socialist revolution. Revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist order worldwide alone can lay the material basis for ending torture, racist oppression, exploitation and war. *Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Down with the racist “war on terror”!*■

SF8...

(continued from page 2)

men to Young’s killing. The “discovery” of a shotgun alleged to be the “missing murder weapon” was found not to match any weapons evidence in the case. Similarly, DNA swabs taken from the defendants in June 2006 did not match any evidence from the crime scene. The prosecution has refused to release fingerprint evidence that exonerates all of these men. The judge ruled against releasing FBI wiretap surveillance of Black Panther phone lines based on an FBI “taint team” affidavit asserting that there had been no wiretap surveillance of the SF8. One need only recall the case of another former Panther, Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt) who spent 27 years behind bars for a murder that the FBI and California state officials knew he did not commit. The FBI claimed that it had “lost” wiretaps proving that Geronimo was at an Oakland Panther meeting, 400 miles away from

L.A. where and when the murder was committed. Geronimo was released from prison in 1997 when an Orange County Superior Court Judge ruled that he had been denied a fair trial because the prosecution had withheld vital evidence from the defense.

The FBI’s murderous COINTELPRO program took the lives of 38 Panthers. Those they couldn’t kill were framed up and thrown in jail, including Mumia Abu-Jamal who remains on death row today on fabricated charges of killing a Philadelphia police officer in 1981. Mumia’s death sentence was secured by the prosecutor’s lying argument that his membership in the Panthers as a teenager “proved” that he had been planning to kill a cop. The prosecution of the SF8 is a continuation of the same COINTELPRO-style frame-up campaign. Together with other fighters against racist injustice, labor unions and federations like the S.F. Labor Council and others, the Partisan Defense Committee demands: Drop the charges *now!*■

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The Rise of U.S. Imperialism...

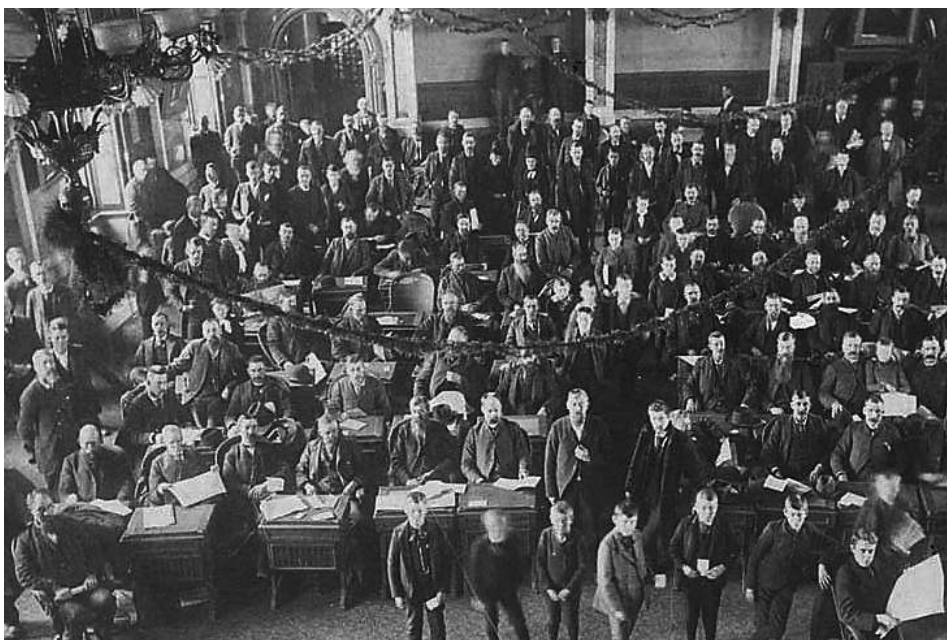
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in labor disputes. On this platform, the Populists polled over a million votes in the 1892 elections, captured 22 presidential electors and sent a powerful delegation to Congress.

In 1893 the American capitalist economy was shaken by a periodic crisis: banks and businesses went into bankruptcy; factory production came to a halt; the unemployed searched for work that did not exist; and the prices of farm products (including cotton) fell disastrously. These conditions sent Populism on the march, with the working class being pulled behind the petty bourgeoisie.

Shaken by economic fluctuations, workers and farmers protested the economic inequalities of the capitalist order, and they found common ground in this multi-class populist movement. They protested the domination and outright corruption of the big financial and industrial interests that controlled the economy and the party machines of both Republicans and Democrats. Looking back at an America that used to be, they protested the inevitable centralization of the economy and state power in the hands of the capitalists. They voiced a theme that we still hear today: share the wealth more fairly and improve the living standards of the masses. They sought to remove the government from the hands of the big capitalists and put it in the hands of the people. They sought to stop imperialist war and keep the nation at peace. What they won fell well short of these objectives. But they did eventually win some reforms: recall of elected officials, direct election of U.S. Senators, the graduated income tax, gains in social welfare, prison reform, child labor legislation and many of the public commissions that regulate capitalist business practices.

The support for the People's Party crossed not only the class line but also the race line. The People's Party was crushed by heavy repression that included the utilization of vicious anti-black racism. But what finally ended and destroyed the People's Party as a national party was the



W. F. Farrow

Left: Members of Populist Party in Kansas legislature, February 1893. Right: Democratic leader William Jennings Bryan, pictured in 1908 campaign poster, played key role in drawing Populist movement into Democratic Party.

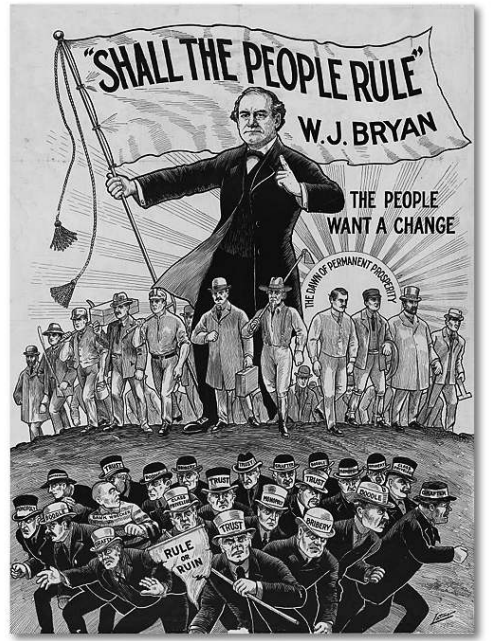
co-optation of its forces into the Democratic Party. Democrat William Jennings Bryan voiced their sentiments in his "Cross of Gold" speech at the Democratic Convention in 1896, invoking the image of Christ on the cross: "You shall not press upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold." He declared that their cause "was as holy as the cause of liberty—the cause of humanity." He exclaimed that the contest was between the idle holders of capital and the toiling millions. Then he named those for whom he claimed to speak: the wage-earner, the country lawyer, the small merchant, the farmer and the miner.

The Democratic Party's appeal to labor voiced by Bryan in his "crown of thorns" speech was reinforced in its radical-sounding platform in 1896. "As labor creates the wealth of the country," ran one plank, "we demand the passage of such laws as may be necessary to protect it in all its rights." Referring to the 1894 Pullman strike, led by railway workers union leader Eugene Debs, the platform denounced "arbitrary interference by federal authorities in local affairs as a violation of the Constitution of the United States and a crime against free institu-

tions." A special objection was lodged against "government by injunction as a new and highly dangerous form of oppression by which federal judges, in contempt of the laws of states and rights of citizens, become at once legislators, judges, and executioners." The remedy advanced was a federal law assuring trial by jury in all cases of contempt in labor disputes.

Early American Communist leader and founding Trotskyist James P. Cannon made the following observations regarding the founding of the American Socialist Party, a party that in part arose out of the People's Party. In an article in *International Socialist Review* (Winter 1960), "American Radicalism: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," Cannon wrote, "The distinctive factor which made possible the development of this new socialist movement at that time was the turn of a number of influential individuals and groups away from the policy of class collaboration in politics to the policy of independent socialist action." Eugene Debs and others who promoted the formation of the Socialist Party in 1901 had supported Bryan and the Democratic Party in 1896. Cannon went on to explain:

"The composition of the party was also unfavorable in some respects.... The Popu-



Library of Congress

list movement in the South was deflected into a reactionary channel. But there was another part of this Populist movement which was drawn into the Socialist party. The Socialist party in many parts of the country consisted of a very large percentage of former Populists. The composition of its membership in the western part of the country was very heavily weighted on the side of the petty bourgeoisie in the cities and in the countryside. At one time the largest single state membership of the Socialist party, and, if I'm not mistaken, the largest socialist vote proportionally, was in the state of Oklahoma. In the other western agrarian states also the hard-pressed tenant and mortgaged farmers and desperate petty bourgeoisie streamed into the Socialist party from the Populist movement and swelled its ranks. So the class composition of the party was not as proletarian as an ideal Socialist movement should be."

This unfavorable class composition of the Socialist Party, the weakness of the trade unions, the mistakes of the militant IWW and the treachery of labor reformism prepared the way for the decline of the American labor movement's impulse to class struggle. What we see here are the historical roots of American labor and the black struggle. Much has, in fact, changed, but evidence of these roots can still be seen today. ■

Britain...

(continued from page 12)

Financial Times described the issues behind the construction strikes: "Unemployment is a big factor behind the disputes. This is a cyclical industry and 25-30 per cent of the 30,000 workers are jobless after projects dried up in recent months. There are more than 1,500 foreign workers on UK sites, which has fuelled the stoppages" (ft.com, 19 June).

Unions Must Defend Immigrant Workers!

Our articles have warned that any mobilisation of workers on the basis of protectionism is poisonous to class consciousness and plays into the hands of the fascists. In the recent elections to the European parliament, the fascist BNP secured two seats, while the right-wing populist UK Independence Party beat the hapless Labour Party, which fell into third place. We said no vote to the No2EU campaign that was led by RMT rail union leader Bob Crow in alliance with the Socialist Party and others. No2EU was supposed to provide a "left" alternative to the BNP but was centrally based on support to the anti-foreigner Lindsey strikes—the "British jobs" crusade that

the BNP was riding high on. A protest rally on 6 May at the 2012 Olympics building site in Stratford, London, addressed by Bob Crow and Keith Gibson, was an orgy of nationalist protectionism. Many protesters had been brought in from Lindsey and some sported signs saying "British Jobs for British Workers" and "Fairness for British Workers." This is particularly provocative at the Olympics site where some 200 Romanian workers have been removed in a clampdown on immigrants in recent months.

As Marxists we oppose the European Union, an imperialist trade bloc and a vehicle for European capitalist classes to co-operate against the working class and oppressed minorities of each country. Our opposition is based on proletarian internationalism, which is counterposed to the "little England" nationalist opposition to the EU that is associated with Old Labour reformism, to which the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Socialist Party are wedded. Old Labour's erstwhile claim to "socialism" amounted to nothing more than a commitment to nationalised industry under capitalism, which is inherently protectionist. The extensive nationalisations of industry carried out under Clement Attlee's Labour government in the post-World War II period had nothing to do with socialism but were a "rescue package" for British capitalism, which was in profound decline against its rivals.

Compared to the Socialist Party, the SWP has taken a more critical stance on the anti-foreign-worker crusade. A recent headline says: "'British Jobs' Slogan Pushed Back but Its Argument Remains a Danger" (*Socialist Worker*, 27 June) and the article notes, "Socialist Worker has always firmly insisted that this is a divisive slogan that feeds racism and pits

workers against each other." This is a cover-up of the SWP's actual support to the reactionary strikes, which is expressed in a petition being circulated by the SWP. On the one hand it says:

"The slogan 'British jobs for British workers' that has come to prominence around the dispute can only lead to deep divisions inside working class communities. The slogan, coined by Gordon Brown in his 2007 speech to Labour's conference, is being taken up by the right wing press and the Nazi BNP. These are forces that have always been bitterly hostile to the trade union movement."

But the petition also says clearly: "We support the demands of the Lindsey Oil Refinery strike committee" ("Unite to Fight for Jobs Petition" at petitiononline.com). Those demands include: "Union controlled registering of unemployed and locally skilled union members, with nominating rights as work becomes available," which is merely another version of "British jobs for British workers."

For the trade-union bureaucracy, the Socialist Party and the SWP, support for these "British first" strikes stems from their reformist program, which accepts the framework of nationalism as opposed to proletarian internationalism. They have no answer to the worldwide capitalist crisis other than to rally in defence of British capitalism. In virtually all major capitalist countries, the union tops have responded to mass job losses and unemployment with chauvinism and calls for increasing protectionism. As we wrote in "Down With Reactionary Strikes Against Foreign Workers!": "For the bourgeoisie, 'free trade' and protectionism are options they can debate, but for the proletariat, protectionism is poison. It is a classic means of channelling discontent over job losses into hostility towards foreign

workers and immigrants while building illusions in the benevolence of our 'own' capitalists.... There is no answer to the boom-and-bust cycles of capitalism short of proletarian socialist revolution that takes power out of the hands of the irrational capitalist ruling class and replaces it with a planned, socialised economy. Only the achievement of a world socialist order can eliminate the age-old problem of poverty, scarcity and want."

We seek to build a multiethnic revolutionary workers party, forged in opposition to Labourism, to overthrow the bloodsoaked British capitalist order and replace it with working-class rule. Down with the reactionary "United Kingdom"! For a federation of workers republics in the British Isles! For a Socialist United States of Europe! ■



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NOTICE

Workers Vanguard skips alternate issues in June, July and August. Our next issue will be dated July 31.

WORKERS VANGUARD

Down With Chauvinist Campaign Against Foreign Workers!

The following article was written by our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Britain

LONDON, June 28—Powerful solidarity strikes of construction workers at many of Britain's power stations, oil and gas facilities over the past week have defeated a union-busting effort by the bosses and secured the reinstatement of some 647 construction workers at the Lindsey oil refinery in Lincolnshire, run by oil giant Total. These workers were fired on 18 June for having walked out on strike in protest when one subcontractor laid off 51 workers who, according to *Socialist Worker* [Britain] (20 June), were "stewards, activists or union members." At the same time, a different subcontractor hired a different set of roughly 60 workers who had almost identical skills as those who had been laid off. The sackings were rightly seen as an attack on the union and sparked sympathy strikes which spread to plants across England, Wales and Scotland in a show of solidarity that appears to have forced a complete climbdown by the bosses.

These sympathy strikes were necessary in order to defend the existence of the unions, and the outcome was certainly in the interests of the working class as a whole. But at the same time, the unions in these construction sites are spearheading a chauvinist campaign against foreign workers that can only fuel racist attacks on immigrants and is *poison* to class consciousness and working-class solidarity. Pitting British workers against their class brothers from other countries, this crusade undermines the fighting capacity of the unions and is detrimental to the interests of the multiethnic working class as a whole. The bosses will always seek to exploit every division among workers to go after all workers; this chauvinist campaign against foreign workers gives the bosses yet another means to attack the unions.

Beginning in January, construction workers at the Lindsey refinery staged a wave of reactionary strikes against Italian and Portuguese workers under the slogan "British jobs for British workers," a cry long associated with the fascists. Among the leaders of these strikes was Keith Gibson of the Socialist Party [affiliated with Socialist Alternative in the U.S.], who is a prominent member of the GMB (gen-

eral union). The Socialist Party has tried to airbrush that slogan out of the picture. In the January strikes, the demand for "British jobs for British workers" became "local" jobs for "local" workers, but the content remained the same. The reactionary strikes and protests received enthusiastic backing from rabidly anti-union, anti-immigrant newspapers such as the *Daily Mail* and from the fascist British

ing class in Britain and those of the workers of Europe as a whole." The reactionary politics of this crusade are shared by the Labourite leadership of the Unite and GMB trade unions, who embraced this patriotic crusade as naturally as they embraced Labour's racist "war on terror" that is directed against Muslims.

The bottom line for the trade-union movement must not be *who* the contrac-

their homes this month by violent racist mobs, who also attacked a rally in support of immigrants. These atrocities show that there is a vital need for the unions to *defend immigrant workers!* To bring the unions' strength to bear in defence of immigrants means fighting for an end to the reactionary strikes against foreign-born workers on construction sites. We say: Down with racist attacks on immigrant workers! No deportations! Down with work restrictions on workers from EU countries in East Europe! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

Mobilising the working class in defence of immigrants requires a class-struggle leadership in the unions, forged as part of the struggle for a Leninist party that would act as a "tribune of the people." This party must be built in opposition to the existing trade-union bureaucracy and pseudo-socialists like the Socialist Party, which tries to claim that the original strikes were not aimed at foreign workers. But the truth is there for all to see. At a protest in Newark, Nottinghamshire, on 24 February against jobs being awarded to Spanish and Polish workers at the Staythorpe power station, a section of the demonstrators chanted "foreigners out." Last month in Milford Haven in South Wales, another anti-immigrant strike resulted in some 40 Polish workers losing their jobs. According to the London *Guardian* Web site (21 May), the strike was settled when "the Dutch-based employer, Hertel, agreed to withdraw 40 Poles and replace them with UK staff at the terminal owned by Exxon-Mobil and Total." While admitting that "Hertel faxed the media that the Polish workers [had] been removed from the site," the Socialist Party dismissed this by saying merely that "this was never a demand of the union." The Socialist Party proclaimed the outcome as another "victory" and blatantly admitted that the British workers "were not opposed to laggards from Poland getting work on the site as long as local laggards were given the opportunity of the work first as under the union agreement" (*Socialist*, 28 May-3 June).

Having embraced the reactionary campaign against foreign workers, the Unite and GMB union bureaucrats are now conducting a strike ballot that would bring future strikes within the provisions of the anti-union laws. The Unite statement motivating strike action repeats the claim that British workers are being discriminated against: "UK workers want fair access to UK construction projects" and alleges that "at a time when the engineering construction sector has the ability to be offering quality jobs to working people, UK workers are being excluded from these job opportunities" (unitetheunion.com). As we said regarding the January strikes, *no* British workers were fired at either Lindsey or Staythorpe. We also insist that until the workers take state power, the proletariat will not be in a position to worry about the ebbs and flows of labour migration, which is subject to the world economy more generally.

The prospect of continuing strikes has enraged the construction bosses, who are incensed that projects such as the desulphurisation plant at Lindsey are behind schedule, which means extra costs. Strikes could also disrupt major infrastructure projects such as new power stations and London's Crossrail scheme. The

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Defend Unions in the Construction Industry!



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June 19: Striking workers picket outside the Lindsey oil refinery to protest mass retaliatory firings for earlier walkout against layoff of 51 workers.

National Party (BNP). The outcome of the January strike at Lindsey says it all: over 100 jobs that were expected to go to Italian workers were allocated to British workers.

From the outset we have insisted that the struggle against protectionist poison is vital to the interests of all working people. In contrast to the majority of the left, we opposed the January strikes at Lindsey, noting in "Down With Reactionary Strikes Against Foreign Workers!" (WV No. 930, 13 February): "The strikes were not intended to secure more jobs or indeed any gains for the working class as a whole, nor to defend existing jobs. They were about redividing the existing pool of jobs according to the nationality of the workers. These reactionary strikes, pitting British workers against foreign workers and immigrants, are detrimental to the interests of the multiethnic work-

tors hire, but at *what rate of pay* and under what conditions. The way to undercut attempts by the bosses to "level down" the wages and working conditions, including safety standards, of all workers by playing off one nationality against the other is for the unions to demand: Full union pay for all work at the prevailing rate, no matter who does the job! Equal pay for equal work! What's needed is to mobilise the multiethnic working class *against* Gordon Brown's Labour government in a fight for jobs for *all*, through a shorter workweek with no loss in pay, and to undertake a union organising drive to draw into their ranks all workers, including those in dangerous and low-paying jobs.

The chauvinist anti-immigrant campaign takes place in the broader climate of a worldwide economic recession in which virulent racism against immigrants is on the rise. A chilling example is the recent provocative attack by the state on immigrant cleaners at London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). Outrageously, when the cleaners turned up to a 6:30 a.m. meeting on 12 June, ostensibly called to discuss working conditions, 40 immigration police in riot gear who had been concealed in the building descended on these low-paid, vulnerable workers. Many have since been deported or await deportation, mainly to Latin America. The real "crime" of these workers was that they had been organised into the Union union.

Immigrants from East Europe in particular are being viciously scapegoated for the economic crisis that stems from the capitalist system itself. Thus in Belfast, over 100 Romanian immigrants, mainly Roma (Gypsies), were driven from



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Protectionist rally against foreign workers at Lindsey oil refinery in January.