

WikiLeaks Documents: U.S. Torture Machine in Iraq

The whistle-blowers at WikiLeaks have struck again. On October 22, WikiLeaks published the largest leak of classified military material in history—nearly 400,000 military field reports on the Iraq war and occupation. Mostly written by soldiers on the ground, the reports detail more than 109,000 deaths, most of them civilians, in the seven years

since the U.S.-led imperialist invasion and occupation of Iraq. They capture a snapshot of how the U.S. has pulverized what was once one of the more advanced countries of the Near East. They describe in nightmarish detail the torture of detainees, executions at U.S. checkpoints as well as the sectarian carnage unleashed by the occupation—

atrocities started under the Bush administration and continued without respite under the “reduced” occupation force of Barack Obama.

The reports document accounts of torture that rival those at the notorious Abu Ghraib prison. Having been caught out in Abu Ghraib and other American torture centers in Iraq, U.S. occupiers opted

to subcontract some of their dirty work to their Iraqi puppet army and police, who tortured their victims through suspension and hanging, beating, whipping, electric shocks, burning, sensory deprivation and rape. Recalling that one of the bogus pretexts of the 2003 Iraq invasion was the “moral imperative” to put an end

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Down With Repression Against Strikers, Youth!

French Strike Wave Against Government Attack on Pensions



Getty

PARIS, November 1—The fight by French workers to defend their retirement pensions against government attack has been one of the sharpest class battles this country has seen in years. Strikes by workers at oil refineries and strategic fuel terminals, which were at the core of the struggle, eventually shut down all 12 of the country’s refineries before being called off last week. Strikes by railroad, subway and airport workers crippled transportation, while shortages closed gasoline stations across the country and threatened the fuel-needy industrial sector. A 33-day-

long strike by fuel terminal workers in the Marseille area stranded some 80 vessels offshore in the Mediterranean. Sanitation workers struck in at least ten cities. In Marseille, 11,000 tons of uncollected trash piled in the streets.

In protests held in September and October, millions mobilized throughout the country. Yet in the face of overwhelming public opposition to the pension “reform” pushed by right-wing president Nicolas Sarkozy, parliament gave final passage last week to a law increasing the minimum retirement age by two years to 62

and the age to receive a full pension to 67.

Determined to make French capitalism competitive against its imperialist rivals, Sarkozy played hardball with the strikers. Hundreds of riot cops were mobilized to forcibly disperse picket lines blocking refineries, fuel depots and other industrial sites. Near Nantes, the entire town of Donges, which has one of the largest refineries in the country, was placed under a state of siege by an army of riot cops. Strikers at the Grandpuits refinery near Paris were ordered to return to work in the interests of “national defense” or

face six-month prison terms. Since mid October, the government has arrested at least 2,500 people.

These attacks on strikers—and on the very right to strike—coincided with systematic police violence against high school youth, particularly those from working-class trade schools with a strong minority component. Youth joined the protests in large numbers, conscious that extending the retirement age would further increase youth unemployment, which stands at 23 percent for those under 25. The last few

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Reuters

Left: Demonstration in Lyon against government austerity, October 19, part of national day of protests that drew 3.5 million. Above: Cops break blockade of striking workers at Grandpuits oil refinery, southeast of Paris, October 22.

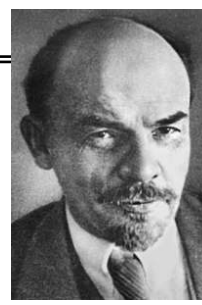
No to a New Popular Front! For a Revolutionary Workers Party!





TROTSKY

FROM THE ARCHIVES OF MARXISM



LENIN

In Honor of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution

November 7 (October 25 by the calendar used in Russia at the time) marks the 93rd anniversary of the Russian Revolution. Led by the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, the workers' seizure of power in Russia gave flesh and blood reality to the Marxist understanding of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Despite the subsequent Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet workers state, culminating in its counterrevolutionary destruction in 1991-92, the October Revolution was and is the international proletariat's greatest victory; its final undoing, a world-historic defeat. The International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) fought to the bitter end in defense of the Soviet Union and the bureaucratically deformed workers states of East Europe, while calling for workers political revolutions to oust the parasitic nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies that ruled these states. This is the same program we uphold today for the remaining workers states of China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba.

Having been expelled from the USSR in 1929 by Stalin, Trotsky spent the remainder of his life in exile.

In November 1932, he gave a speech to a Danish social-democratic student group in Copenhagen. He outlined the political conditions and the social forces that drove the Russian Revolution, stressing the decisive role of the Bolshevik Party. Illuminating the worldwide impact of the Russian Revolution and its place in history, Trotsky underlined the necessity of sweeping away the decaying capitalist order and replacing it with a scientifically planned international socialist economy that will lay the material basis for human freedom.

The ICL fights to forge workers parties modeled on Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks to lead the struggle for new October Revolutions around the globe.

* * *

Revolution means a change of the social order. It transfers the power from the hands of a class which has exhausted itself into those of another class, which is on the rise....

Without the armed insurrection of November 7, 1917, the Soviet state would not be in existence. But the insurrection itself did not drop from Heaven. A series of historical prerequisites was necessary for the October revolution.

1. The rotting away of the old ruling classes—the nobility, the monarchy, the bureaucracy.



Moscow, 1918: Red Army soldiers celebrate first anniversary of October Revolution under banner reading "Communism."

For New October Revolutions!

2. The political weakness of the bourgeoisie, which had no roots in the masses of the people.

3. The revolutionary character of the peasant question.

4. The revolutionary character of the problem of the oppressed nations.

5. The significant social weight of the proletariat.

To these organic pre-conditions we must add certain conjunctural conditions of the highest importance:

6. The Revolution of 1905 was the great school, or in Lenin's words, the "dress rehearsal" of the Revolution of 1917. The Soviets, as the irreplaceable organizational form of the proletarian united front in the revolution, were created for the first time in the year 1905.

7. The imperialist war sharpened all the contradictions, tore the backward masses out of their immobility and thereby prepared the grandiose scale of the catastrophe.

But all these conditions, which fully sufficed for the *outbreak of the Revolution*, were insufficient to assure the *victory of the proletariat* in the Revolution. For this victory one condition more was needed:

8. The Bolshevik Party....

In the year 1883 there arose among the emigres the first Marxist group. In the year 1898, at a secret meeting, the foundation of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party was proclaimed (we all called ourselves Social-Democrats in those days). In the year 1903 occurred the split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. In the year 1912 the Bolshevik fraction finally became an independent Party.

It learned to recognize the class mechanics of society in struggle, in the grandiose events of twelve years (1905-1917). It educated cadres equally capable of initiative and of subordination. The discipline of its revolutionary action was based on the unity of its doctrine, on the tradition of common struggles and on confidence in its tested leadership.

Thus stood the Party in the year 1917. Despised by the official "public opinion" and the paper thunder of the intelligentsia press, it adapted itself to the movement of the masses. Firmly it kept in hand the control of factories and regiments. More and more the peasant masses turned toward it. If we understand by "nation," not the privileged heads, but the majority of the people, that is, the workers and

peasants, then Bolshevism became in the course of the year 1917 a truly national Russian Party.

In September 1917, Lenin, who was compelled to keep in hiding, gave the signal, "The crisis is ripe, the hour of the insurrection has approached." He was right. The ruling classes had landed in a blind alley before the problems of the war, the land and national liberation. The bourgeoisie finally lost its head. The democratic parties, the Mensheviks and social-revolutionaries, wasted the remains of the confidence of the masses in them by their support of the imperialist war, by their policy of ineffectual compromise and concession to the bourgeois and feudal property-owners. The awakened army no longer wanted to fight for the alien aims of imperialism. Disregarding democratic advice, the peasantry smoked the landowners out of their estates. The oppressed nationalities at the periphery rose up against the bureaucracy of Petrograd. In the most important workers' and soldiers' Soviets the Bolsheviks were dominant. The workers and soldiers demanded action. The ulcer was ripe. It needed a cut of the lancet.

Only under these social and political conditions was the insurrection possible. And thus it also became inevitable. But there is no playing around with the insurrection. Woe to the surgeon who is careless in the use of the lancet! Insurrection is an art. It has its laws and its rules.

The Party carried through the October insurrection with cold calculation and with flaming determination. Thanks to this, it conquered almost without victims. Through the victorious Soviets the Bolsheviks placed themselves at the head of a country which occupies one sixth of the surface of the globe....

Let us now in closing attempt to ascertain the place of the October Revolution, not only in the history of Russia but in the history of the world. During the year 1917, in a period of eight months, two historical curves intersect. The February upheaval—that belated echo of the great struggles which had been carried out in past centuries on the territories of Holland, England, France, almost all of Continental Europe—takes its place in the series of bourgeois revolutions. The October Revolution proclaims and opens the domination of the proletariat. It was world capitalism that suffered its first great defeat on the territory of Russia. The chain broke at its weakest link. But it was the

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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EDITOR: Ray Bishop

EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Elizabeth Johnson

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

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5 November 2010

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Police State Crackdown on G20 Protesters

The following article originally appeared in Spartacist Canada No. 166 (Fall 2010), newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League.

SPARTACIST CANADA

During the June 25-27 protests against the G20 summit in Toronto, some 1,100 people were arrested—the largest mass arrests in Canadian history. Inside the heavily fortified summit, [Canadian prime minister Stephen] Harper, Obama and other imperialist rulers plotted how best to police the imperialist order and shore up their crumbling economies on the backs of working people. Meanwhile, out on the streets, the cops ran amok, cracking heads and terrorizing protesters. For months, the Harper government, the cops and the media set the stage for this with predictions of anarchist “violence.” Nearly 20,000 cops occupied the city core in an unprecedented mobilization of state repression that cost more than \$1 billion.

Backed by their political masters from Ottawa to Toronto’s city hall, the cops used minor property damage and a few burned-out police cars as the signal for a massive crackdown. Across the city, from Parkdale to the East End, left-wing activists were rounded up and those who protested the police violence and mayhem were themselves arrested. Riot police charged and arrested protesters in the so-called “free speech zone” in Queen’s Park [site of Ontario Legislature]. Hundreds of protesters and passersby were “kettled” in a downtown intersection, penned in by cops for hours in the driving rain.

Denouncing the manufactured furor over so-called “vandalism,” the Partisan Defense Committee, the legal defense organization associated with the Trotskyist League, issued a June 28 statement, declaring:

“From the standpoint of the working class such actions are no crime! What is a smashed bank window compared to an imperialist system that condemns millions to death by starvation, disease and war?”

The cops’ barbaric treatment of those arrested perfectly mirrors the racism, chauvinist oppression and violence that are integral to capitalist society. Inside the mass detention centre on Eastern Avenue, minorities were subjected to racist abuse. Women, gays and lesbians were singled out for special humiliation, including sexual manhandling and threats of rape. Some protesters were repeatedly strip searched, denied access to toilets, water and adequate food. The disabled were brutalized and those with cop-inflicted injuries were denied medical care.

Reflecting the national oppression of the Québécois at the hands of the Canadian ruling class, protesters from Quebec—automatically deemed supporters of the anarchist Black Bloc—were singled out for arrest and vile Anglo-chauvinist abuse. Merely speaking French or having Quebec plates on your car made you a target. According to a Montreal law student, the cops who pulled him over stated: “We’re pulling people over from Quebec, we’re stopping people in cars and buses” (cbc.ca, 3 July). At least 50 Québécois were arrested in an early morning raid at the University of Toronto’s Graduate Students Union, where they were being billeted. So many Québécois were arrested that of the 450 who came to Toronto on the buses organized by the Anti-Capitalist Convergence (CLAC), only 125 made the return trip.

In the early hours of June 26, even



Gundlock/National Post

Cops rampage against anti-G20 summit protesters in Toronto, June 26.

before the main anti-G20 demonstration, cops barged into private homes at gunpoint, arresting as many as 23 left-wing activists from the Southern Ontario Anarchist Resistance (SOAR), No One Is Illegal and the Montreal-based CLAC. Seventeen protesters now face multiple “conspiracy” charges, which could bring heavy jail time.

Conspiracy charges are often wielded by the state to go after perceived opponents against whom there is no evidence. The capitalist rulers have a long history of using such frame-up prosecutions against the left and labour movement. The early trade unions in this country were outlawed as “criminal conspiracies.” In the 1930s, as the anarchy of production for profit led to mass unemployment, the capitalist rulers launched a ferocious campaign of anti-communist repression, charging members of the Communist Party with “seditious conspiracy.” Such charges criminalize political protest and are meant to intimidate and silence all those who would oppose the violence, poverty and exploitation that are endemic to the rule of capital. Drop all the charges against the G20 protesters now!

Reformist Bankruptcy: Public Inquiries and Cop Baiting

To quell the tide of anger over the cop crackdown and refurbish the image of the cops, various politicians and bourgeois liberals have called for a “public inquiry” into the police violence, a demand eagerly embraced by the reformist left. And multiple inquiries have indeed been announced. In promoting such inquiries, these leftists propagate a dangerous myth

that the capitalist state and its cops can be reformed to serve the interests of the oppressed.

The cops, along with the prisons, courts and military, make up the core of the capitalist state, an instrument of organized violence used to maintain the rule of the capitalists against the working class. When the police kill and brutalize immigrants and Natives, repress leftists, attack picket lines or student protesters, this flows directly from the fact that they serve but one master, the capitalist class. Their job is to protect the profit system that creates unemployment, poverty and oppression. No amount of parliamentary claptrap, “inquiries” or appeals to “justice” will reform the capitalist state. It must be overthrown by a class-conscious working class in a socialist revolution and replaced by a workers state. The June events in Toronto amply demonstrate the truth of the statement by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the 1848 *Communist Manifesto* that “The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.”

From the Harper government to Toronto’s social-democratic mayor David Miller and much of the left, a furious outcry went up against the supposed “violence” of the anarchists. Grotesquely, feminist blowhard Judy Rebick told a CP24 newsmen on June 27 that there should have been *more* cop repression and pre-emptive arrests. “What they could have done,” Rebick railed, “is arrest the Black Bloc at the beginning before they had a chance to be part of a bigger crowd and that’s what they didn’t do.” Rad-lib

media darling Naomi Klein echoed this with her call on the cops to “do your god-damn job.”

The NDP’s [social-democratic New Democratic Party] Jack Layton and the bureaucrats of the Canadian Labour Congress and Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) spoke as one in denouncing “violence” by the protesters. A statement by OFL president Sid Ryan bragged that the labour tops “liaised with the Toronto Police and cooperated at every turn” during the large June 26 protest which they sponsored, and added: “Shamefully, a small number of hooligans used the cloak of our peaceful and lawful demonstration to commit petty acts of vandalism in the streets of Toronto.” This snivelling loyalty to bourgeois “order” is the labour tops’ guarantee that they will contain workers’ struggles within the bounds of capitalist legality.

The Communist Party (CP), Socialist Action (SA), Fightback [affiliated with Alan Woods’ International Marxist Tendency] and the International Socialists (I.S.) all rushed to join the denunciations of the anarchists. The CP ranted that SOAR and the Black Bloc were “playing into the hands of state repression” and demanded that they be “publicly repudiated and condemned” (*People’s Voice*, 1-31 August). Blaming the protesters for causing the cop violence, SA claimed that the “Bloc-istas also gave the cops ammunition to brutalize and jail over 900 innocents” (“Summits of Deceit and Repression,” undated leaflet). I.S. leader Ritch Whyman condemned the Black Bloc who, he said, “utilize the larger rally and split marches to launch attacks on property and the police” (socialistproject.ca, 3 July). The idea that the cops needed the excuse of the Black Bloc to round up hundreds of protesters is simply fatuous. The cops have never needed an excuse for their repression!

The Fightback group, deeply buried in the NDP, was even more virulent in its attacks on the Black Bloc. A June 30 public meeting on the G20 events run by this group featured speakers who actually praised the cops! One of them, United Steelworkers leader and Ontario NDP vice president Mike Seaward, declared that “most of the day the police acted rationally—they were good.” Meanwhile, a Fightback leaflet for the meeting ranted that “the Black Bloc are not part of our movement and there is no difference between them and police provocateurs.”

That the police insinuate provocateurs into the workers movement and left-wing protests is a given for anyone familiar with the workings of the capitalist state. But in the mouths of these reformists, denunciations of “provocateurs” are a cover for *refusing to defend leftists facing state repression*.

All of these misnamed “socialists” stand indicted as reformists committed to the rule of capital, their program and actions completely defined by the framework of bourgeois society. Such a policy was sharply characterized by Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V.I. Lenin of the October 1917 Revolution, as “the actual training of the masses to become imbued with the inviolability of the bourgeois state” (*The Lessons of October*, 1924). In this, their forebears are the social democrats who united with the imperialists to oppose the October Revolution; who in Germany ordered the Freikorps murders of heroic revolutionaries Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht.

Smearing the victims of police state violence is in perfect harmony with Fightback’s long-held position that cops are

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Prominent International Socialists supporters policed June 26 G20 protest for labor bureaucracy. They blocked angry marchers from summit site, telling them to “keep moving” in other direction.





Birth Control, Abortion Rights and Women's Oppression

FIFTY YEARS AFTER THE PILL: STILL A LONG WAY TO GO

"You've come a long way, baby," crooned the old Virginia Slims commercials on TV in the late 1960s, and the bourgeois media has picked up the tune again on this, the fiftieth anniversary of the Pill (no further definition necessary—everyone knows you are talking about s-e-x). And everyone knows the Pill is all about sex. When in 1975 Loretta Lynn sang, "I'm tearin' down your brooder house 'cause now I've got the pill," the hearts of millions of women across America beat in time to the rhythm of her song, which dozens of radio stations tried to censor—until it made the hit charts.

The Pill was the first reliable contraceptive that gave women control over their own reproduction. This tremendous medical advance enabled women to separate sexual enjoyment from fear of pregnancy, freeing them from the now excessive fertility with which evolution has endowed our species. But birth control and abortion remain restricted throughout the capitalist world by the state, by the institution of the family, and by organized religion, which all serve to enforce women's oppression. As long as the capitalist order exists, the benefits of science will be limited by the exploitation and oppression of this class system. Marxists look forward to the day when science can be "applied with full understanding to all the fields of human activity," to quote the words of German socialist leader August Bebel, whose 1879 work *Woman and Socialism* was one of the first major Marxist works on the woman question.

Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V.I. Lenin of the 1917 October Revolution, underlined that birth control and abortion are among woman's "most important civil, political and cultural rights" (*The Revolution Betrayed* [1936]). We fight for women's liberation through socialist revolution. We call for *free abortion on demand* as part of *free, quality health care for all* and for *free, 24-hour childcare* to address the deep class and racial oppression of poor and minority women. The wealthy will always get their medical care, including their abortions, while myriad anti-abortion laws and restrictions on birth control target young, working-class and poor women, who can't afford quality health care, childcare and housing.

At the time of its first release by the pharmaceutical company Searle, big predictions were made about the effect that the Pill would have on society. Moral bigots wailed that it would promote female promiscuity and the decline of religion and the patriarchal family, while birth control advocates believed it would save the family, create happy marriages and end the world population explosion. The Pill was even hailed as the solution to the "Red Menace." In her book *America and the Pill: A History of Promise, Peril, and Liberation* (Basic Books, 2010), historian Elaine May speaks of how some Cold Warriors believed that the Pill

"would alleviate the conditions of poverty and unrest that might lead developing nations to embrace communism, and instead promote the growth of markets for consumer goods and the embrace of capitalism."

In fact, the "sexual revolution" that is often credited to the Pill was the result, in one way or another, of the convulsive social struggles of the civil rights movement, which broke the back of Jim Crow segregation in the South, and of opposition to U.S. imperialism's war against the Vietnamese Revolution. The major social upheavals of the 1960s that broke up the reactionary Cold War consensus also led to substantial advances in access to higher education and professional jobs

abortion rights had been introduced this year alone in state legislatures across the country, and many have already passed. These range from Oklahoma's cruel requirement that a doctor show the woman an ultrasound of the fetus, to Nebraska's ban on all abortions after 20 weeks based on the claim that the fetus can feel pain. Perhaps the most barbarous is Utah's new law. Passed after a desperate 17-year-old paid a man \$150 to beat her in an effort to induce a miscarriage, the law now allows homicide charges against women in similar cases! Meanwhile, the lies that abortion causes depression and breast cancer continue to circulate, and some recent polls show that for the first time more Americans call

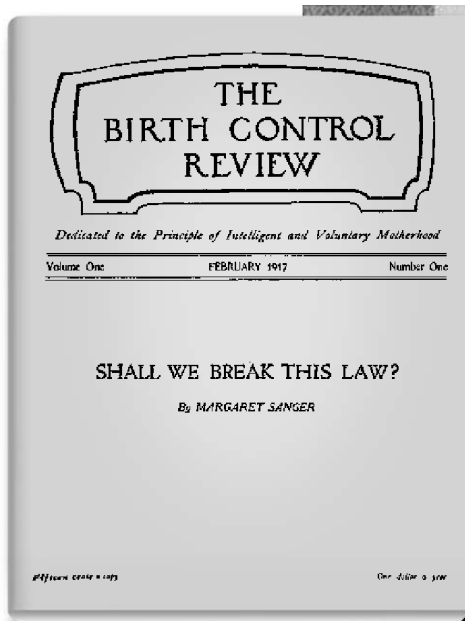
ler, a main target of the anti-woman God squad for decades, was the eighth person murdered in this anti-abortion, "family values" onslaught since 1993. In an article titled "The New Abortion Providers," the *New York Times* (18 July) details the long decline in the number of doctors trained in performing abortions and tells the story of young doctors in groups like Medical Students for Choice fighting to make abortion part of a doctor's regular practice. Abortion is a medical procedure, now one of the safest in the world, that does not need to be carried out in isolated clinics, where doctors and their families, friends and co-workers can easily be subjected to harassment, violence and death by anti-abortion fanatics.

Ever since the passage of *Roe v. Wade* in 1973, the basic democratic right of legal abortion has been under attack. The war on abortion rights has become a spearhead for social and political reaction because at its heart lies the question of legal and social equality for women. Providing women with some control over whether or not to have children, abortion is viewed as a threat to the institution of the family.

Access to contraception, too, is limited by cost and lack of basic information, while "conscience clauses" allow pharmacies to refuse to fill prescriptions for birth control and Plan B, the "morning-after" pill. To all this can be added anti-woman moralizing, which rants that a girl shouldn't want to have sex. The argument goes that while any unwed mother is a bad girl, if she can claim she got carried away, maybe the sin is not quite as great (as long as she doesn't have an abortion). But having birth control implies premeditation. Precisely! In the words of the late comedian George Carlin, "Not every ejaculation deserves a name."

Today sex education in schools is increasingly under attack, while abstinence remains the focus of government-funded programs like the State Personal Responsibility Education Program, established by Barack Obama's recent health care "reform" act. Abortion clinics are overwhelmingly outnumbered by "pregnancy crisis centers"—fake clinics set up by anti-abortion groups with the purpose of subjecting pregnant women to anti-abortion propaganda and otherwise pressuring them to carry the fetus to term. According to the *Nation*, some 4,000 of these centers have received over \$60 million in federal abstinence and marriage-promotion funds. As a result of the ignorance and miseducation produced by this tangle of social reaction, almost half of pregnancies in the U.S. every year are unplanned, according to the most recent government survey.

While U.S. newspapers headline "The Pill: Making Motherhood Better for 50 Years" (*Washington Post*, 9 May), the masses of working-class, minority and poor women have missed the celebration. The Great Recession rages on; union-



Top: WV illustration based on Ortho/McNeil photo; above right: Bettmann
First issue (February 1917) of monthly journal published by Margaret Sanger, shown here protesting gag rule against birth control advocacy in Boston, 1929.

for women. At the same time, the civil rights movement could not eradicate the race-color caste oppression of black people, which is the bedrock of American capitalism, just as the institution of the family, the main source of women's oppression in capitalist society, is a bulwark of the bourgeois order.

Abortion Rights Under Attack

While U.S. bourgeois pundits celebrate the reproductive freedom that the Pill has given women, it is striking that most do not mention the precipitous decline in women's access to abortion. The assault on women's right to abortion continues unabated in the courts and halls of government, especially on the state level. As of June, some 370 bills to restrict

themselves "pro-life" than "pro-choice."

The arsenal of legal measures on the federal as well as the state level has already made abortion virtually inaccessible to a large number of women. Thirty-eight states prohibit abortions after a specified point in pregnancy. Fully 35 states require one or both parents of women under 18 to be notified and/or consent to an abortion. Some 87 percent of U.S. counties and 31 percent of metropolitan areas have no abortion services.

In May 2009, the "pro-life" war on women claimed yet another life. Dr. George Tiller—one of only three doctors whose clinics provide late-term abortions in the United States—was assassinated while attending his church in Wichita, Kansas, by a right-wing anti-abortion bigot. Til-

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

busting is destroying what good union jobs remain; homes are in foreclosure; millions of working people cannot get jobs and their children cannot get a decent education or affordable health care. Except for the women at the very top of society, where the rich are certainly getting richer, the decades-long assault on the working class and the poor has more than canceled out the important improvements in women's legal status over the last 50 years.

In times of substantial class and social struggle, the capitalist class may be forced to cede some reforms. But as long as the capitalist order remains, the ruling class will seek to overturn these gains, as it is now doing, when such struggles are at an ebb. As revolutionary communists, we defend every gain that's been won for the exploited and oppressed, such as the gains wrested during the hard struggles of the civil rights movement. But these reforms have a fundamentally token quality to them because they leave untouched the capitalist system. The source of black oppression and anti-woman bigotry is not the particular capitalist party in power—whether Democratic or Republican—but the capitalist order that breeds oppression and bigotry as a necessary corollary to its system of exploitation.

Sex and Social Control

The capitalist class seeks to buttress the family, which, along with organized religion and the state, form a triad that props up the exploitation of labor. To free women from their deeply entrenched special oppression will take a workers revolution to rip this system of exploitation out by the roots and replace it with a workers government to begin the construction of a socialist world. Only then can we undertake the profound changes in the fabric of everyday life where the institution of the family is replaced by socialized childcare and housework, enabling women to fully participate in social and political life.

The family is not an immutable, timeless institution, but a social relation subject to historical change. In his classic 1884 work *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, Friedrich Engels traced the origin of the family and the state to the division of society into classes. The development of agriculture allowed the creation of a social surplus. In turn, that surplus gave impetus to the development of a leisured ruling class, thus moving human society away from the primitive egalitarianism of the Old Stone Age (Paleolithic). The centrality of the family began with its role in ensuring "legitimate heirs" for the patriarchal inheritance of property, which required women's sexual monogamy and social subordination. In the 10,000 years since the advent of class society, the family has taken many forms—including polygamous, extended and nuclear—reflecting different political economies and their cultures and religions. But the oppression of women is a fundamental feature of *all* class societies.

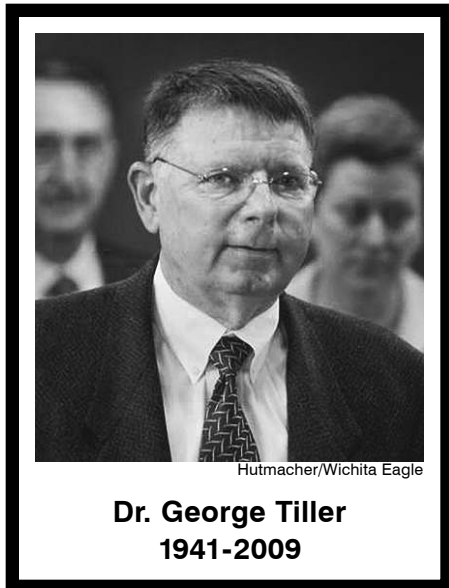
The family is a socially conservatizing force that imposes certain behavioral norms. For example, in this country the definition of "manhood" is, besides getting a girl pregnant, the ability to support a wife and children. But that is becoming ever more difficult given the lack of decent-paying union jobs. If not for wives entering the workforce, the entire bottom 60 percent of the U.S. population would have had real income losses since 1979. At the same time, the institution of the family serves the capitalist rulers by placing the burden of raising a new generation of proletarians on working men and women. Indeed, the "family values" crowd (which encompasses Democrats as well as the Republicans) wails about the so-called "crisis of the family" and insists that it is both right and proper that parents should be wholly responsible for the upbringing of their children.

Even the most cursory examination of laws regulating abortion, contraception and the like that go back thousands of years shows that they are integrally

related to the maintenance of the family. Some of the first documented legal measures to strengthen the patriarchal family were enacted in ancient Rome under Augustus Caesar. These included prohibitions against adultery, incentives for widows to remarry, "sin" taxes on bachelors 30 years and older, and incentives for fathers of three or more children. The concern of the government was to have enough Roman citizens to fill the ranks of the army and maintain the city of Rome as the core of the Empire.

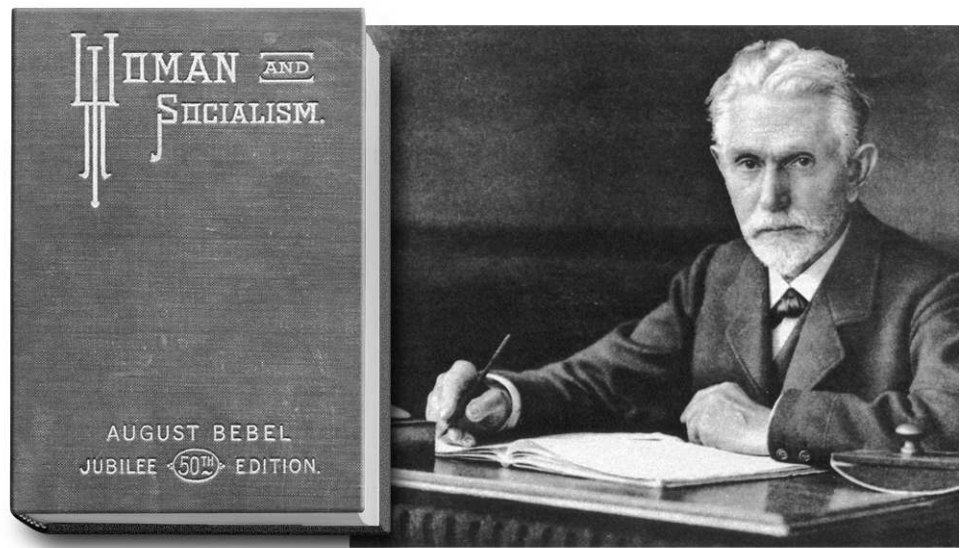
Modern abortion laws show how social and legal institutions have changed to reflect the interests of the capitalist class. In 1803 the British Ellenborough Act marked the advent of abortion as a statutory crime in the English-speaking world. The interest of the ruling class in this law and others following it was to protect the male's right to heirs, punish (especially single) women for illicit sex and encourage population growth for the newly forged capitalist nation-state, its army and labor pool.

Alongside legal prohibition stands religion, the strongest ideological force against birth control and abortion, especially the Roman Catholic church. The claims by the Pope and other clergy about the "souls" of unborn children are revealed as so much superstition by the science of human development. Yet thanks to the reactionary influence of religion, tens of thousands of women die each year from illegal abortions—lives that would have been saved with access to birth control and abortion. A brief look at Catholic



doctrine shows that the church has changed its mind several times about when the nonexistent "soul" enters into the conceptus. For most of the existence of the church, this was considered to be the time of "quickening," at about the fourth month, when the pregnant woman can feel the movement of the fetus. John XXI, who became pope in 1276, was the author of a book called *Treasury of Medicines for the Poor*, which is the greatest single source of information about the practical means of birth control and abortion that was known in the Middle Ages. It was not until 1869 that Pope Pius IX declared that abortion "from conception" was a sin. This was a political calculation carried out in exchange for recognition of "papal infallibility" by French Emperor Napoleon III, who was seeking to stem France's decades-long decline in the birth rate.

The woman-hating strictures against birth control and abortion, the poisonous bigotry against homosexuals, the witch-hunting of "deviant" sex (who defines that?), the relentless pressure on youth to somehow refrain from giving in to their raging hormones—all these are corollaries of the institution of the family and the social control that it gives the ruling class. As communists we oppose attempts to fit human sexuality into legislated or decreed so-called "norms." Government out of the bedroom! The guiding principle for sexual relations between people should be that of effective consent—that is, nothing more than mutual agreement and understanding as opposed to coercion. All consensual relations are purely the concern of the individuals involved,



German socialist leader August Bebel wrote in his 1879 work *Woman and Socialism*, "There can be no liberation of mankind without social independence and equality of the sexes."

and the state has no business interfering in human sexual activity.

Some History of Birth Control

In *Contraception and Abortion from the Ancient World to the Renaissance* (Harvard University Press, 1994), John M. Riddle explores the ways that pre-industrial people might have tried to enjoy sex without the consequence of procreation. Nobody knows if the methods he documents had much effect on the birth rates, but they certainly show intent. One city in Northern Africa, Cyrene, is believed to have made its name and its fortune from a wild giant fennel that grew nearby, which people believed to have abortifacient effects. Its use became so widespread that it was harvested to extinction.

Peter Fryer, in his witty and erudite book *The Birth Controllers*, documents that ancient Egyptians used crocodile-dung pessaries (vaginal suppositories) and other dubious methods to control fertility. The Christian Bible's story of Onan is only the most well known of a long-practiced method (withdrawal), a story used for centuries to put the terror of hell into countless adolescents for masturbation. Some historians believe that the tens of thousands of women who were executed as witches in early modern Europe may have been abortionists and birth control practitioners. In 20th-century America, before the Pill, housewives often resorted to the dangerous practice of douching with Lysol.

In the 1830s, a Massachusetts doctor named Charles Knowlton was the first person in the history of birth control to be sent to prison for advocating it. The United States also has the dubious honor of passing the first nationwide laws prohibiting the dissemination of birth-control methods. In 1873 Congress passed the Comstock Act, named for its sponsor, Postmaster General Anthony Comstock. It outlawed the circulation of contraceptive information and devices through the U.S. postal service as "pornography." In 1915 Comstock boasted that he had convicted enough people of "sexual misconduct" to fill a 60-car passenger train.

One of Comstock's prominent targets in later years was Margaret Sanger. Sanger, who would go on to found Planned Parenthood, began her political life as a member of the Socialist Party, working

on the party's women's committee. She was working as a nurse, visiting immigrants in New York's Lower East Side, where she saw firsthand the suffering of women whose health had been ruined by too many pregnancies, who were struggling to feed children they could not afford to support, who all too often ended up butchered by some back-alley abortionist. Soon she began writing about sex education and health for the party's women's page under the heading, "What Every Girl Should Know." In early 1913 Comstock banned the column, and the paper ran in its place a box titled "What Every Girl Should Know—Nothing; by order of the U.S. Post Office."

Sanger soon left the Socialist Party to focus single-mindedly on fighting for birth control, a term that she herself invented. A courageous woman, Sanger set up the first birth control clinic in the country and endured arrests and imprisonment as she sought to overturn the Comstock Law and to educate women and doctors in birth control methods. She traveled to Europe to research the latest techniques and wrote a sex manual in 1926 where she describes the act of sex in ecstatic, uplifting terms. Seeking to promote the cause of birth control among the wealthy and influential, she steered her movement away from the socialist movement. Sanger, a bourgeois feminist, was willing to make any political compromise she saw as necessary to win advocates to her side and thus embraced some ugly arguments popular among bourgeois reformers of the time, such as endorsing eugenics, including the call to bar immigration for the "feeble-minded." While the eugenics movement, which stigmatized the poor for their own oppression, was at the time not yet associated with the genocidal movement that would emerge in Nazi Germany, it was widely opposed by socialists. American socialist and birth control pioneer Antoinette Konikow denounced the presence of eugenicists at a 1921 New York City conference on birth control, declaring that the working-class mothers she represented "are often considered to be not fit" by such forces.

The "Population Bomb"

Behind the scenes (or not), people have always struggled to control fertility for their own private reasons. But there is

continued on page 6

Spartacists join in defense of abortion clinic against Operation Rescue terrorists, San Mateo, California, July 1993.



The Pill...

(continued from page 5)

also a longstanding chain of argument in favor of population control on the part of bourgeois ideologues. The most notorious of these was made by Church of England parson Thomas Malthus, whose 1798 *Essay on the Principle of Population* predicted unrelenting misery on account of population growth that would, he claimed, inevitably outstrip available resources. Writing at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in Britain, Malthus proposed two solutions: leave the poor to die of their misery (he opposed poor relief) and postpone the age of marriage so as to reduce the number of children per couple (that is, “abstinence” as birth control).

Malthusianism was, as Friedrich Engels characterized it in *The Condition of the Working-Class in England*, “the most open declaration of war of the bourgeoisie upon the proletariat.” Lenin, too, denounced Malthusianism in a short 1913 article, “The Working Class and Neomalthusianism.” At the same time, he noted, “It goes without saying that this does not by any means prevent us from demanding the unconditional annulment of all laws against abortions or against the distribution of medical literature on contraceptive measures, etc.” Lenin called for “freedom for medical propaganda and the protection of the elementary democratic rights of citizens, men and women.”

The corollary of Malthusianism, eugenics, with its calls for compulsory sterilization and forced abortions, has its contemporary advocates, including Obama’s “science czar,” John Holdren. In 1977, Holdren co-authored *Ecoscience: Population, Resources, Environment* with the (now largely discredited) population “experts” Paul and Anne Ehrlich. Dripping with contempt, Holdren et al. wrote: “If some individuals contribute to general social deterioration by overproducing children...they can be required by law to exercise reproductive responsibility.” Such “reproductive responsibility” laws could include “compulsory abortion,” “adding a sterilant to drinking water or staple foods,” “sterilizing women after their second or third child” and other “involuntary fertility control” methods that would be implemented by a “Planetary Regime,” which “might be given responsibility for determining the optimum population for the world.” The ravings of Holdren and the Ehrlichs are worthy of the genocidal Nazi eugenics movement.

Marxists are of course not indifferent to the problem of rapid population growth. But our starting point is the fight for socialist revolution to open the widest vista of human freedom. As we wrote in part two of “Capitalism and Global Warming” (WV No. 966, 8 October):

“Only a society that can raise the standard of living worldwide can provide the



Raleigh News and Observer

Civil rights activists jailed in Wake County, North Carolina, 1963. Civil rights movement ended Jim Crow segregation in South, inspired further struggles, including for women’s rights.

conditions for a natural decline in reproductive rates.... “Under communism, human beings will have far greater mastery over their natural and social environments. Both the division between town and country and economic dependence on the family will be overcome. The time when people were compelled to have more children in order to ensure enough manpower to work the land or to care for the elderly will have long passed.”

Genesis of the Pill

Margaret Sanger first had the idea of a “magic pill” to prevent conception in 1912, but the scientific knowledge to create it did not exist. By the end of World War II, decades of research into human reproductive biology had revealed the crucial role of hormones in conception and pregnancy. In 1953 Sanger, accompanied by International Harvester heiress Katherine McCormick, paid a visit to the Worcester Foundation for Experimental Biology, where Gregory Pincus, who in the 1930s engineered the first in vitro fertilization (a rabbit embryo), conducted his privately funded research. Pincus’s early work had been cited as a great scientific achievement, but the storm of media condemnation over “babies in test tubes” led to him being denied tenure by Harvard University and all but driven from mainstream research as a “mad scientist.” Another maverick scientist, chemist Russell Marker, had developed a technique, later refined by Carl Djerassi, to extract massive, cheap amounts of a synthetic progestin from a species of enormous yam that grew only in Mexico. The research to create an oral contraceptive was funded almost entirely out of McCormick’s private fortune; the pharmaceutical companies would not touch research into contraception at that time.

The post-World War II years were hard for American women. The outbreak of the Cold War, the purge of communists and other militants from the unions and the rise of McCarthyism also included a

wholesale campaign to put women back into the kitchen and nursery. Many women had escaped from such drudgery during World War II, when their labor was necessary for the war economy. As the government investigated “subversives,” there was an unprecedented state intrusion into family life and the deadening of every aspect of social and intellectual life. A “normal” family and a vigilant mother were supposed to be the front line of defense against treason, while anti-Communists linked “deviant” family or sexual behavior to sedition. Most women were married by age 19; the birth rate became the highest in U.S. history.

At the same time, the groundbreaking reports by Alfred C. Kinsey documented what Americans really did behind the bedroom door (and in some other places, too). And women wanted better contraception. The Pill was first marketed in 1957 as a treatment for menstrual disorders. When word circulated that it suppressed ovulation and prevented pregnancy, doctors across the country were besieged by hundreds of thousands of women asking for prescriptions to treat their suddenly discovered menstrual problems.

The leap to respectability and mainstream medicine for the Pill came through Harvard gynecologist John Rock, a fertility specialist, who had the medical practice and experience in working with women patients that enabled the first clinical trials to be conducted. A devout Roman Catholic, Rock later wrote a book, *The Time Has Come: A Catholic Doctor’s Proposals to End the Battle Over Birth Control*, trying to garner public support in a fruitless campaign to make the Catholic church change its denunciation of birth control as a sin.

In its first incarnation, the Pill had doses of progesterone and estrogen far higher than it does today, leading to serious side effects in some users. These dangers were seized upon by anti-woman bigots, including in the Senate, which in 1970 held a series of hearings to “investigate” the matter. Over the years the Pill has been massively tested in many combinations. While risks remain regarding breast cancer and stroke for some, the Pill in fact helps to protect women from ovarian and uterine cancer. Because it reduces or eliminates the menstrual flow, it also reduces the risk of anemia, a serious problem in poor countries. The experience of millions of women, researchers and doctors working to improve the safety of the Pill has provided the basis for the clinical trials and testing now routinely used by the Food and Drug Administration.

From Carter to Reagan: Resurgence of the Religious Right

By 1960 the Pill was available by prescription as a contraceptive, but laws against contraception remained on the books in many states. Until 1965, it was illegal for married people in Connecticut to use birth control. Until 1972, it was illegal for single people to use birth control in Massachusetts and many other states as well. Bill Baird, a heroic fighter

for women’s right to abortion and contraception, spent three months in jail in Massachusetts for giving a package of contraceptive foam and a condom to a Boston University student as a challenge to the law. His case later went to the Supreme Court and helped lay the basis for the right to privacy—the main legal argument behind *Roe v. Wade*, which established legal abortion in the United States in 1973.

The legalization of abortion was itself a product of the explosive struggles of the 1960s. For the American bourgeoisie, the all-sided social turmoil and defiance of authority of that period were deeply disturbing. U.S. imperialism was suffering a humiliating defeat at the hands of Vietnam’s heroic workers and peasants. In the late 1970s, a major bourgeois ideological assault was launched to overcome the “Vietnam syndrome”—popular hostility to direct U.S. military intervention abroad—and to instill an unquestioning acceptance of “free enterprise,” God and the family among the population, which included the desirability of dying for one’s country. Coming to office in 1977, the Democratic Carter administration brought “born again” religious fundamentalism front and center into the White House as it kicked off a renewal of U.S. imperialism’s Cold War drive to destroy the Soviet degenerated workers state, garbed in the call for “human rights.”



WV Photo

Bill Baird, champion of abortion rights for poor and black women, with photo of his Hempstead, New York, clinic, firebombed by anti-abortion terrorist in 1979.

This was the backdrop for the decades-long anti-sex witchhunt against abortion rights, pornography, gay rights and teen sex as well as for the vicious persecution of AIDS patients and day-care workers, who were targeted and jailed as “child molesters” amid hysterical allegations of “satanic ritual abuse.” Beginning in the 1980s, scientific research into new contraceptive methods virtually screeched to a halt as Reagan slashed funding for family planning internationally, including for abortion and birth control, leaving many Third World women with not much to turn to. While Obama has reversed this particular policy, he explicitly disavowed

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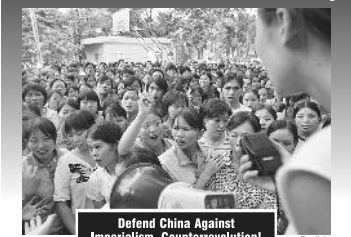
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Gérard Le Métiel, 1959–2007.....3

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The class of women workers in China is the most oppressed and exploited in the world. The Chinese bourgeoisie has turned them into a mass of slaves. The Chinese workers must rise up and overthrow the bourgeoisie and establish a workers state. This is the only way to end the suffering of the Chinese people and to bring about the liberation of the Chinese people from the yoke of imperialism and feudalism. The Chinese workers must rise up and overthrow the bourgeoisie and establish a workers state. This is the only way to end the suffering of the Chinese people and to bring about the liberation of the Chinese people from the yoke of imperialism and feudalism.

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defending the rights of women as well as immigrants in his health care proposal, proclaiming that “the reforms I’m proposing would not apply to those who are here illegally” and that “no federal dollars will be used to fund abortion, and federal conscience laws will remain in place.” Obama pledged to uphold the Hyde Amendment, which outlaws Medicaid funding for abortions.

For Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Birth control methods like the Pill, medical knowledge, understanding of women’s health—these things have indeed taken giant leaps forward in the last 50 years. But exploitation, poverty and religious and cultural strictures deprive most women on the planet of these benefits. For them, daily life is little more than that of a beast of burden. Across vast regions of the globe, in the backward neocolonial capitalist countries oppressed by imperialism, women are swathed in the veil, sold into marriage against their will, or subjected to barbaric punishments like death sentences for “adultery” in Saudi Arabia, Iran and elsewhere. Poverty and backwardness, buttressed by imperialist domination, mean that much of the basic infrastructure necessary to bring basic medical care, contraception and abortion to Third World women is simply not there. Some researchers estimate that in Latin America and the Caribbean the primary cause of death for



Spartacist contingent at protest against bigots’ blockade of abortion clinics, New York, 1988.

women between the ages of 15 and 39 is complications from illegal abortions. Feminism, a worldview counterposed to Marxism, is not capable of generating a program for the liberation of women. Feminism analyzes society as gender-based rather than class-based. It views anti-woman ideology as just bad thinking and puts forward that what is needed is to spread correct ideas and then maybe people will catch on and stop being bigots. Feminism is an anti-egalitarian ideology of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois women

who support the capitalist system and seek their own power and privilege within it. Indeed, for women like Hillary Clinton and Michelle Obama, the good life will only continue to get better. But for working-class, poor and minority women, jobs disappear, wages plummet and life only continues to get harder. The fundamental source of women’s oppression is not bad laws or male chauvinist attitudes—these are but reflections of the subordination of women in the institution of the family and the capitalist system that requires it.

The liberation of women can be realized only with the victory of proletarian revolution, which will smash all forms of social oppression, lay the material basis to free women from age-old family servitude and reorganize society in the interest of all. The family cannot simply be abolished; rather, its social functions like housework, child rearing, preparation of food, etc., must be replaced by social institutions. This perspective requires a tremendous leap in social development, which can be achieved only through sweeping away capitalist rule on a global basis and replacing it with a rational, democratically planned economy. The International Communist League fights to forge Leninist-Trotskyist parties throughout the world to lead the struggle for working-class power. Inscribed on the banners of these parties will be the struggle for women’s liberation, which is an integral part of the emancipating goals of communism. As we wrote in “In Defense of Science and Technology” (WV No. 843, 4 March 2005):

“Communism will elevate the standard of life for everyone to the highest possible level. By eliminating scarcity, poverty and want, communism will also eliminate the greatest driving force for the prevalence of religion and superstition—and the attendant backwardness, which defines the role of women as the producers of the next generation of working masses to be exploited.”

For women’s liberation through socialist revolution!■

Toronto...

(continued from page 3)

“workers in uniform.” For these pseudo-Marxists, the Black Bloc are not part of their “movement,” but the cops are! Speaking during the discussion period at Fightback’s public meeting, a TL comrade declared:

“What we saw in the streets this past weekend proves that the capitalist state—the cops, the courts and the army—is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.... “Fightback’s attack on the Black Bloc protesters and practitioners is their calling card to respectability.... And what of their notorious assertion that cops are ‘workers in uniform’? Go tell that to the people in the street! Go tell that to your friend who got kicked in the face! “Now, we of the Trotskyist League have a different idea. We understand, we have a program for workers revolution against capitalism. We have a statement of defense here with us tonight that calls to defend *all* the protesters.”

A Long and Dirty History of State Repression

From the mass internment of Japanese Canadians during World War II to more than a century of cop provocations and frame-ups against communists and trade unionists, the Canadian capitalist class has never hesitated to wield the full force of state power against its targets. For sheer numbers arrested, the police-state roundups in Toronto exceeded even the mass roundups in Quebec in October 1970. Then, Liberal prime minister Trudeau invoked the War Measures Act after the kidnapping of British diplomat James Cross and Quebec labour minister Pierre Laporte by the left-nationalist Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ). Armoured cars rolled into Montreal as fully armed troopers in battle dress guarded public buildings. Over 450 labour leaders, Quebec nationalists and leftists were rounded up and held incommunicado without charges, as all civil liberties were suspended.

We Trotskyists sharply disagreed with the political program and tactics of the FLQ, but their targets in October 1970 were symbols of imperialist oppression and capitalist rule. We demanded that those imprisoned for the Cross/Laporte kidnappings and the later killing of Laporte be freed. Just as the reformist left today proves its loyalty to the bourgeois state by denouncing the Black Bloc, so ostensible “radicals” dropped defense of the FLQ like a hot potato as they swam with the rightward political tide of the late 1970s.

The repression of October 1970 was a warning to the Québécois that any threat



October 1970: As part of suppression of Québécois independence movement, Liberal prime minister Trudeau ordered army to occupy Montreal.

of separation would be met with the full military force of the Canadian state. Today the oppressed nation of Quebec remains forcibly subjugated in a unitary Canadian state dominated by Anglo chauvinism. We call for Quebec independence in order to remove the roadblock of national antagonisms that divide the workers of English Canada and Quebec, poisoning prospects for united class struggle against capitalism. First and foremost, we fight against the Maple Leaf chauvinism that dominates in the English Canadian working class. At the same time, calling for independence helps combat nationalism in Quebec by giving Marxists a hearing to win Québécois workers away from their nationalist misleaders.

Consistent with their social-democratic pro-NDP politics, reformist groups like the CP and Fightback oppose Quebec independence (see, for example, “Fightback,” SC No. 162, Fall 2009 [reprinted in WV No. 943 (25 September 2009)]). Craven loyalty to the capitalist state is the iron logic connecting their defense of “Canadian unity” to their cop-baiting refusal to extend any solidarity to the Black Bloc anarchists.

The present witchhunt of the Black Bloc by the leftist lackeys of the capitalist state conforms to a pattern that goes back to at least the Genoa anti-G8 protests in 2001, when the Italian police killed leftist protester Carlo Giuliani. In Genoa and many times since, the imperialist rulers have been assisted in their dirty work by the reformist “left,” which has joined the chorus apologizing for bru-

tal state repression of the anarchists.

The International Communist League is forthright in our defense of the Black Bloc anarchists, but sharply critical of their politics. Anarchists hate the dictatorship of the proletariat—past, present and future. Their visceral anti-communism leads them to reject the lessons of the 1917 Russian Revolution, the world’s first and only successful workers revolution. We Trotskyists unconditionally militarily defended the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state, against capitalist counterrevolution and fought for proletarian political revolution against the ruling Stalinist bureaucratic caste. In contrast, the political current of anarchism backed the counterrevolutions of the early 1990s in the Soviet Union and East Europe. Capitalist restoration has been a colossal defeat for the working classes of these countries and internationally, and has emboldened the imperialists in their attacks on workers and the oppressed.

At bottom, anarchism is a form of radical democratic idealism which appeals to the alleged innate goodness of even the most rapacious imperialists to serve humanity. The anarchist perspective of “propaganda of the deed” by small groups of individuals is counterposed to the Marxist fight to mobilize the social power of a class-conscious proletariat to sweep away the capitalist order.

Historically, anarchism has proven to be a class-collaborationist obstacle to the liberation of the oppressed. Uniting with the counterrevolutionary White armies, some anarchists hailed and even participated in the Kronstadt uprising against

the Russian Revolution, and Kronstadt remains an anti-communist touchstone for anarchists today. During the Spanish Civil War [1936-1939], anarchists became ministers in the popular-front government which disarmed and repressed the armed workers’ struggle against capitalism, opening the road to decades of Franco’s dictatorship. (For more, see *Marxism vs. Anarchism*, Spartacist Pamphlet, 2001.)

Successful struggle against capitalist rule and the system of imperialist subjugation must mobilize the social power of the working class on an internationalist program. Rejecting this Marxist perspective, the reformist left ties working people to their capitalist exploiters centrally through support to the NDP. The Trotskyist League fights to build a revolutionary workers party through political struggle against the NDP social democrats and their left tails. Taking up the cause of all the oppressed, such a party would give conscious leadership to the struggles of the workers not only to improve their present conditions but to do away with the entire system of capitalist wage slavery.

“Unity” with the oppressors, or with their social-democratic political agents, is the road to defeat. The only way to smash the all-sided assault on social programs, to assure free quality medical care, child-care and jobs and decent living standards for all, to end the neocolonial pillage of the Third World, is by ripping the productive forces from the hands of the capitalist class through socialist revolution and putting them in the hands of those whose labour makes society run.■



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cluded PCF ministers in the government. It was under Jospin that the “Charpin Report”—which, among other things, effectively called to raise the retirement age to 65—was published, providing the framework for today’s attacks on pensions.

The Fight for a Revolutionary Leadership of the Proletariat

In the face of Sarkozy’s determined attack on pensions, many militant workers clearly understood that isolated “days of action” were not sufficient. Small locally based and generally brief initiatives mushroomed, including by rail workers, like an anarchic ferment lacking a plan. However, unlike December 1995, when rail and transit workers were in the vanguard of the struggle that effectively spelled the end of the right-wing government of Jacques Chirac/Alain Juppé by shutting down public transportation for over three weeks, the situation today is far more difficult for railroad workers. In line with the 2007 law on “social dialogue,” the union bureaucrats have negotiated with the bosses the maintenance of a minimum level of rail service during strikes.

The union bureaucrats accept the framework of capitalism and only dare to demand what they consider to be compatible with the maintenance and prosperity of their own national ruling class, from whom they hope to gain a few crumbs. Thus by its nature, trade-union opportunism is narrowly national. And the bureaucrats themselves contribute to the spreading of chauvinist poison within the working class.

This directly undercuts the struggles of the working class, such as the recent strikes by refinery workers who, while in the forefront of the struggle to defend pensions, were also combating threats to their own jobs. From the capitalists’ viewpoint, with fuel exports to the U.S. having collapsed due to the recession, there are a dozen too many refineries in Europe. French courts recently authorized the shutting down of the Dunkirk refinery, and Petroplus has announced the closure of the Reichstett refinery, near the eastern city of Strasbourg.

It was necessary for French refinery workers to appeal to their class brothers in Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and elsewhere to stop delivery of refined products to France intended to break the strike. According to *Le Monde* online (26 October), Belgian trade unionists picketed a Total-owned fuel depot at Feluy, Belgium in order to stop deliveries destined for France. But the possibility of internationalist class struggle is undercut by the nationalist perspective of the trade-union bureaucrats, whose view is: if there must be plant closures and job losses in Europe, let them be in other countries (in opposition to this, see the joint statement by the ICL’s British, French and German sections, “For United International Class Struggle Against Airbus Bosses!” WV No. 889, 30 March 2007).

The situation cries out for a new, revolutionary leadership of the proletariat. Forging such a leadership requires a political struggle against the workers’ present leadership, and in particular against those like the NPA and LO, which work within the unions to provide a left cover for the bureaucracy.

A revolutionary leadership would fight for a series of transitional demands that start from the current consciousness of wide layers of the working class, addressing their daily struggles against the capitalists, and lead to the necessity of proletarian revolution. It is essential to fight to eliminate the myriad differences in contractual status among workers—temporary employees, trainees, those with fixed contracts—as well as opening up full-time jobs for all those, especially women, who can now only find part-time work. That means fighting for free, quality child-care, open 24 hours a day. Faced with mass unemployment, which has disproportionately hit older workers and youth, it is necessary to share the work among all available workers, with no loss in pay.

There must be a struggle against racist discrimination in hiring and for an end to all work restrictions imposed on workers from East Europe (which notably target Roma from Romania). More broadly, this means a fight for *full citizenship rights for all those who are in this country*, whether they are documented or not, employed or not, wear the veil or not. The government-led racist “war on terror” targets those of Muslim origin in the first place and ultimately the entire working class. On September 14, the French parliament passed a law forbidding women, including French citizens, from wearing the face-covering Muslim *niqab* or *burqa* in public. In the name of defending the “equality” of women, the government is stigmatizing Muslim minorities as the “enemy within.” *Down with the racist law on the burqa!*

It is also necessary to put a stop to the attacks on the education and health systems as well as other social programs, which hit working-class and minority neighborhoods hardest. This requires a program of major public works to build or rebuild housing, transport infrastructure, schools and high schools, hospitals and health centers that the capitalists are in the process of shutting down. The goal of the capitalist production system is to pocket profits rather than address the needs of the population, meaning that the capitalists are incapable of responding to such a set of demands. But for the working class, what is ultimately posed is the question of survival, which is why the



Coal miners march in northern Spain to protest working conditions and unpaid wages, September 28.

workers must understand that the capitalist system must be overthrown by workers revolution.

For the Independence of the Trade Unions from the Bosses and Their State!

In one of his final writings, Leon Trotsky observed that a common feature of modern trade unions “is their drawing closely to and growing together with the state power” (“Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay,” 1940). Trotsky emphasized that to “turn the trade unions into the organs of the broad exploited masses and not the organs of a labor aristocracy” requires the “complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state.”

France has one of the lowest rates of unionization of any industrialized country, with as few as 5 percent of private sector workers organized. Furthermore, it is the norm for this small minority of organized workers to be divided up among several competing unions in the same workplace, which often scab on each other during strikes. The unions depend more on subsidies from the capitalist state and the bosses than on their own members’ dues. How those subsidies are distributed depends largely on the various unions’ relative vote totals in workplace elections, in which all workers—not just the small minority who are unionized—can vote. This means that the bureaucrats do not have the perspective



Charles de Gaulle Airport, August 20: French police expel Romanian gypsies during mass anti-Roma deportation campaign.

of organizing the unorganized, but rather of maximizing their vote totals in workplace elections—which are run by the bosses and the state—in order to obtain a larger slice of the pie than their union competitors.

A key part of the struggle to overcome the divisions between competing union federations is the fight to forge industrial unions that unite all workers from the same industry into a single trade union, regardless of their political affiliation and

ble proof of the fact that police are on the other side of the class line. The bourgeois state and its armed gangs must be destroyed through a workers revolution that replaces the rule of capital with the dictatorship of the proletariat, which will have its own armed bodies. These will come from the workers militias and other red guards forged in the struggle to defend the working class against police strikebreaking and fascist terror. *Foremen, cops, prison and security guards out of the unions!*

Reforge the Fourth International! For New October Revolutions!

The *intersyndicale* coalition of union bureaucrats was seen by many workers as a guarantee of working-class unity. In fact, it has served as a means for the bureaucrats to coordinate their actions on the basis of the lowest common denominator and to mask their treachery behind the facade of “unity.” The role of the “far left” in the recent strikes has been to sell the line of the *intersyndicale* bureaucrats to restive workers. Thus *Lutte Ouvrière* (22 October), writing about the union bureaucracy at SNCF (the nationalized railroad system), declared:

“The attitude of the union leaders has also reassured the strikers. So far they have all pushed for strengthening, if not broadening the movement. This is contrary to the policy they held in 2003 and 2007 when they opposed rallies bringing different services together, visits by strikers to other sectors and even jointly held demonstrations. The movement has thus refound the tones of 1995 with the famous ‘All together, all together.’”

What LO leaves out is that the “All together” unity of 1995 was channeled into electing the Jospin popular-front regime—indeed, what the reformists are angling for today is another popular front.

LO has lately been fond of repeating that the elections won’t change a thing and that what matters is struggle. But this is belied by their practice, which helps tie the workers to the popular front. For the past two years, LO has helped administer capitalism as part of municipal governments, including by voting for local budgets. When the Communist Party

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WikiLeaks...

(continued from page 1)

to the brutal Saddam Hussein regime, an editorial in the London *Guardian* (26 October) noted, “One can reasonably conclude that one set of torturers and thugs has been replaced by another.”

The latest WikiLeaks release was made available to the *New York Times*, the *Guardian*, *Le Monde*, *Der Spiegel* and *Al Jazeera*. When the *New York Times* printed the exposures, the paper sought to minimize their impact by focusing obsessively on the documents’ depiction of the role played by Iran in Iraq. The bourgeoisie’s newspaper of record, which dutifully echoed each and every government lie that paved the road for the Iraq invasion, has joined the Obama administration’s saber rattling against Iran, highlighting (22 October), “Iran’s military, more than has been generally understood, intervened aggressively in support of Shiite combatants, offering weapons, training and sanctuary and in a few instances directly engaging American troops.” It is vital for the international working class, especially in the U.S., to oppose U.S. imperialism’s military threats against Iran and any other semicolonial country. ***U.S. hands off Iran! All U.S. and allied troops out of Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan!***

WikiLeaks’ release of nearly 400,000 documents this October follows their August release of 76,000 classified military field reports from the Afghanistan occupation documenting the brutality inflicted upon civilians, including by CIA-led forces operating out of a string of bases along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. In April, the WikiLeaks Web site posted a video showing a U.S. Apache helicopter in Baghdad in 2007 gunning down and killing at least 12 people, including two Reuters journalists. All this has put WikiLeaks and its founder, Julian Assange, in the crosshairs of U.S. imperialism.

Assange and whoever helped him obtain

Iraqi child covered in blood of her parents, killed by U.S. troops in Tal Afar, January 2005.



and release the documentation of these war crimes have performed courageous and useful acts on behalf of U.S. imperialism’s victims. While WikiLeaks has not divulged any of its sources, Army Private Bradley Manning, who was stationed in Iraq, was arrested last spring, shipped to solitary confinement in a military prison in Kuwait and then to the Marine base at Quantico, Virginia. He faces a court martial next year, having been charged with leaking various materials, including the cockpit video of the Apache helicopter gunship killing in Baghdad. Manning could face up to 52 years in prison.

As for Assange, an Australian citizen, he is on the run, reportedly in hiding in London. Pentagon and Justice Department officials, according to the *New York Times* (23 October), “are weighing his actions under the 1917 Espionage Act,” under which Socialist Party leader Eugene V. Debs was imprisoned for his opposition to the First World War. Former State Department official Christian Whiton has attacked Assange for conducting “political warfare against the US” and has called for him and his associates to be declared “enemy combatants” who can be subjected to “non-judicial actions,”—i.e., kidnapping, torture, indefinite detention and worse.

Meanwhile, Assange’s bid for residence in Sweden has been rejected. With his British visa expiring early next year, Australian government spokesmen have made clear that they will cooperate with the U.S. in going after Assange, who noted that an Australian official ominously informed him, “You play outside the rules, and you will be dealt with outside the rules.” Assange continues to refuse to divulge WikiLeaks’ sources. He described Manning as a “political prisoner,” adding: “We have a duty to assist Mr. Manning and other people who are facing legal and other consequences.” Opponents of U.S. imperialism must demand: ***Free Bradley Manning now! Hands off Julian Assange and WikiLeaks!***

The persecution of Manning and Assange recalls the government vendetta against Daniel Ellsberg, who in 1971 released the Pentagon Papers. The trove of documents provided an account of over two decades of government lies and cover-ups in the service of a very different war—U.S. imperialism’s dirty, losing war against the revolutionary workers and peasants of Vietnam. For his efforts, Ellsberg was viciously attacked by the Nixon administration, taken into custody and charged with theft, conspiracy and espionage.

Eventually, all charges against him were dropped.

Ellsberg recently noted of Obama: “In no way, in the general defense and homeland security area, is he less opaque, more transparent, than Bush. And as I say, he’s being even more aggressive in pursuing prosecution” of whistle-blowers (*Democracy Now!* 22 October). Joining Assange at a London press conference on October 23, Ellsberg denounced the Pentagon’s demand that Assange return any “classified” documents, adding, “Secrecy is essential to empire.”

The capitalist rulers always have gone to great lengths to conceal their crimes, both at home and abroad, through disinformation, legal prosecution and even assassination. We applaud the brave acts of those like Ellsberg and Assange. But unlike the liberals and reformists who seize upon such exposures to pressure U.S. imperialism to adopt more “humane” policies, we Marxists seek to impart the understanding that imperialist war, with all its savagery, is inherent to capitalist class rule. As we noted in “U.S. Imperialism’s Torture, Inc.” (WV No. 826, 14 May 2004): “Capitalist society was born in blood; modern imperialism continues the brutal practices of mass murder, torture and humiliation that accompany exploitation of labor and the ceaseless struggle between competing imperialist forces to dominate the world.”

Only when the system of capitalism is destroyed root and branch through victorious workers revolution internationally will humanity be rid of such horrors. We look to the model of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, which overthrew capitalist rule in one-sixth of the globe and became a beacon for working people and the oppressed throughout the world. The fight to smash U.S. imperialism, the most dangerous force on the planet, requires building a revolutionary workers party independent of all capitalist parties and dedicated to the establishment of working-class rule. ■

France...

(continued from page 9)

mayor of Bagnolet—a municipality in the Paris suburbs where LO is in a governing coalition with its senior partners in the PCF—forcibly evicted the tenants of an apartment building partly occupied by African workers last winter, LO condemned this racist action. But they treacherously remained in the coalition, providing a left cover for their municipal partners (see “Lutte Ouvrière’s Municipal Antics,” WV No. 960, 4 June).

LO recently signed on to the popular-front slate for the December municipal election in Corbeil-Essonnes, south of Paris, in order to “fight the right.” Alongside the PCF, the PS and the Greens, LO has set out to locally manage capitalism on a program that denounces the right-wing municipality’s “failure regarding security” and pledges to “put in the resources” to change this situation—in other words, more racist cops to terrorize the ghetto. At the national level, the next alliance of class collaboration being planned for the 2012 elections between bourgeois parties and workers parties looks set to take on a pink-green hue, with reformist workers parties like the PS, the PCF and Jean-Luc Mélenchon’s Left Party joined by the Green Party and some other bourgeois forces (like the Left Radicals and supporters of capitalist politician Jean-Pierre Chevènement).

This class-collaborationist lash-up can be certain of receiving the electoral support of Besancenot’s NPA. The NPA was founded in 2009 out of the thoroughly social-democratic Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR). In founding the NPA, the LCR openly renounced Trotskyism, revolution and communism—after having done so in practice for decades—in a rare mark of honesty demonstrating the extent to which they imbibe the bourgeoisie’s “death of communism” myth. They also inscribed in the

NPA’s “founding principles” their openness to participating in a bourgeois government, declaring: “We will contribute to their implementation [of progressive measures] if the voters give us such a responsibility.” During the 2007 elections, Besancenot stated his willingness to join a bourgeois government coalition, provided it called itself “anti-capitalist,” declaring, “the LCR will assume its responsibilities in such a government.”

For decades, the LCR voted for the candidates of successive popular-front coalitions, from Mitterrand to Jospin to Ségolène Royal in 2007. They also voted in the 2008 Marseille municipal elections for the slate led by Socialists that included right-wing bourgeois politicians—these same Socialists recently called on the state to crush the Marseille port workers strike. The NPA, whose forebears in the LCR voted for the right-wing Jacques Chirac in 2002, when he was opposed by the fascist Jean-Marie Le Pen, should hardly have a problem stomaching a vote for a Socialist candidate—including current IMF head Dominique Strauss-Kahn, who openly supported Sarkozy’s attacks on pensions.

LO, NPA, et al. have something fundamental in common: They reject the 1917 October Revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. They all supported the various counterrevolutionary forces that destroyed the Soviet Union and deformed workers states of East Europe in the late 1980s-early 1990s. To the extent of their limited forces, they thus contributed to the victory of capitalist counterrevolution. The working class must reappropriate Marxism and the lessons of the Bolshevik Revolution. The International Communist League, of which the LTF is a section, represents the programmatic continuity of the Bolshevik party of Lenin and Trotsky. We fight to build the internationalist revolutionary workers party that is indispensable for leading the next revolutionary uprisings of the proletariat to victory. ■

Bolshevik Revolution...

(continued from page 2)

chain that broke, and not only the link.

Capitalism has outlived itself as a world system. It has ceased to fulfill its essential mission, the increase of human power and human wealth. Humanity cannot stand still at the level which it has reached. Only a powerful increase in productive force and a sound, planned, that is, Socialist organization of production and distribution can assure humanity—all humanity—of a decent standard of life and at the same time give it the precious feeling of freedom with respect to its own economy. Freedom in two senses—first of all, man will no longer be compelled to devote the greater part of his life to physical labor. Second, he will no longer be dependent on the laws of the market, that is, on the blind and dark forces which have grown up behind his back. He will build up his economy freely, that is, according to a plan, with compass in hand. This time it is a question of subjecting the anatomy of society to the X-ray through and through, of disclosing all its secrets and subjecting all its functions to the reason and the will of collective humanity. In this sense, Socialism must become a new step in the historical advance of mankind. Before our ancestor, who first armed himself with a stone axe, the whole of *nature* represented a conspiracy of secret and hostile forces. Since then, the natural sciences, hand in hand with practical technology, have illuminated nature down to its most secret depths. By means of electrical energy, the physicist passes judgment on the nucleus of the atom. The hour is not far when science will easily solve the task of the alchemists, and turn manure into gold and gold into manure. Where the demons and furies of nature once raged, now rules ever more courageously the industrial will of man.

But while he wrestled victoriously with nature, man built up his relations to other men blindly, almost like the bee or the ant. Belatedly and most undecidedly he approached the problems of human society. He began with religion, and passed on to politics. The Reformation represented the first victory of bourgeois individualism and rationalism in a domain which had been ruled by dead tradition. From the church, critical thought went on to the state. Born in the struggle with absolutism and the medieval estates, the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people and of the rights of man and the citizen grew stronger. Thus arose the system of parliamentarism. Critical thought penetrated into the domain of government administration. The political rationalism of democracy was the highest achievement of the revolutionary bourgeoisie.

But between nature and the state stands economic life. Technology liberated man from the tyranny of the old elements—earth, water, fire and air—only to subject him to its own tyranny. Man ceased to be a slave to nature, to become a slave to the machine, and, still worse, a slave to supply and demand. The present world crisis testifies in especially tragic fashion how man, who dives to the bottom of the ocean, who rises up to the stratosphere, who converses on invisible waves with the Antipodes, how this proud and daring ruler of nature remains a slave to the blind forces of his own economy. The historical task of our epoch consists in replacing the uncontrolled play of the market by reasonable planning, in disciplining the forces of production, compelling them to work together in harmony and obediently serve the needs of mankind. Only on this new social basis will man be able to stretch his weary limbs and—every man and every woman, not only a selected few—become a full citizen in the realm of thought.

—“Leon Trotsky Defends the October Revolution” (*Militant*, 21 January 1933) ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Guatemala...

(continued from page 12)

Such crimes are not a thing of the past. To the capitalist rulers, minorities and the colonial and semicolonial slaves of imperialism are “inferior” and “expendable.” In Africa in the late 1990s, the U.S. and the UN funded 15 studies on mother-to-infant HIV transmission that used a placebo instead of AZT—even as AZT was known to effectively block this type of HIV transmission. Some 1,500 infants were expected to die. Such experiments continue to this day. As Harriet A. Washington, the author of *Medical Apartheid*, noted in a 2007 *Democracy Now!* interview, “Africa is being treated as a laboratory for the West by Western researchers.”

The Obama White House was quick to offer its cynical apologies for the Guatemala study—which was carried out under the Democratic Truman administration—expressing “deep regret” about the “reprehensible research.” This is but a sneer at the countless numbers of Iraqi, Afghani



Burns Archive

During infamous “Tuskegee Experiment” of 1932-72, black men with syphilis were denied penicillin and given bogus “treatment” for “bad blood.”

and other prisoners that the U.S. has rounded up and subjected to waterboarding and other forms of torture. The U.S. employs doctors to watch over its inquisitors in order to “refine” their methods of torture and to make sure that their victims live to see another day of torment.

Six years after the Guatemala experiment ended, the U.S. carried out a bloody coup there and for the next several decades installed one brutal dictatorship after an-

other. Between 1960 and 1996, more than 200,000 Mayan villagers, trade unionists and leftist insurgents were slaughtered, as the U.S. directed the transformation of a monstrous but inefficient military gang into an organized machine of systematic mass murder. As part of its war on Communism, the U.S. armed and trained murderers and torturers throughout Central America. To this day, the infamous School of the Americas (now renamed WHINSEC) in

Oscar Grant...

(continued from page 12)

against the working class and oppressed—frame-ups, lies, police terror and murder. The cops are the hired guns of the ruling class whose purpose is to maintain capitalist rule through violence: breaking strikes, rounding up ghetto and barrio youth, repressing social protest. But left-talking trade-union bureaucrats like Heyman and the bureaucracy’s water boys in the reformist left, who were at the rally peddling various schemes to make the cops “accountable,” try to lull the working class into believing that they can obtain “justice” from the courts of the capitalist class enemy.

Speaking out of the other side of his mouth at the October 20 press conference, Heyman allowed, “I don’t believe that there’s justice in the courts, that’s my opinion.” But rather than warning workers against such illusions, Heyman deceived them, stating that “we’re sending a message to the powers-that-be that justice has to be served.” A rally leaflet promised that “together we can make sure that the killer cop gets the maximum sentence,” while several speakers at the rally argued that it was only because of the protests against Grant’s killing that Mehserle was convicted. That is true, but the purpose of the conviction was to try to put the lid on the mounting fury directed against racist police terror. Even in the event that Mehserle serves jail time, the reason would be to refurbish illusions in the state as some kind of “neutral” arbiter that could serve the interest of the exploited and oppressed. On the rare occasion that the capitalist rulers are forced to “punish” one of their gendarmes, the aim is to bol-

ster the effectiveness of the state’s armed forces in repressing the working class, black people, immigrants and any and all perceived enemies of the capitalist state.

As the 12 January 2009 statement by the Bay Area LBL, calling to “Mobilize the Power of the Multiracial Unions in Protest!” observed:

“The hard truth is that there will be no end to police brutality short of the destruction of this entire system of capitalist exploitation and racial oppression. But a massive protest based on the organized muscle of the labor movement would give the cops and their capitalist masters some pause. And it would drive home the point that the interests of the working class are inseparably linked to the defense of the ghettos and barrios, the defense of immigrant rights and the fight for black freedom.

“The Labor Black League for Social Defense stands for mobilizing the masses of black, immigrant and all working people in integrated struggle based on a program of *class struggle*—the understanding that the interests of the working class are irreconcilably counterposed to those of the capitalist class exploiters, their state forces and agencies and their political parties, be they Democrat, Republican or Green.”

Break with the Democrats! For a Class-Struggle Workers Party!

When asked in an interview on KPFA radio whether the timing of the rally might also have something to do with mobilizing for the November 2 midterm elections, Local 10 executive board member Clarence Thomas responded that this would be a mobilization “independent of the two political parties” and that there would be no Democratic or Republican politicians on the platform. There weren’t. However, this doubtless had more to do with the fact that appearing at

a rally to protest the police execution of Oscar Grant was too hot to handle for the capitalist Democratic Party candidates who are vying for electoral support from the growing army of cops, prison and security guards in California. Chiming in behind Thomas, Heyman offered that “people can go to the ballot box if they want,” but once again in his “opinion,” “the candidates that are running for mayor in Oakland are all pro-cop.”

What neither Thomas nor Heyman mentioned is that the ILWU International and the Local 10 bureaucracy, of which they are longtime members, have been pulling out all the stops to mobilize the membership to get out the vote for the Democrats, who represent the very capitalist system that the cops are sworn to “protect and serve.” This includes California gubernatorial candidate Jerry Brown, a former Oakland mayor, whose cops fired rubber bullets and other “non-lethal” projectiles at longshoremen during an antiwar protest on the Oakland docks in 2003. One of his first acts on taking his present office of California attorney general (the state’s top cop) was to arrest the former Black Panthers of the San Francisco 8 on frame-up charges that had been thrown out over 30 years ago!

At the rally, Thomas declared: “We want union jobs! We want living wage jobs! We want jobs for residents of West Oakland.” The increasingly impoverished and destitute conditions of life for the black population of the West Oakland ghetto are a deeply felt issue for many black longshoremen, who also take a lot of pride in the gains that were made for black workers in the Bay Area through the class battles that built the ILWU. But Thomas’ call for jobs is not based on any perspective of struggle. Rather the ILWU Local 10 misleaders are going all out to get the membership to campaign for Democratic mayoral candidate Jean Quan by promising she will back the ILWU in getting the jobs that will be opening up with the development of an intermodal terminal at the former Oakland army base. Meanwhile, the Teamsters are backing Quan’s fellow Democratic Party contender for Oakland mayor, Don Perata, to the same purpose—i.e., as their ticket to jurisdictional “rights” at the terminal.

Thus, although much was made of labor unity at the October 23 rally, behind the scenes is the sordid competition of the ILWU and Teamsters bureaucrats, who pit union against union in the scramble for jobs while shackling workers to the bosses’ parties. What is needed is joint struggle by the ILWU, Teamsters and other unions to protect everyone’s job and extend union rights to all workers in the industry. This includes organizing the unorganized, such as the thousands of largely immigrant port truckers. But to the contrary, the misleaders of both unions point to these workers as a poten-

Fort Benning, Georgia, trains U.S. imperialism’s Latin American henchmen to torture and butcher unionists, leftists and peasants.

None of this is an aberration. Such atrocities are inherent to the capitalist system of production. Even under the “ordinary” everyday workings of imperialism, billions of human beings across the planet must suffer starvation and thirst. They must die excruciating deaths from curable diseases. They must endure cruelty, humiliation, terror or even death at the hands of police and the military. They must feel their bodies break down from work that barely pays enough to prolong their lives another year while the profits from their labor fill the capitalist rulers’ multibillion-dollar bank accounts.

It will take the working class seizing power through socialist revolution—above all in the belly of the U.S. imperialist beast—to put an end to this barbaric capitalist system. As Marxist leader Rosa Luxemburg underlined during the carnage of the First World War, the choice facing humanity is: *socialism or barbarism.* ■

tial “threat to national security,” as part of their pledge of allegiance to the government’s “war on terror.” It is precisely these politics of class collaboration that have deeply eroded the fighting strength of the unions, leaving the ILWU increasingly isolated in a sea of unorganized workers on the West Coast ports.

The killing of Oscar Grant in Oakland, where liberal black Democrat Ron Dellums is mayor, brutally exposes the hoax that the election of a black man, Barack Obama, as president represented progress toward black equality. Amidst the increasing devastation of the livelihoods and very lives of the working class and poor, particularly blacks and immigrants, illusions in Obama are eroding. The Local 10 leadership tries to refurbish support for the Democrats with the promise of union jobs. The bureaucracy’s double-talkers like Heyman and Thomas simply give this game a “labor struggle” cover, claiming to mobilize the union’s power independent of the bosses’ parties against cop terror while peddling deadly illusions in the inherent “justice” of this system.

A genuine fight against police terror must be built in implacable opposition to the capitalist state and its political parties. It also must entail an unwavering commitment to the fight against black oppression, attacks on immigrants and every other manifestation of the tyranny and barbarity of this system. To lead this struggle requires a new class-struggle leadership of the labor movement and the forging of a multiracial revolutionary workers party. As the Bay Area LBL statement concluded, such a party “will lead the way to uprooting this system of exploitation and oppression, which is enforced by racist cop terror. When those who labor rule, the tremendous wealth of this society, created by the working class, will be used to wipe out racial oppression and provide a decent life for the working class, blacks, immigrants, women, the poor, the young and the aged.” ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

ILWU-Initiated Rally Demands “Justice for Oscar Grant”

There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts!



WV Photos



Left: Spartacist and Labor Black League supporters at October 23 rally in Oakland protesting 2009 cop killing of Oscar Grant (inset). Right: ILWU banner at rally. Local 10 tops' call to "Jail Killer Cops" promotes illusion that working people can get justice from capitalist courts.

Hundreds came out for a rally at Oakland City Hall on October 23 to demand “Justice for Oscar Grant”—the young black apprentice grocery butcher who was executed in cold blood by Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) cop Johannes Mehserle on New Year’s Day 2009. The rally was initiated by Local 10 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), which moved its regular monthly stop-work meeting to the same day, shutting down Bay Area ports for eight hours. At the rally, a contingent of some 50 to 100 mainly black longshoremen reflected the deeply felt anger over the racist cop terror that is a daily and deadly fact of life in the inner cities of

this country. The longshoremen were joined by representatives of other unions, including the Service Employees International Union Local 1021 and the Oakland Education Association.

The video images of Mehserle shooting Grant in the back—as he lay pinned by another cop face down with hands behind his back on the Fruitvale BART platform—ignited an outpouring of anger against police terror on the streets of Oakland. The July 8 verdict of “involuntary manslaughter” handed down to Mehserle by a jury that included not one black person, in a trial that was moved from Oakland to Los Angeles, was another slap in the face. At the July meeting of Local 10,

Oscar Grant’s uncle, Cephus Johnson, appealed for the union to mobilize in protest. This struck a real chord among the membership, which is majority black.

Addressing the justified explosion of outrage over Grant’s killing, a 12 January 2009 statement by the Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense, which is fraternally allied with the Spartacist League/U.S., fought for a class-struggle perspective, calling to “link the anger of the ghettos and barrios to the power of *our class*, the multiracial labor movement.” But rather than a militant mobilization of labor’s power in opposition to the capitalist state and its police killers, the organizers of the October 23 rally chan-

neled this anger into appeals for the capitalist state to “jail killer cops.” At an October 20 press conference, Local 10 executive board member Jack Heyman, a central organizer and an emcee of the rally, said, “Cops have to go to jail when they commit a crime just like anyone else.” While the jails of this country overflow with victims of the marauding cops, Heyman seizes upon the widespread disgust with the slap-on-the-wrist verdict for Mehserle to promote the lie that the cops’ capitalist masters will punish their armed thugs if they “commit a crime.”

The entire system of capitalist “law and order” is enforced through crimes

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Sadistic U.S. “Tuskegee Experiment” in Guatemala

Last month, the news got out that U.S. government doctors exposed hundreds of Guatemalan prisoners, soldiers, prostitutes and mental patients to syphilis in 1946-48. Medical historian Susan Reverby uncovered this barbaric crime in the papers of Dr. John Cutler while researching her book, *Examining Tuskegee*. Cutler was the head of the Guatemala experiment, which was co-sponsored by the “humanist” regime of Juan José Arévalo. Afterward, Cutler joined the infamous “Tuskegee experiment” of 1932-72. During that period, U.S. government officials denied life-saving penicillin to hundreds of black men in Alabama with syphilis. The purpose of this “study” was to watch the ravages of the disease as

it destroyed the men’s bodies and minds.

In Guatemala, Cutler and his assistants brought infected prostitutes into the prisons to have sex with healthy men. Uninfected prostitutes had the bacteria inserted into their vaginas before sex. At the mental hospital, Cutler and his ghouls injected the disease directly into the patients’ spines or made them drink solutions containing syphilitic sores of other men or animal tissue. Another “technique” was to scrape a man’s penis with a needle and drip the bacterial solution onto the wound for up to two hours at a time.

Cutler’s victims, who were derided as “rabbits,” did not know what they were being infected with, and no one knows

how many died as a result. The 700 people infected supposedly received treatment. But one physician from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that about one-third did not receive enough penicillin to cure them. Cutler’s papers documented some resistance from his victims. One man ran away but was found two hours later. Others opposed the constant drawing of blood. A researcher lamented in his notes, “Unfortunately our female donor is leaving her profession for marriage and is no longer available.”

These inhuman torments recall Dr. Josef Mengele and the Nazi experiments on Jews, Gypsies and others held in concentration camps. The Guatemala experiment

took place while the U.S. and other Allies were trying fascist war criminals at Nuremberg in 1945-49. The U.S. smuggled to safety many Nazi military officers, concentration camp doctors and prison guards. The U.S. saved Mengele, while Dr. Hubertus Strughold, associated with the experiments at Dachau, was brought to the U.S. to strengthen its military research apparatus. As U.S. imperialism geared up its anti-Soviet Cold War drive, America’s rulers knew they couldn’t let all that Nazi “talent” go to waste.

The U.S. carried out Nazi-like experiments on poor, working-class and black people. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers were sent into irradiated blast sites after atomic bombs were set off. As Washington actively pursued plans for a nuclear “first strike” against the USSR, America’s rulers wanted to know how much radiation their troops could stand in order to train them to subdue survivors of an atomic attack. Poor pregnant women seeking medical care were fed highly radioactive iron, while Harvard and MIT scientists fed breakfast cereal laced with radioactive doses equivalent to 50 chest X-rays to more than 120 mentally retarded teenagers, telling their parents the children were receiving an improved diet.

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