



AFP



AP

Left: Health workers march in Athens against austerity cuts during two-day general strike, October 19. Above: German chancellor Angela Merkel and French president Nicolas Sarkozy at recent G20 meeting in Cannes.

Economic Crisis Rips Europe

This article was written by our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany.

The economic crisis intensifying in Europe—a particularly severe expression of the world capitalist crisis—was triggered in the spring of 2010 as global financial capitalists, fearing that heavily indebted Greece would default on its loan obligations, began spurning Greek government bonds. These fears have extended not only to Portugal and Ireland but also to the much larger economies of Spain and Italy, which are both having trouble refinancing their state debts. Now France, which along with Germany is central to the European Union (EU), has been threatened with a downgrading of its government debt. Frenzied efforts by the EU to devise new “rescue packages,” as well as futile appeals to Brazil and China to step in and help with a bailout, have all proved insufficient. A headline of the financial news service Eurointelligence (22 November) describes “a slow motion train wreck” of the euro, the euro zone (consisting of the 17 countries in the EU that use the euro as a common currency) and probably the EU itself.

Fears over a spreading “credit crunch” in Europe have unsettled international financial markets, threatening to drive the world economy into another major downturn. U.S. banks have been reducing their holdings in European government bonds, while American money market funds have been closing the spigot of money they lend to European banks. This has forced banks in Europe to tighten lending standards, hoard capital to shore up their balance sheets and withdraw financing from long-time customers. Governments are promising ever more severe budget cuts in the hope of pacifying bond markets. The net effect has been a “credit crunch and a squeeze on aggregate demand that is forcing Europe into recession” (*Economist*, 26 November). Industrial orders in the euro

zone fell by 6.8 percent in September, the steepest decline since December 2008.

While initially bourgeois politicians in Germany refused to admit the possibility of a Greek default, fearing that this would destabilize the euro, German chancellor Angela Merkel is now openly threatening to expel Greece from the euro zone. On December 5, Germany and France issued their first joint call for amendments to the

EU’s treaty to introduce more centralized oversight of the euro zone and additional penalties for countries that violate the rules of “budget discipline.”

Over the past several weeks, governments deemed insufficiently zealous in enforcing capitalist austerity have found themselves unceremoniously tossed out of power. In Greece, Prime Minister George Papandreou of the bourgeois Pan-Hellenic

Socialist Movement (PASOK), whose credibility was waning with a populace infuriated by the cutbacks, was removed in a political coup organized by EU leaders and domestic opponents, including members of his own party, after he suggested that there should be a referendum on economic policies. The new government, which now incorporates the main opposition party, New Democracy, as well as PASOK and a small, fascist-infested organization (LAOS), has pledged to continue the austerity program. Similar methods were used to get rid of Silvio Berlusconi in Italy. In Spain, fury over the austerity policies of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero’s Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) government led to the election of Mariano Rajoy’s right-wing Popular Party.

The concern of all wings of the bourgeoisie in the major EU countries is not at all to rescue countries like Greece but to bail out their own banks. The bottom line is that the workers and poor must pay for the capitalist crisis. Underlining that Germany is the pre-eminent power in the EU and calls the shots, Merkel has dictated hardline austerity budgets for debtor countries seeking financial assistance. Governments have engaged in an orgy of spending cuts, with layoffs of public employees, pay cuts, reductions in welfare expenditures, privatizations, etc. In Greece, wages have decreased by 15.4 percent, while the official unemployment rate now exceeds 18 percent. In Spain it is close to 23 percent.

We Trotskyist internationalists are opposed on principle to the EU and any other imperialist alliance. Recognizing that the euro would be an instrument of the EU imperialists, we opposed its introduction. We also opposed the Eastern extension of the EU because it was clear that it meant increased exploitation of the workers of East Europe. At the same time, we have fought against the chauvinist discrimination against East European workers in West Europe.

As Marxists, we understand that an imperialist alliance or bloc can hold together for some time, but since capitalism is based on the nation-state, these

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Down With the EU! For a Socialist United States of Europe!



Reuters

November 30: Demonstration in London, part of one-day strike across Britain by up to two million state workers protesting budget and service cuts.



2011 Subscription Drive Success

WV Welcomes New Readers

To widen the readership of our press, the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs embark on a national campaign each year from August to October. This year, we surpassed our quota by 26 percent with 2,512 points, which includes 1,186 new subscriptions and renewals to *Workers Vanguard*, 60 to *Espartaco* (published by our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México) and 102 to the press of other International Communist League sections. Congratulations to comrade Dylan of the Bay Area local, who won the subscription drive with 125 points.

The backdrop to the sub drive again was the prolonged economic crisis, which has thrown millions of working people out of their homes and jobs. As the chief executive of capitalist class rule, Barack Obama has overseen this ruin at home as well as the atrocities committed by U.S. imperialism abroad.

Although enthusiasm for Obama has faded over time as he continues to stick the knife into workers, immigrants and black people, one comrade noted, “When pressed, most subscribers said they would probably vote for Obama again as a lesser evil compared to the insane types running on the Republican ticket.”

Support for the capitalist Democratic Party “lesser evil” peddled by the trade-union bureaucracy is a key prop for the maintenance of racist American capitalism and has served as a central political obstacle to mobilizing workers in defense of themselves and the oppressed. We hope our newspaper will help to win workers and students to a Marxist worldview and an understanding of the need to build revolutionary workers parties internationally to fight for the overthrow of world capitalism through socialist revolution.

Our campaign kicked off at the outset of the Verizon strike, the largest strike



WV Photo

Spartacists at Occupy Wall Street protest, October 5.

in the U.S. in the last few years. We sold dozens of introductory WV subscriptions to workers on the picket lines but were not able to extend these intros into full-year subscriptions. One factor that we encountered was the frustration that set in after the union bureaucracy called off the two-week strike without a settlement. On the other hand, we sold large num-

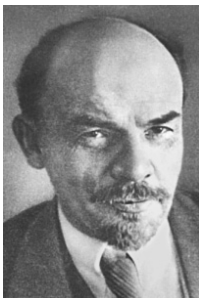
bers of subscriptions to longshore workers on the West Coast and nationally, including in Longview, Washington, during our two trips to intersect and report on the struggle of International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 21. In early September, Local 21 and its supporters fought back against the union-busting EGT grain-exporting conglomerate by engaging in the kind of militant labor action that built the industrial unions in the U.S. in the 1930s. In response, the bosses and their state hit the union with brutal cop attacks, harassment and arrests as well as court-issued fines (see “ILWU Fights Deadly Threat,” WV No. 986, 16 September and “Defend Longview ILWU Against Bosses’ Cops and Courts!” WV No. 987, 30 September). Concrete acts of labor solidarity, especially internationally, are urgently needed to back up the union in its ongoing battle with EGT.

In addition to our material on the Longview struggle, longshoremen expressed interest in what we had to say about the economic downturn and, especially on the East Coast, there was outrage over the execution of Troy Davis. One comrade who sold to longshoremen in Oregon noted, “Workers expressed a lot of basic class anger: the rich get richer while working people are squeezed dry.” The most popular giveaway in the sub drive was our 2009 pamphlet on the economy, *Karl Marx Was Right: Capitalist Anarchy and the Immiseration of the Working Class*.

We attracted attention among students
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For a Workers Europe!

The crisis racking the EU shows that a united Europe under capitalism is a chimera. In a February 1926 speech, one of his last addresses to Soviet workers before his expulsion from the Communist Party by Stalin in November 1927, Leon Trotsky stressed that only the proletarian overthrow of capitalist rule could achieve the genuine unification and economic integration of Europe. Trotsky projected that a Europe under workers rule, allied with the Soviet Union and a



LENIN



TROTSKY

liberated Asia, would be a bulwark against capitalist America, which had become the world’s dominant imperialist force, while also serving as a springboard for workers rule in the U.S.

The proletarian revolution signifies the unification of Europe. Bourgeois economists, pacifists, business sharpeners, day-dreamers and mere bourgeois babblers are not averse nowadays to talk about a United States of Europe. But that task is beyond the strength of the European bourgeoisie which is utterly corroded by contradictions. Europe can be unified only by the victorious European proletariat. No matter where the revolution may first break out, and no matter what the tempo of its development may be, the economic unification of Europe is the first indispensable condition for its socialist reconstruction. Back in 1923 the Communist International proclaimed that it is necessary to drive out those who have partitioned Europe, take power in partitioned Europe in order to unify it, in order to create the Socialist United States of Europe.

Revolutionary Europe will clear a road for herself to raw materials, to food products; she will know how to get help from the peasantry. We ourselves have grown sufficiently strong to be able to extend some help to revolutionary Europe during the most difficult months. Over and above this, we will provide for Europe an excellent bridge to Asia. Proletarian England, shoulder to shoulder with the peoples of India, will insure the independence of that country. But this does not mean that England will lose the possibility of a close economic collaboration with India. Free India will have need of European technology and culture; Europe will have need of the products of India. The Soviet United States of Europe, together with our Soviet Union, will serve as the mightiest of magnets for the peoples of Asia, who will gravitate toward the establishment of the closest economic and political ties with proletarian Europe.

—Leon Trotsky, “Europe and America” (*Fourth International*, May 1943)

WORKERS VANGUARD



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The closing date for news in this issue is December 6.

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9 December 2011

Letter

A Thank You Note

[Received 27 October 2011]

The Sept. 30 edition of the *Vanguard* was the best I have ever read—and I wanted to send a quick note of solidarity.

The article on Troy Davis was an excellent piece, and the transcripts on

the Commune wonderful grounding—the now *and* the then.

I encourage you to publish more material from classes and talks.

Thank you for your work and dedication.

Heath

Letters Policy

Workers Vanguard welcomes letters from our readers. Opinions expressed in letters do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the WV Editorial Board. We reserve the right to respond to letters either at the time of publication or at a later point. We verify the authenticity of letters published in *Workers*

Vanguard; only letters received with contact information will be considered for publication. Letters can be published anonymously if the author so desires. In order to facilitate the printing of letters, which we do not edit, please keep them to 500 words or less. Letters can be sent to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116 or e-mailed to vanguard@tiac.net.

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Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!
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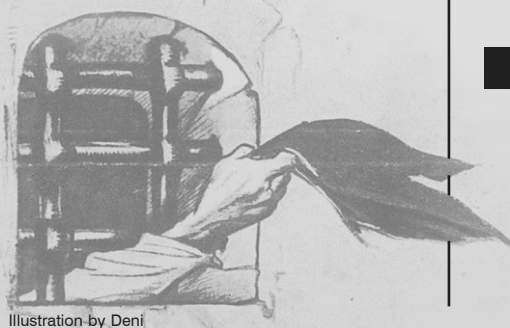


Illustration by Deni

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Europe...

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alliances must break up under their own internal contradictions. Our opposition comes from the basic standpoint of opposing capitalism and imperialism. We fight for the expropriation of the bourgeoisie through socialist revolution and for an internationally planned economy that will overcome the limits of the nation-state. Our call is for a *Socialist United States of Europe!*

To date, the Greek working class has carried out 14 one- or two-day general strikes, trying to fight back against the joint offensive of the European imperialists and its own bourgeoisie. While these strikes have made it more difficult for the government to enforce austerity measures, the attacks on jobs and living standards are unrelenting. In the Italian capital of Rome on October 15, hundreds of thousands of workers and youth demonstrated against the much-discredited Berlusconi government and the measures it was trying to introduce, such as privatizations and raising the pension age. After Berlusconi fell, the leaders of the liberal opposition supported the new government in the name of national unity in order to enforce the very same measures against which the masses had demonstrated a month earlier. In Portugal, a one-day general strike on November 24 stopped nearly everything in the country. But the “Communist” opposition undermines workers struggle with its appeal to the national interest, complaining about “relinquishing the sovereignty of the country” (*Junge Welt*, 25 November).

The reformist labor leaders cannot lead effective class struggle against capitalist austerity because they politically support the EU and more broadly are wedded to the bourgeois order. The leaders of the main body of Spanish trade unions are allied to the PSOE, while in Greece the main union federations are run by PASOK supporters—i.e., the very parties that until very recently were spearheading the austerity drive in those countries. The reformists accept the class-collaborationist lie that the workers and their exploiters have a common “national interest” and therefore the workers must make their “fair share” of sacrifices when the economy goes bust. But workers and capitalists have *counterposed class interests*. The boom-bust cycle is endemic to the capitalist system and will be eliminated only when the proletariat takes power and seizes the productive property of the bourgeoisie.

Class struggle in Germany as well as France in solidarity with Greek, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese workers would not only broaden their struggles against austerity but also would help workers throughout Europe to free themselves from nationalism and break from their own bourgeoisies. In Germany, the class-collaborationist policies of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) have played a significant role in enabling the German bourgeoisie to increase its competitiveness against its rivals. The coalition of the SPD and the bourgeois Greens, in power from 1998 to 2005, was instrumental in increasing German competitiveness by slashing wages and working conditions and carrying out attacks on the “welfare state,” centrally through a series of measures known as the “Hartz” reforms that greatly reduced unemployment and social

CORRECTION

In “Fake Trotskyists in Camp of Counterrevolution—Hue and Cry over China’s Role in Africa” (WV No. 987, 30 September), we wrongly cited 1954 as the date of the Asian-African Solidarity Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, where Chinese premier Zhou Enlai propounded the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.” The conference actually convened in April 1955.



Spartakist

welfare benefits. The use of temporary labor increased dramatically and a huge low-wage sector was created. With the median figure for real wages declining 7.4 percent between 2000 and 2010, now 1.4 million people with full-time jobs need additional welfare in order to survive.

While Germany already had the largest economy in Europe, its increased competitiveness explains why it can run the show on the continent. It is clear that German capitalism’s increased profitability comes directly out of the pockets of the German working class. This points to the connection between the struggle against imperialism abroad and the fight against capitalist rule at home. Above all, what is necessary is forging revolution-



Authenticated News International
NATO jets, part of imperialists’ Cold War arsenal aimed at Soviet Union.

ary internationalist parties in Germany and elsewhere that can lead the working masses in their struggles for life’s necessities as part of the fight for workers rule.

EU: From Anti-Soviet Alliance to Imperialist Consortium

Dominated by Germany and France, the EU exists centrally to advance the interests of these imperialist powers and their junior partners in exploiting their own working class and to use the more dependent states, such as Greece and many East European countries, as their summer holiday resorts or low-wage manufacturing backyards. We have been consistent in our political opposition to the EU and its predecessors. Thus, we wrote in “Labor and the Common Market” (WV No. 15, January 1973): “In the imperialist era, alliances between capitalist states, including their economic aspects, are directed against other states, advanced as well as backward states. The Common Market is essentially an unstable alliance between French and German capitalism on the basis of the most reactionary economic policies.”

The EU is a fragile formation exposed to continuous tensions stemming from the



ICL has consistently opposed EU imperialist trade bloc. German Trotskyists raise call “For a Socialist United States of Europe!” at 1982 demonstration in Bonn.

disparate national interests of the European imperialists, which are constantly threatening to tear it apart. Nor can it be otherwise. Although the productive forces have long since outgrown a national framework, capitalism is a system that rests essentially on nation-states: each of the various national capitalist classes needs its own state to push through and defend its interests at home and abroad. Hence under capitalism, the goal of political union or a European superstate is necessarily reactionary and an empty utopia.

As V.I. Lenin, the leader of the proletarian October Revolution in Russia in 1917, wrote:

“Of course, *temporary* agreements are possible between capitalists and between states. In this sense a United States of Europe is possible as an agreement between the *European* capitalists...but to what end? Only for the purpose of jointly suppressing socialism in Europe, of jointly protecting colonial booty against Japan and America.”
—“On the Slogan for a United States of Europe” (August 1915)

Lenin emphasized that the division of profits among imperialist rivals is ultimately determined by *force*. This understanding was counterposed to the claims of German social democrat Karl Kautsky, whose fantasy of “ultra-imperialism” posited the peaceful resolution of such conflicts, obviating the need for proletarian revolution. Lenin stressed: “Under capitalism there are no other means of restoring the periodically disturbed equilibrium than crises in industry and wars in politics.”

The origins of the European Union go back to the 1950s, when the West European imperialists under U.S. leadership attempted to stabilize their alliance against the Soviet Union through closer economic cooperation. Issuing out of the October Revolution, Soviet Russia remained a workers state—based on the expropriation of the capitalists and the collectivization of the means of production—despite its degeneration under J.V. Stalin. With a planned economy, the USSR provided jobs, housing, medical care and education for all, in sharp distinction to the ravages of capitalism that

are all too obvious today. We Trotskyists unconditionally defended the Soviet Union militarily against the imperialists, who always desired to destroy it.

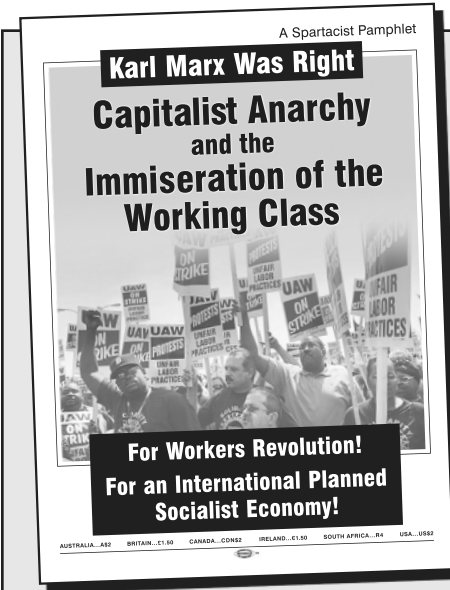
Our opposition on principle to both NATO—the post-World War II military alliance against the Soviet Union—and the EU and its predecessors was linked to our defense of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of the DDR (East Germany) and East Europe. With the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the EU/NATO’s anti-Soviet function disappeared. The EU remained an imperialist trade bloc. The U.S. retains military hegemony, although not the same economic clout it once had.

Shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, French president François Mitterrand made France’s acquiescence to German reunification, achieved when capitalist West Germany swallowed up the DDR, dependent on the two countries’ agreement on a common currency. This was supposed to restrain a newly strengthened Germany from running roughshod over other European states, principally France. Additionally, the currency would be a weapon against the international hegemony of the U.S. dollar. But the unity between these two imperialist powers is itself fraught with conflict, as the disputes over how to deal with the current crisis in the euro zone demonstrate.

The Maastricht Treaty of 1992 authorized the introduction of the euro, which was first traded in 1999 before being introduced as actual money for consumers in 2002. The French Communist Party (PCF) originally opposed the treaty, fearing that it would lead to the dominance of German imperialism over French imperialism, i.e., they opposed it from the reactionary perspective of French nationalism. Later, the PCF made its peace with the euro. So has pretty much the entire European reformist left, which either explicitly supports the EU or claims that it is a framework that can be utilized to better the situation of working people (a “social Europe”).

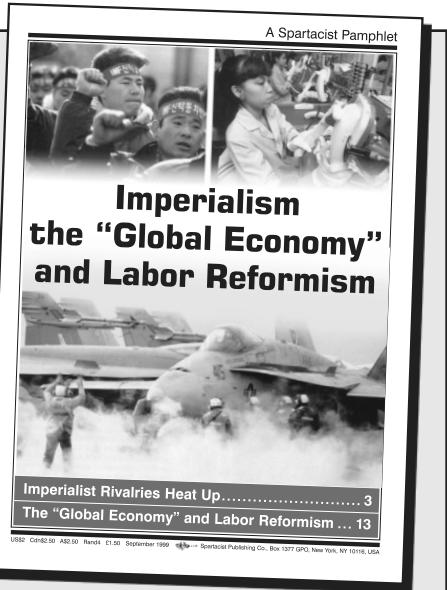
The forerunner of the League for the Fifth International and its British group Workers Power took an abstentionist position on the 1992 referendum on the Maastricht Treaty. They were enthusiastic over the EU “social charter,” with its empty promises of guaranteeing workers rights, sexual equality and such, as was the British Labour Party. *Workers Power* (June 1992) argued that “the terms of the Maastricht Treaty can also be a basis for extending rights and gains from states where the working class never won those gains, or where it has lost them,” and they continued that “to some extent European workers will be better armed to fight back on a continental scale after the implementation of the terms of Maastricht.” The French group Lutte Ouvrière (LO) similarly wrote in 2005, “Even as is, on a capitalist basis, with all the accompanying injustices and insufficiencies, the European Union represents progress in a certain number of areas.” Workers Power and LO are latter-day Kautskyites, flunkies for capital, with

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\$2 (32 pages)

Europe...

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touching faith in “democratic” imperialism and its various alliances.

Opposition to the EU and the euro does come from some bourgeois quarters, however. A section of the German bourgeoisie has always been very skeptical about the euro, thinking that German imperialism could function better with the deutschmark. There are strong anti-EU sentiments among the British Tories, while various fascist and right-wing populist groups oppose the EU from the standpoint of national chauvinism. In effect, the reformist left has conceded opposition to the EU—correctly seen by many workers as an instrument of capitalist austerity—to the reactionary right wing.

German Imperialism’s Third Try to Rule Europe

In a 1997 statement, the International Communist League stressed that a common currency without a common state is not viable:

“Control over the quantity of money within its boundaries is a basic economic prerogative of a bourgeois state, one necessarily closely linked to other instruments of economic policy. A stable monetary system based on the ‘euro’ would require tight and permanent restrictions over taxation and government expenditure in all the EU member states.... But since capitalism is organised on the basis of particular national states, itself the cause of repeated imperialist wars to redivide the world, it is impossible to cohere a stable pan-European bourgeois state. A European imperialist ‘superstate’ can be achieved only by the methods of Adolf Hitler.... Should the Maastricht project for a common European currency come into being, it would amount to only a brief, conflict-ridden episode.”

—“For a Workers Europe—
For Socialist Revolution!”
WV No. 670, 13 June 1997

We now have the first really serious world economic crisis since that statement was written, and the conflicts that have arisen in Europe threaten to bring the EU rapidly to the point of implosion. Behind this open fragmentation is the built-in instability in the monetary system of the EU and the fact that it is formed of competing national states with different levels of labor productivity. These differences, exacerbated by the crisis, have been reflected through the differentials in public borrowing and interest rates on state bonds.

German imperialism made huge profits through driving down wages at home and through the introduction of the euro, and they would like to keep things that way. For years, Germany has run a trade surplus, which was financed through massive private and public debt in other euro zone states and spurred by the fact that the common currency helps keep German industrial exports cheap throughout the euro zone. The German bourgeoisie is not about to reduce the surplus, arguing that this is the problem of the countries with a trade deficit.

Ordinarily, each country has its own currency, and a debtor country can get some relief and regain competitiveness by devaluing its currency. But this is not possible in a currency union. The German bourgeoisie demands that debtor countries slash wages, pensions and welfare. Another proposal is for German capital to lend more funds to the poorer countries in the euro zone—but this is vehemently opposed by the German bourgeoisie. In a *Financial Times* online (13 September) column on the breakdown in the euro zone, Martin Wolf wrote: “This is what I heard from an Italian policymaker: ‘We gave up the old safety valves of inflation and devaluation in return for lower interest rates, but now we do not even have the low interest rates.’... And, not least:

NOTICE

**Workers Vanguard skips
an issue in December.**

**Our next issue will
be dated January 6.**



Reuters

German steel workers in Krefeld during warning strike to demand higher wages, November 9.

‘It would be better to leave than endure 30 years of pain.’ These remarks speak of a loss of faith in both the project and the partners.”

There is no way out for debtor countries like Greece under the setup dictated by the German bourgeoisie. The sharp cuts in public spending have had a predictable deflationary effect—the Greek economy has contracted by 7.5 percent over the past year. A smaller economy means less tax revenue, thereby increasing the deficit and prompting demands for more austerity. At the same time, many bourgeois pundits across the board have issued hysterical warnings on how bad things will be if Greece leaves the euro zone. But that depends on the conditions imposed. After Argentina pegged its currency to the U.S. dollar, its economy went into a deep recession and the country went bankrupt in 2001. Investors in Argentinean bonds lost 70 percent of their money, outraging international banking interests. Following the bankruptcy, Argentina stopped pegging its currency to the dollar and the economy recovered, albeit not until average wages had dropped 30 percent.

The example of Argentina shows graphically that Greece might be much better off if it defaulted and left the euro zone, reinstating its own currency. However, while this might provide relief from the downward spiral, leaving the euro zone will not insulate the Greek proletariat from the world economic downturn and capitalist devastation. In Britain (which is in the EU but not in the euro zone), the Tory government of David Cameron is just as intent on slashing spending as his counterparts on the continent. On November 30, British public sector workers staged a massive one-day strike against austerity measures, including threatened layoffs and an extension of the wage freeze. Socialist revolution is the only solution to unemployment, wage cuts, imperialist war and the other depredations of decaying capitalism.

German-French Axis Rattles Along Until It Breaks

Concerned about the stability of the euro zone (and the French economy), President Nicolas Sarkozy earlier supported the introduction of euro bonds—a scheme whereby the euro zone states would issue common bonds—or alternatively that the European Central Bank buy government bonds directly to bail out countries in trouble. But Merkel has not gone along, knowing that ultimately the money in these schemes will come from Germany. The Obama administration has also pleaded with Merkel to ante up more money. The bottom line is that nothing happens unless it is acceptable to Berlin. As a creditor nation, the Germans stress the need for a balanced budget and a strong euro (the deutschmark in drag), with inflation considered the worst thing in the world. This is justified by reference to two periods of German inflation in 1923 and after WWII, ignoring the equally disastrous deflationary policy during the depression of the early 1930s.

When EU Commission president José

Manuel Barroso proposed introducing euro bonds under the name “stability bonds,” the German right-wing tabloid *Bild* (23 November) ran the headline: “Britain, America, and the Whole EU. They All Want Our Money.” Meanwhile in France, Jacques Attali, a former adviser to Mitterrand, charged that Germany twice led Europe into suicidal wars in the past century and said: “Today, it is again Germany’s turn to hold in its hand the weapon for the continent’s collective suicide.” The PCF chimed in by denouncing Sarkozy for giving in to Merkel over the crisis and accusing him of a “financial Munich,” a



AFP

August 1: African asylum-seekers clash with cops near immigration center in Bari, Italy.

reference to the 1938 decision by France and Britain to refrain from going to war against Hitler’s Germany over its occupation of the Sudetenland.

At the EU summit at the end of October, the heads of state of the ten non-euro zone countries were excluded from a discussion on the euro crisis. This elicited a complaint from British prime minister Cameron, who noted that the crisis in the euro zone impacted elsewhere, including London, a world financial center. Sarkozy snorted at Cameron, who not too long ago was his brother-in-arms in the bombing of Libya: “You have lost a good opportunity to shut up. We are sick of you criticizing us and telling us what to do. You say you hate the euro and now you want to interfere in our meetings.”

The EU is falling apart under the tensions of conflicting national interests. These tensions can also be seen in the imposition of restrictions on the right of passage within the EU, supposedly guaranteed by the Schengen agreement. In 2010, about 400,000 people who wanted to migrate to the EU were stopped on its borders. In the Netherlands, Finland, Denmark and other countries in Northern Europe, populist anti-immigrant parties are gaining support, nurtured by chauvinist government campaigns carried out under the guise of the “war on terror” that largely targets Muslims. It is in the interest of the working class in each

country to fight for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants and refugees! Down with the EU and racist “Fortress Europe”!*

SPD and Left Party: To Capitalism’s Rescue

In response to the capitalist attacks stemming from the crisis in the EU, the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany recognized the urgent necessity for the working class of Europe, and especially the powerful German proletariat, to take class-struggle action. On May Day 2010, the SpAD intervened for “Solidarity with the Greek workers!” and for “Class struggle against the German capitalists!” (*Spartakist* No. 183, May 2010). The chief obstacles to such struggle are the reformist workers parties, SPD and Left Party, together with the trade-union bureaucracy, and the left groups that orient toward them.

In the summer, the SPD came out in favor of euro bonds. Peer Steinbrück, a former SPD finance minister, gave the reasons in an interview with *Spiegel* (12 September):

“One has to explain to people that the EU in this form is the answer both to 1945 and to the 21st century, in a dramatically altered world with new heavyweights, and that Germany benefits from the continued integration of Europe in political, economic and societal ways. And, of course, that means the Germans will have to pay. But the money is well invested in both our future and Europe’s, in peace and prosperity.”

Steinbrück and the SPD are playing here with the fear of war, which is prevalent in many parts of Europe as a result of the two world wars. This takes

real *chutzpah*: during the Balkans war in 1999 the SPD-led government was the first since WWII to introduce German troops outside the country. The SPD’s differences with Merkel are strictly tactical, amounting to a debate over what’s best for German imperialism. Its support to the euro bonds scheme reflects the fear that Merkel’s headline policies could destroy the EU, thereby possibly killing the goose that has laid a golden egg for German capitalism and enabled the Social Democrats to continue supping at the table of German capital. The SPD exemplifies what V.I. Lenin called bourgeois workers parties: parties with a working-class base, especially through the unions, but with a thoroughly pro-capitalist program and leadership. The SPD besmirched the banner of workers internationalism by voting for war credits for German imperialism in 1914. Ever since, the SPD has been a vehement enemy of revolution.

The Left Party—a fusion of the former Stalinist ruling party of the DDR and a split from the SPD, including a section of the trade-union bureaucracy—is seen by many leftist and working-class militants as an alternative to the SPD. The Left Party might talk a bit more about solidarity with Greece, but like the SPD it accepts the framework of the EU and the common currency while arguing that this alliance of imperialist robbers should carry out more progressive policies. Thus, the Left Party

Brutal CUNY Cop Attack on Tuition Protesters

On November 21, hundreds of City University of New York (CUNY) students marched to Baruch College to protest a proposed tuition hike at a Board of Trustees public meeting. In retaliation, campus administrators unleashed their cop thugs on students, who were roughed up and arrested. Pleading poverty as the state and city governments have slashed education and social services to the bone while gouging public workers, the Trustees approved the hike on November 28. The heavily black and Latino CUNY student population—mostly from working-class families and already thousands of dollars in debt—will now be made to pay further for the economic downturn, making it even more difficult to continue their studies.

At a feeder demonstration on CUNY’s City College campus ahead of the November 21 meeting, Spartacus Youth Club comrades led chants of “Free quality education! Abolish the administration!” The money and resources exist to provide quality education for all. But getting our hands on the wealth of society requires breaking the power of the bourgeoisie through workers revolution. Addressing the crowd, an SYC speaker pointed the way forward: “Students must ally with the working class in fighting against the capitalist system.”

We print below a November 29 letter from the New York SYC to Chancellor Matthew Goldstein protesting the police repression.

* * *

The Spartacus Youth Club denounces the arrests of at least fifteen protesters at Baruch College on Monday, November 21. Campus police—acting under the oversight of a university administrator—prevented hundreds of students from attending a public hearing before the CUNY Board of Trustees on a proposed \$300/year tuition hike. The university administration’s claim that the protesters “surged forward” was exposed as a brazen lie by video footage that showed the police unleashing a sudden baton attack against dozens trapped in the Baruch College lobby.

The actions of the CUNY cops, similar to recent cop attacks at UC Davis and elsewhere, are unmistakable acts of intimidation meant to silence student protest against the administration’s campaign for tuition increases. This repression coincides with a wave of brutal police attacks and mass arrests targeting Occupy protesters around the country.

At least five protesters are facing charges including criminal trespass,



Abramson/Chronicle of Higher Education

New York City, November 21: Cops arrest protester at CUNY Board of Trustees public meeting.

attempted grand larceny and resisting arrest. On November 28, three more protesters were arrested at Baruch College while the Board of Trustees met and approved the tuition hike. The Spartacus

Youth Club demands that all the charges against these protesters be dropped immediately, and that no further actions, including suspensions and expulsions, be taken against them! ■

Subscription Drive...

(continued from page 2)

for our articles on Egypt—in which we emphasized the importance of the working class emerging as a contender for power in its own right as against the military and Islamists—and in defense of the Palestinians against Israeli state terror. One polarizing issue was our call on workers around the world to take a stand for military defense of Libya against the U.S./NATO imperialist butchers and their “opposition” lackeys on the ground, without offering any political support whatsoever to Qaddafi’s capitalist regime. Our position shocked the sensibilities of one student so much that, within a few weeks, she cancelled her subscription. Well, a revolutionary internationalist newspaper isn’t for everyone.

From September on, we intersected the growing Occupy protests in New York City and elsewhere. The Occupy movement has attracted broad support among wide layers of the population searching for some way to fight the wrenching effects of the recession. But the liberal-populist outlook of the protests is premised on the false notions that American capitalist “democracy” can be

made to work for the little guy and that the working class is just another sector of the “people,” i.e., the amorphous “99 percent.” Although we have received a hearing for our views, selling a large amount of individual WV copies, we sold comparatively few subscriptions, underscoring the tremendous gulf between our Marxist worldview and the liberal politics of Occupy.

One standout of this year’s campaign was the fine work of our new SYC members in Lansing, Michigan. With the help of comrades in the Midwest, the Chicago/Lansing SYC sold dozens of subscriptions at Michigan State University and elsewhere. Comrades who intervened into Occupy Lansing had a polarizing impact on protesters on account of our forthright opposition to the Democrats as a party of capital and to the police as the enforcers of capitalist rule.

A key part of our annual sub drives involves traveling to regions of the country where we do not have a regular presence in order to meet with current subscribers, offer our paper to new readers and sample political consciousness and moods, from the campuses to the workplaces and union halls. This year, our subscriptions in North Carolina and Oregon increased significantly, and we also had success at the Detroit Labor Day rally as well as on campuses in Arizona

and Texas, although it was slow going in Massachusetts.

On many regional campuses, the disastrous effects of the economic meltdown piqued student interest in reading a newspaper that opposes capitalism. Many students who subscribed also were motivated by opposition to racism and anti-immigrant bigotry as well as the ongoing assault on abortion rights. While we had success at many public universities that attract working-class students (a student in Durham, North Carolina, allocated the last of her laundry money for a subscription), sales were more difficult at elite campuses like the University of Chicago and Harvard as well as the University of California at Berkeley.

As usual, on some campuses we had to fight for our right to distribute our paper. At the University of New Orleans, armed police kicked us off campus following a sharp confrontation with a racist who hated our defense of the Pelican Bay, California, prisoners on hunger strike. Notably, the campus chapter of Amnesty International defended our right to be on campus, allowing us to set a sales table back up. At the University of Massachusetts Boston, cops who approached our table left us alone after we asserted our right to get out our views, much to the displeasure of a member of the anti-communist International Socialist Organization hovering nearby.

Making our paper available to black workers and students is especially important to our party. Subjected to racial oppression that is endemic to capitalist America, black workers—strategically placed in the economy—will play a key role in the vanguard of the fight to overthrow capitalism. Since 2008, we had run into some difficulty selling subscriptions to black people, for whom the election of the first black president was supposed to provide some relief from the raw racist reality of this society. Older black workers still tend to tell us that Obama is “limited in what he can do” and fear that any criticism might play into the hands of racist reaction. But with the bloom off the Obama administration—one student called Obama “the world’s biggest terrorist,” citing rapper Lupe Fiasco—our sales this year to black workers and students increased significantly.

Workers Vanguard welcomes our new and returning subscribers. A Marxist, working-class press is a crucial scaffolding for our small fighting propaganda group, the nucleus of a future Leninist vanguard party. It is the purpose of WV to propagate the revolutionary program in addressing the struggles of workers and the oppressed. We encourage all readers to carefully consider our arguments, attend our public events, write us and let us know what they think. ■

also advocates euro bonds. But since when does workers solidarity with the embattled Greek masses consist of pleading with the government to offer bank loans at a fractionally reduced interest rate?

The left face of the Left Party is its vice chairwoman, Sahra Wagenknecht of the misnamed “Communist Platform.” Wagenknecht absurdly argues that government budgets must “be freed from their dependency on the capital markets.” To this end, she wants a public European bank to be set up, which would offer favorable interest rates. Only a dyed-in-the-wool social democrat could imagine that the budget of a capitalist government could be independent of the capitalist market! And there are already hundreds of publicly owned banks in Europe; all of them play by the rules of the capitalist profit system. Wagenknecht’s reformist schemes are whitewash to obscure the Left Party’s role in supporting capitalist exploitation. They ought to know about government budgets, since they have entered into governments in Berlin and other regions that have laid off workers and cut public spending.

The German trade-union federation

DGB has spent lots of membership dues money to run ads in newspapers campaigning for “Yes to Europe! Yes to the euro!” Meanwhile, the DGB bureaucrats’ “solidarity” with the Greek working class fighting against the crisis has been limited to a few speeches on May Day and maybe a letter of support. No struggle has been waged against the German government and the German capitalists, who are the most outspoken proponents of the austerity measures that are hitting the Greek, Portuguese and other working classes so hard.

The same social-democratic union bureaucracy has contributed to advancing German imperialism and its dominant role in the EU by presiding over a massive slashing of real wages. The union misleadership propounds the class-collaborationist lie that what is good for the company and Germany is good for the workers. Most recently, the labor tops agreed to a 20 percent wage cut for all new employees of Lufthansa at the new Berlin airport. In a short space of time, this sellout deal will serve to lower wages at Lufthansa generally. It is urgently necessary to defend wages and working conditions through

class struggle: Organize the unorganized! Equal pay for equal work! For an end to the division between permanent employees, contracted workers and workers on short-term contracts! One company, one union, one wage scale! Forge a class-struggle trade-union leadership, linked to the building of a revolutionary party!

For the Socialist United States of Europe!

In 1929, Leon Trotsky, then the leader of the Left Opposition fighting for authentic Bolshevism against the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union and the Communist International, wrote:

“In the person of the Opposition the vanguard of the European proletariat tells its present rulers: In order to unify Europe it is first of all necessary to wrest power out of your hands. We will do it. We will unite Europe. We will unite it against the hostile capitalist world. We will turn it into a mighty drill-ground of militant socialism. We will make it the cornerstone of the world socialist federation.”

—“Disarmament and the United States of Europe” (October 1929)

The Socialist United States of Europe, in

conjunction with the conquest of proletarian power in the U.S., Japan and throughout the world, would lay the basis for a real international division of labor in a planned economy, thus enormously increasing the productivity of society. Establishing the genuine equality of the peoples of Europe, it would eradicate the source of the imperialist wars that have brought Europe so many times near extinction.

The multiethnic German working class, with its various components from Mediterranean lands, the Balkans and East Europe—who often bring with them more militant class-struggle traditions—possesses the living links to the struggles of Greek workers, of Turkish and Kurdish workers in Turkey and of workers elsewhere. Class struggle by German workers would resonate powerfully with the French proletariat and would be a beacon to the working class worldwide. Central to our perspective as Trotskyists is the reorganizing of the Fourth International as the world party of proletarian revolution, the task the International Communist League, and its German section, the SpAD, has set for itself. ■

South Africa

Early Years of the Communist Party

We reprint below the second part of an article from *Spartacist South Africa* No. 7 (Winter 2011), incorporating minor factual and stylistic corrections. It is an edited version of a class given by comrade Karen Cole at a meeting in 2000 of *Spartacist South Africa*, section of the *International Communist League*. Part One appeared in *WV* No. 991 (25 November). The article refers to the *Voortrekkers*, who were Afrikaner farmers (Boers) who left the British Cape Colony in the first half of the 19th century for the African interior.

PART TWO

The newly founded Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) had not completely broken from the Labour Party. Sidney Bunting and David Ivon Jones as well still saw the militant white miners as strategic to the South African revolution. The young party was immediately faced with an enormous and contradictory class battle on the Rand. The 1922 ten-week strike of white miners was a hard-fought battle in defence of the racist colour bar, the reservation of higher-paid job classifications for whites. Miners seized towns and carried out armed combat with the police and army. Four strikers were hanged, and three of them went to the gallows singing “The Red Flag.” Aerial artillery was used against striking workers. The Jan Smuts government ruthlessly crushed the strike.

The strike fundamentally had a reactionary purpose—to preserve the colour bar in mining. The ostensible reason for the strike was in defence of skilled miners who had been retrenched [laid off], but everyone knew this was part of the drive to replace these privileged white workers with superexploited black labour. Back in 1907 when Keir Hardie, a Scottish miners’ leader, visited South Africa, he was pelted when he raised the basic demand that white unions should be opened to the blacks on the basis of equal pay for equal work. White workers’ consciousness had not changed much from that time, but the mine owners were more determined now that falling gold prices required increasing the rate of exploitation by hiring black labour.

The strike had various leaderships, and one of them was headquartered in the offices of the Communist Party led by Bill Andrews, a longtime union leader and party founder. This included expelled union leaders who considered themselves Marxists. There was a Commando faction led by Afrikaner miners modelled on the



International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa
Mass workers rally in Johannesburg, June 1918. Crowd was addressed by speaker from International Socialist League, predecessor of Communist Party.

Commando units of the Voortrekkers who terrorised and murdered blacks and Indians. At a march one could see a banner, “Workers of the World Fight and Unite for a White S.A.” (*Class and Colour in South Africa*, 1983).

It is interesting to note that Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman of the APO [African Political Organisation] and Clements Kadalie of the Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union (ICU), the two most prominent political leaders of the coloured and black masses at the time, both rightly condemned the racism of the strike, but coming from petty-bourgeois perspectives, they both directed their appeals to the racist Smuts government to increase their control and repression of the unions.

Eddie Roux wrote that Bunting, who had always been a regular soapboxer, never spoke publicly throughout the strike at the hundreds of meetings, and walked around muttering criticisms. The CPSA propaganda condemned attacks on black Africans. At the same time, Bunting and the CPSA didn’t directly attack the colour bar regulations, rationalising that the rules kept up overall wage levels and the fight should be for improving the wages of Africans.

In November 1922 the Fourth Congress of the Comintern issued a protest statement on the execution of the four strikers. They stated that the task was to “draw the native workers too into the struggle against South African Capitalism, and thereby ensure common and final vic-

tory” (reprinted in *South African Communists Speak*, 1981).

After the Rand Strike

In 1923 the Afrikaner Nationalist Party of Barry Hertzog and the Labour Party made an alliance to defeat the Smuts government, which became known as the “Pact.” The Labour Party promised to drop any mention of socialism, and the Nationalists promised to drop their call for secession and an independent Afrikaner republic. What they had in common was white supremacy. To get a flavour of this electoral alliance, in the midst of the campaign, the Labour Party was calling for the expulsion of Asians.

From Moscow, Jones advocated a united front with the Labour Party. In this way they would be part of the anti-Smuts alliance. He argued with Bunting at the time of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern in November 1922 that this would be an application of the anti-imperialist united front as put forward in the “Theses on the Eastern Question.” Bunting brought back from the Congress the importance of fighting for “immediate demands” and for the “united front.” Bunting argued for Comintern discipline and for carrying out the decisions of the Comintern in South Africa, and argued against sectarianism. In keeping with such arguments, the CPSA voted to apply for affiliation to the Labour Party and to support its electoral alliance with the Nationalists.

There was some resistance to this line in the Western Cape where the party had more links with black and coloured labour, but they fell in line. This strategy of the CPSA had to repel black militants. After the victory of the Pact alliance at the polls, the CPSA quickly withdrew their support, and called for Labour Party delegates to oppose putting Frederic Creswell and Tommy Boydell, Labour Party leaders, in the new cabinet. The new government as promised passed yet more laws to reinforce the colour bar and further exclude blacks.

In the article “Permanent Revolution vs. the ‘Anti-Imperialist United Front’: The Origins of Chinese Trotskyism” (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 53, Summer 1997), we criticise the ambiguity of the slogan for the “anti-imperialist united front” put forward in 1922 by the Fourth Congress, as easily interpreted as a two-stage programme for revolution in the colonial countries and as a call to ally with bourgeois-nationalist forces. How-

ever, in the *Spartacist* article we also make the point that it was a sharp descent from these unclear

formulations and opportunist appetites to the full-blown betrayal later of the 1925-27 Chinese Revolution under Stalin and Bukharin. The South African party vastly misread the white miners’ anger coming off the smashing of the Rand strike. Their continued support to the Labour Party demonstrated their continued ambivalence toward the black proletariat.

In 1924 the CPSA national conference debated entering the Labour Party once again. Arguments based on interpretation of Comintern tactics that applied to Europe—where there were mass social-democratic parties—were used to motivate entry. By this time, the Rand strike and the Pact government had had an impact on Bunting and the party, as both made clearer that both the English-speaking and Afrikaner workers were tightly in the grip of their racist and nationalist leadership. Bunting and Roux argued against entry and that the main task was to take their programme to the black masses. This time they won. Some older members in the right wing fell away, and this cleared the way for the party to turn its face to the black proletariat.

The new youth group, the Young Communist League (YCL) of the CPSA, most directly challenged the old status quo of the CPSA. In 1921 Eddie Roux, one of the first Afrikaners and native-born South Africans in the party, founded the youth group. As Eddie Roux came more under the influence of Bunting, he became an advocate for recruiting blacks to the party. Roux became a regular speaker for the Communist Party at ICU meetings. The ICU, which I will get back to later, was growing rapidly at this time. When Roux argued in early 1924 that they must recruit black youth and they must set up a Cape Town branch so they could recruit black and coloured youth, he found himself in a small minority. Roux appealed to the Young Communist International, and he was backed up, and the policy was implemented. The YCL passed a motion stating that the main task of the YCL of South Africa is the organisation of the native youth.

They recruited two blacks early on: Stanley Silwana and Thomas Mbeki. Trade unionist Johnny Gomas, who became a longtime leader of the CPSA, heard Roux speak at a YCL meeting in Cape Town in 1924 and joined the party. Bunting had found new bloc partners with the new youth. Also, the Cape Town branch was more determined to recruit coloureds and blacks where racism was slightly more modulated than in the raw Rand area.

The ICU

There was tremendous political activity among the black workers in the mid to late 1920s. The ICU was the first mass popular semi-political union organisation of black and coloured workers. Its influence far overshadowed that of the Native Congress [predecessor of African National Congress (ANC)] in its time. The development of the ICU reflected the eagerness of black workers to organise in self-defence. It was organised by Clements Kadalie who came from Nyasaland, today’s Malawi. He organised the black Cape Town dock workers in 1919, and the ICU soon grew into the main political representative of blacks in



Cape Archives, Cape Town

Striking white miners protest outside Johannesburg court, 1922. Militant strike had reactionary goal: defense of racist color-bar in Rand mines.

The ICU was racked with internal contradictions because it was a massive populist organisation. Kadalie endorsed the Afrikaner Nationalist leader General Barry Hertzog because he sent greetings and a donation to the ICU. Kadalie looked to British trade-union bureaucrats and liberals, and by the end of the 1920s the organisation was disintegrating. In December 1926 he expelled the Communist Party members in the organisation, partly to please his newly acquired British liberal patrons. CPers had entered the ICU to recruit out of it, and in 1923 Eddie Roux helped set up the Johannesburg ICU office. Young Communist League member Thomas Mbeki became the Transvaal secretary of the ICU. Among those expelled along with Mbeki in 1926 were Johnny Gomas and Jimmy La Guma, who had joined the CPSA while in the ICU and were the Cape Town ICU leadership. By the time they were expelled, the CPSA was so popular that several branches protested their expulsion.

The Ferreirastown night school, set up in 1925, was run by T.W. Thibedi, the first black member of the International Socialist League (ISL) and later a CPSAer. It had its origins dating back to the days of the ISL. By 1928, it had over 100 students and taught literacy with the use of *The ABC of Communism* [1920 book by Bolsheviks Nikolai Bukharin and Evgeny Preobrazhensky] along with other basic subjects. The school had been moved to a bigger building and was now run by a retired schoolteacher and militant atheist. In order to avoid arrest past nine o'clock,

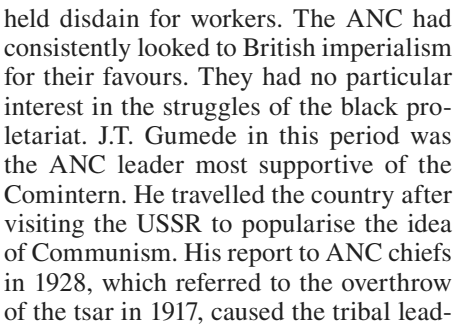
The ramifications of Stalin's class-collaborationist policies were tragically



The African National Congress (as the South African Native National Congress renamed itself in 1923) was the leadership of the only non-white petty-bourgeois nationalist movement in South Africa. It

The ECCI's resolution for the South African party, with the central slogan of "an independent Native republic as a stage towards a workers' and peasants' government," was referred to the section for discussion. This was, in fact, the application of the disastrous Stalinist Chinese strategy to South African soil: that only an anti-imperialist capitalist revolution led by the nationalist petty bourgeoisie was on the agenda. The dictatorship of

continued on page 8



The CPSA paper was renamed the *South African Worker* and had more than half its articles in Xhosa, Zulu and Sotho. The paper also serialised an adapted version of *The ABC of Communism*, the book used in the Soviet Union to teach Marxism and literacy. In the late 1920s, the CPSA finally made breakthroughs in both organising black unions and joint struggles of white and black workers. They formed the Non-European Federation of Trade Unions in the Witwatersrand, and membership in the unions and the party grew rapidly. A whole new layer of black

illustrated in China. In this largely peasant country the working class was highly concentrated in a few key cities like Shanghai and by 1925, inspired by the Russian Revolution, it had begun to seek the road to power. But the Comintern leadership under Bukharin and Stalin was abandoning its revolutionary purpose. Over Trotsky's objections, the Chinese Communist Party was subordinated to the nationalist party, the Guomindang. In 1927 the revolution

7

South Africa...

(continued from page 7)

the proletariat is not on the agenda and must wait.

Bunting and his wife Rebecca and Edward Roux attended the 1928 Sixth Congress of the Comintern as delegates representing the majority of the party which opposed the new slogan. The Buntings found that the whole atmosphere of the Comintern had changed between the Fourth Congress they attended and the Sixth—the Fourth Congress had a spirit of hope and comradeship. They came to the Sixth Congress excited that they could report that the party was now largely black African. Out of 1,750 members, 1,600 were black. However, they were bluntly greeted with “We are going to attack you,” and were cold-shouldered by what Roux called “a hard-bitten gang of bureaucrats.” Bunting, who had fought for more than ten years to transform the party into majority black, was dismissed as a “white chauvinist.” Roux says he ran into Trotskyist sympathisers at the Congress and heard cynical statements of delegates that Trotsky was right on China, but Trotsky was no longer a Communist.

Bukharin sycophants Jay Lovestone, a careerist in the U.S. party, and John Pepper, a Hungarian Communist who had been sent to the U.S., are mentioned as demonstratively ignoring Bunting’s speeches in the commission. Pepper was the major advocate of a farmer-labour party policy in the U.S. CP—basically a two-class workers and peasants party for America. James W. Ford, a leading black American delegate, ignored them.

Bunting spoke against the “native republic” slogan, arguing that black African peasants have been drawn into the working class where they are most militant, i.e., they are proletarianised. Industry in South Africa is far advanced for a colonial country, and so consequently is the working class. Bunting objected to the fact that the draft programme of the CI referred only to “colonial masses” and not the colonial proletariat. There are *classes* in the colonial world. We do not have to wait for capitalism to develop; it has been thrust upon us. He begged for more Comintern attention to South Africa, and less ignorance of the particular conditions in different colonies of the African continent. He said in his 20 August 1928 speech at the Congress: “the class struggle is practically coincident and simultaneous with the national struggle” (*South Africa’s Radical Tradition*, 1996). Roux also argued at the Congress that it is not the task for the party to artificially build a nationalist movement: “There is no need to go through the laborious and (from the point of view of the revolution) dangerous process of building up a native bourgeois-nationalist movement the leadership of which must be displaced before the proletarian revolution can be achieved” (*South Africa’s Radical Tradition*).

Bunting also argued that the slogan would alienate white workers, that either the neutrality or occasional support of white labour would be of great value as a shield against state repression for the revolutionary native movement. Such arguments undermined his valid argu-

John Gomas addressing Communist Party meeting on steps of Johannesburg City Hall in 1932.



Mayibuye Centre, University of the Western Cape

ments against two-stage revolution in South Africa. All the CP’s actions on the ground at home were toward Africanising the party. But Bunting did not have Lenin’s understanding that the struggle for national liberation using the methods of proletarian class struggle could be a powerful motor force for socialist revolution in South Africa. So he had nothing to counterpose to the Stalinist programme of politically chaining the black masses to the nationalist leadership.

It didn’t really matter what Bunting and Roux argued about the class forces or the status of the national movement in South Africa. Hammering out a programme for revolution was not the purpose of this Congress. In evaluating the debates with Bunting and Roux at the Sixth Congress, you have to keep in mind that really what is going on is the increasingly conservative Comintern clubbing any potential opposition to the nationally limited programme of “Socialism in One Country” and class peace with the world bourgeoisie. The Bukharinites (although Bukharin was deposed soon after this Congress) were not looking for a correct political programme for South Africa; they were looking for followers who would toe the line of the Comintern leadership. Thus the Comintern resolved that: “Our aim should be to transform the African National Congress into a fighting nationalist revolutionary organisation against the white bourgeoisie and the British imperialists, based upon the trade unions, peasant organisations, etc., developing systematically the leadership of the workers and the Communist Party in this organisation” (Resolution on “The South African Question” adopted by the ECCI following the Sixth Congress, reprinted in *South African Communists Speak*).

Roux refers to a document that was circulating among certain delegates at the Congress—the first and third parts of *The Third International After Lenin*. Trotsky made the point that the International had no programme; it had rationalisations for defeats and generalities to cover its zigzag policies. The Stalinists had replaced the struggle to win the working class organised in the unions to the Communist Party by the opportunist utilisation of the ready-made apparatus of the trade-union bureaucracy exemplified

in England where the Soviet government maintained a bloc with the labour leadership just as they were selling out a general strike, or in the so-called “revolutionary national bourgeoisie” as in China—in both cases ending in defeat for the workers and oppressed. Trotsky was launching an international struggle to win the communists back to the programme that had made the Bolshevik Revolution.

Seven years later, Trotsky wrote a letter to the fledgling Left Oppositionists of the Workers’ Party of South Africa in response to their draft theses. He took issue with their argument that “the slogan of a ‘Black Republic’ is *equally* harmful for the revolutionary cause as is the slogan of a ‘South Africa for the whites.’” Based on the application of permanent revolution, Trotsky wrote that the character of the proletarian revolution in South Africa will be one of national liberation of the black masses as well:

“Three-quarters of the population of South Africa (almost six million of the almost eight million total) is composed of non-Europeans. A victorious revolution is unthinkable without the awakening of the native masses. In its turn, that will give them what they are so lacking today—confidence in their strength, a heightened personal consciousness, a cultural growth. “Under these conditions the South African Republic will emerge first of all as a ‘black’ republic; this does not exclude, of course, either full equality for the whites or brotherly relations between the two races—depending mainly on the conduct of the whites. But it is entirely obvious that the predominant majority of the population, liberated from slavish dependence, will put a certain imprint on the state. “Insofar as a victorious revolution will radically change the relation not only between the classes but also between the races and will assure to the blacks that place in the state that corresponds to their numbers, thus far will the *social* revolution in South Africa also have a *national* character. “We have not the slightest reason to close our eyes to this side of the question or to diminish its significance. On the contrary, the proletarian party should

in words and in deeds openly and boldly take the solution of the national (racial) problem in its hands. “Nevertheless, the proletarian party can and must solve the national problem by *its own* methods. “The historical weapon of national liberation can be only the *class struggle*.” —Leon Trotsky, “On the South African Theses” (20 April 1935), *Writings of Leon Trotsky* (1934-35) (Pathfinder Press, 1971)

Bunting and Roux never found their way to Trotsky’s Left Opposition although other communists did join Trotsky’s Left Opposition and the Fourth International. Today we Trotskyists of Spartacist South Africa are the continuity of Lenin and Trotsky’s party. We fight for a black-centred workers government as part of a socialist federation of Southern Africa. This is directly counterposed to the illusion fostered by the South African Communist Party today that the “national democratic revolution” has achieved a “rainbow nation” based on the ANC’s celebrated doctrine of “non-racialism.” We call for workers to break with the bourgeois Tripartite Alliance—a class-collaborationist nationalist popular front that ties the working class to the capitalist rulers.

Just a few final notes. Jones, always sickly, spent his last days in Moscow providing the invaluable service of translating parts of the early works of Lenin into English, including popularising *What Is To Be Done?* He also continued to write on the black question, and Africa and world imperialism. He died in 1924. Bunting stayed in the CPSA. He carried on a difficult and courageous election campaign in Thembuland with Rebecca Bunting and their comrade Gana Makabeni as Xhosa interpreter. They attempted for the first time to bring the communist programme into the rural reserves whilst being watched by police and opposed by the Native chiefs living on government salaries. Bunting and others were purged in 1931 as the party came under the direct manipulation of Stalin’s fake “left turn,” and he died some years later, still a loyal Communist. Eddie Roux repudiated his communist politics, became an academic and did a service by writing *Time Longer Than Rope* and *S.P. Bunting: A Political Biography*.

The early South African Communist Party was a mix of comrades in motion, grappling with a rapidly changing reality, and racked with contradictions. There was an element in this party that was revolutionary internationalist, trying to apply Marxism to South Africa, and particularly to the question of ending black oppression. They were inspired and transformed by the Russian Revolution, but, in the end, their struggle to sort out a strategy and programme for black liberation and the dictatorship of the proletariat was cut short as the Comintern they looked to was strangled by Stalin and his heirs. It is the revolutionary Trotskyists of Spartacist South Africa who are carrying forward the necessary fight for the programme of proletarian revolution in Southern Africa. ■

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Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

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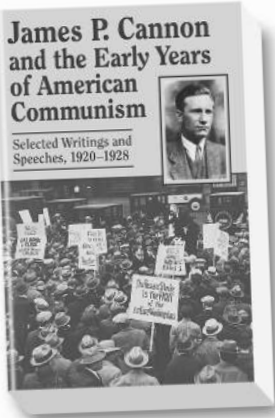
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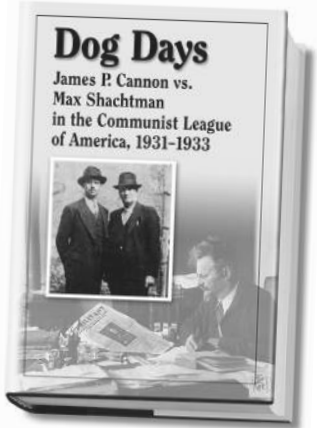


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- This subject index covers issues of *Workers Vanguard* published during 2011, from issue No. 971 (7 January) through the end-of-the-year issue No. 992 (9 December). During this time, *WV* was published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August, and skipping the last issue in December.
- The fullest listing is by SUBJECT. Subject headings are arranged alphabetically. Entries are listed chronologically with two exceptions: all entries comprising a series are listed together immediately following the first entry of the series; corrections immediately follow the relevant entry. An asterisk (*) after the page location of an entry indicates that a correction follows.
For Free, Safe Abortion on Demand!, #975, 4 Mar. (12, 11) means the headline of the article, issue No. 975, dated 4 March 2011 beginning on page 12 and continuing on page 11.
- Entries are listed under subject heads. In some cases, subject heads are broken down into subcategories. These subcategories are listed immediately after the initial subject head and preceded by a dot (•). The numbers following each entry headline give the issue number, date and page number(s) for the article. Thus:
Workplace Safety—See **Labor: General**. See also **Japan**. means that articles about workplace safety can be found by going to the subject head **LABOR** and looking under

the subcategory **General**. Related articles can be found by going to the subject head **JAPAN**.

- Individuals mentioned in articles are usually not a subject heading unless the article is primarily about the given person. Foreign political organizations are generally cross-referenced to their appropriate countries, while U.S. political organizations are listed under their organizational names.
- Articles relating to foreign countries are listed under geographical headings and not normally under any other subject heading. Articles that deal centrally with U.S. foreign policy will be found under **U.S.: International Relations** or under the relevant geographical heading. For example, articles about the war on Libya will be found under **LIBYA**.
- Articles under the *Class-Struggle Defense Notes* (CSDN) masthead are by the Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.
- Abbreviations used in entries are:

C: Correction

CSDN: *Class-Struggle Defense Notes* article

E: Editorial Note

L: Letter

S: Series

W&R: *Women and Revolution* article

YSp: *Young Spartacus* article
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