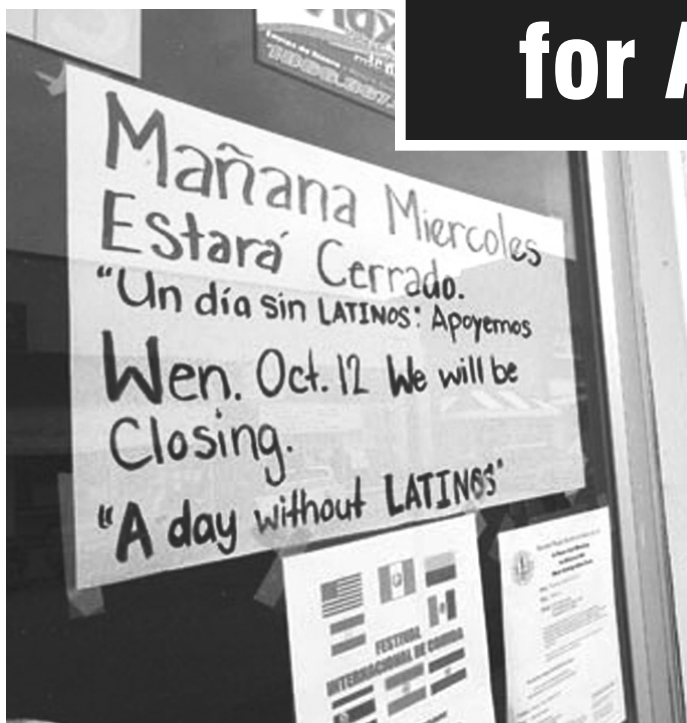


Racist Alabama Law Drives Out Latino Workers

Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!



Left: Store closed as part of protest against draconian Alabama anti-immigrant law, October 12. Right: Protesters gather on October 16 in front of courthouse in Athens, Alabama.

A new anti-immigrant law has taken effect in Alabama, striking fear into the state's small Latino community—citizens, documented and undocumented immigrants alike. With even harsher provisions than Arizona's infamous SB 1070 and a similar measure in Georgia, the Alabama law empowers police to question and detain anyone suspected of being "foreign" and forces schools to track their students' immigration status. It also imposes new restrictions on immigrants' ability to sign contracts, threatening their access to housing and utilities. Enacted under Republican governor Robert Bentley, the law took effect on September 29 after most of its provisions were upheld by U.S. District Judge Sharon Lovelace Blackburn.

In response, Latinos have fled the state or hunkered down at home, afraid to report to work, let their kids attend school or even make a run to the grocery store. A taxi driver in Birmingham told investigators from the American Civil Liberties Union that people have asked him to drive them as far as New York and Indiana, likening these trips to the Underground Railroad that took escaped black slaves "up North" to freedom ("ACLU Report from Alabama," 11 October). A tomato farmer in north Alabama told Fox News that only eight of the 48 Hispanic workers she needed for the harvest showed up after the law took effect and that she and her husband were shopping for them because they feared arrest. Meanwhile, many parents have rushed to draw up powers of attorney designating guardianship of their kids who were born here and have U.S. citizenship should the parents be jailed or deported.

Latino immigrants and their supporters have tried to fight back. At least six

poultry plants in northeast Alabama shut down or scaled back operations on October 12, which had been declared a "Día sin Latinos" (Day Without Latinos). Organized principally through *La Jefa* radio, the protest by poultry workers coincided with the closing of Latino-owned restaurants and a school boycott.

On October 14, an emergency stay by the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals blocked the checking of student status at enrollment and the provision of the law that made it a crime for immigrants not to carry proof of legal status. But the limited, temporary stay has done little to mitigate the sweeping criminalization of immigrants in Alabama.

Combined with the spectacle of the Republican presidential candidates' debates, where Mitt Romney, Rick Perry et al. bait each other on who's "soft" on immigrants, the new laws passed by Republican state legislatures no doubt serve to reinforce illusions that the Democratic Party is the "friend" of immigrants. But the biggest enforcer of anti-immigrant repression is the federal government under Democrat Barack Obama, who took office soon after the outbreak of the world capitalist economic crisis. In mid October, immigration officials announced that they had deported just under 400,000 people over the last year—a record number for a single year. This is largely due to the Obama administration's drastic expansion of the "Secure Communities" program initiated by George W. Bush. Under this federal dragnet, all those jailed, no matter how minor the alleged crime, have their

fingerprints checked against FBI criminal databases and Homeland Security immigration records for possible deportation or detention.

Just as immigrant workers are brought in during economic boom times to provide a pool of low-wage labor, the current anti-immigrant crackdown is at bottom a product of the economic depression, as the capitalists have less need for such labor. This is not new: mass deportations were also launched during the Great Depression of the 1930s under both Republican Herbert Hoover and his successor, liberal icon Franklin D. Roosevelt. The capitalists everywhere seek to inflame racial, national, religious and other tensions in order to divide the working class and weaken its struggles against exploitation. Today, attacks on immigrants go hand in hand with brutal austerity measures being enforced against the entire working people.

Defense of immigrants is of vital interest for the labor movement and all fighters against racist discrimination. The Spartacist League calls for **full citizenship rights for all immigrants!** Anyone who got to this country should have the same rights as the native-born, including the right to hold a passport, which would allow them to travel to their home countries and back. As Marxist opponents of capitalist class rule, we do not seek to advise the bourgeoisie on its immigration policy or to offer reforms to "clean up" its enforcement techniques. We fight for workers revolution that will replace the crisis-ridden capitalist profit system with a

planned economy on a world scale, in which the workers in power will worry about the ebbs and flows of labor migration and the world economy more generally.

In Alabama, nativist hatred of "foreigners" is intertwined with the state's history as the heart of the slaveholders' Confederacy and later a bulwark of Jim Crow segregation. With farmers howling about the loss of labor as immigrant workers are driven away, Alabama has announced that it will take a page from that history for a solution: the use of prison labor to work in the fields. Already in Idaho, convicts have been put to work picking, sorting and packing potatoes, and similar programs are in place in Arizona and elsewhere. Even the *Wall Street Journal* (18 October) felt compelled to point out that "convict labor has a dark history in America, notoriously in the post-Civil War South, when thousands of African-Americans endured what historians say was a kind of de facto enslavement as prisoners on chain gangs." In Alabama in 1908, the state government sent convicts to work in coal mines owned by U.S. Steel in order to break a strike by thousands of black and white members of the United Mine Workers.

The link between the struggles for immigrant rights and black rights is today glaringly evident in Alabama. Writing in the *Washington Examiner* (21 August), Wade Henderson, president of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, noted that the Alabama law "seeks to frighten undocumented immigrants into leaving

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Recollections of a Participant

From 1960s New Left to Trotskyism.....Page 4



Revolution and Counterrevolution in Russia

To mark the 94th anniversary of the October Revolution in Russia, we reprint an excerpt from a 1938 article published in the American Trotskyist journal *New International* (January 1938). On 7 November 1917 (25 October 1917 by the Julian calendar in use in Russia at the time), the working class, led by the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, seized power in Russia, thus far the greatest historical victory for the proletariat. Overthrowing capitalist rule, the

The 20th Anniversary of the Bolshevik Uprising and the Degeneration of the Soviet Power

By Max Shachtman
New International, January 1938

new workers state, based on workers' and peasants' soviets (councils), handed the landed estates to the peasantry and declared an immediate end to the country's involvement in the interimperialist slaughter of World War I. The October Revolution acted as a beacon for all the world's exploited and oppressed, who saw in Soviet Russia the promise of their own liberation.

Dedicated to the construction of an international socialist society, the Bolsheviks saw theirs as the first in a chain of workers revolutions that would have to extend to the main imperialist centers. However, the Soviet workers state remained isolated due mainly to the failure of newly fledged Communist parties to consummate proletarian revolutions elsewhere despite opportunities to do so, crucially in Germany in 1923. In Russia, which was emerging from deep backwardness inherited from tsarism and the devastating effects of imperialist war and civil war, a bureaucratic caste centered on J.V. Stalin usurped political power from the proletariat beginning in 1923-24. This was the political counterrevolution referred to in the headline of the article.

Of the sections of Max Shachtman's article that we are not including below, the bulk deal with the degeneration and bureaucratization of the Bolshevik Party, the trade unions and the soviets under Stalin's rule. Leon Trotsky's 1936 work *The Revolution Betrayed* elaborated a Marxist analysis of the degeneration of the Soviet Union. The Stalinist bureaucracy threw overboard the Bolsheviks' revolutionary internationalism, adopting the anti-Marxist program of "socialism in one country" with its inevitable corollary of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. The counterrevolutionary content of this program was graphically demonstrated in the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s, when, as Shacht-



Above: Red Army soldiers celebrate first anniversary of Russian Revolution under banner hailing Communism, Moscow, 1918. Below: Exiled Soviet Left Oppositionists in Siberia in 1928 hold banner (center) proclaiming "Long Live the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."



man noted, the Stalinists' efforts were "directed towards crushing the proletarian revolution in Spain, preserving Spanish bourgeois democracy as an instrument in the hands of Anglo-French imperialism."

A central purpose of Shachtman's article was to argue against those in the workers movement who claimed that there was nothing left to defend in the Soviet Union because of the crimes of Stalinism. But only a year and a half later, Shachtman himself abandoned unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union against the capitalist class enemy as the pressure of impending world war intensified. This was precipitated by Shachtman's capitulation to petty-bourgeois public opinion

following the signing of the 1939 pact between the USSR and Nazi Germany. In 1940, Shachtman along with other leading cadre, notably James Burnham and Martin Abern, split from the Socialist Workers Party, the U.S. Trotskyist party. Eight years later, he definitively turned his back on Trotsky's Fourth International.

In continuity with the program outlined in Shachtman's article, the International Communist League fought to the end in defense of the gains of October. We opposed the forces of capitalist counterrevolution from Poland to East Germany and in the Soviet Union itself and fought for proletarian political revolution against the parasitic Stalinist regimes. Today we uphold this program in regard to the remaining countries where capitalist rule was overturned: the deformed workers states of China, Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam and Laos. Our Trotskyist defensism is integral to the struggle to reforge the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution. *For new October Revolutions!*

What remains of the Russian revolution? Why should we defend the Soviet Union in case of war?

A number of realities still remain. The conflict between German fascism (and fundamentally, also, of the capitalist world as a whole), and the Soviet Union, still remains no less a reality than, let us say, the conflict between fascism and social-democracy or the trade unions, regardless of how corrupt may be the leadership of the latter, regardless of how

it may compromise and capitulate, regardless of how much it may seek to place itself under the protection of one capitalist force (as did the Austrian

social democracy) against another. The conflict can be resolved only by the capitalist world being overturned by the working class, or by the Soviet Union, its present bureaucracy included, being crushed and reduced to the status of a colonial or semi-colonial country, divided among the world's imperialist bandits.

Another great reality is the economic foundation established by the October revolution. Despite bureaucratic mismanagement and parasitism, we have the prodigious economic advances made by Soviet industry, the great expansion of the productive forces in Russia (without which human progress is generally inconceivable) in a period of stagnation and retrogression in the capitalist world, the principle and practise of economic planning. All these were possible only on the basis of the abolition of socially-operated private property, of the nationalization of the means of production and exchange, their centralization in the hands of the state which is the main prerequisite of an evolution towards the classless society of universal abundance, leisure and unprecedented cultural advancement.

Outraged by the brutality of the reactionary usurpers, by their blood purges, by their political expropriation of the toilers, by their totalitarian régime, more than one class conscious worker and revolutionary militant has concluded that nothing is left of the Russian revolution, that there are no more grounds for defending the Soviet Union in a war than for defending any capitalist state. The professional confusionists of the various ultra-leftist grouplets prey upon these honest reactions to Stalinism and try to goad the workers into a reactionary position. Some of these philosophers of ignorance and superficiality prescribe a position of neutrality in a war between the Soviet Union and Germany; others, less timid, call for the strategy of defeatism in the Soviet Union. At bottom, the ultra-leftist position on the Soviet Union, which denies it any claim whatsoever to being a workers' state, reflects the vacillations of the petty bourgeoisie, their inability to make a firm choice between the camps of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, of revolution and imperialism.

Class rule is based upon property relations. Bourgeois class rule, the bourgeois state, is based upon private ownership, appropriation and accumulation. The political superstructure of the bourgeois class state may vary: democratic republic, monarchy, fascist dictatorship. When the bourgeoisie can no longer rule directly politically, and the working class is still too weak to take power, a Bonapartist military dictatorship may arise which seeks to raise itself "above the classes," to "mediate" between them. But it continues to rule over a *bourgeois state* (even though, as in Germany, it has politically expropriated the bourgeoisie and its parties), because it has left bourgeois property relations more or less intact.

The October revolution abolished bourgeois property relations in the decisive spheres of economic life. By centralizing the means of production in the hands of the state, it created new property relations. The counter-revolutionary bureaucracy, although it has destroyed the political rule of the proletariat, has *not*

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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Baltimore: Racist Abuse Disguised as Research

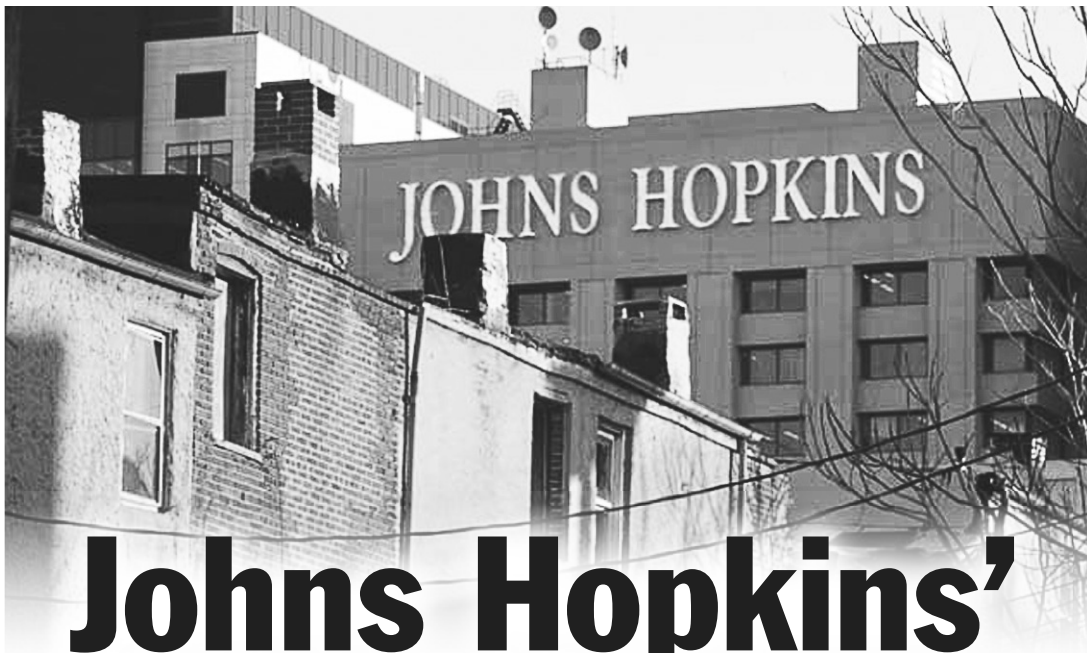
Ericka Grimes was one year old when researchers from Baltimore's Kennedy Krieger Institute (KKI), a prestigious medical facility affiliated with Johns Hopkins University, knowingly exposed her to dangerous levels of lead. As part of its 1993 "Lead-Based Paint Abatement and Repair and Maintenance Study," KKI kept her in a decrepit house encrusted with crumbling, peeling lead paint. Five months later, the lead in Ericka's blood had tripled to a level considered "highly elevated" by medical authorities. Ericka was among scores of black children who were harmed by the KKI study, which was funded by the federal government. Children of her age who ingest lead paint chips or dust can develop learning disabilities, impaired hearing and permanent brain damage.

The stated objective of the study was to help "preserve availability of low-rent urban housing that might be abandoned by landlords if they had to pay for the expensive repairs needed to eliminate lead using standard abatement methods"—in other words, to save slumlords some cash. It was already well known that the risk of childhood lead poisoning could be practically eliminated by a thorough lead abatement, not to speak of replacing the crumbling ghetto buildings with new, lead-free housing. What the study intended to figure out was how much landlords could skimp on repairs before the children ended up with brain damage.

KKI claims that the study was ultimately beneficial to the city of Baltimore because it helped bring about a large drop in new lead-poisoning cases. To get those results, KKI acted with racist contempt for the children, using them as human guinea pigs. KKI encouraged landlords to rent to families with young children and lured unwitting parents with toys, food stamps and money. Researchers periodically took blood samples from the children and identified lead-infested hot spots in the houses but hid the danger from the parents.

The children with elevated blood lead levels did not receive any medical treatment. Indeed, treating them, which should have begun by providing the families with decent homes, would have vitiated the study, the whole point of which was to measure the rising levels of lead in the children's blood. As noted in a class-action lawsuit filed on September 15, KKI, an internationally renowned facility specializing in childhood brain disorders, intentionally treated poor black children like "canaries in the mines."

The lawsuit was made possible by a 2001 Maryland Court of Appeals ruling that overturned previous court decisions protecting KKI from legal action. The ruling sent shock waves through the



Johns Hopkins' Lead Poisoning Experiment on Black Kids

public health establishment by concluding that no child in Maryland could be included in a "non-therapeutic study that promises no medical benefit to the child." The court decision noted that if children were involved in such a study, "any balance between risk and benefit is necessarily negative."

The decision compared the lead-poisoning study to Nazi experiments carried out in the Buchenwald concentration camp, U.S. government radiation experiments on soldiers in the 1940s and '50s and the infamous "Tuskegee experiment." In the "Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male," the U.S. Public Health Service recruited hundreds of black men with syphilis in Macon County, Alabama, and watched them die slow, agonizing, yet preventable deaths. For 40 years, the government withheld treatment from the men, even when penicillin became available as an effective treatment for syphilis. The "study" ended in 1972 only because it was exposed in the press, igniting a firestorm of public outrage over its racism and cruelty. By then, more than 100 of the men had already died of the disease and its complications.

In the case of the radiation studies cited by the court, the government sent no fewer than 200,000 American soldiers into irradiated test sites within minutes

after atomic bombs were set off. The tests came on the heels of the 1945 incineration of 200,000 Japanese civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki by U.S. atomic bombs. That horrendous war crime and the later studies were carried out as part of the massive effort to develop and test nuclear weapons for use against the Soviet Union (see "U.S. Irradiated Thousands in Atomic Experiments," WV No. 594, 18 February 1994).

In fact, the radiation experiments went far beyond the exposure of soldiers to nuclear fallout. In hospitals, schools and other institutions across the U.S., unsuspecting pregnant women, children and others were exposed to massive amounts of X-rays, injected with radioactive isotopes and made to eat food laced with radioactive carcinogens. These and many other atrocities, which lasted until the 1970s, are chronicled in *The Plutonium Files: America's Secret Medical Experiments in the Cold War* (1999), written by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Eileen Welsome. Johns Hopkins was among the universities and hospitals cited by Welsome that carried out the experiments.

Medical Research and Racist Contempt

For generations, black oral history has featured "night doctors" who abduct chil-

dren for gruesome experiments. These stories are not entirely irrational. The KKI experiment is not an aberration. Indeed, there is a long history of such atrocities in this capitalist society, which was founded on black chattel slavery and continues to brand black people for life by the color of their skin. From the horrors of the Middle Passage and the bartering in human flesh to the noose of the lynch rope and rampant racist cop terror, the oppression of black people in the U.S. has been marked by systematic degradation and cruelty.

In the slaveholders' South, slaves were sometimes rented or purchased for the sole purpose of medical experimentation. Thomas Jefferson experimented with smallpox vaccine on his slaves. In the 1840s, James Marion Sims—venerated as a benefactor of women and the "father of gynecology" for pioneering fistula repair, among other contributions—performed scores of operations on the genitals of female slaves without anesthesia. Sims refused to administer the anesthetic ether, claiming that blacks felt less pain than whites—a lie long favored by slavery's apologists.

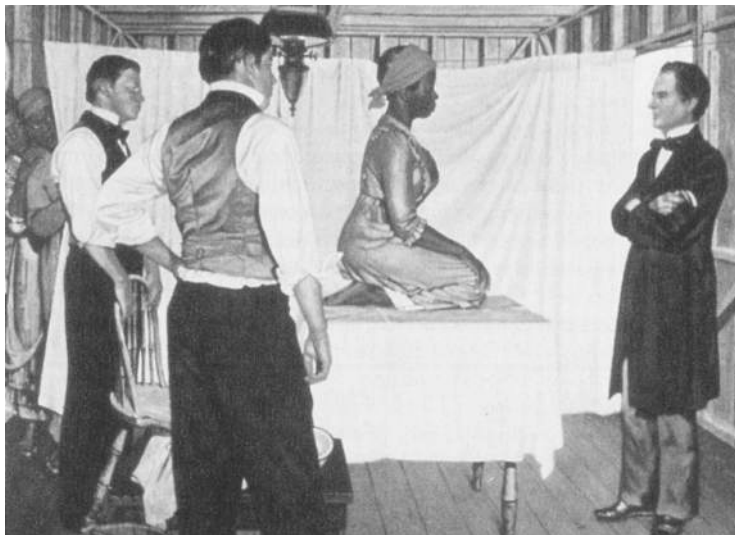
The imprint of slavery, Jim Crow segregation and the continuing oppression of black people is reflected in the race and class bias permeating the KKI study. Johns Hopkins Medicine includes a state-of-the-art hospital whose renowned doctors and medical advances attract patients and students from around the world. It also provides medical services for poor people in Baltimore—a mainly black, once heavily industrialized city whose unemployment, decay and racist police brutality were poignantly captured in the HBO TV series *The Wire*. Yet the lead-poisoning experiment was one of a long list of racist abuses carried out by this respected institution.

As part of a federally funded study, in 2000 Johns Hopkins researchers spread sludge fertilizer made from human and industrial waste on lawns in black neighborhoods. According to a 2008 Associated Press exposé, researchers argued that the iron and phosphates in the fertilizer could prevent lead from being absorbed by children playing in the yard who get soil in their mouths. (Proper soil abatement involves installing an impermeable barrier or replacing topsoil with uncontaminated soil. But landlords want to avoid such costly measures.) Families were assured of the safety of the sludge and were never told about the harmful effects if their kids ingested it.

An example of the disdainful treatment Johns Hopkins has meted out to its black patients is related in Rebecca Skloot's book *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (2010). An impoverished black woman, Lacks was treated for cervical cancer in 1951 at the segregated "colored women" ward at Johns Hopkins Hospital. Without her knowledge, physicians excised tissue from her tumor and proceeded to culture cells from that sample. When Lacks died a few months later, doctors duped her family into performing an autopsy solely to secure more of her tissues for culture.

The many cultures derived from these cells, known by laboratory convention as HeLa, became an unparalleled research tool crucial to a vast amount of biomedical research, from the development of the polio vaccine to mapping the human genome, AIDS research and the development of cloning techniques. HeLa cells are featured in 60,000 scientific papers. But while Henrietta Lacks' cells

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Painting by Robert Thom



Burns Archive

Left: Dr. J. Marion Sims, considered "father of gynecology," purchased black women slaves for gruesome operations in mid 1800s. Right: Infamous "Tuskegee experiment" of 1932-72 denied penicillin, gave bogus "treatment" to black men with syphilis.

Black Struggle, the Vietnamese Revolution and the Working Class



Bettmann



Spartacist

Left: 1967 NYC demonstration against Vietnam War. Right: Spartacists put forward revolutionary-internationalist perspective against U.S. imperialism at August 1966 NYC antiwar protest.

From 1960s New Left to Trotskyism

We print below the first part of a presentation, slightly edited for publication, by Spartacist League speaker Diana Coleman at an October 15 forum in Los Angeles.

I’ve noticed that there is quite a bit of interest in and nostalgia for the activism and struggle of the 1960s. Well, that’s understandable. In the last few years, the world has plunged into an economic crisis unrivaled since the days of the Great Depression. The con men on Wall Street whose financial swindles were central to this collapse were bailed out to the tune of trillions of dollars by the Democratic Party administration of Barack Obama, following in the steps of George W. Bush. The working class, black people, Latinos

PART ONE

and the growing mass of the poor have been made to foot the bill, losing their jobs, homes, pensions and virtually anything else that makes life remotely livable.

Every day you read of some new attack on the unions. Every day the fees go up for a college education. U.S. imperialism rampages around the world from Iraq to Afghanistan to Libya, leaving death and destruction in its wake. And particularly here in the U.S., there has been precious little class struggle, social struggle, even student struggle, in response—with the notable exception of the longshore union in Longview, Washington. We are now seeing a little action from these “Occupy Wall Street” protesters, who are basically frustrated young liberals. But the bottom line is: capitalism cannot be reformed. What is needed is a Marxist perspective of international socialist revolution.

What I am going to do today is talk about the 1960s—the last time there was serious social struggle in the U.S.—and why some of us concluded that struggle, even quite militant struggle, is not enough. You need a Marxist working-class perspective and a Leninist vanguard party that can lead the working class forward to seize state power and establish socialized, collectivized property systems around the whole world.

After that long introduction, I’m going to play you an early Phil Ochs song, “I’m Going to Say It Now.” This was probably written not long after the 1964 Free Speech Movement (FSM) at UC Berkeley. It has a lot of the themes of that period—alienation, opposition to “in loco paren-

Recollections of a Participant

tis,” etc. It’s a very liberal protest song, but it foreshadows things to come:

“Oh you’ve given me a number and
you’ve taken off my name,
To get around this campus why you
almost need a plane,
And you’re supporting Chang Kai-Shek,
while I’m supporting Mao.
So when I’ve got something to say,
sir, I’m gonna say it now....
“I’ve read of other countries where
the students take a stand,
Maybe even help to overthrow the
leaders of the land
Now I wouldn’t go so far to say
we’re also learnin’ how,
But when I’ve got something to say,
sir, I’m gonna say it now.”

From the 1960s up to the early ’70s, there developed a distinct generation of American leftists whose experiences were quite different from the preceding generation of leftists, whose main experiences

were the Great Depression and the labor struggles of the 1930s. This generation called itself the New Left as opposed to the “old left,” which had been dominated by the pro-Moscow Stalinist Communist Party (CP). This New Left generation, of which I’m a part, makes up a lot of the cadre and leadership of not only the Spartacist League but also our left opponents: the Progressive Labor Party (PL), Revolutionary Communist Party, International Socialist Organization (ISO), Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) and Workers World Party (WWP).

Let me first say a word about the 1950s. What a nasty period—the intensely anti-Communist climate after the Korean War, blacklisting, reds driven out of the unions, the Smith Act trials of CP members, deadening conformity, women forced back into the home after World War II. My parents were in the CP, and I remember when I was seven years old the execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, American Commu-



Bettmann

Jackson, Mississippi, 1963: Courageous civil rights activists sit in at lunch counter to protest Jim Crow segregation.

nists executed for supposedly betraying the “secret” of the atom bomb to the Soviet Union. When I asked my parents why this was happening, they said it was because the Rosenbergs were “progressives” (a code word for CPers) and Jews. Even then I knew that this described my parents, too. Later, my mother told me that if they, my parents, were arrested, my grandparents would take care of my brother and me. Luckily, it never came to that, but this was my first encounter with the U.S. “justice system,” and I never forgot it.

The Left, Old and New

Under the immense pressure of Cold War anti-Communism, the old left—both the reformist CP and the then-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (SWP)—suffered major right-wing defections. The SWP lost 20 percent of its membership in the Cochran-Clarke faction fight and the CP lost three-quarters of its membership in 1956-57. These ex-CPers didn’t mostly become right-wingers. Rather they mostly became liberals—they had been voting Democrat for years, anyhow. The hard-core Stalinists later became Maoists and influenced the New Left in the late ’60s, but I’ll get to that later.

These losses were heavily concentrated among the parties’ active trade unionists. This purging and defection of reds from the labor movement in the ’50s was the single most important negative factor shaping the outlook of what would become the New Left. When young political activists, white and black, entered the political scene during the civil rights movement, they encountered a labor movement with no left wing sharing their views on racial oppression or U.S. militarism. The labor bureaucrats were militant anti-Communists who had gotten their posts by working hand in glove with the government in driving the reds out of the unions and were gung ho for all of U.S. imperialism’s dirty wars.

No surprise there, but it was not just the bureaucracy. When I got a union job in the late ’60s after the New Left finally became interested in the working class, there wasn’t anybody older than me in the unions who had ever been a leftist. So what developed among the New Left was a real petty-bourgeois, anti-working-class elitism. For them, “those workers” were all “bought off” with their high wages, good union jobs, fancy pensions. Today that seems like a joke, but that was the view at the time.

Two things really brought the McCar-

thy period to an end: the civil rights movement and the Cuban Revolution. Castro and Che were not seen as hardline Stalinists. Well, originally they weren't—they were petty-bourgeois nationalists. And, indeed, young would-be leftists often identified with them against the U.S. on a democratic basis of “national liberation” rather than on the basis of socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

On the home front, in the American South black people faced legal segregation and were deprived of basic rights—a fact well-publicized by the Soviet Union. The Southern Jim Crow system was based on police/Klan terror against atomized rural sharecroppers, and it had become increasingly outmoded as industrialization in the South around World War II drew blacks into the working class and the Southern cities. By the late 1950s, black anger at Jim Crow segregation had given birth to the civil rights movement, shattering the climate of Cold War McCarthyism and increasingly polarizing American society. It's not as well known, but by the early '60s there were huge demos in the North, too: boycotts of segregated schools, rent strikes against ghetto slumlords, protests against segregated housing and racist police brutality. These culminated in the late '60s in a series of massive ghetto rebellions.

Radicalization of Civil Rights Militants

The first group I ever joined was the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in 1963-64 in San Francisco. I participated in various mass demos protesting job discrimination against black people—at the Sheraton Palace, at Lucky's (now Albertsons) and on Auto Row. In retrospect, that last one seems kind of weird—for the right of blacks to be car salesmen? But these demos were huge, drawing thousands. The following summer, I decided to go down South for the second Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) Freedom Summer. This was the year after civil rights activists Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman and James Chaney had been killed, but being 19 I wasn't as fearful as I probably should have been.

When they tell the official story of the civil rights movement, Martin Luther King was the undisputed leader whom everyone loved and followed. It's not so! King's vaunted nonviolence was really a way of trying to keep the movement liberal, respectable, reformist. His whole strategy was to appeal to the liberal Northern establishment to, please, help out black people. Pressuring the Democrats was to remain King's consistent strategy throughout his life.

Seeking to refurbish its image, the bourgeoisie eventually acquiesced to the demand for legal equality in the South. At the same time, the federal government sought to restrain the most militant elements of the civil rights movement and usually did little to prevent the violent suppression of civil rights activists by Southern authorities, often collaborating in that suppression. This could not help but bring the question of the class nature of the capitalist state, as an organ of repression, to the fore. SNCC was formed under the auspices of MLK's Southern Christian Leadership Conference. After some hard experiences in the South with the cops, Klan and Democrats (who ran the South, after all), SNCC moved to the left, increasingly frustrated with and eventually hostile to the Northern liberal establishment—and King himself.

When I was there in the summer of 1965, the Los Angeles Watts upheaval broke out. Martin Luther King said that “as powerful a police force as possible” should be brought to L.A. to stop it. SNCC activists on my project cursed King for that. SNCC had broken with mainstream liberalism but had not yet definitely latched onto black nationalism. I could see that SNCC was having a total political identity crisis, but I sure didn't have the answers. By this time, I hated the Democrats and was convinced that racial oppression was integral to the capitalist system and wasn't going to go away just because black people could ride at the



18 June 1953: NYC gathering in support of American Communists Julius and Ethel Rosenberg the day before their execution.

front of the bus. So I decided I should spend some time in Berkeley checking out the socialist groups.

The early years of the 1960s in the South were a key moment. If the SWP, which had been *the* Trotskyist party, had remained a revolutionary party and concentrated its forces in the Southern civil rights movement, it may well have won to Trotskyism a large fraction of those young black militants who eventually became black nationalists. That would have really changed the political scene. But by the early 1960s, the SWP had lost its revolutionary bearings and tailed non-proletarian class forces. Domestically, it abstained from the Southern civil rights movement. Internationally, the SWP was uncritically cheerleading for the petty-bourgeois radical-nationalist leadership of the Cuban Revolution.

Trotskyists should have been calling for the unconditional military defense of the Cuban deformed workers state and, at the same time, calling on the Cuban proletariat to establish a regime of workers democracy by sweeping away the Castroite bureaucracy through a political revolution. But the SWP refused to criticize Castro. These two questions—Cuba and the black question—which had decisively broken open the McCarthy period, were exactly the two questions the SWP couldn't deal with. In the process, they abandoned the centrality of the working class and the necessity of building Trotskyist parties in every country.

It is during this period that the Spartacist League originated as the Revolutionary Tendency (RT) opposition within the SWP, fighting on these two questions. In an August 1963 document, “The Negro Struggle and the Crisis of Leadership,” the RT wrote: “We must consider non-intervention in the crisis of leadership a crime of the worst sort.” After being expelled from the SWP, the small Spartacist forces intervened in the civil rights movement in both the South and North. Look at *Spartacist* Bound Volume No. 1—the SL, founded in 1966, was intervening on the black question all the time and calling on militants to break with the Democratic Party, no less than the Republicans a capitalist party. The call for a Freedom Labor Party was an axis to link the exploding black struggle to the power of labor, North and South. In the mid '60s, Spartacists were arguing the right line but lacked the numbers and, more importantly, the acquired political authority to decisively influence the internal factional struggles in SNCC. So the crucial moment was lost.

The Rise of Students for a Democratic Society

I could say a lot more about the civil rights movement, but I want to talk about how this massive ferment influenced the student movement. The most organized expression of the New Left was Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Of course, that sentence is sort of a contradiction in terms given how deliberately disorganized SDS was: participatory de-

mocracy, every chapter going its own way, etc. Restarted in 2006, the new SDS is a liberal campus group that combines parochial campus activism with Democratic Party lesser-evilmism. We have an excellent article about SDS headlined “From Tepid Liberalism to Radicalism and Back Again” (WV No. 927, 2 January 2009). The original SDS went from liberalism to radicalism; the new group is running the film in reverse.

In well-publicized interviews, leaders of the new SDS push the myth that Communism destroyed the first SDS and call for such leftists to stay out of SDS. WWP and Freedom Road Socialist Organization (FRSO) work in SDS anyway, but this says less about SDS's “non-sectarianism” and more about these reformists' tooth-

Free Speech Movement protest at UC Berkeley, 1964. FSM was early expression of 1960s student radicalization.



less politics and their own lesser-evilmism. Here in L.A., during the 2008 election we saw FRSO as part of SDS busily holding a “no to McCain” campaign rally at UCLA, which in plain English meant “yes to Obama.” The new SDS's “democratic” and “anti-authoritarian” rhetoric recapitulates the Cold War anti-Communism that the first SDS broke from.

The original SDS began as the Student League for Industrial Democracy (SLID), the student affiliate of the League for Industrial Democracy (LID). Moribund by 1960, the LID had served as a handmaiden of the U.S. government in the left and labor movement. Populated by “State Department socialists,” such as Norman Thomas and Michael Harrington, the LID also counted among its members Victor and Walter Reuther—the labor traitors who rode to power in the United Auto Workers by purging Communists from the union in the 1940s—and Sidney Hook. Once close to the CP, Hook turned repentant and became a staunch supporter of American “democracy.” Hook was a leading light in the Congress for Cultural Freedom—a CIA-funded opera-

tion devoted to counteracting the appeal of Communism and the Soviet Union. These types are the ones for whom the term “CIA socialist” or “State Department socialist” was invented.

But the youth were getting a little restive. In 1960, the Student League for Industrial Democracy changed its name to Students for a Democratic Society and began to grow. In 1962, in response to Kennedy's Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba—a failed attempt to overthrow the Cuban Revolution—SDSers posed the question: “Whether our foreign policy had really changed from its old imperialist ways?” Obviously not! The SDS 1962 Port Huron Statement took tiny steps away from anti-Communism, opining that “the American Military response has been more effective in deterring the growth of democracy than communism.”

Even these small steps away from McCarthyism were too much for the LID elders, who hauled the SDS leadership into a trial for not being anti-Communist enough, then cut all funds to SDS and changed the locks on the SDS office. I recommend Kirkpatrick Sale's book *SDS* (1973) if you want to know all the details. After much organizational wrangling, SDS and the LID patched things up. Although moving away from the dried-up LID social democrats, SDS had not fundamentally broken from lesser-evil Democratic Party pressure politics, drawing disaffected youth back into the two-party shell game and perpetuating illusions in bourgeois democracy. In the 1964 elections, a wing of SDS campaigned to go “part of the way with LBJ” (a reference to Lyndon Johnson) instead of the official Democratic Party slogan: “All the way with LBJ.”

But the times they were a-changin', as the song by Bob Dylan said. In 1964 at UC Berkeley, the Free Speech Movement broke out in response to the administration's

attempts to censor political life on campus by barring reds and other civil rights activists (“outside agitators”) and restricting the activities of student organizations. What happened was that a young activist from CORE, Jack Weinberg, had set up an unauthorized literature table in Sproul Plaza. For this terrible crime, he was arrested. I will just comment here that considering all the trouble and hassle the SL has these days in setting up literature tables on campuses for our sub drive, one has to conclude that not too much has changed!

In this case, 3,000 students converged on Sproul Plaza and blocked in the police car. For the next 32 hours, the police car served as an impromptu podium for those defending the right of students to “free speech.” Facing reprisals from both the liberal campus administration and Democratic governor Pat Brown—the father of the current governor—FSM activists defended their right to “hear any person speak in any open area of the campus at any time on any subject” (see “The Student Revolt at Berkeley,” *Spartacist* No. 4, May-June 1965). The FSM's victory fueled

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further student radicalization across the country and undermined illusions in the good offices of campus administrations and the Democratic Party.

A funny addendum here: Jack Weinberg, the guy in the police car, was the one who said, “Don’t trust anyone over 30.” I don’t know if right then, but certainly within a few years, he was in the International Socialists (the predecessor to the thoroughly reformist ISO). And by 1984 on the 20th anniversary of the FSM, the *SF Chronicle* reported that Weinberg and Mario Savio, the best-known leader of the FSM, were both registered Democrats. So *they* sure weren’t trustworthy when they got older.

The Impact of the Vietnam War on the Left

Meanwhile, the escalation of the imperialist war in Vietnam meant more youth were being drafted, adding a direct material interest to the moral outrage felt by student activists opposing American imperialist aims. In 1965, SDS initiated the first nationwide protest against the Vietnam War. To many LID liberals, protesting a war against Communism was as bad as supporting the Communists outright. Furthermore, SDS’s call for the march included no anti-Communist exclusion clause. With a rush of new members and continued radicalization, SDS would abolish its anti-Communist exclusion clause at its 1965 summer convention, and soon afterward it split from LID entirely.

Now, I didn’t go to Berkeley from ’64 to ’68. Maybe I should have, but when I had to make my choice in ’62, Berkeley was politically dead as a doornail. I viewed Berkeley as huge and soulless, so I went to a small liberal arts school in New Mexico instead. But this did give me a sense of how quickly things can change, especially among the petty bourgeoisie. One minute Berkeley was all bouffant hairdos and “frat rats.” The next time I went there on summer vacation, it was a hotbed of student activism and everybody looked like a hippie. And the people were all the same, I could see that.

That first SDS-organized national antiwar march took place in Washington, D.C., in the spring of 1965. It got 20-25,000 people, which totally amazed SDS. At the invitation of the SDS leaders, the rally was addressed by two liberal U.S. Senators. One of them denounced the “expansionist” policies of Communist China and called for a negotiated settlement in Vietnam. A few years later, it would be inconceivable for SDS to invite Democratic Senators to their antiwar protests, and anyone who spoke of Chinese expansionism would have been booed off the stage.

Let me comment first that many leftists and liberals claim that the Vietnam *antiwar movement* ended the war in Vietnam. No way! The Vietnamese won on the battlefield—that’s what ended the war. But this kind of liberal-pacifist antiwar movement has nevertheless become the model for all of the reformist left’s subsequent antiwar demos. If you don’t believe me, go to any PSL/ANSWER demo, where you will find exactly these same reformist politics.

We stand for the military defense of the peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan against the



WV Photo

Left: SL at 1973 anti-Vietnam War protest in Washington, D.C. Right: SWP honcho Fred Halstead, shown with social-patriotic placard, led assault on PL, SL at 1971 NPAC conference.



Young Socialist

brutal U.S. imperialist occupiers. As revolutionary Marxists, we side with oppressed countries against the predatory imperialist powers. But unlike in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, there was another element at work during the Vietnam War: there was a socially progressive character to those who fought against the imperialist butchers. The heroic Vietnamese had carried out a social revolution, albeit bureaucratically deformed, overturning capitalism in the North, and they were fighting to extend it to the South. We demanded the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. forces and called for the military defense of the National Liberation Front (NLF) and North Vietnamese forces, raising revolutionary slogans such as “Victory for the Vietnamese Revolution! No negotiations!” and “All Indochina must go Communist!”

The Split in the Antiwar Movement

As opposition to the war grew, more and more young activists stopped chanting for “peace” and began calling for “Victory to the NLF!” After all, the liberal establishment, including the Democratic president Johnson, backed the imperialist adventure in Vietnam. This drove the radical student movement to the left and opened it to revolutionary politics. Soon those who had been calling for “part of the way with LBJ” were chanting: “Hey, Hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?”

Here is a description of SDS circa 1967 from the novel *Vida* by Marge Piercy, who had been in SDS and is a bourgeois feminist. She refers to the group SAW, but I believe what she is describing is SDS:

“Every person in SAW had their own politics—anarchist, liberal, communist, democratic-socialist, syndicalist, Catholic-worker, Maoist, Schactmanite [sic], Spartacist—but what mattered was the politics of the act.... Everyone was accommodated in the vast lumbering movement. Vida was content to be of the New Left, without a fancier label. All that hairsplitting—that was what the poor Old Lefties had sat around doing in dreary meetings in the fifties nobody else attended while the resident FBI agent took notes. Now they knew that everything must be done and they must speak to everyone, through the poetry of the act, through the theatre of the streets.... SAW was a fiercely, totally democratic organization, open to anyone with or without the low dues, with an elected leadership usually galloping in one direction while the members marched in another. Chapters did as they pleased and projects happened because enough people did them. Program was hotly debated and then often coldly ignored, unless it really was up from the grass roots. SAW was uncontrollable and lush as a vacant-lot jungle.”

Spartacists sporadically intervened into SDS in the mid ’60s, and all I can say is I don’t envy the comrade trying to do an intervention into that “lush jungle.”

Now, there was a left-right split in the antiwar movement just as there had been in the civil rights movement, where MLK had been the right wing. SDS was the left here, and the right wing was the CP and the once-Trotskyist SWP. While the CP continued to preach its class-collaborationist program of electoral support to lesser-evil Democrats, the SWP became the main organizer of peace crawls designed to cater to liberal bourgeois spokesmen—that is, popular-frontist, class-collaborationist formations based on a liberal bourgeois program. One thing that the SWP was adamant on was that these rallies and demos absolutely

could not call for the Vietnamese’s military victory. Oh no, that would upset the Democrats—so the slogans had to be kept to “Out now” or “Bring our boys home!”

As the war dragged on, there were some Democrats who thought the U.S. was spending too much on napalm and Agent Orange for Vietnam when it should be building its nuclear arsenal to fight the real danger, the Soviet Union. So Democrats became a regular feature of these antiwar rallies. Often these now-antiwar Democrats (bourgeois defeatists) were viciously anti-labor. You can easily imagine how violently anti-Spartacist the SWP would get when the SL called for “Bourgeoisie out of the antiwar movement” and “Labor strikes against the war!”

This came to a head at a 1971 conference in New York City. SL comrades attempted to put forward a motion to



New Left Notes

PL-SDS national convention, Chicago, 1970: Spartacists fought for Trotskyist program against PL leadership.

exclude ruling-class politicians from the conference. They said, this is an antiwar conference—how can you have representatives of the ruling class that’s prosecuting the war? When the SWP would not entertain the motion, our comrades together with supporters of PL and SDS heckled Democratic Senator Vance Hartke during his speech. Comrades chanted, “Labor strikes against the war” when Victor Reuther began his speech. The SL didn’t attempt to drive them off the stage or anything like that. In response, the SWP went ballistic and sent their goon squad on a vicious assault against the protesters, some of whom were beaten, with one PL member reportedly thrown through a glass door. Assisting the SWP thugs were the minions of Tim Wohlforth’s Workers League, now the Socialist Equality Party.

But it wasn’t just the SL versus the SWP. Literally thousands of radicalized students were repelled by the SWP’s reformism and pacifism. I came back to the Bay Area in late 1968, and for one of those Spring Mobilizations (in ’69 or ’70) I heard that New Leftists in Berkeley were setting up an “anti-imperialist coalition” to march in the SWP-initiated peace demo. This sounded great to me. Like many others, I hated the “give peace a chance,” liberal, pro-American quality of these demos. I had decided that “our boys” were the ones fighting on the other side, and I was rooting for them. When this anti-imperialist contingent marched up, it looked like the SWP marshals were

Vietnam War in the spring of 1968. In his book, Sale gives a quote from the bourgeois press of this time on SDS:

“These youngsters, organized in the Students for a Democratic Society, (S.D.S.), are acting out a revolution—not a protest, and not a rebellion, but an honest-to-God revolution. They see themselves as the Che Guevaras of our society, and their intention is to seize control of the university, destroy its present structure, and establish the ‘liberated’ university as the redoubt from which to storm and overthrow ‘bourgeois’ America. This is what they say they are doing—they are the least conspiratorial and most candid of revolutionists—and this is what in fact they *are* doing.”

Noting that this gave SDS a whole lot of credit, Sale goes on to say: “The most ardently resistant SDSer couldn’t have put it better—and even he wouldn’t have been so convinced.”

Then there was the Democratic National Convention in fall 1968. Most of the protesters opposed the Democratic Party as a capitalist party presiding over social injustice. As Sale describes, SDS activists rejected “as usual the idea of mass marches but [were] doubly scornful of any project mired in electoral politics.” SDS members propagandized and organized actions against the Democratic Party and raised general hell in the city. For that, they were arrested, savagely beaten and one young man was shot to death, all under the aegis of the Democratic Party city administration of the infamous Daley machine. It had a huge impact nationally. [TO BE CONTINUED]

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yet been able to restore capitalist property relations by abolishing those established by the revolution. This great reality determines, for Marxists, the character of the Soviet Union as a workers’ state, bureaucratically degenerated, it is true, usurped and therefore crucially imperilled by the Bonapartists, but still fundamentally a workers’ state. This great remaining conquest of the revolution determines, in turn, our defense of the Soviet Union from imperialist attack *and* from its Bonapartist sappers at home.

Because it is not a simple question, Lenin pointed out at the 9th Congress of the party in 1920, we must be careful not to sink into the morass of confusion.

“Wherein consists the rule of the class? Wherein consisted the rule of the bourgeoisie over the feudal lords? In the constitution it was written: ‘in freedom and equality.’—That is a lie. So long as there are toilers, the property owners are capable and, as such, even compelled, to speculate. We say that there is no equality there, and that the sated are not the equals of the hungry, the speculator is not the equal of the toiler. Wherein does the rule of the class express itself? The rule of the proletariat expresses itself in the abolition of landed and capitalist property. Even the fundamental content of all former constitutions—the republican included—boiled down to property. Our constitution has acquired the right to historical existence, we did not merely write down on paper that we are abolishing property, but the victorious proletariat did abolish property and abolished it completely.—Therein consists the rule of the class—primarily in the question of property. When the question of property was decided in practise, the rule of the class was thereby assured; thereupon the constitution wrote down on paper what life had decided: ‘There is no capitalist and landed property,’ and it added: ‘The working class has more rights than the peasantry, but the exploiters have no rights at all.’ “Therewith was written down the manner in which we realized the rule of our class, in which we bound together the toilers of all strata, all the little groups. The petty bourgeois proprietors were split-up. Among them those who have a larger property are the foes of those who have less, and the proletariat openly declares war against them when it abolishes property.... “The rule of the class is determined only by the relationship to property. That is precisely what determines the constitution. And our constitution correctly set down our attitude to property and our attitude to the question of what class must stand at the head. He who, in the question of how the rule of the class is expressed, falls into the questions of democratic centralism, as we often observe, brings so much confusion into the matter that he makes impossible any successful work on this ground.” —(*Russische Korrespondenz*, Nr. 10, July 1920, p. 8) [see Lenin, “Ninth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.),” March 1920, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30]

Liberal apologists have distorted Lenin’s concepts into an argument for the compatibility of the bureaucratic dictatorship, and even a personal dictatorship, with a consistent development towards the new social order. “So long as industry remains nationalized and the productive forces expand,” runs their apology, “what does it really matter if Stalin maintains a bureaucratic despotism, which we civilized liberals would not tolerate but which is good enough for backward Russians?” It is of course quite true that Lenin saw no absolute incompatibility between proletarian democracy and “individual dictatorship” in industry under given conditions. A year before his quoted speech at the 9th Congress, he observed:

“That the dictatorship of single persons in the history of the revolutionary movements was very often the spokesman, the carrier and the executant of the dictatorship of the revolutionary classes, is evidenced by the incontestable experience of history.... If we are not anarchists, we must acknowledge the necessity of the state, *i.e.*, of coercion, for the transition from capitalism to socialism. The form of coercion is determined by the degree of development of the given revolutionary class, furthermore, by such special circumstances as, e.g., the heritage of a long, reactionary war, furthermore, by the



International Trotskyist movement fought for unconditional military defense of USSR during World War II. Graphic shows articles from American SWP’s *Militant* and French Trotskyist press.

forms of the resistance of the bourgeoisie or of the petty bourgeoisie. Therefore there is not the slightest contradiction in principle between Soviet (*i.e.*, socialist) democracy and the application of the dictatorial rule of individual persons.” —(*Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. XXII, pp. 524f., Ger. ed.) [see Lenin, “The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government,” April 1918, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27]

But in order to make clear his real thoughts, he hastened to add the following indispensable supplementary statement, without which everything is one-sided and therefore false:

“The more resolutely we now come out in favor of a ruthlessly strong power, for the dictatorship of individual persons in *definite labor processes* during certain periods of *purely executive functions*, the more manifold must be the forms and methods of control from below in order to paralyze every trace of a possibility of distorting the Soviet power, in order to tear out, incessantly and tirelessly, the weeds of bureaucratism.” —(*Ibid.*, p. 532)

It is precisely those manifold forms and methods of *democratic control from below* which the bureaucracy has destroyed in its development towards despotic rule. In destroying proletarian democracy and the political rule of the working class, the bureaucracy has lifted itself beyond the reach of the masses out of which it emerged. Having abandoned its original class base, it must find a new one, for it cannot last long as a thin bureaucratic stratum hanging, so to speak, in mid-air. The social layers with which it has linked itself are the well-to-do farmers, the factory directors and trust heads, the Stakhanovite aristocracy, the officialdom of the party, the Soviet apparatus, the Red Army and the G.P.U. But none of these, nor all of them taken together, represents a *class*, with a distinctive function in the productive life of the country, or with specific property forms upon which to build a firm class and firm class rule. Their whole *tendency* is to develop into a new property-owning class, that is, into a capitalist class based on private property. Blocking the road to the realization of this yearning stands the still powerful reality of the nationalization of the means of production and exchange, centralized planning, and the protection of nationalized industry which is afforded by the monopoly of foreign trade.

The bureaucracy, closely interlinked with these restorationist strata of Soviet society and embodying their social aspirations, is now driven by inexorable forces to take its next big step backward. Hitherto, the reaction has been confined essentially to the destruction of the whole political superstructure of the workers’ democracy established by the revolution, and to the physical annihilation of all those who were the living connection between today and the revolutionary yesterday. From now on, the anti-Soviet bureaucracy will, and in a certain sense, must seek its self-preservation by an assault upon the economic foundations of the workers’ state: nationalized property, planning, the monopoly of foreign trade.

In our opinion, it cannot and will not succeed in establishing the rule of an independent, new Russian capitalist class, even if we arbitrarily exclude the possibility, *by no means exhausted*, of the crushing of the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy by a resurgent proletariat. The new strata of society gathered around the ruling Soviet

clique *may* prevail over the Russian proletariat in the period to come. But we do not believe that they are strong or solidly rooted enough to develop into a national neo-bourgeoisie capable of resisting, on a capitalist basis, the infinitely stronger bourgeoisie of the foreign imperialist countries.

In other words, the Stalinist bureaucracy and its satellites are doomed regardless of the outcome. They cannot develop into an independent ruling capitalist class in Russia. Either they are defeated by the proletariat which carries through a political revolution for the purpose of restoring workers’ democracy and of safeguarding the economic basis of the workers’ state which still exists. Or they are defeated by powerful foreign imperialism, which would wipe out that old economic basis, reduce the Union to a semi-colonial country, and convert the restorationist strata not into a ruling capitalist class for Russia but merely into a compradore agency of world imperialism, occupying a position not dissimilar from that of the Chinese national bourgeoisie.

The class conscious workers will place all their hopes and bend all their efforts towards the realization of the former outcome of the struggle. The building of the revolutionary party to lead the Russian masses in the battle to save the Russian revolution is dependent upon the success of the revolutionary movement in the capitalist world. The depression and reaction in the ranks of the Russian proletariat was created by the defeats of the working class in the rest of the world, by the feeling of the Russians that they had no powerful allies in the capitalist world. The growth and victories of the Fourth International will galvanize the latent revolutionary strength of the Russian masses and set it into irresistible motion. Everything depends on the speed with which we accomplish our indicated task.

* * *

The crisis of the Russian revolution has emboldened all the critics of Bolshevism, that is, of revolutionary Marxism—all of them, old and new. But all their hoary argumentation leaves the Marxist unrepentant for his solidarity with those principles and ideas which made the Russian revolution possible. For in abandoning these ideas, he would have to adopt others, and what others are there? Should he adopt those of the Mensheviks? It is true: had they triumphed, the proletarian revolution in Russia would not have degenerated into its Stalinist caricature for the simple reason that there would have been no proletarian revolution. Should he adopt those of the Western European confrères of the Mensheviks, the parties of the Second International? It is true: they did not let the proletarian revolution in Germany and Austria and Italy degenerate, and that by the simple device of crushing it in the egg and thus facilitating the consolidation of their famous bourgeois democracy which brought the working class directly under the knife of Hitler and [Austrian chancellor] Schuschnigg and Mussolini. Should he adopt those of the anarchist politicians who have become so clamorous of late, especially about the Kronstadt rebellion? But the lamentable collapse of anarchist politics in Spain, the servile collaboration with the bourgeoisie, the heaping of capitulation upon capitulation and the yielding of one position after another without a struggle, are not calculated to attract us away from Marxism.

It is not in place here to dwell on the flawlessness of Bolshevism and all its policies in the great period of the revolution. Its defects may be freely granted. But the oppressed and exploited of the world have not yet been offered a scientific guide to action in their struggle for freedom which can even remotely claim to serve as a substitute for the party and principles of Lenin. In the face of enormous obstacles—not the least of which were created, with arms in hand, by the present-day bourgeois and reformist critics—Lenin and the Bolsheviks carried through the first conscious proletarian revolution. They laid the economic foundation for the new society without class rule, without iniquity or exploitation or oppression. They—and nobody else—gave us a picture of the truly breathtaking prospects for human advancement and human dignity which are open to us as soon as capitalism is sent to the rubbish-heap.

Rash indeed would he be who forecast the immediate future of the Russian revolution. But whatever it may be, its historical achievements are already imperishable. The first steam engine may not have been much faster than the old-fashioned stage-coach, if it was able to move at all. But the country’s network of rails is today skimmed by speedy, advanced, streamline locomotives, while the stage-coach can be found only in museums. The creation of the steam-engine was a monumental contribution to human progress. The creation of the first Soviet republic was an even greater contribution. History will give little place to the period of Stalinist counter-revolution, for it will treat it as a passing historical episode. But the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 and its enduring achievements will never be wiped out of the consciousness of man, for it sounded the knell of all class rule, marked the beginning of the end of man’s pre-history, the inauguration of a new era for a new man. In this sense, Lenin and his party of revolutionary Bolsheviks could say with Ovid: *Jamque opus exegi: quod nec Jovis ira, nec ignes, Nec poterit ferrum, nec edax abolere vetustas*.

“I have now completed a work which neither the wrath of Jove, nor fire, nor the sword, nor the corroding tooth of time, shall be able to destroy.” ■

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she was no longer a “street activist” or even city councilman: “Once you assume the responsibility and you take the oath of office, you have to make it clear to your mother, your father and your supporters that you’re going to operate in the public’s interest.” The “public interest” is a code word for serving the interests of the capitalist class.

Some Democrats in Oakland and other cities continue to push for the cops to remove the Occupy encampments. Others, like Congresswoman Barbara Lee, who pledges her support to “peaceful protesters in this struggle for economic justice,” see an opportunity to boost the Democrats’ electoral fortunes. Here again the Democrats are served by their loyal foot soldiers in the labor bureaucracy. Having



November 3: Oakland mayor Jean Quan with police chief the day after brutal cop attack on protesters.

done virtually nothing to defend even their own members against the capitalist rulers’ relentless union-busting assaults, the union misleaders now embrace the Occupy movement. They supported the call for a “general strike” precisely because it wasn’t one.

Left-talking ILWU Local 10 executive board member Clarence Thomas, who was a prominent spokesman for the November 2 action, lauded the fact that the “general strike” call had come not from labor but from the “grassroots.” This was merely a convenient ruse to cover for the fact that none of the union tops, including the more “militant” ILWU bureaucrats, mobilized their ranks in labor action.

On the day of the rally, Jack Heyman announced from the podium that ILWU members had refused to take jobs and had effectively shut down the port. This was not the case. As Clarence Thomas said in an interview that day, it was “misinformation.” While a leaflet signed by Heyman, Thomas and a few other ILWUers calling to “Defend Occupy Oakland with the Muscle of Organized Labor” was given big play by Bay Area

rad-libs, the membership of the union was never mobilized to take any such action, or even much informed. Many longshoremen did take jobs, and the port was not shut down during the day.

Thousands of protesters did shut down the port that night. But the politics that drove this action was not qualitatively different from the “no business as usual” liberalism of the rest of the rally, precisely because it was *not* an action carried out by labor. It did nothing to advance the consciousness of the workers, nor of the protesters, of labor’s class power. Instead, protesters were left with the idea that all they needed to do was to set up a picket line and the workers wouldn’t work. The workers were relegated to a subordinate role, subsumed under the populism that dominated the overwhelmingly petty-bourgeois protest and that was pushed by *all* the union bureaucrats, including those of the ILWU.

The 1946 Oakland General Strike

Much was made of the November 2 action as the first “general strike” in this country since the 1946 Oakland general strike, which was part of the largest strike wave in U.S. history. The 1946 strike was sparked when workers walked out in protest against police herding a convoy of scab trucks with products for two major department stores that were being struck by women workers. As described by Stan Weir, a supporter of Max Shachtman’s Workers Party and a participant in the strike, “truck drivers, bus and streetcar operators and passengers, got off their vehicles and did not return. The city filled with workers, they milled about in the city’s core for several hours and then organized themselves” (“1946: The Oakland General Strike,” libcom.org). That included shutting down all stores except pharmacies and food markets; cordoning off the center of the city, directing traffic and only allowing those with union cards in; forming flying squads of workers to patrol against any strikebreaking activity.

That is what the mobilization of labor’s power in an actual general strike looks like, not some one-day protest to blow off steam like regularly takes place in many European countries and not what took place in Oakland on November 2. Whatever may be the spark for a general strike, when workers shut down production and run various aspects of society themselves, their action poses the question of which class shall rule.

The 1946 strike also clearly demonstrated the commitment of the labor bureaucracy to the maintenance of the capitalist order. The American Federation of Labor and Central Labor Council leaders worked overtime to keep the strike contained. Dave Beck, the vice president of the Teamsters union at the time, denounced the general strike as “nothing but a revolution” and ordered Teamsters to break the strike. Local union leaders made a settlement with Oakland city officials to end it. The workers went back to work, their strike sabotaged by their own misleaders.

The Fraud of Bourgeois Democracy

The Occupy protests have tapped into the widespread anger of many against the increasing destitution brought on by the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. But the populist notion, promoted by many in the petty-bourgeois Occupy movement, that the struggle is to “reclaim our democracy” from greedy bankers and corporate magnates is not only false but dangerous. This country was founded on the enslavement of black people and the genocidal annihilation of Native Americans. Its history is riddled with the bodies of working-class fighters killed at the hands of the police or the courts. The banks and corporations didn’t hijack the government in the last couple of decades or with the onset of the Wall Street crash. The purpose of this government has always been to defend the property and profits of the ruling class.

The wealth of this country is actu-

SYC Speaker: “Cops Are Not Workers, They Are Strikebreakers”



Cops advance on Occupy Oakland protesters in early morning of November 3.

We print below a speech, edited for publication, given by a Spartacus Youth Club representative to an Occupy Oakland protest against police brutality at the encampment outside City Hall on October 29.

The brutal attack on Occupy Oakland, the mass arrests, tear-gassing and nearly lethal attack on Scott Olsen by an army of cops shows what the police are all about: repression, racist terror and murder. Along with the courts, prisons and military, the cops make up the armed fist of the state, which defends the property and profits of the capitalist ruling class. Cops are not workers, they are strikebreakers. They shot Oscar Grant down in cold blood. Cops are not potential allies, they are our enemy.

The slogan “We are the 99 percent” actually blurs the class line and disguises the class nature of the capitalist state and all its political parties. Some people think that [mayor] Jean Quan betrayed the protesters. But in reality she is a Democratic Party capitalist politician who was doing her job as

the city commander of the OPD [Oakland Police Department], just like Obama does as Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism.

The Democrats, every bit as much as the Republicans, are the politicians of the capitalist ruling class. And Quan simply showed the reality behind the sometime “progressive” mask the Democrats put on to fool the workers and oppressed. Now the Democrats, whose hands are dripping with the blood of millions of victims of U.S. imperialism at home and abroad, are swooping in to channel the protesters’ anger into the shell game of electoral politics.

The current economic crisis has sparked the mass protests. But to actually end exploitation and oppression, you have to do something fundamentally different. We are fighting to build a multiracial revolutionary workers party that will lead the workers in smashing the capitalist state, expropriating the banks and corporations and building a socialist world in which those who labor rule.

ally overwhelmingly concentrated in the handful of families—far less than 1 percent of the population—that own the corporations and the banks and whose profits are derived through the exploitation of labor. This capitalist class runs both the Democratic and Republican parties, whose main difference is not *what* they do but *how* they do it. The Republicans make no bones about being the party of “big business” in viciously going after the working class, blacks, immigrants and the poor. The Democrats lie and do the same thing. The “choice” at election time is

simply which capitalist party will oversee the brutal repression of the working class and oppressed at home and prosecute U.S. imperialism’s bloody wars and occupations abroad.

America is ruled by a single class—it is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The facade of democracy serves to obscure the fact that the capitalist state is an instrument of organized violence—consisting at its core of the police, military, courts and prisons—for maintaining capitalist rule.

The Occupy movement largely expresses a cry of rage by white, petty-bourgeois



Oakland, December 1946: Mass workers rally at Latham Square. General strike showed power of labor organized as a class.

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Immigration...

(continued from page 1)

the state or going deeper underground, where they will be vulnerable to exploitative employers, unscrupulous landlords and violent criminals. While today’s bigots have found more sophisticated ways to intimidate minority groups, there’s a short distance between Bull Connor and today’s slumlords, sweatshop owners and anti-immigrant demagogues.” The vile segregationist Connor, Birmingham’s Commissioner of Public Safety in the early 1960s, was notorious for setting police dogs and high-pressure hoses against civil rights demonstrators.

The keynote speaker for a recent rally in Birmingham against the new Alabama law was Democratic Illinois Congressman Luis Gutierrez, whose speeches often link opposition to anti-immigrant measures to the civil rights movement of the 1950s and ’60s. The struggles of that time broke the back of Jim Crow segregation in the South. But the program of the liberal civil rights leadership, which preached reliance on the capitalist courts and the Democratic Party, derailed the fight for black freedom as it confronted the all-sided racial oppression that is embedded in the structure of American capitalism. Reliance on the Democratic Party and the capitalist state

is no less a dead end in the fight for immigrant rights today.

Gutierrez played a prominent role, along with a host of Democratic Party politicians, Catholic church figures and union officials, in heading mass protests against the Bush administration’s anti-immigrant drive in 2006. As the reformist left chimed in with talk of a “new civil rights movement,” the rallying cry of “Today we march, tomorrow we vote” paid off handsomely for the Democrats, who captured the overwhelming majority of the Latino vote in the last presidential elections. The results can be seen in the massive *increase* in deportations under Barack Obama. Gutierrez, who likes to occasionally posture as a critic of Obama’s crackdown on immigrants, has repeatedly called for the military reinforcement of the border with Mexico and pushed “reforms” of deportation guidelines so that they could more effectively target “real criminals”—the same premise as the “Secure Communities” dragnet.

The political shell game in which the Democratic Party postures as the “friend” of immigrants, labor and black people is a central pillar of U.S. capitalist rule. Perpetuating this fraud among workers, the pro-capitalist trade-union leadership acts as a central obstacle to mobilizing labor in its own interests and in the interests of the oppressed—from fighting the ravages of



Getty

Los Angeles: Protest against “Secure Communities” mass deportation program, August 15.

the capitalist economic crisis to defending black and immigrant rights and organizing the “open shop” South.

There will be no effective resistance to the immiseration of the working people without the unity in struggle of the labor movement and the black and Latino poor. Our aim as Marxists is to advance the solidarity and consciousness of the entire working class—black, white, Latino;

native-born and foreign-born—in the struggle to build a workers party in opposition to all the parties of capitalist class rule. A revolutionary workers party, with black and immigrant workers prominently in its leadership, is the necessary instrument for making the working class conscious of its historic task of overthrowing the capitalist system and building a society where those who labor rule. ■

youth as the avenues that they thought would be open to them after going thousands of dollars in debt for a college degree are increasingly closed. From their vantage point, this is an abrogation of the promise of the “American dream” with its attendant, if threadbare, Horatio Alger myth that those who study and work hard will prosper.

For the working class, the idea that their children would have a better future than themselves has receded further and further out of reach. And for black people in this country, the American dream has always been a nightmare. Class divisions and racial fault lines rend the Occupy movement’s much-vaunted 99 percent. Their populist appeals reverberate less among the largely black members of Local 10 than they do among teachers and nurses. As one minority activist, who is sympathetic with Occupy Oakland, put it in describing the attention this movement has received: “It’s the Columbine phenomenon. When it happens to white people, it becomes news. This has been happening to people in my neighborhood all the time” (*Oakland Tribune*, 2 November).

Occupy Oakland named its encampment after Oscar Grant, the young black worker who was shot down in cold blood by a BART cop early on New Year’s Day 2009. This is a statement of solidarity and recognition of the reality of racist cop terror. But the slogan “we are the 99 percent” falsely puts forward the idea that all those not in the top 1 percent have common interests. This was picked up by the Oakland Police Officers’ Association in a sinister letter to “the citizens of Oakland” on the eve of the November 2 protest. Declaring “we, too, are the 99% fighting for better working conditions, fair treatment and the ability to provide a living for our children and families,” the letter ended with an appeal for “real leaders NOW” to back them up in doing their job—from lobbing tear gas grenades at protesters to strengthening their power as a racist occupying army in the Oakland ghettos.

The cops, who had largely been held in reserve on November 2, were itching for the opportunity to bust some heads. And at the end of the night, the police once again launched an assault on protesters in downtown Oakland, rupturing the spleen of yet another Iraq war veteran and arresting over 100. Echoing city authorities, protest organizers have launched a hue and cry against “violent” anarchists. This serves only to alibi the cops. In fact, the anarchists share the liberal politics of the organizers of the Occupy movement, simply giving them a (generally infantile) “streetfighting” veneer. All opponents of police terror



WV Photo

Port of Oakland, November 2.

must demand that all charges be dropped! That means rejecting the notion promoted by many in the Occupy movement that the cops are potential allies.

The attacks on Occupy Oakland have given the protesters a bloody taste of the police terror and repression that is an everyday fact of life for blacks in the inner cities of this country. Any worker who engages in struggle to defend his union, job, wages and working conditions gets a lesson in the class nature of the capitalist state. The march on the Port of Oakland on November 2 was promoted as being in solidarity with ILWU workers battling the giant EGT grain-exporting consortium at the port of Longview, Washington. In the fight to defeat EGT’s union-busting drive, ILWU members have been brutally assaulted and arrested by the cops and the union has been hit with massive fines by the courts. The workers have fought back, as seen in the mass picket set up on September 8 to stop trains carrying grain into the terminal, backing off the cops and the company’s security thugs (see “ILWU Fights Deadly Threat,” WV No. 986, 16 September). This battle gave a small, if real, taste of the power that lies in the hands of the working class.

For Workers Revolution to Expropriate the Bourgeoisie!

In a 4 November *Liberation* editorial titled “The Movement We Need for the Society We Deserve,” the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) argues that despite the “problems” of the Occupy movement, “revolution is a process. Liberal movements become radical and then revolutionary as they are confronted with new challenges, obstacles and needs.” To

be sure, many people are propelled into struggle in opposition to the injustices of this society while still being animated by the liberal notion that this system can be reformed to address the needs of “all of the people.” But such movements do not become revolutionary simply through the course of struggle.

On the contrary, the movements of the past—from the civil rights movement to mass protests against the Vietnam War—demonstrate that those who do not break from the liberal belief in the inherent, if supposedly abused, “democracy” of capitalist America will for the most part end up serving it, usually as part of the Democratic Party. That self-proclaimed “socialists” like the PSL, the International Socialist Organization and others

Baltimore...

(continued from page 3)

were hawked by laboratory supply companies the world over, generating billions of dollars in profit, her family was for years kept in the dark. Her daughter Deborah told Skloot that while she “can’t get mad at science” because it helped people live better lives, she wanted health insurance so she could have access to medicine that her mother’s cells probably helped make.

Deborah Lacks, who died from a heart attack in 2009, was a microcosm of the health crisis afflicting the black population. She had high blood pressure, osteoporosis, diabetes, depression and anxiety disorder. Life expectancy for black people in the U.S. is six years less than that of

whites. At 13.3 per one thousand, the black infant mortality rate is almost double the national average and higher than that of Sri Lanka.

Wretched housing, entrenched poverty, mass unemployment, rotten health care: these conditions define life for the mass of the black population, whose segregation at the bottom of society is a fundamental feature of American capitalism. When the multiracial working class seizes power from the capitalist exploiters and establishes a workers government, it will lay the basis for building a planned economy in which all are guaranteed jobs, quality health care and integrated, quality housing and schools. It is only through the construction of an egalitarian socialist society that the chains of racial oppression can be broken once and for all. ■

Chile...

(continued from page 12)

Radical Party as well as some Christian Democrats. The Allende government was not, as maintained by reformists around the world, a “people’s government” gradually introducing socialism. It was a government committed to the maintenance of capitalism. The presence of bourgeois parties in the UP coalition was a guarantee to the capitalists that the workers parties would not take any steps to threaten the profit system.

Even before assuming office, Allende signed an agreement pledging not to permit the formation of “private” armed forces—i.e., workers militias. The Allende government disarmed the workers by seizing their weapons and by sowing illusions in a “peaceful road to socialism.” This cleared the way for the bourgeoisie to crush the working class. With the support of U.S. imperialism, the Pinochet junta killed at least 30,000 leftists, workers and peasants, sending untold thousands more into concentration camps and exile.

This bloody state terror, aimed at breaking the back of the militant Chilean proletariat, allowed the bourgeoisie to proceed with a “shock therapy” program of economic austerity devised by University of Chicago economist Milton Friedman. Viewing the large state universities as breeding grounds for radicalism and protest, Pinochet cut their funding and later promoted a proliferation of private universities.

The end of the Pinochet dictatorship in 1990 was followed by the 20-year rule of the “center left” Concertación (pact) coalition, which claimed to be restoring democracy to Chile. This latter-day popular front of the SP with Christian Democrats and others was charged by the bourgeoisie with bringing “stability” and economic growth to Chile. But what the capitalist governments of Concertación and, more recently, Piñera have meant for workers, the rural and urban poor and oppressed indigenous minorities such as the Mapuche is continued widespread inequality and poverty. Chile has the highest per capita income of any country in Latin America. It also is rated by a 2010 UN development report as one of the 15 most unequal countries in the world.

For Free, Quality Education for All!

The bourgeois rulers maintain elite schools to ensure quality education for their children and to train the managers and technicians needed to administer the capitalist system. When it comes to the working class and the poor, the capitalists seek to spend on education only what they calculate they can get back in profit.

A reference point for student protesters in Chile today is the massive strike at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) in 1999-2000. For nine and a half months, students shut down UNAM in a hard-fought battle against attacks on access to the university for working-class and poor youth. Our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México intervened actively



September 22: High school and university students in Santiago demonstrate for free, quality education.

into the strike, pointing to the necessity for students to ally with the social power of the working class and combating illusions in the bourgeois-populist Party of the Democratic Revolution. The strike gained support among key sectors of the working class, intersecting broad discontent with capitalist austerity. But the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy was largely responsible for demobilizing the workers and the student strike was left isolated. While the strike succeeded in stopping the imposition of tuition fees—an important gain—it was ultimately broken through brutal state repression.

In an article assessing the lessons of the UNAM strike, the GEM demanded the abolition of the bourgeois university administration and called for student, teacher and worker control of the university (“A Marxist Analysis of the UNAM Student Strike, 1999-2000,” *Espartaco* No. 31 [Spring 2009], reprinted in *WV* No. 958, 7 May 2010). The article continued: “These slogans, together with our main call for free, quality education for all, point toward the need for socialist revolution, the only way to put both education and culture not only within reach, but also at the service of the masses.”

In order for education to be truly accessible to all, we fight not only for abolishing fees and for nationalization of the private universities, but also for open admissions—all who want to study should be able to do so—and for a state-paid living stipend for students. Securing the right of all to quality education, health care, decent jobs and housing will become possible when the working class has seized the mines, factories and banks and placed them in the service of meeting the needs of the working people instead of the tiny handful of capitalist exploiters. That requires socialist revolution to sweep away the capitalist state and expropriate the bourgeoisie.

Workers Power Is Key

Coinciding with the Chilean students’ protests, the miners—the most powerful and strategic section of the proletariat—have waged a series of strikes in recent months. Chile is the world’s largest producer of copper, and the Chilean bourgeoisie and its imperialist patrons have raked in massive profits from the rise in copper prices in recent years. In July, miners at the state-owned Codelco mines, which produce more than 10 percent of the world’s copper, struck for 24 hours against steps toward privatization. Later that month, over 2,000 striking miners shut down the world’s biggest copper mine, La Escondida, for two weeks demanding higher wages and benefits. The strike cost BHP Billiton and its partners \$30 million a day.

In late October, workers at the world’s third-largest copper mine, Collahuasi, went on strike over bonus payments. This followed their strike last year—the longest ever at a private mine in Chile—when they held out for 32 days against the Xstrata and Anglo American bosses. During the recent action, mineworkers union leader Cristian Arancibia said:

“In addition to our demands as workers at a multinational as powerful as Collahuasi, this mobilization is also a way of expressing our support to the demands of the student movement in our capacity as parents and guardians of thousands of youth who are setting an example in the struggle for social demands” (www.radio.uchile.cl, 29 October).

It is the social power of such workers, who can stop the flow of profit, that must be brought to bear in the struggle for free, quality education for all. Students are a petty-bourgeois layer in society, with no direct relationship to the means of production and hence little social power in their own right. However, their struggles can be a catalyst for broader class and social struggle. Such was the



Santiago: Riot police attack students during 48-hour national strike, August 25.

case in France in May 1968 when student protests were the immediate precursor to a millions-strong general strike by workers, leading to a prerevolutionary situation. The workers were subsequently sold out by the reformist misleaders of the French Communist Party (see “France, May 1968” *WV* Nos. 972, 974 and 976, 21 January, 18 February, 18 March). The

point for radical students is to view the working class not simply as allies in their struggle but as the only class that, because of its unique position in capitalist production, has the power to overthrow the profit system.

The main student organizations are led by members of the CP and SP, as is the CUT union federation. These reformist misleaders constitute a major obstacle to mobilizing the social power of the working class, continuing to promote the same popular-frontist politics that led to bloody defeat in 1973. The CP and SP preach the treacherous notion that the interests of the workers and oppressed can be served through the democratic reform of Chilean capitalism. An example is the student leaders’ call on the Piñera government to fund free education by increasing taxes on mining profits, renationalizing more of the copper industry and cutting the defense budget, as if the problem were that the bourgeoisie doesn’t know where to find the money for education! While the student protests have prompted Piñera to make a show of throwing some more government money into education, his real response was the legislation he recently sent to Congress as he sat down for “negotiations” with student leaders. The proposed law mandates five-year prison sentences for students occupying schools or blocking traffic, along with a host of other repressive measures.

Illusions in Bourgeois Democracy

As reported on the London *Guardian* Web site (7 October), CP youth leader Camila Vallejo “said the students will prepare now to make the government pay in the next elections.” With municipal elections next year and presidential

elections in 2013, Vallejo’s comrades in Congress have been discussing a potential electoral alliance with leaders of the Party for Democracy, an integral part of the Concertación coalition. For all the CP’s rhetoric against Piñera and Concertación, it is clear that the CP is looking to channel the discontent in the streets into a new electoral alliance of the left.

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Reuters
Salvador Allende (at right) with his commander-in-chief Augusto Pinochet one month before 1973 military coup.

The CP and many on the left are also calling for a new constitution and a plebiscite on education reform. The current constitution originated in 1980, when Pinochet was in power, and retains many Pinochet-era restrictions on democratic freedoms while also specifically targeting workers, prohibiting strikes by public employees and forbidding union leaders from membership in political parties. While Trotskyists oppose such reactionary provisions and support workers struggles against them, the reformist SP and CP misleaders seek to channel workers' just hatred of the legacy of the Pinochet dictatorship into illusions in bourgeois democracy.

The protection of capitalist property rights against threats from the proletariat is enshrined in all bourgeois constitutions. So long as the mines, factories and banks remain in the hands of the capitalist class, Chile remains a dictatorship of capital. This dictatorship is defended by the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state: the army, cops, courts and prison system. The democratic trappings of parliament, referenda and constitutions are used by the bourgeoisie to obscure that the capitalist state is a machine for the violent suppression of the proletariat. As V.I. Lenin, leader of the 1917 October Revolution, explained: "The bourgeoisie are compelled to be hypocritical and to describe as 'popular government' or democracy in general, or pure democracy, the (*bourgeois*) democratic republic which is, in practice, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the dictatorship of the exploiters over the working people" ("Democracy' and Dictatorship," December 1918).

The bloody defeat of Allende's "peaceful road to socialism" provides an all-too-vivid confirmation of Karl Marx's teaching that the "working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes" (*The Civil War in France*, 1871). Marx's conclusion was that the capitalist state cannot be reformed but must be

smashed through workers revolution. In keeping with their worship of bourgeois democracy, the CP and SP leaders have distanced themselves from the so-called *encapuchados* (masked youth) in the student protests, who have been denounced by the blood-drenched Chilean bourgeoisie as "violent." It is necessary for the workers movement to come to the defense of *all* the protesters, demanding the release of all those being held and the immediate dropping of charges.

Lessons of the Popular Front

Workers and youth in Chile need to understand that undoing the "heritage of Pinochet," which many leftists call for, requires undoing the heritage of Allende also. The UP popular front came to power in 1970 as Chile was being swept by a wave of strikes by workers and occupations of landed estates by agricultural laborers and landless peasants. Far from representing a step toward socialism, the modest reforms of the Allende government were aimed at heading off this wave of struggle.

The nationalizations of mines and some foreign-owned light industry in 1971 sparked a further wave of working-class struggle. In response, the UP turned to repression and austerity, increasingly



Reuters
22 November 2010: Workers march in support of month-long strike at Collahuasi, world's third-largest copper mine.

seeking to appease rightist opponents of the popular front. Bowing to a reactionary mobilization of sections of the petty bourgeoisie, in 1972 Allende invited military leaders into the government. He named Pinochet, who had butchered striking copper miners in the town of El Salvador in 1966, commander-in-chief of the army.

Allende preached faith in the supposed "neutrality" of the "democratic" military and promised not to touch the bourgeois officer corps. He pushed through a law allowing military raids in search of arms, ostensibly aimed against "extremists" of both the right and the left. Predictably, it

11 September 1976: NYC protest against Pinochet junta on third anniversary of coup.



was used exclusively against unions, factory workers and workers parties, while fascist groups built stockpiles of arms. In 1973, Allende took away the sliding scale of wages for workers at the state-owned El Teniente copper mine, prompting a strike that was repressed by riot cops. He also placed two mining provinces under military control.

Toward the end of the Allende regime, rejection of his anti-working-class policies had led workers in the industrial areas around Santiago to form *cordones industriales* (district coordinating bodies of factory committees). These embryonic for-

physical annihilation of an entire section of the working class rests squarely upon the shoulders of the SP and CP misleaders, and those so-called Marxist parties in Chile and around the world that gave even the most critical support to the UP, such as the Chilean Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR). Responsibility also lies with the Stalinist regime in Cuba, whose program of "socialism in one country" meant endorsing the UP and opposing calls to expropriate the bourgeoisie. Fidel Castro went so far as to lecture striking El Teniente miners to "sacrifice more" for the good of the fatherland.

The Spartacist tendency was unique on the left internationally in opposing any political support to the UP from the beginning. As we wrote in "Chilean Popular Front," (*Spartacist* No. 19, November-December 1970):

"It is the most elementary duty for revolutionary Marxists to irreconcilably oppose the Popular Front in the election and to place absolutely no confidence in it in power. Any 'critical support' to the Allende coalition is class treason, paving the way for bloody defeat for the Chilean working people when domestic reaction, abetted by international imperialism, is ready."

Writing of the 1930s Spanish Popular Front, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky explained that the subordination of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie assures defeat, noting that this represented "the entire experience of history, beginning at least with 1848. The modern history of bourgeois society is filled with all sorts of Popular Fronts, i.e., the most diverse political combinations for the deception of the toilers" ("The Lessons of Spain: The Last Warning," 17 December 1937).

Militant workers and youth in Chile must be won to the fight to forge a revolutionary workers party in opposition to all wings of the bourgeoisie. Such a party must act, in Lenin's words, as a "tribune of the people," championing the rights of all the oppressed layers of society—women, gays, youth, the Mapuche, etc. A vanguard party will be forged only through hard struggle against nationalism—the predominant false consciousness, reinforced by imperialist domination, that ties the exploited and the oppressed to the Chilean bourgeoisie. The fight for proletarian power in Chile must be based on the perspective of socialist revolution throughout Latin America and in the U.S. imperialist center, where the world economic crisis has hit the multiracial proletariat hard. What is necessary is to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. ■

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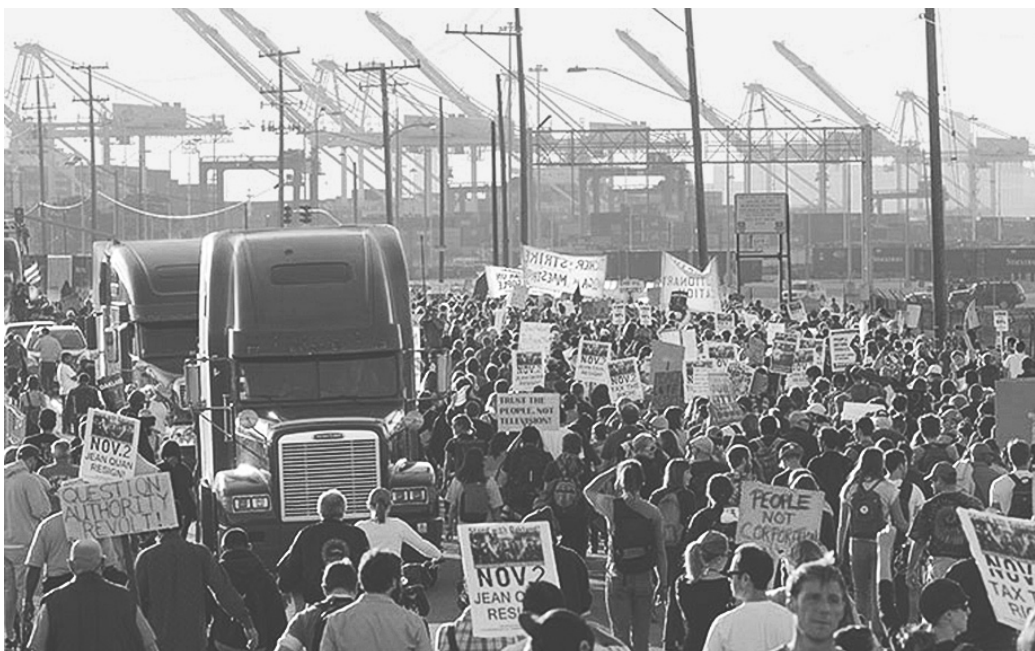
Labor Bureaucrats Promote “99 Percent” Populism

Thousands Come Out to “Occupy Oakland” Protest

In the largest protest seen in Oakland in decades, more than 10,000 mobilized for a “general strike” in solidarity with “Occupy Oakland” on November 2. That night, a huge column of protesters marched on the Oakland port, shutting it down. A week earlier, on October 25, the city’s streets were a virtual war zone, with an army of riot-equipped cops firing tear gas canisters and other projectiles at 3,000 demonstrators who had come out to protest the police destruction of the Occupy Oakland tent encampment that morning. Video images of Iraq war veteran Scott Olsen lying bleeding on the ground, his skull fractured, while a cop fired an explosive device at protesters trying to rescue him galvanized outrage around the country and around the world.

The call for a “general strike” to protest the cop attack was made at an October 26 Occupy Oakland General Assembly of some 2,000 people. The Alameda Labor Council, SEIU Local 1021 city workers, the Oakland Education Association and other unions issued calls to their members to support the action. Speaking at Occupy Wall Street on October 27, Jack Heyman, a former member of the executive board of the Bay Area International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10, said that ILWU members would be trying to shut down the port on November 2.

There was anger in the ranks of labor against the vicious cop attack on Occupy Oakland, particularly among public work-



James Fassinger

November 2: Marchers converge on Port of Oakland.

ers. Moreover, the working class is burning with its own hatred of the banks and corporations that have busted their unions, savaged their jobs, stolen their houses and made their lives a scramble simply

another victimized sector of society—a sense of labor’s unique social power. The workers’ strength lies in their collective organization and above all their ability to shut down production and stop the flow

to work or not. Many workers did take the day off and are proud that they did. But these workers had little organized presence as union contingents. Instead, they were dissolved into an amorphous mass of the “99 percent.” The populist notion that everyone from the workers to students, yuppies and shopkeepers has common interests in opposition to the filthy-rich top 1 percent of this society serves the trade-union misleaders who are so desperate to avoid even the hint of class struggle that they can barely choke out the words “working class.” Behind their cries to defend the “middle class” lie decades of subordinating the workers’ interests to the capitalist class enemy, particularly through their support to the Democratic Party.

Last year, Bay Area labor tops, including the leadership of ILWU Local 10, pulled out all the stops to mobilize the ranks to get out the vote for Democrat Jean Quan as mayor of Oakland. Quan had a reputation as a “friend of labor” and supporter of various liberal causes. Now most of her former backers are screaming that she betrayed them by ordering the police attack on the Occupy Oakland encampment on October 25.

But Quan was simply fulfilling the job of the city’s chief executive office and commander-in-chief of the Oakland police. As former San Francisco mayor Willie Brown explained in his column in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (30 October), when Quan became mayor *continued on page 8*

We Need a New Ruling Class —The Workers!

to survive. A mass mobilization of actual union power in defense of the Occupy protesters against police terror would have given the racist, strikebreaking cops some pause. It would also have given the workers as well as the young protesters—most of whom see labor as simply

of profits into the coffers of the capitalist owners of industry and the banks.

But there was not even the semblance of any mobilization of union power, much less a “general strike,” in Oakland on November 2. Instead, it was left to individual union members to decide whether

Chile: Mass Protests Demand Free Education

Chile has been convulsed for months now by mass protests that began with a struggle for free higher education. Since May, hundreds of thousands of high school and university students have been waging a strike, occupying schools and campuses around the country, while huge demonstrations have taken place in the capital Santiago and nationwide. Long-standing anger over entrenched inequalities in the education system and a lack of funding has come to a head. An article on the BBC News Web site (11 August) noted: “At the heart of the students’ anger is a perception that Chile’s education system is grossly unfair—that it gives rich students access to some of the best schooling in Latin America while dumping poor pupils in shabby, underfunded state schools.”

The right-wing government, headed by billionaire Sebastián Piñera of the National Renewal party, has responded to the protests with vicious state repression.

Demonstrators have been routinely tear-gassed, attacked with water cannon and beaten. Thousands have been arrested and brutalized by the militarized police force, the *carabineros*. On August 25, 16-year-old Manuel Gutierrez was killed by police gunfire while passing by a protest in Santiago.

The student struggle has served as a lightning rod for the broader discontent of working people in Chile. Families, many of whom have been saddled with enormous debt in order to finance education for their children, have poured into the streets in solidarity with the students, protesting with *cacerolazos* (the banging of pots and pans). Trade unionists from the Central Confederation of Workers (CUT) have mobilized in support of the students, holding two-day work stoppages

in August and October and joining rallies of hundreds of thousands. The workers have raised demands for better public health care, pensions and union rights.

In Chile, over half of the schools and most universities are privately run. As reported by the *Nation* (18 August), the average monthly minimum wage is \$385, college tuition averages \$485 per month and the average student debt following graduation is \$40,000. According to a comparison of educational standards internationally conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Chile ranked 64th out of 65 countries in terms of segregation according to social class in schools and colleges. Private secondary schools, including those run by the Catholic church, receive state subsidies

in the form of a voucher system. Since fees are charged on top of the voucher, the scheme has predominantly benefited wealthier families. A central demand of the student strikers is for an end to “education for profit” and to state financing of private schools.

Pinochet, Concertación and Education

The privatization of large sections of the education system dates back to the “free market” starvation policies implemented under the murderous dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. The Pinochet regime came to power in 1973 in a military coup that overthrew the Unidad Popular (UP) government headed by Socialist Party (SP) leader Salvador Allende. The UP was a classic popular front, an alliance of reformist workers parties, chiefly the SP and Communist Party (CP), with bourgeois forces—the small *continued on page 10*