

Greece: Down With PASOK Government's "Stability Program"!



Athens: Tens of thousands protest against government austerity program during May 5 general strike.

AFF

Forge a Multiethnic Revolutionary Workers Party! For a Socialist United States of Europe!

As part of an economic bailout package introduced by Greece's European Union (EU) partners and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Greek prime minister George Papandreou has announced a new round of brutal attacks on the standard of living of that country's working population. The austerity measures imposed by Papandreou's Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) government include slashing public sector wages by 14 percent, cutting average pension benefits by 11 percent, raising the average retirement age by four years and jacking up the sales tax to 23 percent. Despite its name, PASOK is a capitalist party whose policies differ little from those of the right-wing New Democracy, which

has alternated with PASOK as the ruling party of Greece but was voted out in the elections of October 2009. These all-sided capitalist attacks would be devastating to the living standards of the Greek masses, particularly the most vulnerable sectors, such as the poor, elderly and women. But thus far they have been met with stiff resistance by the country's combative working class. As their part of the bailout deal, the EU and IMF committed an unprecedented sum—almost \$1 trillion—for loans to Greece, and potentially other heavily indebted EU countries like Portugal and Spain, to help them cover their budget deficits and refinance their debt. After months of blocking every proposal, the German government finally joined with other EU powers to seal the deal after growing fears of a possible default by Greece, Spain and Portugal raised the spectre of a renewed, full-blown financial crisis in Europe. Greece's economic woes

occur against the backdrop of the international economic crisis, which has also exposed the seething national antagonisms beneath the surface of European capitalist "unity" as embodied in the EU and the euro. In Europe, as elsewhere, each national ruling class is seeking to ratchet up the exploitation of its own working class, while simultaneously maneuvering to gain the advantage against its rivals. The PASOK government's string of anti-working-class attacks has provoked a wave of militant strikes, including four one-day general strikes so far this year, with a fifth one scheduled for May 20. The protest demonstrations during the most recent general strike, on May 5, were the largest since the fall of the Greek military junta in 1974. More than 150,000 marched in the streets of Athens, while large protests also occurred in other cities. As the government's measures were being debated, some protesters attempted to storm the parliament building in Athens'

Syntagma Square but were beaten back by the hated riot police. The death of three bank workers who suffocated in a fire caused by a Molotov cocktail thrown during the May 5 protest in Athens has been seized on by the government to unleash a wave of police repression directed in particular against anarchist and immigrant groups. Cops ransacked the offices of an immigrant support network and raided cafes and homes in the Exarchia neighborhood, an anarchist stronghold, detaining dozens. While Papandreou denounced the "violence" of the demonstrators, a co-worker of those killed in the fire issued a widely disseminated statement revealing that the bank workers had been threatened with firing if they failed to show up for work and then were prevented from leaving when they attempted to do so. According to this worker, the building, which had no fire certificate, no sprinklers and no fire exits, continued on page 8



On Haiti Capitulation

Massachusetts
29 April 2010

I welcome the 4/27/10 corrective statement issued by the ICL, “Repudiating Our Position on Haiti Earthquake: A Capitulation to U.S. Imperialism”. I had a harder time understanding the initial position taken by *Workers Vanguard* than any other issue since I began reading your press in 1997. I emailed my concerns on 2/6/10 and was about to follow up this weekend since I have continued to be unsatisfied with the line in *WV* on this issue.

Natural disasters are not a new phenomenon. Marxists have also been around for quite some time, so it’s instructive that no revolutionary has called for imperialist troops in the aftermath of natural disasters. Rosa Luxemburg didn’t do it in the aftermath of a volcano. You didn’t do it after Hurricane Katrina or the tsunami in Indonesia. There is some difference between calling for “troops

in” and refusing for the time being to call for them out, but it’s basically hair-splitting, and moreover was blurred by your initial analysis, which presented the US military as the only force that could provide relief. I had a hard time wondering how long you were going to refuse to call for troop withdrawal, how many other exceptions there could be, and what facts changed in *WV* (No. 955) that you called for “troops out,” without repudiating your initial position. I think the corrective is overdue but absolutely essential to maintaining the revolutionary future of the ICL.

I do not consider myself a great Marxist theoretician, so it’s hard to insist on my point of view against others who know far more than I do. I get things wrong and it’s frustrating. I try to learn and get things right for the next time. I hope that the comrades who held to the initial error can be convinced of the correction and that the party as a whole can

find its bearings. The ICL is operating under enormous pressures, trying to accomplish the most difficult and important task in human history: international, workers revolution and the establishment of a socialist society. I would love to see the day it finally happens.

Joel

The following letter, dated February 6, was received on May 8 after we requested that it be resent.

My initial reaction to the earthquake in Haiti was for the U.S./UN military to get out and let the rescue volunteers do their job. I don’t think there’s anything reformist about demanding that the imperialist military keep their bloody hands off a small neocolony. Nor do I see anything wrong with wanting international volunteers to help a desperate people in a time of emergency. This is different from the perennial reformist demand of “butter, not guns”.

Workers Vanguard (No. 951) cites the history of imperialist abuse and the current crimes being committed, but does not call for U.S./UN troops out now. *WV* states: “The U.S. military is the only force on the ground with the capacity—e.g., trucks, planes, ships—to organize the transport of what food, water, medical and other supplies are getting to Haiti’s population. And they’re doing it in the typical piggish U.S. imperialist manner. We have always opposed U.S. and UN occupations in Haiti and everywhere—and it may become necessary to call for U.S./UN out of Haiti in the near future—but we are not going to call for an end to such aid as the desperate Haitian masses can get their hands on.”

The Internationalist Group, in a 1/30/10 post, takes *WV* to task on this position. I expect *WV* to respond in the next issue, but I felt the need to write anyway, as a longtime *WV* reader, to express my confusion on this issue. I’d like to know what’s wrong with calling for troops out now and allowing volunteer rescue workers in? If troops are allowed in, when would you call for them to leave? The devastation will be longterm and so likely will the occupation, which will be a staging ground

against the Caribbean proletariat and especially Cuba.

To be clear, I do not support the IG position that the earthquake devastation opens up a good opportunity for a small but militant proletariat to lead the Haitian masses in socialist revolution. The IG seems to conjure up revolutionary opportunities all over the world. I’m just waiting for them to find a small but militant proletariat ready to lead Afghanistan in socialist revolution. I will need to research the history but Haiti does seem more akin to Afghanistan, as the SL has maintained for years. (It is not a sudden 2010 discovery, as the IG writes.) It is ultra-leftist to see revolutionary opportunities everywhere and always, despite the devastation, and in some areas disappearance, of the working class, and the tremendous retrogression in consciousness since the demise of the Soviet Union. It denies reality and leads to opportunism by ignoring the political gulf that separates even militant protesters from Marxism.

I’m writing in the hope that your next article will answer these questions and provide some historical examples where it was correct for Marxists to even temporarily drop the call for imperialist forces to get out of a neocolony. Reformists love to make exceptions, e.g., troops in Ireland to provide breathing space, etc. Marxists are relentless in criticizing any bend towards imperialism. I think your quote by Trotsky about troops putting out a fire is not a sufficient analogy. I don’t know if the SL has made a mistake by over-reacting to the IG’s erroneous position or if I am simply not understanding your analysis.

Joel

* * *

5 May 2010

Comrades,

I am very relieved to see the line change—it was very difficult to understand how it was OK, from a Trotskyist perspective, for the US military to invade Haiti. Apparently it should have been impossible. I give you credit for publicly and vociferously rejecting and denouncing that line.

DY



TROTSKY

Karl Marx on the American Civil War

From the outset of the U.S. Civil War, much of the British capitalist class, whose textile industry depended on cotton imported from the Southern slave states, clamored for the North to allow the South to secede. Countering those forces, Karl Marx, who fought to rally the English working class to support the Union’s blockade of Confederate ports, emphasized that the war posed a struggle to the death between two social systems that could no longer coexist: industrial capitalism in the North and chattel slavery in the South. It took the Civil War, the Second American Revolution, to crush the system of black enslavement. And it will take a third, socialist, American revolution to achieve genuine social equality for the oppressed black masses and the emancipation of all labor through the overthrow of the decrepit capitalist order.

“Let him go, he is not worth your anger!” Again and again English statesmanship cries—recently through the mouth of Lord John Russell—to the North of the United States this advice of Leporello to Don Juan’s deserted love. [In literature and the theater, Leporello is the servant and loyal friend of the libertine Don Juan.] If the North lets the South go, it then frees itself from any association with slavery, from its historical original sin, and creates the basis of a new and higher development....

“*The South*,” however, is neither a territory closely sealed off from the North geographically, nor a moral unity. It is not a country at all, but a battle slogan.

The advice of an amicable separation presupposes that the Southern Confederacy, although it assumed the offensive in the Civil War, at least wages it for defensive purposes. It is believed that the issue for the slaveholders’ party is merely one of uniting the territories it has hitherto dominated into an independent group of states and withdrawing them from the supreme authority of the Union. Nothing could be more false.... A large part of the territory thus claimed is still in the possession of the Union and would first have to be conquered from it. None of the so-called border states, however, not even those in the possession of the Confederacy, were ever *actual slave states*. Rather, they constitute the area of the United States in which the system of slavery and the system of free labour exist side by side and contend for mastery, the actual field of battle between South and North, between slavery and freedom. The war of the Southern Confederacy is, therefore, not a war of defence, but a war of conquest, a war of conquest for the spread and perpetuation of slavery....

The present struggle between the South and North is, therefore, nothing but a struggle between two social systems, the system of slavery and the system of free labour. The struggle has broken out because the two systems can no longer live peacefully side by side on the North American continent. It can only be ended by the victory of one system or the other.

—Karl Marx, “The Civil War in the United States,” 7 November 1861

WORKERS VANGUARD

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21 May 2010

Free the MOVE Prisoners!

The following May 10 protest letter was sent by the Partisan Defense Committee to Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole chairman Catherine C. McVey.

The Partisan Defense Committee once again joins with those supporting the release of the eight surviving political prisoners who have been collectively known as the MOVE 9. These men and women were victims of racist police brutality. They are innocent of the crimes for which they were convicted and imprisoned for over three decades.

We are outraged by your continued refusal to allow these innocent prisoners to be paroled. As we said in our letter of 6 March 2008, “We are mindful that a common ruse for denying parole for those who have been falsely convicted is the claimed failure to show ‘remorse.’ Having committed no crime, the imprisoned MOVE members have no reason to demonstrate any so-called ‘remorse.’” And yet that is exactly the pretext you consistently have used to turn down the MOVE 9’s parole. In effect you are denying parole for anyone who maintains his or her innocence.

After a year-long siege, on August 8, 1978, an army of nearly 600 police surrounded the MOVE home to evict its defenseless residents. Three months before the attack, MOVE had allowed the police to search their home, resulting in the removal of what were inoperable weapons. The police turned on “deluge guns,” flooding the basement of the house, and then unleashed a furious fusillade so intense that one of their own officers, James

Ramp, was killed in the police cross fire.

At least eight witnesses testified that no gunshots came from the MOVE house. Three firemen said they did not know where the gunshots came from and had seen no MOVE members with guns. When weapons supposedly found at the MOVE home were brought to court, none of them had any fingerprints of the defendants on them, and none of the MOVE prisoners were ever charged with illegal weapons possession. After the trial, when presiding judge Edwin Malmed was asked, “Who shot James Ramp?” he replied, “I haven’t the faintest idea.” The MOVE prisoners were convicted of among other charges, conspiracy, a catchall charge used especially to prosecute people for their shared political beliefs when prosecutors are unable to prove that a criminal act was committed.

The denial of parole for the MOVE 9 can only be seen as part and parcel of

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MEMORIAL MEETING

A memorial meeting
in honor of
our comrade Joe Verret
will be held in Los Angeles
on June 12.

For more information, call
(213) 380-8239.

Virginia Governor Salutes Slavocracy

“Confederate History Month”: Racist Garbage

Almost 150 years after the armed rebellion of the slaveowning Southern ruling class against the growing domination of the capitalist class in the North, we are still being subjected to the spectacle of unreconstructed apologists for the Confederacy beating the drum for the “lost cause.” This time, it’s the governor of Virginia, Robert McDonnell, who at the behest of the Sons of Confederate Veterans declared April Confederate History Month in Virginia. Adding insult to injury, in nary a one of the six “whereas” clauses in his original proclamation announcing this paean to the slavocracy did the governor mention the word “slavery.”

When called out about his “omission,” McDonnell—whose intellect was “refined” by earning a law degree at televangelist Pat Robertson’s Regent University, formerly the Christian Broadcasting Network University—retorted: “There were any number of aspects to that conflict between the states. Obviously, it involved slavery. It involved other issues. But I focused on the ones I thought were most significant for Virginia.” Obviously, the millions of black people held as chattel were not “significant” for the governor.

Among those who embrace the “heritage” of the slaveholders, it’s a common refrain: the Civil War wasn’t about slavery. But as Alexander Stephens, vice president of the Confederacy, laid out in his famous 1861 “Cornerstone” speech, “Our new Government is founded...its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and moral condition.”

Virginia is the state where the most Civil War military engagements were fought, during which tens of thousands of Union soldiers, black and white, laid down their lives stamping out the system of slavery. It is the state where slaveowner Robert E. Lee was finally defeated and surrendered. It also is the state where the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision was met with a campaign of “Massive Resistance” in the late 1950s, as the segregationist state government closed down

public schools, sometimes for years, rather than desegregate. When Democrat Doug Wilder, then a state legislator and later the first black governor of Virginia, pushed for a holiday to honor Martin Luther King in 1984, what he finally accepted was King’s name tacked on to the preexisting state holiday for Confederate generals Lee and Stonewall Jackson! Up to this day, a major artery through northern Virginia, right across

population is confronted every day with the legacy of chattel slavery. The enduring reality of the color line also serves to obscure the fundamental division of society into antagonistic social classes with irreconcilably opposed interests.

McDonnell’s Confederate History Month proclamation was issued amid a burgeoning white racist backlash, e.g., the Tea Party movement, over Wall Street Democrat Barack Obama’s ascendancy to the

ken bodies of black people forced into peonage with the defeat of Reconstruction, a Confederate memorial was built, complete with a frieze depicting a black mammy taking care of a white baby and a slave boy going off to war with his master. Ever since Virginia-born arch-racist president Woodrow Wilson dedicated the memorial in 1914, presidents have been paying homage to the Confederate dead.

While Obama honors the rebel dead, we recall the first Memorial Day (earlier known as Decoration Day) before the holiday was later turned into a commemoration of U.S. imperialist warmongering. On 1 May 1865, in Charleston, South Carolina, nearly 10,000 former slaves marched onto the grounds of the old Washington Race Course, where wealthy Charleston planters and socialites had gathered before the war. During the final year of the war, the racecourse had been turned into a prison camp, where hundreds of Union soldiers died and were buried. Black schoolchildren marched by their graves, softly singing “John Brown’s Body” and decorating the graves with flowers. The former slaves were joined by several Union regiments, including the 104th and 35th Colored regiments, as well as the famous 54th Massachusetts. The liberators marched around the graves with the liberated in solemn salute.

The American Civil War was the last great bourgeois-democratic revolution. In pursuing its class interests, the Northern bourgeoisie was compelled to abolish black chattel slavery and destroy the old Southern plantation agricultural system. The recruitment of blacks into the Union Army helped turn the tide of the war. But the promise of black freedom was betrayed when the Northern capitalists formed an alliance with the remnants of the slavocracy in order to exploit Southern resources and the freedmen. The capitalist system in its youth was historically progressive, but today produces nothing but unmitigated horror. Our task is to build a revolutionary party that champions the cause of all the oppressed. Finish the Civil War—for black liberation through socialist revolution! ■

Civil War: Black Troops Helped Turn Tide



Library of Congress

Company E, 4th U.S. Colored Infantry.

the Potomac from the Lincoln Memorial, is named Jefferson Davis Highway.

For the better part of a century, the Democrats, earlier the main party of the slaveholders, ruled the Jim Crow South with an iron fist supplemented by Klan terror. In the supposedly “post-racial” America of Barack Obama, who preaches the lie that the civil rights movement moved the U.S. “90 percent of the way” to ending racism, black people are still branded by their skin color. Specially oppressed as a race-color caste at the bottom of this capitalist society, the black

White House. In fact, as Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism, Obama is the overseer of the whole plantation, whose job is to enforce the racist capitalist status quo. The president created an uproar last Memorial Day when he sent a wreath to the Confederate war memorial in Arlington National Cemetery. The cemetery was built on Robert E. Lee’s opulent Virginia estate during the Civil War as a resting place for Union dead, and over 15,000 are buried there. Later, in the spirit of reconciliation between North and South, consolidated over the bloody, bro-

25 Years Ago: Racist Government Bombed Black Philadelphia

Remember the MOVE Massacre

May 13 marks the 25th anniversary of the 1985 MOVE massacre. Eleven people, including five children, were burned alive after police, acting on orders from black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode and in collusion with the Feds, dropped a powerful incendiary bomb on the Osage Avenue home of the largely black MOVE commune in West Philadelphia. The firebombing followed a 12-hour siege during which the cops unloaded over 10,000 rounds of ammunition into the house. Firefighters on site were held back, and cops shot at anyone who tried to escape the burning building. The inferno spread, destroying 61 houses and leaving hundreds homeless in the black neighborhood.

Then-president Ronald Reagan, the FBI, the Philly cops and Wilson Goode were all

responsible for this hideous crime, a stark example of the racist terror that black people are subject to in capitalist America. None of the perpetrators ever faced charges, while Ramona Africa, the sole adult survivor, served every day of her seven-year prison sentence. Immediately after the massacre, and ever since, the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the SL, have sought to sear this racist atrocity into the memory of the working class.

In July 1985, the SL held a public forum in New York City to honor the MOVE martyrs, at which family members and supporters spoke. We wrote in protest

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Police helicopter drops bomb on MOVE commune, Philadelphia, 13 May 1985. Eleven MOVE members, including five children, were killed and an entire black neighborhood was destroyed in the ensuing inferno.

UPI, Barger/WCAU-TV (inset)



After Decades of UAW Misleaders' Betrayals

California NUMMI Auto Plant Axed

On April 1, Toyota shut down the New United Motor Manufacturing (NUMMI) auto assembly plant in Fremont, California. Some 4,700 employees, including 3,700 members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) union were thrown out of work, and tens of thousands of workers in the auto parts supply chain and other businesses could be axed. This is a body blow to the multiracial working class in the San Francisco Bay Area, once a bastion of union power. It is also testimony to the trade-union bureaucracy's class-collaborationist policies, which are based on the lie of a "partnership" between labor and its capitalist exploiters and their parties, particularly the Democrats, who falsely pose as "friends of labor."

First opened in 1963 by General Motors, the sprawling Fremont facility was once the biggest auto plant on the West Coast.

agers to "solve problems," undermining the union shop steward system, facilitating speedup and subverting union work rules. The union misleaders instituted a new "partnership" with NUMMI, paving the way for massive speedup and additional labor discipline.

In exchange, the workers were promised "lifetime jobs" in the supposed Toyota tradition. This promise has always been a lie, as NUMMI (like Toyota in Japan and elsewhere in the U.S.) relied heavily on so-called "temporary" workers who could be dismissed at any time. Up to the last day, the Toyota bosses worked to squeeze every last ounce of production out of NUMMI workers. They held out the promise of a "retention bonus" in the form of severance pay as an inducement to keep the assembly line rolling without disruption and then threatened to withdraw the

employed are subject to intense speedup, while being hamstrung by a six-year no-strike pledge.

In exchange, Gettelfinger accepted 17.5 percent of GM stock, to be held by the retiree health care trust, with a union official taking a seat on the company board of directors. That their own union leaders are stockholders in GM, sitting at the auto bosses' table where they will have a direct hand in ratcheting up the exploitation of the UAW's remaining members, was also not lost on many NUMMI workers. As it is now, with GM again starting to turn a profit and ramping up production, it can hire new workers at half as much pay for doing the same work as existing UAW members, by the terms of the sellout contract brokered by the union tops in 2007.

Union bureaucrats like Doug Fraser encouraged Toyota to "export" jobs to the U.S. in the first place by calling for protectionist legislation that would impose harsh trade sanctions if the foreign automakers did not assemble vehicles in the U.S. After starting at NUMMI, Toyota went on to open five non-union plants, four in the "open shop" South. Over the ensuing decades, the UAW tops have steered clear and wide of the necessary class-struggle fight to organize the non-union plants. In testimony before Congress in 2008, Gettelfinger actually boasted that the "gap in labor costs" between the Big Three and the non-union "foreign transplant operations will be largely or completely eliminated."

In the face of such misleadership, some auto workers turned to "oppositionists" who offer nothing but more of the same rotten program of reliance on the class enemy and its representatives. A case in point is a grouping in Local 2244 around *Autoworkers News*, a newsletter put out by Local committeeman Juan Castillo, which called to "put pressure on the state politicians to pass the bills that would

bonus offer. In the end, NUMMI workers were dumped on the recession-ravaged streets with a minimal severance package averaging \$54,000, while those on disability, after working countless years on backbreaking assembly lines, are to receive less than \$22,000, regardless of seniority.

The response of the bureaucrats to this catastrophe—from the UAW International down to the local officials—was to go begging to the capitalist politicians for redress, coupled with an orgy of flag-waving chauvinism against "foreign" Toyota. This included a petition campaign for a consumer boycott of Toyota and union-organized pickets of Toyota dealerships under the banner "Toyota Is Killing American Jobs."

This "America First" protectionism poisons international solidarity with foreign workers, scapegoating them for the loss of jobs in the U.S. At the same time, such chauvinism sacrifices the class interests of U.S. workers to those of the union-busting, job-slashing American bosses, concealing the fact that it is the capitalists and their profit system that are responsible for the devastation of labor. For decades, the UAW officialdom has bent over backward to bolster the "competitiveness" of the American automakers. As many angry NUMMI workers themselves noted, the UAW tops gave a free pass to GM, whose pullout from NUMMI last year opened the door for Toyota to dump its only union operation in the country.

GM ended its partnership with Toyota during last year's "restructuring" of the American auto industry, which was a condition of the massive financial bailout of GM and Chrysler. The purpose of this deal, spearheaded by Obama's Democratic Party administration, was to restore the profitability of GM and the other U.S. automakers by breaking the back of the UAW. And UAW president Ron Gettelfinger worked hand in glove with Obama to make it happen. As a result, GM closed down 14 plants and laid off some 21,000 workers. Those still



Reuters

February 12 rally at UAW union hall protests plant closure.

give incentives to Auto Manufacturing Companies" (28 September 2009) to save NUMMI. While railing against Local officials who amnestied GM, this opposition amnestied Toyota, playing into the hands of the company's machinations. When Local officials claimed they were holding out for a better severance package, *Autoworkers News* (11 January) complained that the company's paltry offer "may be rescinded because of the Union's position."

Betrayed by the union bureaucracy, a number of NUMMI workers began to denounce the union as a whole, calling the UAW "Union Against Workers." Such sentiments are inflamed by the actions of the union bureaucrats. Union officials reportedly called in the cops—the bosses' strikebreaking thugs—when a January 24 union meeting, for which the opposition had mobilized, dissolved in an uproar.

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Reuters

UAW president Ron Gettelfinger (second from left) with Big Three auto bosses at December 2008 Senate bailout hearing.

It was closed in 1982 amid a wave of mass layoffs and plant shutdowns in auto. At the time, class-struggle militants in UAW Local 1364 at the plant fought to mobilize the power of the union to fight against the layoffs and keep the plants open. In a leaflet titled "We Need a Sit-down!", the Militant Caucus argued that a plant occupation backed up by mass picket lines "would inspire the support of thousands of UAW members industry-wide across the country who are themselves facing layoffs or already on the street." As a former member of the Militant Caucus wrote in a letter to *Workers Vanguard* last year (see "UAW Tops Roll Over as Bosses Ax NUMMI Auto Plant," WV No. 946, 6 November 2009):

"When we called for a sit-down strike, it struck a real chord, especially among a small number of very experienced workers who took up the call and fought for it. Local 1364's union bureaucrats countered with the argument that these tactics were OK in the 1930s but were now illegal, and union members needed instead to get out the vote for the Democrats. Unfortunately, the bureaucracy's fear-mongering and defeatism prevailed. In all, close to 6,000 auto workers from the Fremont plant were laid off and thrown onto the streets of Reagan's America."

In 1984, the Fremont plant was reopened as a joint venture between GM and Toyota. According to the mediator who brokered this partnership, GM wanted to learn Toyota's innovative production system, and Toyota sought to gain experience running a factory in the United States. As he pointed out, the linchpin for cementing the deal was then-UAW International president Doug Fraser, who "helped persuade Toyota that workers in Fremont would adapt to Japanese production methods" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 28 February). The UAW tops imposed an agreement that tore up the old union contract, disbanded Local 1364, which had a reputation for militancy, and replaced it with Local 2244. All former GM workers had to go through a screening process in order to be rehired. In line with Toyota's "team" concept, workers on the shopfloor were expected to "cooperate" with man-

Victory to Long Beach Boeing Strike!



AP

LOS ANGELES—On May 11, 1,700 Boeing production workers organized in UAW Local 148 went on strike at the company's Long Beach, California, assembly plant, stopping production of the massive C-17 military transport aircraft that have been a workhorse of U.S. imperialism's occupations of Iraq, Afghanistan and Haiti. The strikers, most of whom have worked at the plant for decades and are close to retirement, overwhelmingly rejected the company's proposal to make the workers pay more for their pensions and medical benefits. The multiracial workforce also faces layoffs as Boeing cuts production, with Congress planning to stop pur-

chases of the C-17 by 2013.

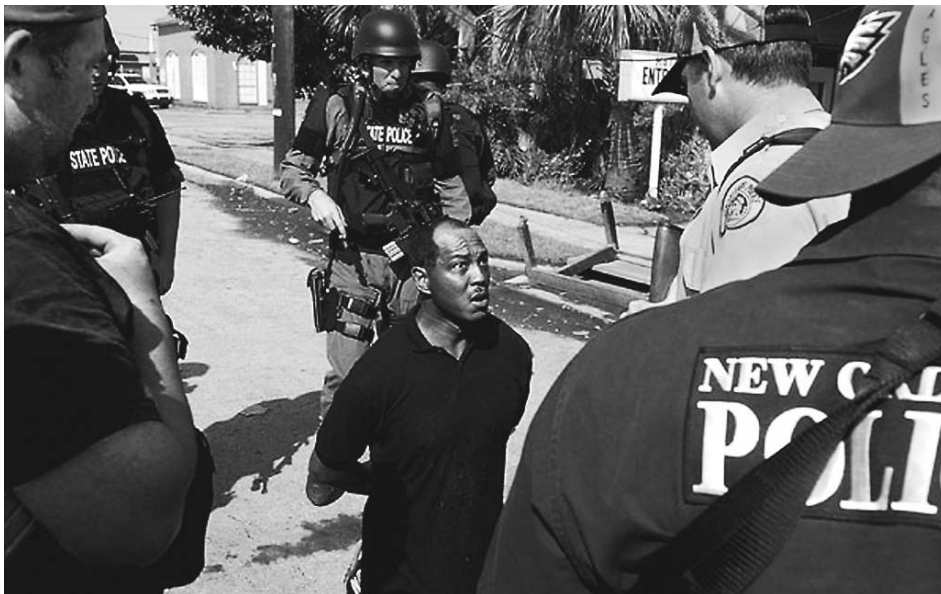
L.A. Spartacist League comrades have shown support for the strike on the picket lines and at a May 14 rally, which was attended by Local 148 members and other unionists. The comrades report that workers are plenty angry at the company for threatening to throw them on the scrap heap after years of toiling for the aerospace giant. Strikers have acted to stop scabs, but many are still crossing the picket lines. Teamsters trash haulers and UPS truck drivers have pledged to honor the picket lines. It is the duty of all area unions to back Local 148 as it fights this important labor battle.

Katrina: Danziger Bridge Cover-Up Exposed

Homicidal New Orleans Cops

The notorious New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) has been so flagrantly kill-crazy since Hurricane Katrina that newly elected mayor Mitch Landrieu called in the federal Justice Department earlier this month to help “clean up” the NOPD. Last year, the Feds raided the NOPD’s homicide department as part of investigations into killings by the cops on New Orleans’ Danziger Bridge, six days after the hurricane, as well as their subsequent cover-up and other atrocities that had been exposed in the national media. Almost five years after the events, with the statute of limitations set to expire, four former police officers pleaded guilty in federal court to charges relating to the shootings on Danziger Bridge. But these federal investigations are not about “justice”; they are a con game to rehabilitate the NOPD and “help repair the enormous breach in public trust the department now faces,” in the words of an editorial in the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* (25 February). It’s all so the NOPD can better do its job of terrorizing working people, the black poor and just about everyone else.

Hurricane Katrina threw a spotlight on the reality of black oppression in the U.S. and exposed the venality, class arrogance and utter ineptitude of the capitalist government at all levels, from the mayor on up to the White House. In the hurricane’s wake, the raw violence at the core of the capitalist state was stripped of its democratic facade as a tidal wave of



Brandon/Times-Picayune

4 September 2005: Lance Madison arrested at Danziger Bridge after cops shot six people, killing two, including Madison’s disabled brother.

ranted, “Anybody who is caught looting in the city of New Orleans will go directly to Angola,” one of the U.S.’s most notorious prisons. “God bless you if you are there,” he warned. The authorities wasted no time in constructing a prison camp in the parking lot of the Greyhound bus station—the notorious “Camp Greyhound”—using Angola prison labor. The warden from Angola prison declared that this was the first step in the rebuilding of New Orleans: “You can’t have the security

Algiers district with the support of the NOPD. The 2006 Danish documentary *Welcome to New Orleans* shows one vigilante gloating, “It was great! It was like pheasant season in South Dakota. If it moved, you shot it.” These killings are only the ones that have been documented. With the massive police and state cover-up, the extent of the deadly racist frenzy probably will never be known.

Most notorious are the shootings at Danziger Bridge, where, according to the *New York Times* (5 May), police accounts describe “the strafing of unarmed civilians.” The *Times-Picayune* (18 February 2007) recounted:

“Shooting victims and police agree on only a few points: that about 9 a.m. on Sept. 4, 2005, six people were shot by police, five of them on the eastern side of the Danziger Bridge. The Bartholomew family—Leonard Bartholomew III, his wife, Susan, and their teenage daughter, Leshia—jumped behind a concrete barrier with a relative, Jose Holmes, and his friend, Brissette. The four survivors were repeatedly hit by police bullets: Susan’s right arm was partially blasted off, Leshia had four wounds, while Leonard was shot in the head, back and left heel.”

James Brissette died on the spot. He was 19 years old and, according to the police report, he had seven gunshot wounds to his arms, neck, buttocks and leg. The family had been trying to get to a Winn-Dixie grocery store on the other side of the bridge. Also heading east were two brothers, Lance and Ronald Madison. They ran over the bridge to flee the shooting; Ronald was shot and killed by a cop in the driveway of the former Friendly Inn Motel at the foot of the bridge. He was 40 years old and, according to his family, mentally disabled. Lance Madison was arrested on trumped-up charges of attempted murder.

Police lieutenant Michael Lohman arrived at the bridge shortly after the killings, along with a host of other police, and instantly began to orchestrate the cover-up, including making sure that the gun cops planted at the scene was not traceable (the victims were all unarmed) and rewriting the official report to be more plausible. In the *Times-Picayune* (7 March), reporter James Gill described how Lohman played an instrumental role in protecting the cops from murder charges in 2008 related to the Danziger Bridge shootings. Lohman claimed he was shown secret grand jury testimony by an assistant district attorney, leading the judge to dismiss the case. Gill noted that the other assistant DA working the case, who was at the meeting where Lohman was allegedly shown the transcript, “says it just didn’t happen. It was just a ploy to get Lohman’s men off the hook.” Later, Lohman became the first cop to plead guilty

to the federal charges over the shootings.

Three other cop shootings the week after Katrina were investigated in depth in the *Times-Picayune* series. Police shot Danny Brumfield Sr., a black 45-year-old grandfather, in the back outside the Convention Center and left him to die. Matthew McDonald, a white man, was also fatally shot in the back by a cop with an AR-15 assault rifle; cops told McDonald’s relatives that an unknown murderer had done it. Keenon McCann, a black man standing by a bottled water truck, was shot multiple times. Police claimed he had a gun, though it was never found. He survived his injuries; when he was released from the hospital, police sought to jail him for aggravated assault. The *Times-Picayune* (12 December 2009) reported that, in the period immediately following Hurricane Katrina, the NOPD superintendent “instructed police on the scenes of officer-involved shootings to write up only a brief report and mark the incident as ‘NAT,’ the police code for ‘necessary action taken’.”

The Feds are also looking at the death of 31-year-old Henry Glover, a case first brought to light by the *Nation* in December 2008. Glover was shot by an unknown person four days after the hurricane. When a helpful passer-by, William Tanner, drove him to a nearby school commandeered by the NOPD, Tanner was handcuffed and beaten by the cops, who confiscated the car with Glover in it, still alive. Weeks later, Tanner found his car, burnt out with Glover’s charred remains still inside, behind a district police station.

The New Orleans Police Department has a long, sordid record of brutal racist murder and cover-up. This is not a matter of “rogue cops”; any illusion that the NOPD, or any other arm of the capitalist state, can be reformed is dangerously misguided. The police street thugs are a force of organized violence to protect the capitalists’ class rule and private property. As for the Feds, look at their history of setting up civil rights activists for murder, from Viola Liuzzo in Alabama in 1965 to the Greensboro, North Carolina, massacre of leftist anti-Klan demonstrators in 1979. In the U.S., a country founded on chattel slavery, the ruling class depends on the forcible segregation of the overwhelming majority of the black population at the bottom of society, inflaming racial divisions to keep the working class divided and misled. It will take a socialist revolution to end the savage exploitation and brutal racial oppression of capitalist class rule and the barbarism through which it is enforced. Our purpose is to build the workers party necessary to lead the proletariat in that struggle. ■



Marko Georgiev

New Orleans, 1 September 2005: Police mill around motionless body at Religious and Richard Streets. After being photographed, cops grabbed camera’s memory card and reporter’s notebook at gunpoint but took wrong card by mistake.

police and white vigilante terror was unleashed against black New Orleans residents. National television broadcasts of thousands of desperate survivors trapped in the Convention Center evoked the horrors of the Middle Passage. Barely a day after the flooding, the government and its media mouthpieces made the victims out as “criminals,” spreading vile tales of black looters and rapists (while white residents resourcefully “found” food and water and cops helped themselves to Cadillacs from a local dealership).

Fanning this racist hysteria, Ray Nagin, then the black Democratic mayor,

until you have the jail” (see “Notes on New Orleans” by Joe Vetter, WV No. 955, 26 March).

Introducing its investigative series “Law and Disorder: Police Shootings in the Week After Hurricane Katrina,” the *Times-Picayune* (12 December 2009) wrote, “New Orleans police shot 10 civilians, at least four of whom died, according to interviews and internal police documents.... In the week after Katrina, New Orleans police killed and wounded as many people as they do in a typical year.” At least eleven black men were hunted down by white “militia” patrolling the

Osage Avenue home. This caused the burning to death of eleven people, including five children, and left an entire black neighborhood in smoldering ruins.

It is an injustice that these men and women were ever incarcerated at all. They are innocent survivors of premeditated police assaults. We call once more for the immediate, unconditional release of Debbie Africa, Janine Africa, Janet Africa, Chuck Africa, Eddie Africa, Phil Africa, Delbert Africa and Mike Africa. ■

Prisoners...

(continued from page 2)

a decades-long vendetta against MOVE and its supporters. The most grotesque example of this took place 25 years ago in May 1985, when they watched in horror from their Pennsylvania prison cells as the Philadelphia police, in league with federal authorities, dropped a high-powered explosive bomb on MOVE’s

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New Orleans: Racist Atrocity
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Apologists for French Neocolonialism in Africa

France: NPA Social Democrats Support Military Coup in Niger

We print below an article translated from *Le Bolchévik* No. 191 (March 2010), newspaper of the *Ligue Trotskyste de France*, section of the *International Communist League* (Fourth Internationalist).

On February 18 a military coup d'état took place in Niger, one of the world's poorest countries. This landlocked country in the Sahel region contains major

LE BOLCHEVIK

uranium mines, operated for 40 years by the French Areva nuclear power conglomerate (and its predecessors), which gets almost half its annual uranium supply from Niger. Uranium is a strategically important metal especially for French imperialism with its nuclear power plants and atomic bombs. The country of Niger, whose independence French premier Charles De Gaulle engineered in 1960, remains solidly in the French neocolonial African backyard—commonly referred to as *Françafrique*—which was officially declared to be a thing of the past by French president Nicolas Sarkozy and Gabon's president Ali Bongo, whose father Omar ruled Gabon for 42 years.

As it happens, the president of the capitalist state of Niger, Mamadou Tandja, had had the nerve to want to renegotiate prices with Areva and tried to get the support of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state as a counterweight to French imperialism. In the eyes of French imperialism, that's a crime far more serious than physically liquidating a few opponents or dissolving parliament: Tandja was reportedly locked up in a military camp somewhere.

What has changed regarding *Françafrique* is not so much that Tandja didn't find himself immediately riddled with bullets. It is that, above all, there is now a French social-democratic organization (which used to call itself "far left" and even "Trotskyist") that supported the military coup that deposed Tandja. Indeed, the New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA) of Olivier Besancenot has just published an article in *Tout Est à Nous* (25 February) that, starting with the title ("Niger—A Counter-Coup d'Etat"), blames the villain Tandja for what happened to him after he anti-democratically dissolved parliament and extended his own mandate by a phony plebiscite. The article goes on: "The president's dealings had been condemned by the International Community...and called by many a constitutional coup d'état." The "International Community" complete with capital letters is appar-



AFP

Members of new military junta gather in Niamey, Niger, in February. Right: Olivier Besancenot, spokesman for French New Anti-Capitalist Party, which hailed military coup.



François Lafitte

ently the name the NPA now gives French imperialism, its government led by Sarkozy and [Foreign Minister Bernard] Kouchner, and France's allies. Despite the orders of the "International Community," an unrepentant Tandja "wanted to maintain the Sixth Republic (that was autocratically installed)" according to the NPA, which goes on to denounce "these maneuvers by Tandja to maintain himself in power and his obvious commitment to blocking negotiations with the opposition."

The NPA hails the military intervention, giving advice to the Quai d'Orsay [France's Foreign Office] and to the new dictator of Niger, Salou Djibo, who claims that he wants to organize elections and draw up a new Constitution: "Some observers see this putsch as an opportunity to put an end to the drift toward autocracy.... If the purpose of the coup was to rid the country of the dictatorship, they should go all the way and not let themselves be

overtaken by the vertigo of power as happened in Guinea, Chad and Togo...." And they continue: "Confronted with a looming famine, the abandonment of [dispossessed] local populations, particularly the Tuaregs, and the curse represented by its mineral wealth, Niger must take advantage of this turnaround in the situation. To that end, a hands-off policy is necessary and the Manichean discourse of silence or intervention must be rejected."

According to the NPA, Niger's "curse" isn't the yoke of French imperialism but the country's mineral riches! No matter how obscenely pro-imperialist these declarations are, don't expect them to stir up any indignation in the NPA's ranks. The NPA is a deeply social-democratic organization and as such is based on the union bureaucracy and the aristocracy of labor (and also, markedly for the NPA, the bohemian petty-bourgeoisie) who are bought off by the imperialists. For that the imperialists draw in particular upon the superprofits they have reaped from their colonies and neocolonies, such as the plunder of Niger for more than a century. As Lenin explained in 1915 in "Socialism and War":

"Opportunism and social-chauvinism stand on a common economic basis—the interests of a thin crust of privileged workers and of the petty-bourgeoisie, who are defending their privileged position, their 'right' to some modicum of the profits that their 'own' national bourgeoisie obtain from robbing other nations, from the advantages of their Great-Power status, etc."

The NPA's crowning argument for lining up behind its own bourgeoisie is the question of "democracy." It was in the name of the struggle for "democracy" that the NPA's predecessor, Alain Krivine's Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, supported the pro-capitalist counterrevolu-

tionaries of Solidarność in Poland in the early 1980s and then supported the right-wing bourgeois politician Jacques Chirac in the 2002 [French] presidential elections. From that to supporting a military junta in *Françafrique* is but a short step which the NPA took very blithely.

Democracy is nothing but a convenient guise for the bourgeoisie to hide its own bloody dictatorship against the classes and social layers that it exploits and oppresses. In disappearing the principal question—democracy *for which class?*—the NPA comes out unconditionally for the rule of the bourgeoisie—democratic if possible, but not necessarily—and always opposes the dictatorship of the proletariat (which after all is only democratic for the workers and the oppressed). Lenin wrote in his polemic against the renegade Kautsky:

"There is not a single state, however democratic, which has no loopholes or reservations in its constitution guaranteeing the bourgeoisie the possibility of dispatching troops against the workers, of proclaiming martial law, and so forth, in the case of a 'violation of public order,' and actually in case the exploited class 'violates' its position of slavery and tries to behave in a non-slavish manner."

The NPA reaches the height of the grotesque by supporting a military junta in Niger, which it presents as a step toward the restoration of "democracy." If the NPA sees democracy in pink and green colors in France [i.e., the social democracy and the Greens], apparently according to them khaki is just as good a color for Africa! After a hundred years of French imperialist atrocities in Niger and the whole region, these countries endure horrendous and growing poverty. There is almost no working class in that whole part of Africa, which means that these countries lack the only social force that can lead all the oppressed in smashing the imperialist yoke once and for all and fight for an international socialist revolution. In fact, the West African immigrant workers in France can play a strategic role and serve as a living bridge between the struggle for revolution in France and in these countries. This makes it all the more vital to fight in France itself against the depredations of French imperialism overseas, and to overthrow capitalism here and throughout the whole world. Only then can we begin to remedy the ravages of imperialist oppression and lay the bases for a society of plenty based on a collectivized and internationally planned economy. **French imperialism out of Africa! ■**

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From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal

May Day Amidst Global Mayhem



As May approaches, the day celebrated for over a century as an emblem of workers power, May Day, seems to have become a symbol of its fall.

That's because, as the economic system has gone through shocks, after-shocks, and tremors, social and communal wealth has been funneled to banking and corporate interests—bailouts for billionaires, while workers have faced, at best, a plague of cutbacks; at worst, mass layoffs and firings as businesses reorgan-

ize by being even more antagonistic to labor.

Marx and Engels rightly determined that “the modern state is but the executive committee of the bourgeoisie.” Why else would the world's economic powers pour hundreds of billions into corporate coffers, virtually no questions asked, while dropping a pittance—like coins in the cup—to workers and their families?

May Day began in America in the midst of the Haymarket Rebellion of the 1800's, in struggle for

the 40 hour week and an end to child labor.

May Day still represents workers struggle in America, in Europe, in Africa and Asia, against State and corporate repression and greed.

In a nutshell, capitalism is in severe crisis, and the phony wars and very real rise of cronyism are but mirrors of that crisis.

If workers are to use their billions to change the world, they must join together across false barriers to build a new and better world where life and liberty are more precious than profit.

It's not only possible; it's necessary.

31 March 2010

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Send urgently needed contributions for Mumia's legal defense, made payable to “National Lawyers Guild Foundation” and earmarked for “Mumia,” to: Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, P.O. Box 2012, New York, NY 10159.

If you wish to correspond with Mumia, you can write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 175 Progress Drive, Waynesburg, PA 15370.

MOVE...

(continued from page 3)

that the mass murder carried the bloody signature of the Reagan years and was intended “to send a message to black America and ‘radicals’ of every stripe. ‘Anti-terrorism’ means massive government terror against anyone who is out of step in Reagan's America” (WV No. 379, 17 May 1985). Under both Democratic and Republican administrations, the onslaught against black people, synonymous with Reagan reaction, has continued unabated to this day.

From the moment that MOVE surfaced in the early 1970s in the racist

hellhole of Philadelphia, denouncing “the system” and defending the right to armed self-defense, this back-to-nature group was subjected to police harassment, beatings and hundreds of arrests. On 8 August 1978, 600 cops unleashed a barrage of gunfire as they stormed MOVE's Powelton Village compound. When MOVE members emerged from their home, the police dragged, kicked and stomped Delbert Africa nearly to death. Nine MOVE members were framed up and sentenced in 1981 to 30-100 years on charges of killing a cop who died in the police crossfire at Powelton Village—even though the judge stated that he didn't have the “faintest idea” who killed the cop. Merle Africa died in

her prison cell in 1998. The rest of the MOVE 9 are still in Pennsylvania's dungeons (see page 2).

In an expression of solidarity with those imprisoned for standing up to racist capitalist repression, the PDC provided monthly stipends for Ramona Africa during her imprisonment as it has also done for the MOVE 9 and death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, who became a MOVE supporter while reporting on the MOVE 9 trial.

Mumia, an innocent man framed up on false charges of killing police officer Daniel Faulkner, was sentenced to death in 1982 for his political views. His case is what the death penalty is all about—a legacy of chattel slavery, the lynch

rope made legal. A former Black Panther leader as a teenager in the 1960s, Mumia became a prominent radical radio journalist known as “The Voice of the Voiceless” who reported on the racist Philly cops and courts. It was during the sham trial of the MOVE 9 that Mumia became sympathetic to the MOVE organization.

To avenge the MOVE martyrs, the working class must fight to smash this capitalist system, whose rulers inflict a special oppression on black people as a means to divide and attack the entire working class. *We will not forget the MOVE massacre! Free the MOVE members, Mumia and all class-war prisoners! For black liberation through socialist revolution!■*

Join the Labor Black Leagues!

The Labor Black Leagues stand for mobilizing the masses of black and working people for militant integrated struggle against the brutal system of racist oppression that is capitalist America.

Initiated by and fraternally allied to the Spartacist League, a multiracial revolutionary Marxist organization, the Labor Black Leagues are part of the revolutionary movement of the workers and the oppressed against the bosses and for socialism.

Since they were brought to this country in chains and enslaved, black people have been an integral part of American class society while at the same time forcibly segregated at the bottom. It took the Civil War to emancipate black people from chattel slavery. But the Civil War was not carried to its completion, and black people were freed from slavery only to be stripped of political

rights and economically subjugated. The civil rights movement, tied to pro-Democratic Party pressure politics and sold out by liberal reformism, failed to complete the unfinished business of the Civil War. We fight to win the entire working class, including white workers as well as the growing number of Latino and other immigrants, to the fight for black liberation, strategic to the American revolution. Black and working-class militants must stand for full citizenship rights for all immigrants and in their defense against racist and chauvinist anti-immigrant attacks. An injury to one is an injury to all!

The Labor Black Leagues raise the call: Finish the Civil War! Forward to a workers state! They base their perspectives on the realization that it will take a third American revolution, a workers revolution, to finally liberate black people.

If You Stand For —

1 Full rights for black people and for everyone else in jobs, housing and schools! Defeat the racist assault on affirmative action! For union-run minority job recruitment and training programs! For union hiring halls! Open up the universities to all—for open admissions, free tuition and a full living stipend for all students. Free, quality, integrated public education for all!

2 A fighting labor movement—picket lines mean don't cross! Defeat police scabherding and strikebreaking through mass pickets and union defense guards! For sit-down strikes against mass layoffs! Fight union-busting; keep the capitalist courts out of the unions! Organize the unorganized, unionize the South! Jobs for all—for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay with full cost-of-living escalator clause! Cops, prison guards and security guards out of the unions!

3 Fight for women's rights! Defend abortion clinics! Free abortion on demand; free, quality 24-hour child-care! Equal pay for equal work! For free, quality health care for all!

4 Full citizenship rights for all immigrants; everyone who made it into this country has the right to stay and live decently! Stop deportations! No to racist “English only” laws! Down with anti-Latino, anti-Semitic, anti-Arab and anti-Asian bigotry!

5 Defend the separation of church and state! Full democratic rights for homosexuals! Down with the anti-sex witchhunt—cops and courts out of the bedroom! Down with all laws against consensual activities such as

“crimes without victims” like pornography, gambling, drugs and prostitution!

6 Mass labor/black/Latino mobilizations drawing on the power of the unions against the racist terrorists. Stop the Nazis! Stop the KKK!

7 Abolish the racist death penalty! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Free all victims of racist capitalist repression! No faith in the capitalist courts! No to gun control! Defend victims of cop terror and racist police frame-up! No illusions in civilian review boards or community control of the police! Down with the racist and anti-labor “war on drugs”! For decriminalization of drugs! For class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense; support the work of the Partisan Defense Committee!

8 Unconditional opposition to every attempt to abolish welfare! Down with slave-labor, union-busting “workfare” schemes! Fight any and every attempt of the government to take away or cut back even more social programs such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, public health and aid to education and housing! For a massive program of public works—high-quality integrated housing, schools, libraries, hospitals for the working people and the poor!

9 Down with the chauvinist poison of protectionism! For international working-class solidarity! Support revolutionary struggles of working people abroad! Defend the deformed workers states—Cuba, Vietnam, China and North Korea—against capitalist restoration and imperialist attack! For proletarian political revolution to oust their Stalinist bureaucracies! For labor action against U.S. imperialist war moves and military adven-

tures! For the right of independence for Puerto Rico! U.S. troops out of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean!

10 Down with the Democrats and Republicans! For a revolutionary workers party that champions the cause of all the oppressed! Finish the Civil War! Those who labor must rule! For a workers government to take industry away from its racist, incompetent and corrupt owners! Rebuild America on a socialist planned economy!

—Join the Labor Black Leagues!

Membership pledge: \$3/year unemployed; \$10/year employed. For more information:

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Box 29497, Oakland, CA 94604
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Greece...

(continued from page 1)

was locked and even the Internet connection was cut. We demand that all charges be dropped against the anarchists and all other leftist protesters, including those arrested during the earlier general strikes!

While the PASOK government’s attacks on working people are in large part dictated by the IMF and the major European powers, with imperialist Germany in the lead, the Greek ruling class is not just a minion of the EU; it is using this as an opportunity to crack down on the workers. Meanwhile, the arrogant German bourgeoisie has unleashed a chauvinist campaign against the smaller and weaker European economies. German capitalists have been sneering that Greece has been living “beyond its means,” while a leading spokesman for German industrialists snidely suggested that Athens cut its deficit by selling off some “uninhabited islands.”

The government’s threats and the repression have failed to intimidate workers. But a major obstacle to a class-struggle fight against the capitalists and their government is the Greek chauvinism pushed by the official leaders of the workers movement, including those of the Communist Party (KKE), who oppose the IMF and EU imperialist bloodsuckers on the narrow nationalist basis that they threaten Greece’s national sovereignty. It is only on the basis of proletarian internationalism that the workers of Greece can be mobilized in revolutionary struggle in their own class interests at the head of all the oppressed. Today the bankruptcy of the whole capitalist-imperialist system is clear, but what is lacking is revolutionary leadership to finally end exploitation, poverty, racism and war. For a Socialist United States of Europe! For world socialist revolution to establish an international division of labor in a planned socialist economy!

We reprint below a 28 April leaflet published by our comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece. It was distributed at two May Day demonstrations in Athens—one organized by the All Workers Militant Front (PAME), a trade-union federation associated with the KKE, and the other organized by the two largest trade-union federations, the private sector General Confederation of Workers of Greece (GSEE) and the Confederation of Public Servants (ADEDY), both led by PASOK.

* * *

The attempts by the PASOK government to shift the bourgeoisie’s massive debt burden onto the backs of the working people have led to furious resistance by tens of thousands of workers and pensioners. General strikes throughout Greece in February and March, as well as two days of strikes in April, repeatedly brought the country to a halt, closing down transportation, schools, banks and government offices. The workers’ response to PASOK’s savage “stability



**Athens:
Cops attack
April 22 rally
during civil
servants
strike.**

program”—imposed as a precondition for any bailout from the EU and the IMF—has been: “We won’t pay!” In March, angry workers occupied government buildings, including the National Printing Office, where they sought to prevent the printing of the legislation bringing the austerity plan into effect. Olympic Airways workers closed down the central Athens artery of Panepistimiou for several days in protest against layoffs.

PASOK’s “stability program” involves thousands of job losses, raising the retirement age and a massive increase in the cost of living resulting from wage cuts, tax increases and price hikes for gasoline and other necessities. The strikes and protests have clearly demonstrated the enormous potential social power of the working class. That power can and must be mobilized in the workers’ own interests, to beat back the government’s attacks but also to open up the possibility of a counteroffensive against the entire capitalist system of exploitation and oppression. A major obstacle to such a fightback, however, is the official leadership of the trade unions—both the pro-PASOK leadership of GSEE and ADEDY and the Stalinist-controlled PAME—which promotes class collaboration and Greek nationalism, thus tying the working class to their exploiters.

While seething anger at the base has forced the PASOK union bureaucrats to call strikes, they have repeatedly expressed their support for the government and its calls for sacrifices. ADEDY leader Papaspyros said: “The situation is hard for all of us, for the economy, for the government, for the working people, for the trade unions. Continuous analysis and evaluation is needed from all of us” (quoted in [Athens daily] *To Vima*, 14 February), while GSEE refused to take part in the strikes on April 21 and 22. The trade-union bureaucracy seeks to rally working-class support for the government by trading on the lie that PASOK is some kind of “socialist” party. In this they are aided by reformists like the Socialist Workers Party (SEK), who claim PASOK is a reformist workers party. It is no such thing. Since its inception, PASOK has been a bourgeois-populist party—an instrument of the class enemy no less

than New Democracy.

It is necessary to forge a new, revolutionary leadership of the unions based on the understanding that there are no common interests between the proletariat and the capitalist bloodsuckers. Workers must fight for what we need, not for what the bosses say they can afford. The Greek capitalist class has brought the country to the brink of bankruptcy and is now determined to make the working class pay for the economic crisis. We say no! To hell with the government’s “stability program”!

The kind of class-struggle leadership that we seek to build would fight for a series of transitional demands which, as Trotsky explained in the Transitional Program written in 1938, start from the current consciousness of the working class and its daily struggles against the bosses and the government and lead to the goal of proletarian revolution. According to a 21 March article in [national newspaper] *Eleutherotypia*: “The increase in unemployment exceeded 150,000 people at the



AFF

Desperate immigrants seek to reach Greek island, May 2009.

end of 2009. In fact, it is much higher if you count those that work only a few hours per week.” In the same article, Labor Minister Andreas Loverdos estimated that unemployment will shoot up to 12 percent in March. In reality, unemployment is higher still. “GSEE asserts that the [government] statistic of 11.3 percent is in real terms approaching 17.5 percent and the number of unemployed is 800,000 people” ([Athens daily] *Kathimerini*, 21 April). Unemployment has hit women and youth hardest. According to the National Statistics Service, unemployment is four times higher for women and around 25.8 percent among youth.

To combat mass unemployment, it is necessary to demand the sharing of available work, with no loss of pay, and a massive program of public works. To protect even their current living standards—already among the lowest in Europe—workers must demand that wages be indexed to inflation. To unmask the exploitation, robbery and fraud of the capitalist owners and the swindles of the banks, Trotsky argued that workers should demand that the capitalists open their books “to reveal to all members of society that unconscionable squandering of human labor which is the result of capitalist anarchy and the naked pursuit of profits.” Raising the call for the expropriation of branches of industry vital for national existence, or the most parasitic of the capitalist rulers, Trotsky underlined that such a demand must necessarily be linked to the fight for the seizure of power

by the working class, as against the reformist misleaders for whom the call for nationalization was merely a prescription for bailing out capitalist enterprises.

In opposition to the capitalists and their reformist agents, Trotsky argued:

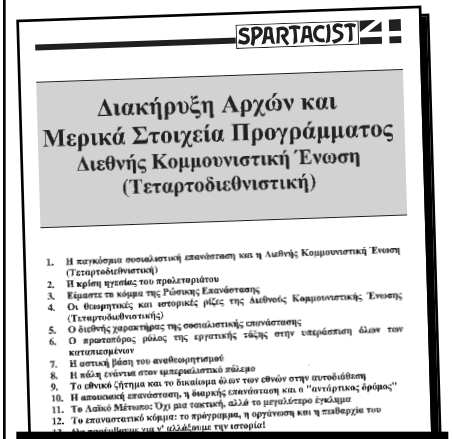
“If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish. ‘Realizability’ or ‘unrealizability’ is in the given instance a question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle. By means of this struggle, no matter what its immediate practical successes may be, the workers will best come to understand the necessity of liquidating capitalist slavery.”

Down With National Chauvinism! For Workers’ Unity Against the Bosses!

The fight to mobilize the working class in struggle for its class interests must include a struggle against all forms of discrimination. Key to forging the unity of the working class is the struggle against the racist oppression of immigrants. Immigrant workers, from Albania, South Asia, Africa and elsewhere, are a key component of the working class in Greece who must be drawn into common struggle alongside their Greek class brothers and sisters. To prevent the capitalists’ scapegoating of foreign workers for the economic crisis, the workers movement must fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations!

The virulent racism of the Greek capitalist state was recently demonstrated at the Independence Day parade in Athens on March 25, when a Greek special forces unit was filmed chanting racist slogans against Albanians, Macedonians and Turks. The video was later posted on YouTube and led to protests by Albanians in

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Defend the Palestinian People!



tgraham

London, December 2008: Protest against Zionist mass murder in Gaza.

Free the Anti-Zionist Protesters! Drop the Charges Now!

Britain

The following article appeared in *Workers Hammer* No. 210 (Spring 2010), newspaper of our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain.

WORKERS HAMMER

We print below a 13 March letter sent to the Home Office by the Partisan Defence Committee, a class-struggle, legal and social defence organisation associated with the Spartacist League. The letter protests the conviction and jailing of youth, mainly Muslims, who took part in London protests against Israel's war on Gaza a little over a year ago. There will

likely be more such sentences as more cases come before the courts.

Comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain and other International Communist League (ICL) sections internationally participated in protests while the Zionist mass murder machine pounded the Gaza ghetto in air assaults followed by a devastating ground invasion, terrorising and killing Palestinian men, women and children. The ICL called for the working class internationally to stand for military defence of Hamas without giving that reactionary Islamic fundamentalist outfit one iota of political support. We demanded: Defend the Palestinian people! All Zionist troops and settlers out of the West Bank and East Jerusalem!

Unlike the Zionists and indeed the anti-Semitic Islamic fundamentalists, we do not equate the Zionist state with the

Hebrew-speaking people, who have the right to self-determination as well as the Palestinian people. The Israeli/Palestinian conflict is one of interpenetrated peoples: two peoples laying claim to the same piece of land. Under capitalism, the exercise of national self-determination by one will necessarily be at the expense of the other. As long as the national principle prevails, the oppression of the Palestinians, who are the weaker side, can only worsen. As Marxists we seek to bring the class question to the fore, insisting on the need for proletarian revolutionary parties to fight for workers revolutions to shatter the Zionist state from within and to sweep away the mullahs, colonels, sheikhs and all the other capitalist rulers. Defence of those subjugated by the imperialists around the globe demands the pursuit of class struggle in Britain, the U.S. and other

imperialist centres, pointing towards a proletarian struggle for power.

For Arab/Hebrew workers revolution!
For a socialist federation of the Near East!

* * *

We protest the outrageous convictions and sentences meted out to youth arrested during the December 2008-January 2009 London protests against Israel's slaughter in Gaza. Reportedly of 119 arrested, some 26 have so far been sentenced and 22 sent to jail for terms ranging from eight months to two-and-a-half years, for such trivial acts as throwing placards. The arrests followed months of surveillance by the police, who descended on homes like stormtroopers in dawn raids during which family members were handcuffed in separate rooms.

These youth, almost all Muslims and many under 20 years old, were expressing justified rage at the bloodbath carried out by the Zionists in Gaza. Israel's war left 1,400 Palestinians dead and thousands injured, and reduced most of Gaza—already essentially a concentration camp surrounded by an electrified fence, a sealed border with Egypt, and the Mediterranean Sea—to ash and rubble. The jailings for protesting this atrocity underline British imperialism's solidarity with the Zionist butchers.

Judge John Denniss, in handing down the sentences at Isleworth Crown Court in Middlesex, has stated his intent to send a message of "deterrence." The message, broadcast loud and clear in the convictions and sentences, is one of naked state racism otherwise known as the government's "war on terror," which is an anti-Muslim witch hunt. In fact the judge reportedly relied on the precedent of the draconian sentences handed out to young Asians jailed for defending their communities from rampaging fascists in Bradford in 2001. Then too such "lessons" were delivered in the form of six-year prison terms for throwing stones. The fruit of this poison relentlessly dished up by the Blair and Brown Labour governments is the growth of the fascist BNP and their spin-offs, the English Defence League, who parade their anti-Muslim filth.

We demand: **Free the jailed protesters now! Drop all the charges!** ■

ests of the major European bourgeois states are expressed. The EU is also a vehicle for the European capitalists to cooperate with each other against the working class and against immigrants. Our opposition to the EU, based on proletarian internationalism, is counterposed to the attacks by the Greek Communist Party (KKE) on the EU, which are based on gross capitulation to Greek nationalism. In a 17 April article in *Rizospastis*, the KKE blatantly expresses concern that the PASOK government might be undermining Greece's defense and worries about its borders with Turkey in the Aegean Sea, saying that KKE leader Aleka Papariga "repeated the worries of her party that the country's deeper incorporation into the imperialist organizations and their plans has prepared the ground for compromises at the expense of the sovereign rights of the country and its defense capability." She added that "now we worry additionally for the Aegean Sea." And

while the KKE-dominated PAME trade-union federation raises class-against-class slogans such as "Either with capital or with the workers," it simultaneously appeals for patriotism in banners proclaiming, "Rising Up Against Impoverishment of the People Is Patriotism." Such nationalism is poisonous to class consciousness and is counterposed to proletarian internationalism. It serves to pit workers in Greece against workers in other countries and reinforces anti-immigrant racism. Any effective struggle against the bosses' attacks must begin with the understanding that the workers have no country. What is needed is international workers solidarity across the EU against capital.

The EU was originally established as an adjunct of NATO as the U.S. sought to strengthen West Europe against the Soviet Union. Today it is an unstable adjunct to the economic, military and political priorities of the European capitalists. The International Communist League uniquely fought to the last for military defense of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of East Europe against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. We fought for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies whose appeasement of imperialism undermined the defense of the workers states. That is today our program for the remaining deformed workers states—China, Vietnam, Cuba and North Korea.

The current world economic crisis is further powerful confirmation of the Marxist analysis of capitalist society and the need for socialist revolution to do away with the boom-bust cycle of capitalism and establish a rational, planned economy where production is for human

need, not for profits for a handful of super-rich exploiters. No amount of tinkering with the existing system can wrench it into serving the needs of the proletariat and the oppressed.

As working people face ruin, the most that reformist groups like the SEK can put forward are pathetic appeals to the PASOK government to "tax the rich." Such schemes, advanced by reformists like the SEK, posit the possibility of radically redistributing wealth without getting rid of the capitalist system. The bourgeoisie has at its disposal cops, courts and

troops—the armed bodies of men that constitute the core of the capitalist state—to wage war upon the working class in order to drive up profits. What's needed is a socialist revolution to overthrow the capitalist state and replace it with a workers state that will lay the basis for building a socialist society. For that you need to build a revolutionary workers party—a party like Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks—which will fight for a workers government. The TGG, Greek sympathizing section of the ICL, seeks to build such a party. ■

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Britain...

(continued from page 12)

outrageous charges of “conspiracy to commit violent disorder” (*Morning Star*, 22 March). We say: Drop the charges against Weyman Bennett and all anti-fascist protesters!

Fascists are paramilitary shock troops dedicated to racist terror who aim to smash the organisations of the working class. BNP and EDL provocations must be met with massive protests, centred on the trade unions mobilised in defence of Muslims, immigrants and all their intended victims. However, Marxists understand that the decaying capitalist system breeds the social conditions for the growth of the fascists, thus the struggle against fascism is inseparable from the fight for socialist revolution. Mobilising the social power of the multiethnic working class in a fight for jobs and for the rights of immigrants and minorities is anathema to the pro-capitalist trade union bureaucracy, which aims to keep the unions tied to the capitalist order. The fascists have intervened heavily into the chauvinist strikes against foreign workers that began at Lindsey oil refinery in January 2009 under the slogan of “British jobs for British workers.” This has long been a rallying cry of the fascists (see “Down With Reactionary Strikes Against Foreign Workers!” *Workers Hammer* No. 206, Spring 2009 [printed in WV No. 930, 13 February 2009]).

Disgracefully, these strikes were championed by the Socialist Party [affiliated with Socialist Alternative in the U.S.], as well as by the Unite trade union bureaucracy and by Bob Crow, leader of the RMT [Rail, Maritime and Transport union]. These unions—which consist of white, black and Asian workers—have enormous potential power that can hit the capitalists where it hurts. But Crow and the leadership of Unite have kept the lid on class struggle under Labour and the Unite bureaucrats have done their utmost to sell out their members who are on strike against British Airways [see “Shut Down Heathrow Airport! Victory to the British Airways Strike!” WV No. 955, 26 March].

Unions: Defend Immigrants!

Responsibility for the racist climate that has bolstered the fascists rests squarely with the Labour governments of the last 13 years. Under Labour, the imperialist occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and the “war on terror” at home elevated anti-Muslim racism to unprecedented levels. Liberal journalist Yasmin Alibhai-Brown in her *Independent* column (8 March) bitterly complains that the British establishment “has surpassed its previous disgraceful record,” treating Muslims as “contemptible creatures, devalued humans.” The indifference of Gordon Brown (and Tony Blair) to the countless Iraqis killed and indiscriminately bombed, Alibhai-Brown says, only confirms that “native Iraqis are grains of sand to those who executed the imperial war.” Even while the

Right: Poisonous slogan at construction workers demonstration, Westminster, February 3. Far right: RMT union leader Bob Crow (center) at launch of No2EU election campaign, which supported chauvinist strikes.



Workers Hammer photos

press is filled with revelations showing that “terror suspects” are routinely tortured abroad with the connivance of the British secret services, Muslim youth in Britain are being served with serious prison sentences for protesting against the murderous Israeli attack on Gaza last year (see “Free the Anti-Zionist Protesters!” [reprinted on page 9]).

Labour removed some of the most basic rights from asylum seekers, replacing meagre welfare benefits with food vouchers. Among other things, those incarcerated in detention centres are denied access to healthcare; other asylum seekers have been “dispersed” to sink estates [impoverished housing projects] such as Glasgow’s Red Road flats where in early March a Russian family—Serge Serykh, his wife Tatiana and her son—tragically threw themselves to their deaths from a

The unions must organise immigrant workers and demand equal pay at the highest going rate for all work, *no matter who does it!* Down with reactionary strikes against foreign workers! No deportations! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

Under the slogan of Karl Marx, “Workers of all countries unite!”, immigrant workers from Eastern Europe must become a bridge to proletarian internationalist opposition to the European Union, a bosses’ conglomerate designed to bludgeon the multiethnic working classes of all Europe.

No Vote to Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition!

Following a long period when it seemed likely that Labour would lose big in the general election, in recent months the



Penny Krantz

March 20: Police attack United Against Fascism protest against fascist English Defence League provocation in Bolton.

tower block, having been refused leave to remain in Britain. This tragedy is not unusual, as *Guardian* columnist Deborah Orr points out, noting “the fact that the three had to chuck down a large wardrobe before they jumped, to break the anti-suicide netting that had been installed, is an indication that they were not the only people in the vicinity who were considered to be in danger of finding their lives intolerable” (“Who Is Really to Blame for the Glasgow Suicides?” *Guardian*, 11 March). Britain’s “flexible labour market” is heavily dependent on immigrant workers who work for pitiful wages in a climate of racist hostility. The sub-human conditions endured by workers in the meat processing industry—which is worth hundreds of millions of pounds and employs almost 90,000 people—was the subject of a report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. A *Guardian* article, titled “‘I’m Not a Slave, I Just Can’t Speak English’—Life in the Meat Industry,” summarised the condition of these workers, many of whom are immigrants, predominantly from Eastern Europe, saying:

“Pregnant women being forced to stand for long hours in factory production lines without breaks, or perform heavy lifting under threat of the sack; meat factory workers having frozen hamburgers ‘like stones’ thrown at them by line managers; women with heavy periods being refused toilet breaks so that they bled on their clothes on the production lines; workers with bladder problems refused breaks so that they urinated on themselves, workers exposed to verbal and physical abuse.”

—*Guardian*, 13 March

Tory lead has been narrowing. At the mere hint of a rise in Labour’s fortunes, the reformist left—including Workers Power and the SWP—jumped to attention, calling for a vote to the rotten Labour Party, to “keep the Tories out.” But calling for a vote to Labour in 2010 is hard to stomach for many. Notably it caused something of an uproar in the ranks of the SWP, an organisation that, since its inception over half a century ago, has voted Labour without fail. The SWP cites the age-old excuse that “over the last 50 years the majority of working class voters, between 50 and 60 percent, consistently vote Labour. Just over 4 million trade unionists are affiliated to Labour—the unions remain the biggest source of funds for the party.” Moreover, these consummate Labourites assert that: “To sit in a canteen, staff room or office and say there’s no difference between the Tories and Labour cuts you off from some of the best people around you. You will look like you are some sect on the fringe.” Heaven forbid. Better to vote for the party of imperialist occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, the party which lavished benefits on the City bankers and which is running on its willingness to shove massive public spending cuts down the throats of working people.

The SWP is also supporting the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (Tusc). One doesn’t have to be a Marxist to be repulsed by Tusc, which upholds the chauvinist strikes against foreign workers and counts among its luminaries prison officers’ leader Brian Caton. Tusc is the successor to the No2EU coalition formed

by the Socialist Party and RMT rail union leader Bob Crow for the European Parliament elections last year. We said “No Vote to No2EU,” whose campaign consisted of chauvinist protectionism. As a 22 May 2009 article on *BBC News* online put it: “NO2EU was born out of the ‘British jobs for British workers’ protests at the Lindsey oil refinery and its aim is to provide working class voters and trade union members with a left wing alternative to the British National Party.” Today Tusc’s list of candidates includes Keith Gibson of the Socialist Party, who played a leading role in the strikes at Lindsey. Moreover the Socialist Party and Bob Crow appear to decide who is eligible to join Tusc according to whether or not they supported the Lindsey strikes and/or the No2EU coalition. An article by the Socialist Party informs us that the SWP’s admission to Tusc was “not automatic” and explains:

“Bob Crow, reflecting the response of RMT militants as last year’s Lindsey strike unfolded, immediately and rightly condemned those ‘misrepresenting the strikers as xenophobic—a posh word for racist’ (in a letter to *The Guardian*, 6 February 2009). The SWP, on the other hand, criticised the strikes as ‘nationalist’.

“The SWP took a similar stance towards No2EU, the electoral body which was supported not just by the union tops but a big majority of RMT activists. These and other political mistakes by the SWP will not make winning support for Tusc easier inside the RMT, and other unions too.”

—*Socialist*, 3 February

The SWP tried to have it both ways on the Lindsey strike, claiming to oppose the slogan of “British jobs for British workers” while petitioning in the unions for support to the demands of the strike committee, which included a version of local jobs for local workers.

The Tusc leadership allowed the SWP to join, because workers “would naturally want to see the widest possible unity,” but both the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) and Workers Power, who applied to stand candidates under the Tusc umbrella, were turned down. As a condition of admission both groups were asked to provide membership figures, details of any members they have on union national executive committees who would support Tusc and a statement of “what recommendation did your organisation give, if any, on how to vote in the 2009 European elections” (letter from Tusc to CPGB, 3 February, published in *Weekly Worker*, 11 February). The CPGB answered that they did not call for a vote to No2EU, because it wasn’t for “working class unity on a European level”...so they voted Labour!

CORRECTION

In the article “ILWU: Don’t Handle Scab Borax!” (WV No. 956, 9 April) we wrote, “A significant factor in the labor statesmen’s sell-out of the [1995 Australian miners’] Weipa struggle was their desire to defuse the situation for the benefit of the Labor Party in elections that year.” Actually, the federal elections occurred on 2 March 1996.

WORKERS HAMMER
No. 212
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Organ of the Spartacist League

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Troops out of Iraq, Afghanistan!

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The CPGB will of course vote for Tusc anyway, as well as for “Labour candidates who are prepared to call for an unconditional and immediate withdrawal of all British troops from Afghanistan and Iraq, and who pledge to oppose all cuts in public services and benefits” (*Weekly Worker*, 11 February).

In a recent split, the SWP lost three senior cadre—Chris Nineham, John Rees and Lindsey German, who criticised the SWP’s failure to build a mass electoral vehicle to replace old Labour. In her 13 February resignation statement, German, convenor of [the SWP-brokered] Stop the War [Coalition], opined: “I believe the party leadership has systematically moved away from the perspective applied in the past decade, which has been so successful in building the anti capitalist and anti war movements.” Upholding the Respect coalition, an attempt to “try to build a left electoral alternative involving working class people, including Muslims,” as “a courageous thing to do,” German laments “the abandonment of the methods of building pioneered by [SWP founder] Tony Cliff,” which he termed “bending the stick.” In the recent period the SWP has certainly bent the stick in every conceivable direction. But the SWP failed to grow out of the Socialist Alliance, the Respect coalition or the Stop the War Coalition and overall its numbers have declined, while the Socialist Party’s several-years-long campaign for a “new mass workers party” has yet to get off the ground.

In the aftermath of counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union in 1991-92, these reformists have followed the rightward shifts of the mass reformist parties [in Europe], notably the Labour Party, dropping any remaining lip service to socialism that might taint them by association with the Russian October Revolution. Yet despite their opportunist efforts they failed to cash in. The restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state, and in the deformed workers states in Eastern Europe was a historic defeat for the working masses of the entire world in material terms. This counterrevolution, which ushered in the bourgeois ideological offensive that “communism is dead,” was *supported* by both the SWP and the Socialist Party.

The SWP as a tendency originated out of the anti-communist Cold War hysteria that accompanied the Korean War of 1950-53. Its founder, the late Tony Cliff, reneged on the Trotskyist position of unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union as well as the Chinese and

North Korean deformed workers states against imperialist attack. This was a cowardly capitulation to the British bourgeoisie and to the Labour government that sent troops to Korea. (See “The Bankruptcy of ‘New Class’ Theories” [*Spartacist* No. 55 (English-language edition), Autumn 1999]). The SWP actually played its small part in *helping to create* today’s political climate of post-Soviet reaction. In August 1991 when Boris Yeltsin’s imperialist-backed forces of counterrevolution staged a counter coup in Moscow, the SWP triumphantly proclaimed: “Communism has collapsed,” describing this as a fact that “should have every socialist rejoicing” (*Socialist Worker*, 31 August 1991).

We in the ICL fought with all our resources against capitalist restoration. During the unfolding political revolution

we apply today to the remaining deformed workers states—China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam.

Counterrevolution in the Soviet Union has led to a profound retrogression in proletarian consciousness. Although it is uneven throughout the world, today even the most politically conscious workers in the capitalist countries by and large do not identify their struggles with the goal of socialism. Our task is to swim against the stream of today’s reactionary climate and to forge the nucleus of a revolutionary vanguard party. As Trotsky noted in his article “Stalinism and Bolshevism” (1937):

“Great political defeats inevitably provoke a reconsideration of values, generally occurring in two directions. On the one hand the true vanguard, enriched by the experience of defeat, defends with tooth and nail the heritage of revolution-

majority government. This is no longer the case. As a reflection of Britain’s relative economic decline and also a product of the de-industrialisation policies pursued relentlessly both by Margaret Thatcher’s Tory governments and by New Labour since 1997, the majority of the population is no longer proletarian. Under Tony Blair in the 1990s the Labour Party began to sever its historic links to the trade union movement (while trying to keep the unions’ financial contributions to the party) and to cast around for the support of other social layers, particularly those who had swung to the Tories in the 1980s.

It was the political bankruptcy of old Labour that led to the rise of New Labour, which now stands discredited among workers after a prolonged period at the helm of a country in an economic mess. New Labour is a product of decades of attacks—including by Labour governments in the 1960s and 70s—on working people to break the power of the unions in an effort to improve the competitiveness of British capitalism. Labour was replaced by the Thatcher government in 1979, which prepared a showdown with the miners, culminating in the heroic year-long strike of 1984-85. Defeat in this battle was far from inevitable and was the result of the treachery of the Labourite union leaders, particularly the “left” leaders of the unions in rail and the docks who refused to organise solidarity strikes alongside the miners. The difficult conditions under which the British workers struggle today—including the anti-union laws—are the legacy of the defeat of that struggle and the fact that under the New Labour governments the leadership of the unions have refused to rock the boat with class struggle.

The British capitalist order is based on the dominance of the City of London and the middle-class English Home Counties [surrounding London] over the former industrial heartlands of the north of England as well as the national oppression of Scotland and Wales. We oppose the reactionary United Kingdom, which is centred on the archaic institutions of the monarchy, the House of Lords and the established churches. We seek to build a multiethnic revolutionary workers party that fights to overthrow Westminster rule and replace it with a workers government. Abolish the monarchy, the established churches and the House of Lords! British troops out of Northern Ireland, Iraq and Afghanistan! For an Irish workers republic within a voluntary federation of workers republics in the British Isles!■



January 1992 Spartacist protest in New York City against Boris Yeltsin’s visit with Wall Street paymasters. ICL uniquely fought against capitalist counter-revolution, for workers political revolution.

in East Germany in 1989-90, we unconditionally opposed capitalist reunification with imperialist West Germany. We fought for political revolution in the East and socialist revolution in the West. Against Boris Yeltsin’s forces of counterrevolution in Moscow in August 1991, we headlined: “Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!” We upheld the Trotskyist programme of unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union and the East European deformed workers states, and for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies and replace them with regimes based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism. This is the programme

ary thought and on this basis attempts to educate new cadres for the mass struggle to come. On the other hand the routinists, centrists, and dilettantes, frightened by defeat, do their best to destroy the authority of revolutionary tradition and go backward in their search of a ‘New Word’.”

The British SWP’s “socialism” only ever amounted to pressuring the Labour Party and trade union bureaucracy who are wedded to British imperialism and to parliament. The old Labour Party was born out of a unique situation in which Britain’s industrial proletariat was a majority of the population. Thus Labour had a sufficiently large working-class vote to get elected to parliament as a

Auto Plant...

(continued from page 4)

Swooping in like vultures at the union’s February membership meeting were the political bandits of David North’s Socialist Equality Party, who urged the workers to “break with the UAW,” which they consider a “business.” This is music to the ears of Toyota, which has worked hard to keep the UAW out of their non-union plants in the U.S.

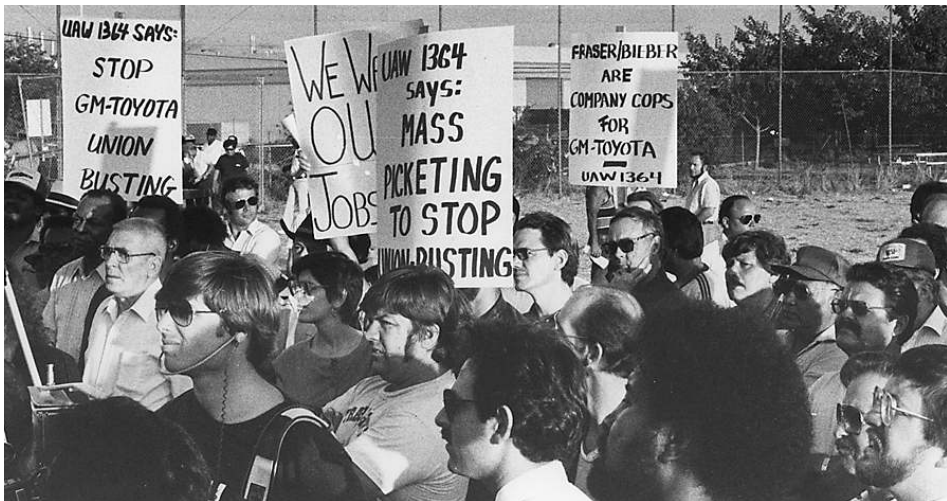
It is fatal to identify the sellout bureaucracy with the union as a whole. The answer is not to abandon the unions, the basic defense organizations of the working class against the bosses. What is needed is a political struggle to replace the “labor lieutenants of capital” with a leadership armed with a class-struggle program, one that breaks labor’s chains to

the Democratic Party. Such a leadership would prepare the workers for the vitally necessary battles against America’s capitalist masters—from organizing the unorganized to the fight against black oppression and anti-immigrant bigotry.

There is no simple trade-union solution to the crisis in auto that has now claimed the jobs of thousands of NUMMI workers and hundreds of thousands worldwide. It is the product of the entire anarchic and outmoded capitalist system of production for profit, whose inbuilt crises repeatedly and increasingly throw masses of workers on the scrap heap. As we wrote in “Auto Bailout Means Union Busting” (WV No. 931, 27 February 2009):

“The fight for jobs is equivalent to the fight against the devastation of America’s working people. What is necessary is a massive program of public works at union wages to rebuild the dams, bridges and roads that are in an advanced stage of decay; to tear down and replace the crumbling public schools in the nation’s inner cities; to create an America that looks like a place that its inhabitants could survive in. It is necessary to call an end to the layoffs by shortening the workweek at no loss in pay, as part of the struggle for jobs for all.

“All must have full access to medical care at no cost and unemployment benefits must be extended until there are jobs, with all pensions completely guaranteed by the government. Such demands, the elements of which were laid out in the



August 1983: UAW members calling for militant action at protest against disbanding of Fremont Local 1364.

1938 Transitional Program, the founding document of the Trotskyist Fourth International, will not be granted by the rapacious capitalist rulers. The capitalist state exists to defend the rule and profits of the bourgeoisie. It cannot be reformed or wielded to serve the interests of working people. The catastrophe of joblessness, threatening the disintegration of the working class, can be effectively fought only by a workers movement led by those committed to the struggle for socialist revolution.”

The boom-and-bust cycles of capitalism will not end short of proletarian revolu-

tion that takes power out of the hands of the irrational capitalist ruling class and creates a workers state based on a planned, socialized economy. Only the achievement of a world socialist order can eliminate the age-old problems of poverty, scarcity and want. It is the purpose of the Spartacist League to help forge the multiracial revolutionary workers party necessary to lead the fight for a workers government that will seize the wealth produced by labor and use it for the benefit of the many, not the profits of a few.■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Reactionary Tory/Liberal Government Formed

British Trotskyists Said: No Vote to Labour, Party of Racism and War



Reuters



Kaler/Demotix

Above: Thousands march against cuts at London hospital, February 27. Above left: Labour's Gordon Brown leaves 10 Downing Street, May 11. Above right: Tory David Cameron (at right, with Liberal Democrat Nick Clegg) moves in.



Getty

On May 6, after 13 years of rule on behalf of Britain's capitalist ruling class, the British Labour Party suffered a stinging electoral defeat, bringing to an ignominious end the government of heretofore prime minister Gordon Brown. With no party achieving a majority—the first such “hung Parliament” since 1974—a coalition government was cobbled together between the Conservative Party (Tories) of David Cameron, who now becomes prime minister, and the Liberal Democrats.

WORKERS HAMMER

The Cameron government takes office amid a burgeoning financial crisis in Europe. With public spending now equivalent to roughly half the country's national output, the new British government is promising brutal cutbacks in public services and austerity on a par with those being forced upon working people in Greece. (More details will likely emerge later this month when, as is the custom, the Queen presents the new government's legislative agenda to Parliament.) That program parallels the anti-working-class perspective put forward as well by the Labour Party. This was made clear in the following article written during the election campaign, which is reprinted from *Workers Hammer* No. 210 (Spring 2010), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League.

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From the standpoint of the working people, it makes no difference whether Gordon Brown's Labour Party or David Cameron's Tories win the general election. Both parties are committed to the brutal imperialist occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and to the “war on terror” against Muslims at home, while each strives to outdo the other in racist hostility to immigrants. Above all, both are committed to fleecing the working people

to pay for the enormous deficit in Britain's public finances.

The 2008 financial meltdown and the worldwide crisis that followed had a devastating impact on the British economy. The burden, which is being heaped onto the British working class, is proportionally higher than elsewhere largely because Britain's financial sector is so bloated relative to the rest of the economy. With public borrowing as a share of national income forecast to be the highest in the G20 group of the largest world economies, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, and a budget deficit that is higher than that of Greece, the European Commission warned that Britain must take tougher measures to cut its deficit by 2015.

Both Labour and Tories know that to tell the truth about the state of the economy would be suicidal in electoral terms. But whoever forms the next government will implement massive public spending cuts and chancellor Alistair Darling [British finance minister] has admitted that Labour will cut “deeper and tougher” than Margaret Thatcher did in the 1980s. Since the beginning of the present economic crisis, half a million people have lost their jobs and according to one estimate a British property is repossessed every eleven minutes. Economic analyst John Lanchester sums up the situation saying: “We had the longest period of sustained economic growth since records began, followed by the longest period of sustained economic contraction

since records began, all of it under the leadership of a government that repeatedly and explicitly promised ‘an end to boom and bust’” (“The Great British Economy Disaster,” *London Review of Books*, 11 March). Lanchester predicts cuts amounting to around eleven per cent across the board, rising to 16 per cent in certain areas, which he notes are of a magnitude never before achieved in this country, while “a two-year freeze in NHS [National Health Service] spending—which is what Labour have talked about—would be its sharpest contraction in 60 years.” Meanwhile the Institute for Fiscal Studies estimates spending cuts of up to 25 per cent.

We say: No vote to Labour, party of the City [of London] bankers and of imperialist murder and pillage in Iraq and Afghanistan, of vile racism against immigrants and minorities and contempt for the working class at home. When Labour won a landslide victory in 1997, in contrast to the euphoria amongst the reformist left, we vehemently opposed any support to Tony Blair's Labour Party. Our 21 April 1997 election statement titled “For a Revolutionary Workers Party! For a Federation of Workers Republics in the British Isles!” said:

“The Spartacist League/Britain says unequivocally: No vote to New Labour in the general election! New Labour is pledged to maintaining the sickening reality of life under capitalism—keeping the unions in shackles, slashing welfare programmes, waging war on workers, racial minorities and immigrants, women

and youth—everybody who is consigned to the bottom of the heap by rotting British capitalism. Blair's ‘contract with Britain’ is a pact with the bloated City of London, where vast wealth is generated from profits extracted through exploitation of workers around the world.”

—*Workers Hammer* No. 156, May/June 1997

The working class needs a party that fights for its own class interests. We fight for a multiethnic revolutionary workers party, part of a Leninist-Trotskyist international, dedicated to the task of fighting for socialist revolution to overthrow the capitalist order. Boom-and-bust cycles are endemic to the capitalist system itself, which is also the root cause of all exploitation and oppression. Fundamental change in the interests of the working people can only come about through revolutionary internationalist class struggle which must shatter the framework of capitalism worldwide. Socialist revolution will lay the basis for rationally planned economies based on production for need, not for profit, and for a qualitative development of the productive forces, opening the road to the elimination of poverty, scarcity and want and to the creation of an egalitarian socialist society.

Labour Government Racism Bolsters BNP

The run-up to the election has been marked by an ominous increase in fascist activity. On the one hand the British National Party (BNP) has been running a high-profile election campaign, spreading racist filth against immigrants and Muslims, while on the streets the English Defence League (EDL) has been staging violent anti-Muslim provocations in various cities. A protest by Unite Against Fascism (UAF) against the EDL in Bolton on 20 March was viciously attacked by the police, who arrested prominent leftists and anti-fascists. UAF leader and Socialist Workers Party (SWP) member Weyman Bennett was held by police on

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