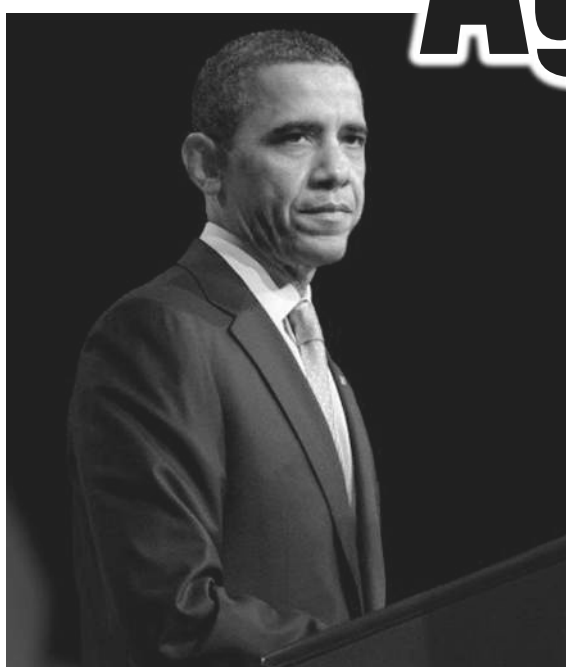


U.S. Imperialists Hands Off the World!

Down With Starvation Sanctions Against Iran!



AP



Reuters

Left: Addressing the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, Obama pushes sanctions, keeps open possibility of military attack against Iran, March 4. Right: Uranium enrichment control room at Natanz nuclear facility in central Iran.

APRIL 9—Further ratcheting up imperialist pressures against Iran, the U.S. and its European Union allies are preparing to issue an ultimatum that Tehran immediately close the recently completed Fordo nuclear facility, which is deep underground, and stop further enrichment of uranium. The demands of the Western powers, which claim that Iran is a few steps from developing weapons-grade uranium, are to be delivered at a meeting scheduled to begin later this week in Istanbul. As reported in the *New York Times* (7 April), President Obama calls this “Iran’s ‘last chance’ to resolve its nuclear confrontation with the United Nations and the West diplomatically.” Obama had already invoked the prospect of war to get Iran to bow to the imperialist diktat. He has declared that “all options are on the table” and assured Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has repeatedly threatened air strikes, that the U.S. “has Israel’s back.”

The main weapon the imperialists have been wielding against Iran is an economic

siege, which they have recently intensified. Beginning in November, the U.S., in coordination with Britain and Canada, moved to implement a virtual international financial quarantine of Iran. Last month, all businesses and banks in Iran were barred from accessing the system that arranges international money transfers. The embargo includes the central bank, which handles the export of crude oil. As a result of economic sanctions, the value of Iran’s currency, the rial, has dropped sharply and inflation is skyrocketing, led by soaring food and gas prices. With unemployment shooting steadily upward, Hyundai Motors has closed down its factory in Iran for fear of being penalized under the sanctions. Some essential household goods are impossible to obtain. The austerity is exacerbated by Tehran’s ban on hundreds of imported items, an effort intended to stem the decline of its currency.

The latest sanctions are aimed to strike at the heart of Iran’s economy: its oil exports. The European Union, whose member states currently buy 20 percent

of Iran’s oil, plans to initiate a ban on all Iranian oil imports in July. The U.S. sanctions include measures to penalize countries that import Iranian oil and any bank handling payment for such sales can be denied access to the U.S. financial system. Under pressure from Washington, Turkey has declared that it will slash its purchases of Iranian oil by 20 percent. Other big buyers, including Japan, South Africa and India, have also indicated that they will reduce their orders, while China too has been buying less. To make up for the shortfall, the Saudis have promised to increase oil production to a 30-year high.

The stated purpose of the sanctions and military threats is to stop Iran’s purported program to develop nuclear weapons—an effort the Iranian government has always denied and for which even pro-imperialist analysts and U.S. intelligence agencies admit there is no evidence. It is the height of arrogance and hypocrisy for the U.S. rulers, echoed by imperialist Britain and France as well as Israel, to declaim that Iran has “no right” to pursue the develop-

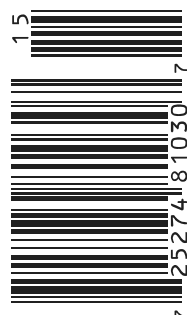
ment of nuclear weapons. The U.S. spends more on its military than the next 14 largest military spenders combined and possesses by far the world’s greatest supply of nukes as well as massive stores of highly enriched uranium. It stands alone in having used atomic weapons, incinerating some 200,000 Japanese civilians in the A-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 at the end of World War II. The purpose of that massacre was to send a message to the Soviet Union that U.S. imperialism meant to reign supreme.

There are clear indications that Iran has no plans to build an atomic bomb, as its government has repeatedly said. It should be noted that the 20 percent uranium enrichment level cited by the imperialists as approaching the level that can be used in weapons is the same needed for medical isotopes for cancer treatment. In 2007, the International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA) conceded that Iran had dismantled efforts to build an atomic bomb four years earlier. However, last November the IAEA released a report darkly hinting at “indications” that “some activities” related to nuclear weapons may have continued after 2003 and “may still be ongoing.” The facade of neutrality upheld by the IAEA, a body of the United Nations, was exposed by a cable released by WikiLeaks in which the agency’s director general, Yukiya Amano, was described by an American official as “solidly in the US court on every key strategic decision, from high-level personnel appointments to the handling of Iran’s alleged nuclear weapons program” (London *Guardian*, 23 March).

The fact that Iran does not have nukes
continued on page 10

“Separate but Equal” Poison The Rehabilitation of Booker T. Washington

See page 4



Drop All Charges Against Carlos Montes!

On March 27, a Los Angeles judge dismissed two out of six felony charges against Chicano activist Carlos Montes, who is a supporter of the reformist Freedom Road Socialist Organization (FRSO) and writes for its newspaper, *Fight Back!* Montes is a victim of an FBI frame-up of 24 leftists, antiwar organizers and union activists. Beginning in September 2010, the FBI raided their homes and offices, mainly in the Midwest. The Feds investigated them for “material support to terrorism” due to their activities in solidarity with the oppressed in Latin America and the Near East and for helping to organize protests against the 2008 Republican National Convention (see “Protest FBI Raids on Leftists, Union Activists!” WV No. 966, 8 October 2010).

On 17 May 2011, the FBI and a Los Angeles Sheriff’s SWAT team broke down Montes’ door and ransacked his home, seizing his notes and papers. Using reactionary gun control laws, the agents arrested Montes on bogus charges of violating a firearms code, falsely alleging he had a felony on his record and therefore cannot own a gun. This claim originates from a 1969 student strike for black, Chi-



Gardner/Fight Back! News

Los Angeles, May 2011: Carlos Montes (left) at rally three days after FBI/L.A. Sheriff’s Department SWAT team raid on his home.

cano and women’s studies at East L.A. College in which protesters were beaten and arrested by police. On his way home, Montes was arrested and accused of assaulting a sheriff’s deputy—with an empty soda can! However, as the Committee to Stop FBI Repression points out, “according to a recent court document, this charge was sentenced as a misdemeanor. The prosecution is basing its case on this 42-year-old misdemeanor, disguising it as a bogus felony” (fightbacknews.org, 25 March).

We print below a speech by Diana Coleman at a March 27 protest in defense of Carlos Montes called by the L.A. Committee to Stop FBI Repression, which was held outside the Los Angeles Superior Courts Building. The protest was attended by FRSO supporters and other leftists, including former SDS organizer Eric Gardner. In her remarks, comrade Coleman refers to a 2008 rally where Gardner argued the importance of “holding the Obama administration to their antiwar promises” (see “UCLA SDS Hitches Skateboard to Obama Bandwagon,” WV No. 927, 2 January 2009). The FRSO, for its part, claimed that Obama’s victory was “stunning” and represented “a blow against racism.” As we have repeatedly noted, Barack Obama, as head of U.S. imperialism, has simply carried out the pledge he made as a candidate: to uphold the interests of the racist capitalist ruling class against workers and the oppressed at home and abroad, not least by extending the reach of the rulers’ “war on terror.”

* * *

On behalf of the Spartacist League and the Partisan Defense Committee, we have come to these hearings to defend Carlos Montes against the government/FBI witchhunt and to demand that all

charges be dropped! This case, along with the raids and grand jury subpoenas in the Midwest against Freedom Road Socialist Organization and others, is part of the Obama administration’s war on civil liberties. This is a blatant political frame-up targeting Montes because of his 40-plus years of leftist political activism and his work with Freedom Road.

In vastly expanding the state’s repressive powers in the name of the “war on terror,” the capitalist government has slashed the fundamental rights of association and speech. The Obama administration has one-upped the Bush regime in its war on civil liberties, deported more immigrants than Bush ever did, and has continued U.S. imperialism’s wars abroad with a vengeance. During the 2008 elections liberals and reformist leftists including Freedom Road pushed the dangerous illusion that Obama would reverse the worst policies of George Bush. I remember Eric here, who is nicely holding the megaphone, arguing this line at a UCLA SDS rally. We Marxists of the SL say *no!* Democrats, no less than Republicans, are the enemies of working people.

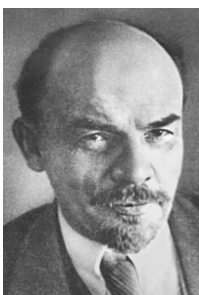
What is needed is a class-struggle defense which looks to the power of the multiracial working class, which is the ultimate target of the “anti-terror” witch-hunt and which alone has the social power and interest in smashing capitalist rule and replacing it with a workers state. Any illusions in the neutrality of the state or the courts undermine a serious defense. The courts, prisons and police exist to maintain through organized violence the rule of the capitalist class over the workers and oppressed. But ultimately what the racist capitalist rulers can get away with is determined by the level of class struggle. And there will be no real justice until the imperialist exploiters are swept away through socialist revolution. Drop all charges against Carlos Montes! An injury to one is an injury to all! ■



TROTSKY

The Leninist Press and Revolutionary Continuity

For the 1,000th issue of Workers Vanguard, we print below excerpts from a 1958 speech by James P. Cannon, historic leader of American Trotskyism, on the role of the Leninist press in propagating revolutionary Marxism and cohering the cadres of the proletarian vanguard. Delivered on the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Militant, newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Cannon’s talk also marked the anni-



LENIN

versary of the 1917 October Revolution in Russia. In the early 1960s, the Revolutionary Tendency, forerunner of the Spartacist League/U.S., was formed inside the SWP to fight against the party majority’s increasing abandonment of the Trotskyist program. The SL, founded in 1966, began publishing WV five years later. We salute the dedication of comrades who have helped produce and distribute our press over the decades and go forward in the fight for new October Revolutions.

We did not pretend, when we started *The Militant*, that we were producing a great mass paper, simplifying everything to the lowest common denominator. On the contrary, our paper was devoted to the education and reeducation of the vanguard militants of the Communist movement. It was primarily a cadre paper, the educator and guide of the cadres. The people who hold the party together and keep it going in all kinds of weather. The people who never quit, who never float down the stream like dead fish, but swim against the current no matter how rough it may be. That is the meaning of “militant,” and that was the meaning of the paper we started to represent such people.

We had learned a good deal by then, although we have learned a great deal more since, and were applying something from Lenin’s program for *Iskra*. Many of you have read in his great pamphlet, *What Is To Be Done?*, what he considered to be the role of a national paper. As Lenin conceived it, the role of a revolutionary paper is to function not merely as an agitator dealing with protest issues, not merely as a propagandist concerned with educating people and dealing with questions of theory and politics, but as the best organizer of the party....

Old Frederick Engels, in the hard and bitter time of the movement of his day, wrote to an old comrade, an old guard of the Communist League, referring to the difficulties and troubles they were in and to the good comrades who had fallen by the wayside. And the old comrade asked, “What shall we do?” And Engels answered, “What can we do? We stand in the breach. That’s what we are here for.”

—James P. Cannon, “Revolutionary Journalism,” November 1958, reprinted in *Speeches for Socialism* (Pathfinder, 1971)

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Tunisia: Trade Unions Under Attack by Government, Islamists

The following article is translated from *Le Bolchévik* No. 199 (March 2012), newspaper of the *Ligue Trotskyste de France*, section of the *International Communist League* (Fourth Internationalist).

LE BOLCHEVIK

The so-called “Arab Spring,” hailed by social democrats, is turning into a nightmare for workers, and particularly for the Tunisian workers who were at the forefront of last year’s struggle to overthrow the Ben Ali police dictatorship. As the economic crisis continues to worsen, Tunisian workers are fighting to defend their meager gains against the Tunisian capitalists and the imperialists, who seek to take advantage of the recession to escalate their attacks.

A major four-day strike by sanitation and other municipal workers that began on February 20 was attacked jointly by Islamist thugs and cops. Offices of the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT) federation were attacked, not only provincial offices but also the headquarters in Tunis. Across the street from the police station in the Casbah, the mausoleum of Farhat Hached—founder of the UGTT and a hero of the struggle for independence who was murdered by the French colonialists in 1952—was desecrated. A mass demonstration called by the UGTT on February 25 against these anti-union attacks itself ended in bloody police repression (*L’Humanité*, 27 February). ***Down with the attacks against the UGTT! Victory to the sanitation workers struggle! For workers defense groups to repel attacks by Islamist thugs against union activists and unveiled women!***

One year after the uprising against Ben Ali, it is essential to draw the political lessons in order to move forward. The rise of Islamism throughout the region, the threats against women, the continuing subjugation to imperialism, the immiseration of peasants and workers and rising unemployment—all this shows that the aspirations of the Tunisian masses to democracy, the emancipation of women and the eradication of urban and rural poverty will not be satisfied without over-

turning the capitalist order and establishing a workers and peasants government. The working class is the only class with the social power, in struggle against the bourgeoisie and its Islamists, to overthrow capitalism and establish its own state.

This is the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution, which was validated by the Russian Revolution of October 1917. That revolution placed the working

sian Workers (PCOT, originally Maoist), which channeled the uprising toward the election of a constituent assembly—a bourgeois parliamentary body—leading to the current situation.

Now the Islamists dare to openly attack a prominent union like the UGTT that played such a key role in the fall of the Ben Ali regime. Nevertheless, in our solidarity with the Tunisian workers, we reaf-

played no role in the uprising against Ben Ali and did not conceal their reactionary intentions—particularly against women’s rights. Nor did they hide the support lavished upon them by the imperialists, who were eager to restore capitalist order. The fraudulent certificate of “revolutionary” merit granted by the left to Ennahda greatly helped the Islamists win the elections a few months later, amid massive abstention.

Now Ennahda spokesman Walid Ben-nani has the nerve to accuse workers in struggle of being “anti-revolutionary forces, trying to ensure that difficulties persist” (www.lapresse.tn, 27 February). But the union bureaucrats have learned nothing from their previous betrayals because they cannot envision any framework other than the oppressive capitalist system. (Besides, the UGTT leadership supported Ben Ali almost to the end.) Sami Tahri, spokesman for the UGTT, said that “it is in the best interests of the country for Ennahda and UGTT to cooperate and work together. As a union we have to have a partner with whom we can negotiate, especially since at this stage we must address issues such as employment, economic development, skyrocketing prices, etc.” (*ibid.*). In ceding political independence of the working class, the union bureaucrats and the reformist organizations are leading Tunisian women and workers straight to disaster. There must be a fight in the unions to replace the treacherous bureaucrats with a revolutionary leadership!

In France, class solidarity with Tunisian workers requires fighting for class independence, against the capitalist parties and their reformist agents in the workers movement, and for the overthrow of the French capitalist imperialist order, which is sponsoring Tunisia’s new Islamic “coalition” regime. The millions of people of Maghreb (North African) origin in France, concentrated in the proletariat and the most oppressed layers of the population, form a living link between the countries of North Africa and France in the struggle for socialist revolution. A proletarian revolution in Tunisia would immediately have a huge impact in France, and vice versa. We struggle to forge revolutionary internationalist parties to lead the working class to power on both sides of the Mediterranean. ***Down with the attacks against the UGTT by the Islamists and the government! For permanent revolution throughout North Africa!*** ■



Tunis, February 25: More than 4,000 trade unionists marched in a demonstration against government-led attacks on unions.

class in power for the first time. Workers must take power in Tunisia, Egypt and elsewhere and spread the revolution to France and other imperialist centers. To achieve this, it is necessary to build revolutionary workers parties that will link the struggle for socialist federations of North Africa and the Near East to the struggle for proletarian revolution in the imperialist countries.

With this perspective, we wrote last February that the Tunisian working class needed its own organs of power: strike committees, factory committees and, ultimately, soviets [workers’ councils]. This call was counterposed to the bourgeois-democratic perspective of the entire left, including the Communist Party of Tun-

firm our denunciation of last March of the UGTT’s joining the “National Council to Safeguard the Revolution.” This council was a nationalist, class-collaborationist body encompassing reformists and bourgeois formations ***including Ennahda, a reactionary Islamist party.*** The small, left-reformist Tunisian working-class organizations (the PCOT and the League of the Workers Left [LGO] associated with the French New Anti-Capitalist Party of Olivier Besancenot) also participated in this bloc. We wrote: “By tying the workers to their class enemy, the union bureaucrats and the reformists are paving the way to bloody defeat for the workers and oppressed. Break with class collaboration!” (*Le Bolchévik* No. 195, March 2011).

The UGTT, PCOT and LGO thus created a supposed revolutionary pedigree for the Islamists, even though the Islamists

Letter

Nationalize Religious Hospitals!

13 March 2012

To *Workers Vanguard*,

Relevant to the issues raised by “Obama Panders to Religious Reaction” (*Workers Vanguard* No. 997, 2 March) is the role of clerical-run hospitals, which are largely Catholic. A 28 February *New York Times* editorial “Women’s Health Care at Risk” warned:

“A wave of mergers between Roman Catholic and secular hospitals is threatening to deprive women in many areas of the country of ready access to important reproductive services. Catholic hospitals that merge or form partnerships with secular hospitals often try to impose religious restrictions against abortions, contraception and sterilization on the whole system. This can put an unacceptable burden on women, especially low-income women and those who live in smaller communities where there are fewer health care options.”

It continues:

“The nation’s 600 Catholic hospitals are an important part of the health care system. They treat one-sixth of all hospital

patients, and are sometimes the only hospital in a small community.”

The editorial notes that struggling secular hospitals are forced to merge with financially stronger institutions which are often Catholic, where Church doctrine dominates the outcome. “By one estimate, 20 mergers between Catholic and non-Catholic hospitals have been announced over the past three years,” the editorial reports, “and more can be expected.”

Separation of church and state means keeping religion out of the schools; it should also mean keeping religion out of the hospitals. As part of our demand for “Free, quality, integrated public education for all!” we call for nationalizing the private universities. Likewise, as part of our demand for free, quality health care for all, including birth control and abortion, we should raise the call:

Nationalize the private and religious hospitals!

Comradely,
Reuben S.

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“Separate but Equal” Poison

The Rehabilitation of Booker T. Washington

The following is a presentation, edited for publication, by Don Alexander of the Spartacist League Central Committee at a March 6 forum in New York City.

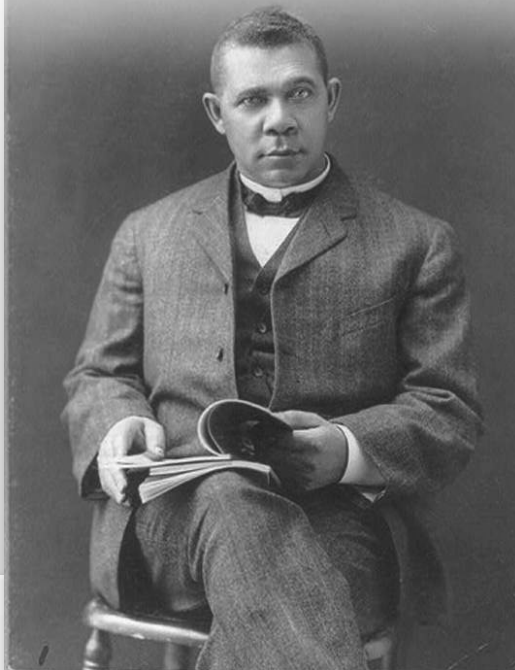
In part, the origin of this talk grew out of my returning from doing political work in South Africa a decade ago. I noticed coming back here that a lot of black people were reading Booker T. Washington. I went also to my hometown in Southern California, and some very little black newspaper there had a series of articles on him. And I began to bump into people in the library reading his autobiography, *Up From Slavery*, and said, “Something is going on.”

Well, what’s going on is what I want to talk about because Booker T. Washington was a sellout. He was an Uncle Tom, which is a conservative black misleader kowtowing to white ruling-class interests. This was basic understanding on the part of any of us who became radicalized in the 1960s. But now we have to reaffirm these truths in the face of the prodigious output of lying hypocritical capitalist mouthpieces.

His rehabilitation grows out of the relative dearth of class and social struggles today, what we call a sort of one-sided class war. History is being reinvented by self-proclaimed spokesmen for the oppressed, so that yesterday’s chumps are turned into today’s champs. There’s an ongoing bourgeois campaign to rehabilitate the pro-segregationist, anti-labor, pro-imperialist legacy of Booker T. Washington. We have to defeat such reactionary trends in order to politically arm the working class and its allies to wage a revolutionary struggle for the smashing of capitalist rule.

From the halls of academia to union halls to the Commander-in-Chief Obama, Washington is being touted as some kind of spokesman for black freedom. This is a gross falsification of history in the service of reconciling the oppressed with their oppressors. Bound up with this falsification is a new reality of the first black president of the U.S., Barack Obama. This is supposed to mean, according to what he stated, that black people are 90 percent free. I don’t know how you can be 90 percent free! We oppose on principle any support to capitalist parties—Democrats, Republicans and Greens. The capitalist system cannot be reformed but must be smashed by proletarian revolution.

Right: Booker T. Washington exhorted black people to accept segregation, not struggle for equality, in post-Reconstruction South. Below: Image shows students cultivating sweet potatoes at his Tuskegee Institute.



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Tuskegee: Training for Industrial Slavery

Washington was called by some the “Black Moses.” He was born in 1856 in Franklin County, Virginia, to a slave mother and a white father whom he never knew. His name is synonymous with the Tuskegee Institute—a school to train black men and women in menial labor and instill an ethic of so-called self-help. He presided over Tuskegee from 1881 to his death in 1915.

His stepfather relocated his family to a mining town. Eventually the young Booker briefly became a miner, around the age of 12. He didn’t like that very much.

He worked in a salt mine, hard work. Eventually he found work for a well-to-do white family in a job that inculcated in him the importance of understanding hard work and cleanliness and above all the toothbrush, which is what he lectured a lot of the Tuskegee students about. The toothbrush.

According to Washington, the most important person who shaped him was a man named General Samuel Chapman Armstrong. Armstrong was born and raised in Hawaii. He was the son of educational missionaries who worked to “civilize” indigenous Hawaiians. He was also a commander of a black regiment during the Civil War.

After the Civil War, Armstrong became a superintendent in the Virginia Freedmen’s Bureau, which in a limited way sought to ameliorate the desperate plight of the black freedmen. His perspective was that he had to do something to teach the black freedmen what the dignity of labor is. He was considered ideal to teach black people because of his Civil War experience. So after he left the Freedmen’s Bureau he applied the colonialist-inspired training in Hawaii that he acquired at an early age to set up the Hampton “school” in West Virginia. Some called this less a school and more like a church and army barracks. Hampton was geared to teaching black Southerners to “stay in their place”—menial labor.

Black women were taught cooking, cleaning, dusting. Maybe for two hours at the end of the day people got a chance to

study the Three R’s. One biographer of Armstrong wrote:

“The General thought of blacks primarily in terms of what they could contribute to the economic prosperity of the country. In harmony with the racial economics of his age, Armstrong considered blacks to be inferior, barbaric, and ugly creatures—with a ‘facial angle,’ ‘thicker cranium,’ ‘two inch longer arm,’ and ‘color of skin’ that were all repulsive, but ‘no barrier to industry.’”

—Donald Spivey, *Schooling for the New Slavery* (1978)

He looked at it in terms of how they could serve and build prosperity for Southern and Northern industrialists. Two years before he died in 1893, Armstrong made it clear that he was never dreaming of “social equality.”

His views were in accordance with the viciously racist ideology of his time, promulgated especially at the end of the 19th century. There were a lot of so-called scholars preaching pseudoscientific racism to prove “black inferiority” and “white superiority.” Also, there were others who were predicting the ultimate extinction of the black race.

Washington’s Tuskegee Institute in Alabama was modeled after Hampton. It was a drilling ground for non-union, menial agricultural labor. And as I pointed out, there was very little of teaching the basics going on. Religious service was mandatory and every person had a seat, so you didn’t get out of it. Tuskegee was really a school, as one fellow called it, for industrial slavery in the “New South” of the time.

Washington’s program of self-help, pull yourself up by your bootstraps and black capitalism is a renunciation of a fight for black equality and acceptance of racist segregation. It had influence on an assortment of black nationalist organizations and leaders over the years, such as Marcus Garvey, who from Jamaica was following closely the work of the Tuskegee Institute. One reason he emigrated to the U.S. was to meet and study under Washington, but Washington died shortly before he arrived. The Nation of Islam is another organization which stands in that tradition.

Washington’s reactionary program was translated on the streets of Washington, D.C., in 1995. The Nation of Islam, led by the reactionary nationalist, anti-Semitic demagogue Louis Farrakhan (the same man who wanted Malcolm X dead) staged his Million Man March. This was a reactionary mobilization of the oppressed that was also directed against women, especially black women. This is the program that blames black people for their own oppression. And it was no accident that then-president Bill Clinton even gave it a nod of approval.

For Revolutionary Integrationism!

As revolutionary Marxists, the Spartacist League fights for the class-struggle program of revolutionary integration: championing struggles for black equality while emphasizing that the liberation of black people from color-caste oppression can be achieved only in an egalitarian socialist society. Any serious struggle for black liberation in racist capitalist America has revolutionary implications. Linked to the power of the integrated labor



Yale Collection

Booker T. Washington and President Theodore Roosevelt at Tuskegee Institute, October 1905.

movement, it is a potential dagger aimed straight at the heart of the capitalist private property system, which is the source of the special oppression of black people.

Our program is directly counterposed to the dead-end program of liberal integrationism—represented by the “respectable,” legalistic organizations such as the NAACP—*and* black separatism. The program of the former is based upon step-at-a-time gradualism, preaching mainly reliance on the capitalist courts for justice. The black separatists despair of the possibility of mobilizing the multiracial working class to fight for black freedom. They both defend the capitalist system against the exploited and oppressed. There can be no separate road to black liberation. It is in the interest of the working class to fight for black freedom, which is an inseparable part of the struggle for abolishing the system of capitalist exploitation through socialist revolution.

The period of history we are living in right now remains the epoch of imperialist decay. The Bolshevik revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky pointed out that in periods of gigantic defeats for the proletariat, consciousness regresses to previous epochs, to pre-Marxist ideas. Such is the case today, two decades after capitalist counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union and East Europe, as reflected by the rehabilitation of bourgeois scoundrels such as the arch-reactionary black capitalist political spokesman Booker T. Washington. You see it also with the ghosts of the Confederacy, like in Brooklyn on Memorial Day last year, when they lauded some Confederate soldier buried in Green-Wood Cemetery.

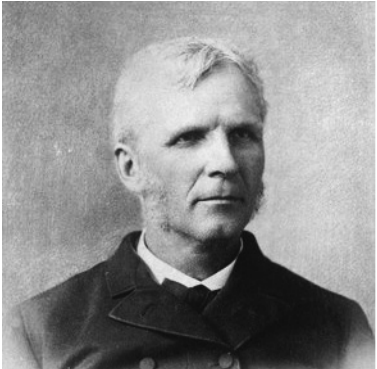
The tumultuous struggles of the civil rights movement, which challenged the anti-Communist Cold War consensus, resulted in the destruction of Jim Crow legalized segregation. However, that movement was derailed by the pro-capitalist program of its liberal leadership—ranging from King’s Southern Christian Leadership Conference to Roy Wilkins’ NAACP—which counseled reliance on the Democrats, the federal government and the courts. When the civil rights movement moved North, it ran into the solid core of racist American capitalism, manifested by dilapidated housing and schools, rampant cop brutality, entrenched unemployment. The liberals were incapable of addressing the material roots of black oppression because above all they sought to keep that struggle within the bounds of capitalism.

Busing for school integration in the mid 1970s was knifed in the back by liberal Democrats and the reformists, such as the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Workers World’s Youth Against War and Fascism, who tailed them. The reformists’ reliance on Democratic politicians and the bourgeois state—for example, the SWP’s call for federal troops to Boston—facilitated the defeat of school integration by very well-organized and deadly anti-busing forces.

A searing symbol of the virulent racist anti-busing backlash was a famous photograph of a black lawyer in Boston being speared with a flag pole with the American flag on it, wielded by racists.

We fought for the independent mobilization of labor to fight for elementary democratic rights for black people. We fought for labor-black defense guards to defend the black schoolchildren and for extending busing to the suburbs, where there undoubtedly existed better schools. Busing was no cure-all, no panacea, but we defended it because it was a partial step toward black equality.

Historically, when black people have perceived an opening for integration, they have fought for it. For some years after the defeat of school integration in Boston and elsewhere, battles were still being fought out in the South. In May 1983, a 10,000-strong march in Norfolk, Virginia, to defend busing had a significant component of black ILA longshoremen. Ex-civil rights leader Jesse Jackson conveyed to those assembled there that he came to march not for desegregation but for voter registration, that is, for the Dem-



Washington’s mentor General Samuel Chapman Armstrong (left) considered black people inferior, founded Hampton Institute (below) to train black Southerners in menial labor.

Frances Benjamin Johnston photos



ocrats. Jackson’s Operation PUSH organization wanted “integration” all right: into the boardrooms of Wall Street and petty capitalist enterprises.

The reformist left—the International Socialist Organization, Workers World and others—lie that the pro-Democratic Party liberal Martin Luther King was becoming a revolutionary toward the end of his life. Today this myth is standard fare. It’s preposterous on a number of levels. You don’t have to know everything about King’s political history to see through this bull, but you do know that you don’t get to have a monument in Washington, D.C., unless you have played a part in helping the oppressors to keep the oppressed in line.

The black liberal ideologue (and perennial talking head) Michael Eric Dyson recently wrote that “Martin Luther King, Jr., ten days before he died, said before the Rabbinical Assembly of America that black people ought to practice ‘temporary segregation’ unless we’re going to

be ‘integrated out of power.’” Now, Dyson described this in positive terms as a “complex form of solidarity.” What we’ve got to deal with!

Obama Trumpets Booker T. Washington

Today there is hardly a pretense of any struggle for integration. In 1954, the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that outlawed segregation in the schools had a qualifier attached to it: “with all deliberate speed.” This was a signal to the racists—so-called states’ righters—that they could undermine it and sabotage it at will. In 2007, the Supreme Court threw out school desegregation plans in Seattle and Louisville, giving the green light to those seeking to overturn some 1,000 school integration plans across the country. As we pointed out in “Supreme Court: Segregation Forever” (WV No. 895, 6 July 2007): “In eviscerating the 1954 *Brown v. Board*

Obama in a May 2011 commencement speech at Booker T. Washington High School in Memphis, Tennessee, stated that Washington “entered this world a slave on a Southern plantation. But he would leave this world as the leader of a growing civil rights movement and the president of the world famous Tuskegee Institute.” Had anyone made such a claim to Booker T. Washington during his lifetime, he probably would have sued for defamation. In *Up From Slavery*, he excoriated black freedmen who, he said, during Reconstruction sought a too-rapid improvement in their lives. He also denounced them for what he portrayed as their general uncouthness.

It was the hard struggles of the black freedmen and women during Reconstruction, in alliance with the Radical Republicans, that led to the establishment of public education for the black and white poor. The bourgeoisie today is trying to destroy that. With the escalating bipartisan attacks on public education, teachers unions are under attack, and there is a concomitant growth of charter schools.

The comment by Obama that I quoted deliberately distorts the historical record. He is invoking the legacy of a capitalist politician who became an effective spokesman for the interests of the U.S. ruling class in the period of the rise of U.S. imperialism, at the end of the 19th century. Today, in the period of the decay of this system, Wall Street money sharks cleverly promoted to the presidency a black man (but not too black) to be the CEO of their system.

Like Booker T. Washington, Obama lost no time in showing how he can “keep black people in their place.” For example, on Father’s Day, June 15, 2008, he addressed a black church in Chicago, stating that “in the African American community... more than half of all black children live in single-parent households,” and “too many fathers [are] missing from too many lives and too many homes.... These absent black fathers have abandoned their responsibilities, acting more like boys instead of men.” Saying “acting like boys” in the past would have been fighting words. Blaming the oppressed for their oppression is beating them down, convincing them that they are the source of their own problems.

The Jim Crow South

The Trotskyists of the Workers Party U.S., our revolutionary forerunners, ran an article titled “Booker T. Washington—He Pleased the Bourgeoisie” in the *New Militant* (2 February 1935). They put forth a Marxist appraisal of this “leader”:

“In speaking once of social equality for Negroes, Washington said: ‘In things industrial we can be as close as one, but in things social as separate as the fingers on the hands.’
“This pleased his white financial masters and they covered him with additional honor and glory in the form of more endowments for his institution. They well knew that so long as such ideas were shoved down the throats of the Negro and white workers there would be little danger of unity and their position as robbers of the American workers, would be secure.”

The veteran Trotskyist Richard Fraser, *continued on page 6*



Forman/Boston Herald American

Left: Racist anti-busing mob in Boston attacks black lawyer Ted Landsmark, mobilizations to stop racist attacks on busing for school integration.



WV Photo

Right: Spartacist contingent at 1974 demonstration calls for labor/black mobilizations to stop racist attacks on busing for school integration.

(continued from page 5)

whose programmatic contributions on the black question we embrace, stated in his lectures in 1954, titled “The Negro Struggle and the Proletarian Revolution”:

“The economic well-being and the political stability of the capitalist class rest upon the renewed degradation of the Negro people after the Civil War.

"It was this degradation that brought forth Booker T. Washington. He was the instrument by which the Negroes acceded to the terms of defeat."

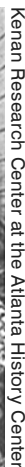
—printed in the Prometheus
Research Library's
*In Memoriam: Richard S.
Fraser*, Prometheus Research
Series No. 3 (August 1990)

Fraser pointed out that in his famous Atlanta speech in 1895, Washington formally renounced the struggle for equality.

In pursuit of their class interests, the Northern capitalists betrayed the fight for black equality following the Civil War. The Compromise of 1877, which settled a disputed election, placed the Republican Rutherford B. Hayes in the White House in exchange for pulling the Federal troops—the occupying Union Army—from the South. The Northern capitalists feared an alliance between the Southern planters and agrarian interests in the West and temporarily backed voting and civil rights for the black freedmen. However, the Radical Republicans' demand for land confiscation ran counter to the bourgeoisie's class interests. The more conservative Republicans opposed this as a dangerous precedent that would perhaps put some wrong ideas in the heads of their wage slaves in the North, who might get rid of the "sacred" capitalist private property system.

Through Klan terror, intimidation, fraud and disenfranchisement, the Northern capitalists and their Southern allies “reconciled.” The political counterrevolution brought to power what became known as the Redeemer governments supported by Northern capital. The freedmen were pushed out of skilled jobs they previously held and forced into conditions of semi-servitude through debt peonage, sharecropping and convict leasing (now referred to as “slavery by another name”). Between 1885 and 1900, 2,500 lynchings, mostly of black people, occurred in the United States. This led Mark Twain to write an essay titled “The United States of Lyncherdom.”

There was a long depression during the 1890s and also bitterly fought labor struggles throughout the South, including a protracted strike in 1894 of black and white coal miners in Alabama. The Knights of Labor undertook organizing black workers into unions, with mixed results. Initially they stood against racial discrimination in the unions. But they were overwhelmed by, and capitulated to, the galloping white-supremacist reaction, eventually allowing separate charters for



September 1906: At least two dozen black people were killed and thousands driven from their homes during racist pogrom in Atlanta.

the black Knights of Labor members.

There was also a Populist revolt against “the monopolists” and for the “little people.” During this period, nearly a quarter of ex-slaves had farms, and many white farmers were being ruined and driven to join with their black counterparts. There was a tentative union between black and white farmers, but it was ultimately doomed to failure.

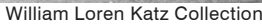
One of the main Populist leaders was Tom Watson of Georgia, a former Democrat. Watson and the Populists won support from poor black and white farmers and sharecroppers, not just on isolated farms but also in what was known as Ala-

ern planters raised \$40,000 to defeat him, a considerable sum at that time. President Cleveland remarked that defeating Watson was just as important as his own election. After he was defeated, Watson became a vile white-supremacist demagogue.

As we stated in our programmatic document on the fight for black liberation, “Black and Red” (reprinted in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 9, “Basic Documents of the Spartacist League”): “The small farmer class itself could not be a real contender for political power in a capitalist society, while the dynamics of private farming inevitably brought about sharp competition among the farmers.” With the bloody



Left: Ida B. Wells, critic of Washington and anti-lynching fighter. Right: 1917 march in New York City protested national wave of lynchings by race-terrorist KKK.



bama's "Black Belt" industrial area. This caught the attention of then-president Grover Cleveland. The prospect of joint class struggle against the capitalist exploiters scared the hell out of them. Big Business mobilized to smash the Populists. When Watson ran for Congress in 1892 on the Populist ticket, the capitalists and South-

defeat of Populism and the overturning of democratic rights for blacks, the stage was set for the subsequent rapid disenfranchisement of black people and poor whites and the codification of Jim Crow segregation. That resulted in the total consolidation of black people as a race-color caste, integrated into the U.S. capitalist economy but forcibly segregated at the bottom of society.

Policing Southern Black Labor

After the defeat of the Populists, Southern capitalists and planters and especially the wealthy Northern capitalists began to seriously cultivate Booker T. Washington. His philosophy of “industrial education” was bound up with his anti-union message. He stressed the importance of staying in your place and not struggling for your rights. Speaking to a convention of industrialists in Alabama in the late 1890s, he said: “It is here alone, by reason of the presence of the Negro, that capital is freed from the tyranny and despotism that prevents you from employing whom you please.” What he meant was seen at Tuskegee, where some of the graduates—for example, teachers and social workers—were enlisted to preach subservience to the bosses. They were sent to mining areas and other workplaces to exhort black workers to work harder, to obey management, to avoid unions and to stick with the church.

Some workers were not listening. One

report stated, "A Birmingham camp physician noted in 1907 that 'the churches wield only a limited influence' over the lives of black miners, who 'make no pretense toward being religious, even tho[sic] moral.'"

White bosses sent Booker T. Washington twice to Norfolk, Virginia, to help police black workers. The bosses threatened to hire immigrant labor. Washington was an enemy of immigrant workers. In his Atlanta address of 1895, he railed against them: "To those of the white race who look to the incoming of those of foreign birth and strange tongue and habits for the prosperity of the South, were I permitted I would repeat what I say to my own race, 'cast down your bucket where you are.'"

As labor historian Brian Kelly noted in “Sentinels for New South Industry” (*Labor History*, Vol. 44, No. 3, 2003): “Employers frustrated with their lack of success in anchoring black workers to steady, full-time industrial labor frequently solicited race leaders’ advice, and many responded enthusiastically.” Washington spoke on at least two occasions to orchestrated mass meetings at the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company, one of the largest employers of black industrial labor in the South. He reportedly exhorted workers to “stick to their jobs and, instead of recklessly and foolishly spending their good wages, build better homes and churches.”

Booker T. Washington's imperialist masters made very good use of him. He had the ear of presidents like the "progressive" Theodore Roosevelt, who had earlier been Assistant Secretary of the Navy when U.S. imperialism was butchering Filipino independence fighters, a

history which is still very well known there today.

Roosevelt got Washington's help in introducing dark-skinned Cubans to the "American Way" after the Spanish-American War of 1898. Some black Cubans attended Tuskegee. According to one account cited by Kelly: "In 1898 Washington entered an arrangement with the US military allowing matriculation of Cuban and Puerto Rican students at Tuskegee Institute. Some among them led a series of strikes and mini-rebellions at Tuskegee over complaints about food and prohibitions against their playing baseball on Sundays." Largely because of these students, "the school had to construct a guardhouse. The Cubans refused to eat...and struck against their work. When a teacher and a student tried to put [one of their leaders] in jail, his compatriots jumped them, but they succeeded in making the arrest. Guns were flourished before order was restored." Black American students also staged a brief strike there in 1903; it didn't last very long.

Washington's Black Critics

The early 20th century was known as the Progressive Era, with mild liberal reforms which, of course, didn't touch the foundations of the capitalist system. There was a small but vocal coterie of black critics of Washington's "bootstraps" philosophy. One of the most outspoken was black journalist Monroe Trotter, who resided in Boston and was close friends

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Obama and the Ex-Klansman

We print below the remarks of a comrade at the New York forum on Booker T. Washington.

Many people we talk to tell us they will vote for Obama in opposition to the openly racist Republican candidates. But a vote for this capitalist politician is a vote *against* the emancipation of the working class. A vote for Obama is a vote *against* black freedom and equality.

This forum on the rehabilitation of Booker T. Washington reminded me of a speech Obama gave at the funeral of Democratic Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia in July of 2010. Senator Byrd was a former leader of the KKK, later an arch-segregationist who unsuccessfully filibustered the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Senator Byrd's endorsement of Obama

for president was crucial to his 2008 campaign's effort to prove to the bourgeoisie that he was a safe bet for their class interests.

So Obama gave a speech at Senator Byrd's funeral in 2010. After making a coy reference to the things this ex-Klan leader "said and things he did that he came to regret," Obama went on to say, "Robert Byrd was a mountain eagle and his lowest swoop was still higher than the other birds upon the plain." That was Obama's tribute, quoted in the *Washington Post* online.

Racist terrorists like the KKK are not ancient history. The Spartacist League has organized protests aimed at stopping fascist terrorists, who pose a deadly threat against the working class. We

look to the power of labor to do this, not the capitalist state. One of these mobilizations we organized was in Springfield, Illinois, in 1994 and hundreds of trade unionists, students and others took part. It was just prior to this rally that our party had our first and possibly only interaction with Obama.

We invited people we were very much in political disagreement with to endorse our united-front demonstration. Our call to stop the Klan touched a nerve with pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucrats and even black Democratic politicians like Emil Jones, and many of them endorsed our united front. After we got Emil Jones's endorsement, one of our comrades in Chicago called up Emil Jones's protégée, Barack Obama. Obama refused to

endorse the mobilization to stop the Klan from marching in Springfield.

All of this transpired in December 1993-January 1994, before Barack Obama became an Illinois state senator, U.S. Senator, and then Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism. Now he's a war criminal like the presidents who came before him, with the blood of many thousands of Afghanis, Iraqis, Libyans and Pakistanis on his hands. Now he has many notches in his belt, like the deportation of 1,000,000 immigrants, the union-busting bailout of the auto industry, and legalizing the indefinite military detention of U.S. citizens.

The Spartacist League has a program to fight against imperialism, racial oppression and the exploitation of the multiracial working class. Don't vote for your class enemies in the Democratic Party. Join us in the struggle to build a workers party that will fight for socialist revolution.

with W.E.B. Du Bois. Trotter was jailed in 1903 for "disturbing the peace" during a speech Washington gave there. Washington had his spies very busy trying to ferret out opponents who might show up. Washington supporters had a hard time restraining the hecklers and maintaining order. After Trotter tried to speak, it got into the white and black newspapers for the first time that there was a black opposition to Washington's accommodationist program.

W.E.B. Du Bois was one of the most prominent critics of Washington in the early 20th century. Du Bois criticized Washington for abandoning any struggle for political and civil rights. Du Bois envisioned a "talented tenth" leadership of college-educated blacks who were presumably uniquely equipped to lead the black masses in struggles for higher education, political power and basic democratic rights. Du Bois didn't reject everything favored by Washington. He stated in his book *The Souls of Black Folk*: "So far as Mr. Washington preaches Thrift, Patience, and Industrial training for the masses, we must hold up his hands and strive with him." In fact, they were friends for a while.

In 1903, Du Bois taught summer school at Tuskegee and he regularly dined with Washington. But when Du Bois came out with his book criticizing his leadership, Washington took off the gloves. Unknown to the public, Washington had behind the scenes funded a number of black newspapers. He made sure that Du Bois' book would get unfavorable reviews. In 1904, Washington organized a meeting of black "notables"—Du Bois was invited—at Carnegie Hall. Du Bois got there and saw that Washington had all his Bookerites there. He was outmaneuvered. They set up some committee called the "Committee of 12" that was elected to pursue "progress" for blacks, and it disappeared into the mist of do-nothingness.

In 1905, Du Bois was one of the initiators of the Niagara movement. This eventually led to the creation of the NAACP, which was initially led by reformist social democrats. Oswald Garrison Villard, grandson of the white abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison (who represented the "moral suasion" wing of the abolitionist movement), was one of its leading forces.

Washington faced some severe trials in 1906. There was the anti-black pogrom in Atlanta that began on September 22. It lasted for five days. Lynch mobs pulled black passengers from streetcars, destroyed black businesses. Thousands of black people were driven out of Atlanta. The Atlanta newspapers fanned the flames. They printed unsubstantiated rumors of black men raping white women. There was also a gubernatorial campaign going on in which the candidates seized on the racist outcry of "black beast rapists." A couple of dozen black people were killed during this pogrom (some estimates were a lot more), and five whites were also killed.

Washington gave a back-handed defense



Thousands of black and white miners march on Red Diamond mine during Alabama coal strike of 1908.

of the lynching; he viewed lynching in class terms—the "better" whites didn't do that. Washington's National Negro Business League had met in Atlanta three weeks before this racist pogrom. In his speech at that convention he stated, "The Negro is committing too much crime North and South. We should see to it, as far as our influence extends, that crimes are fewer in number; otherwise the race will permanently suffer." So he blamed the victims for their oppression, and the bosses' papers just ate it up. In commenting on this speech, the *Atlanta Constitution* ran an incendiary headline: "Law-Breaking Negroes Worst Menace to Race."

At the time of the pogrom, Du Bois, who had been away in rural Alabama, quickly returned home to Atlanta. He grabbed his shotgun and waited. He was lucky that things had died down. Some of Washington's supporters, like the journalist T. Thomas Fortune, advocated armed self-defense, but Washington did not want to hear anything about that.

There was another atrocity in 1906, in Brownsville on the southernmost tip of Texas, near the Mexican border. Just to give you a brief synopsis, from a new biography of Washington:

"On the evening of August 13, 1906, a band of unidentified men opened fire on the streets of Brownsville near Fort Brown, where three companies of black soldiers of the Twenty-Fifth Infantry regiment had been moved from their previous post in Nebraska. A bartender was killed and a policeman badly wounded. Just who was responsible for the incident was never proven. But townspeople who resented black soldiers in their midst blamed a dozen members of the black regiment for the shooting, even though the commander of the fort said all men were accounted for at the time. The twelve accused soldiers were imprisoned. The remainder of the regiment, 155 men, remained silent when asked what they knew of the incident. After several cursory investigations the entire regiment of 167 men was charged with insubordina-

tion, with the recommendation that they be dishonorably discharged."

—Raymond W. Smock, *Black Leadership in the Age of Jim Crow* (2009)

The case went to Roosevelt for review. He waited until after the November 1906 elections to make a final decision on the black soldiers' dismissal. He needed the black vote at the time for the Congressional elections, so he temporized. Washington implored him to discharge *some* of the regiments. Roosevelt refused to heed his advice. Many career soldiers with distinguished records in the Army were thrown out of the service. They lost their pay, pensions and possibility of obtaining future jobs with the federal government. Washington's closest friends unsuccessfully urged him to break with Roosevelt.

Black women such as anti-lynching fighter Ida B. Wells were especially sharp critics of Washington's accommodationism. Wells drew out the reactionary underpinnings of Washington's program and his gibes against college-educated blacks: "The result is that the world which

listens to him and which largely supports his educational institution, has almost unanimously decided that college education is a mistake for the Negro."

Reviving Washington in the Obama Years

Anti-integration, pro-Booker T. Washington sentiments are increasingly expressed by younger (and not so young) pro-Democratic Party, pro-Obama liberal academics as well as celebrities like Bill Cosby, Juan Williams and many others. A good place to start is a recent book by Stephen Tuck, an Oxford University lecturer in American History, titled *We Ain't What We Ought To Be* (2010), which has been well received by many "radical" academics, such as Robin Kelley.

Tuck notes that "Washington dismissed Reconstruction as a 'strange' mistake. He denounced black leaders who complained about white supremacy. He then called on black southerners to stay in the South and remember that 'no race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as writing a poem.'" In the next paragraph, Tuck suggests that Washington was a very astute leader:

"Washington's silences were strategic. He believed that if black southerners could not have the democracy part of the American system, they should at least seek the capitalist part. With some three-fourths of black Southerners barely eking out a living on the land, he judged the capitalist part more pressing anyway.... With no state help on offer, self-help made sense."

Juan Williams wrote a book whose title speaks volumes about the program of latter-day Booker T. Washington, pro-capitalist, accommodationist thought: *Enough: The Phony Leaders, Dead-End Movements, and Culture of Failure That Are Undermining Black America—and What We Can Do About It* (2006). This book both defends Washington and slanders his critics, remarking: "Black leaders of all ideological stripes agreed that the key to racial progress was black people helping themselves."

Christopher Alan Bracey, a professor of law and of African and African American

continued on page 9

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Defend the Unions Through Class Struggle!

Canada: Capitalist War on Public Sector Jobs, Services

The following article is reprinted from Spartacist Canada No. 172 (Spring 2012), newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

SPARTACIST CANADA

Claiming a need to “balance the budget” and “keep Canada competitive,” the ruling class is bringing down the austerity axe on tens of thousands of government jobs from coast to coast. As in the U.S. and throughout Europe, the capitalists are trying to make the working class pay for the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression—a crisis that was caused by the capitalist system itself. This one-sided class war has brought massive unemployment and poverty, which the rulers have wielded to further weaken the trade unions.

First the capitalists ravaged the private sector unions, whose leaders have proved utterly incapable of mounting an effective defense. Now they are targeting what the *Globe and Mail* editorialists haughtily call the “voracious public sector unions.” With 71 percent of public sector workers in unions, governments at every level are intent on extracting huge concessions, putting labour’s hard-won gains—seniority rights, pensions, health plans, sick benefits—on the chopping block. Unless there is some serious working-class struggle, which alone can beat back this ruling-class offensive, it is about to get much worse.

With cuts of \$4 to \$8 billion planned for this year alone, the Harper Conservative government’s onslaught against workers and the poor continues unabated. While rewarding their friends with tax cuts and other largesse, the Tories have already cut housing, job training and health care for Natives, as well as programs for the elderly and unemployed and more. So deep are the cuts to Service Canada [government social services agency] that hundreds of thousands of already desperate unemployed workers are being made to wait weeks, and in some cases months, for their first EI [unemployment insurance] cheque. According to the Public Service Alliance of Canada, federal government cutbacks will lead to more than 100,000 job losses over the next three years.

In recession-ravaged Ontario, Dalton McGuinty’s Liberal government is preparing an austerity campaign that could well exceed the brutal cuts of the Mike Harris Tory regime in the 1990s. A government-commissioned report by former TD Bank chief economist Don Drummond calls for a wrenching 16.2 percent cut to Ontario government spending over the next seven years. Drummond, a key player in the federal Liberals’ massive cuts to jobs and social services in the 1990s, calls his hatchet job “pretty much unprecedented in Canadian post-war history.”

Drummond took particular aim at health care and education. Teachers will be forced to work more years and get lower pensions on retirement; some 10,000 non-teaching staff face the loss of their jobs. Drummond proposes that when collective agreements are renewed, the government take away accumulated sick time from teachers—a larcenous grab of some \$1.7 billion. After years of cutbacks and layoffs of nurses and other front-line



Doroszuk/Toronto Sun

Unions, community groups protest cuts in Toronto, April 2011.

staff, hospitals are to be further starved of funds and the door to privatization of health care opened wider. The bosses will be able to get rid of large numbers of workers by eliminating programs, gutting seniority rights and expanding management’s right to discipline and fire.

As the rulers take aim at the pensions of those who still have them, old people are being vilified for every imaginable

Instead of such urgently necessary class struggle, the union tops offer their own solutions to the capitalists’ budget deficit. Typical is OPSEU’s call for “higher taxes and at the very least a fair tax system.” The union misleaders couple an acceptance of capitalist austerity with loyalty to the NDP [New Democratic Party] social democrats or even the capitalist Liberals. It is a bitter irony that in the 2011 provin-



Reuters

Toronto, June 2009: Strike by city workers unions beat back worst of attacks by social-democratic mayor.

fiscal woe. Harper & Co. are now planning to make the already paltry Old Age Security program unavailable before the age of 67. Truly, the capitalist class destroys the human beings whose labour it exploits: workers must either die in the harness or live out their days as paupers. And with the ravages to the health care system, there may well be fewer people around to collect such pensions as still exist. Ghoulishly, Drummond’s report advises doctors to start talking to their middle-aged patients about “end of life health care.”

The Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) is right that these attacks will “guarantee levels of destitution and desperation not seen in Ontario in living memory.” But what the ruling class gets away with depends on the level of working-class opposition. An effective defense of jobs, pensions and unions requires hard *class struggle*—including preparation for strike action across the public sector—that draws in the unemployed, oppressed minorities and the poor.

cial election, nurses and teachers unions backed the McGuinty Liberals, who are now unleashing this firestorm on them.

Like most of the union misleaders, the reformist left slavishly backs the New Democrats. The Fightback group, which is an organic part of the NDP, perennially calls for the “NDP to power on a socialist program.” Such calls simply breed illusions that capitalism can be reformed to serve the interests of the working class. The NDP aims not to champion the cause of the workers (let alone establish socialism), but to administer the system of capitalist exploitation. In this spirit, Ontario NDP leader Andrea Horwath answered Drummond’s report by repeating her election vow to balance the Ontario budget. Another NDP MPP [Member of Provincial Parliament], Sarah Campbell, called it “a starting point.” Two decades ago, Bob Rae’s NDP government, ruling as the open agents of the capitalist class, ripped up union contracts, jailed striking workers and went after welfare mothers, immigrants, the old and the sick.

There have been protests, most recently against the austerity blitzkrieg of right-wing Toronto mayor Rob Ford. But the potential power of the unions has not been brought to bear. For the labour movement to beat back these attacks it will take a bullheaded fight based on the understanding that in this class-divided society, the interests of capital and labour are counterposed and irreconcilable.

Toronto: Ground Zero in War on Public Sector Unions

The recent course of events in Toronto offers a painful cautionary tale of how a quiescent and defeatist labour leadership disarms and weakens the potentially powerful unions in the face of concerted attack. Rob Ford came into office over a year ago vowing to get rid of 7,000 workers, contract out union jobs and slash social services. Ford is a crude buffoon, but his goal of dealing a body blow to Toronto’s civic unions is widely shared by the bourgeoisie and he has so far met with few obstacles.

There was a great outcry against Ford’s demand that every city agency and department cut its budget by 10 percent. Many of the proposed cuts, such as eliminating nutrition programs for 14,000 poor kids and slashing HIV prevention programs, were gratuitously cruel. Others, like the huge cuts to transit, were simply irrational. The city unions had a significant role in these protests, but their fighting power was dissolved by the union tops into the “community,” mirroring the “99 percent” populism of the Occupy movement. A tiny fraction of the most egregious budget cuts were shelved, but overall the city bosses got what they wanted: deep cuts to jobs and services. Criminally, this outcome was trumpeted as a victory by various union leaders and fake leftists. Typical of the latter were the International Socialists (I.S.), who made the absurd claim that this was “a huge setback to the Ford agenda” and “showed that people can fight City Hall” (*Socialist Worker*, February 2012).

The city played hardball from the start, threatening to lock out the workers and run scabs to enforce their union-wrecking. In the face of this, Mark Ferguson, president of Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 416, representing outside workers, quickly offered a three-year wage freeze and other givebacks. By his own account, the union “was making offers from the start: on wages, hours, scheduling and employment security” (*National Post*, 11 February). The only question was whether Ferguson could give away enough to satisfy the labour-haters at City Hall. As it turned out, he could and did.

In mid-February, when the city’s negotiators threatened to impose a contract that would have all but destroyed the union, the union tops cried uncle. With their backs to the wall and with no perspective of struggle, Local 416 members approved a contract that makes unprecedented concessions including a significant erosion of job security. The deal eliminates many of the impediments to contracting out and getting rid of unionized city workers. At the ratification vote, the union leadership declared, “We Beat Them Back.” To the contrary. Even though the union was not busted and its fighting capacity was not destroyed, this contract is a big defeat. Its consequences will reverberate throughout the labour

movement, most immediately against the 23,000 inside workers in CUPE Local 79 and 2,300 library workers who are facing equally harsh demands.

Ford's election was prepared by multiple anti-union attacks under former mayor David Miller, a social democrat associated with the NDP who was backed by both the union bureaucrats and the reformist left. In 2006, when transit workers in the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 113 were driven to a wildcat strike, Miller joined the anti-union hysteria, demanding massive fines from the union. Two years later, when the ATU struck again, the city demanded the province enact strikebreaking legislation, for which the provincial NDP caucus voted unanimously.

In 2009, Miller & Co. targeted Locals 416 and 79, aiming to destroy sick benefits and gut seniority rights. Though the city bosses won a crucial concession in terms of sick benefits, the two unions—which struck together—were able to beat back the worst of the attacks *because they fought tenaciously*. The 2009 strike subsequently became a lightning rod for the bosses' media and right-wing city councillors in their campaign of anti-union vitriol. Since then, it's been open season on city workers. As public taunting of transit workers became a local blood sport, Ford

got the McGuinty government to pass a law making transit strikes illegal. This easy win against the ATU—achieved with the acquiescence of the Local 113 leadership—paved the way for the broader drive against city workers. Epitomizing the labour tops' abject defeatism, a few months ago Local 416 leader Ferguson told the media, "we learned our lesson in 2009" as he offered to seek "efficiencies" and help the city save money off the backs of the workers.

An all-out fight that mobilized the power of the city unions in defense of the transit workers could have turned the tables on Ford and his cronies. But such a struggle, breaking through all the laws designed to tame the labour movement, would have meant a confrontation with the government and the capitalist state—centrally the cops and courts. Such a perspective is anathema to the labour misleaders, many of whom regard bourgeois law as holy writ. Worse yet, they embrace the police and prison guards—the armed fist of the capitalist state—not just as allies of the working class, but as fellow union members. These labour-hating thugs have no place in the unions! Yet OPSEU actually organizes prison guards, while Ferguson addresses the Toronto police as "brothers and sisters." The one exception to Ford's budget slashing was the cops,

who got an 11.5 percent pay hike.

Playing by the bosses' rules assures defeat. Take compulsory arbitration, which today is promoted by sections of the union misleadership as being in the interest of the workers. The whole purpose of arbitration is to take away the workers' most powerful weapon—their ability to withdraw their labour through strike action. Beginning with the very right to form unions, all the major gains that labour has wrested from the bosses in the past century were once "illegal" by the norms of bourgeois "law and order." Hard-fought strikes galvanize the rest of the labour movement and, when victorious, tear up the bosses' anti-strike laws and injunctions.

There Will Be Class Struggle or Defeat

The social power of public sector workers is not that of industrial workers, who can directly stop the wheels of production and thus of profit from turning. But public sector unions include transportation, utility and other workers who provide the means and services by which the economy runs—the infrastructure vital for a modern industrial economy. A serious labour counteroffensive would put paid to the supposed "public outrage" against the trade unions. Such a struggle would find many allies among those whose lives and

futures have been blighted by the capitalists and who know on some basic level that a defeat for the unions will only bring them further ruin.

This truth highlights that for the working class to beat back these attacks and triumph over the bankrupt rule of capital it must consciously organize the active support of all the oppressed. The working class must champion black youth facing police terror, desperate refugees and immigrants, Muslims targeted by the imperialists' "war on terror," Native peoples, women and gays. It must advocate independence for Quebec in order to clear the road to anti-capitalist class struggle in both English Canada and Quebec. Such a perspective requires, in the first instance, a struggle to replace the current pro-capitalist misleaders of the unions, who have brought defeat after defeat, and a sharp break with the politics of the NDP.

We desperately need a revolutionary workers party. Such a party—multiracial and internationalist—would mobilize the power of the working class to smash the bosses' austerity attacks across the country. Armed with a vision of struggle for a new society, the working class can rally all of the oppressed in a victorious war against the oppressor of all—the capitalist system. For workers revolution and a socialist North America! ■

Booker T. Washington...

(continued from page 7)

Studies at Washington University in St. Louis, wrote an interesting book, *Saviors or Sellouts: The Promise and Peril of Black Conservatism from Booker T. Washington to Condoleezza Rice* (2008). Bracey seeks to shield Washington from his actual support for white supremacy, for which Washington was handsomely rewarded. Filthy rich capitalist Andrew Carnegie gave Washington and his wife lifetime income.

Bracey rails against the "black conservatives," but he excuses their support to capitalism and covers for Washington's reactionary program. At the end of this book, he says:

"It would be a mistake to conclude, however, that Washington's eschewal of an open civil rights agenda and promotion of industrial education marked him as a 'sellout.' To some degree, it was simply a matter of emphasis. For instance, although Washington encouraged blacks to stay out of politics, he strongly opposed black disenfranchisement behind the scenes and privately financed 'test cases' in many southern states to challenge the constitutionality of restrictive voting laws. Though Washington supported literacy tests for voters, he publicly urged that such tests be applied fairly, and he signed petitions to state legislatures to oppose bills that would disenfranchise blacks unfairly."

One is tempted to ask Professor Bracey: Should we then embrace the legacy of the deceased rabid segregationist South Carolina Senator Strom Thurmond, who fathered a child with a black woman, because he "secretly" provided his daughter with financial support?

Former New Left radicals such as Earl Ofari Hutchinson, who once denounced Booker T. Washington, now praise him for having done a "masterful job." In 1970, Ofari wrote *The Myth of Black Capitalism*, which among other things sharply criticized Booker T. Washington's utopian "black capitalism." At that time, he stated:

"That many so-called black leaders should waste black people's valuable time and energy chasing another of the American ruling class's myths is understandable *but it is inexcusable*. For black Americans have the opportunity today as never before to learn from the experiences of the many sincere genuine revolutionary people throughout the world."

Now, without acknowledging his condemnation of Washington in the past, he belts this out:

"To understand the whole person, you have to put him in the context of the time he lived and worked.... Washington was embraced by Northern philanthropists. The Carnegies, the Rockefellers, the

Rosenwalds poured money into his programs and essentially subsidized Booker T. Washington. Given that endorsement, could he really have stepped outside that and said, 'Look, segregation is wrong. We are going to march; we're going to demonstrate, picket, and protest—use every means of political and social protest.'... Could he have challenged the philanthropists, none of whom were for black civil rights back then?... If he had spoken out, he'd have been buried."

—Uncle Tom or New Negro? (2006)

The late Manning Marable wrote a book in 1998 called *Black Leadership*. He pointed out Washington's support to



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strikebreaking during the bitterly fought 1908 Alabama coal miners strike. The Alabama United Mineworkers Union had 12,000 members, half of them black miners. After U.S. Steel refused to renew the workers' contracts and ordered substantial wage cuts, the miners announced a strike. The Alabama state government sent in convicts to scab. The strikers faced ruthless attacks from police, company goons and state militia. Many of their leaders were imprisoned. Marable notes that Washington made clear *his* side in this bloody class battle: "Negroes must not be 'given to strikes,' he declared. The collective bargaining process of unionism must be avoided as 'a form of slavery.'"

The Need for Revolutionary Leadership

The rulers of racist American capitalism continue to be haunted by the Civil War. It took a social revolution to uproot black chattel slavery. It will take a third American revolution, a workers revolution, to finish the Civil War.

In addition to naked force, the bourgeoisie requires deception in order to maintain

its class rule. Recently you might have seen in the press a "scholarly" paper published by the creepy Manhattan Institute called the "End of the Segregated Century." And as for more deception, Obama asserted in his January State of the Union address that "America is back." One obvious question is: back for whom?

The downturn of this capitalist economy continues. Manufacturing is slowing. It's the same old story: profits rise and the proletariat falls. In the U.S., some 50 million people don't have health insurance, 10-20 million are unemployed or under-



Chicago Tribune

Left: Obama speaking at Booker T. Washington High School in Memphis, Tennessee, trumpeted Washington's program of self-help, May 2011. Right: Families line up in Chicago for food and toys, Christmas Eve 2010.

employed, the homeless population is exploding and the jails and prisons bursting at the seams. Police killings of black and Latino youth mount, and a record number of immigrants, largely Mexican, have been deported. And now there is a vicious bipartisan assault against women's rights to have an abortion and access to contraceptives. Obama, who pretends that he's on the side of women, panders to the anti-abortion bigots.

The Republicans are openly pro-big business. They use brass knuckles to pound into the ground the exploited and the oppressed. The Democrats—the so-called "friends of labor"—administer their blows with steel pipes wrapped in perfumed velvet gloves. So pick your poison—or better yet, don't swallow it!

What we see today is the reality elaborated by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*, that the government is an executive committee that runs the common affairs of the bourgeoisie. There is a small number of people constituting the property-owning class, which exploits the masses of working people. Abroad, U.S. imperialism murders and maims count-

expropriate the capitalist exploiters. We say that those who labor must rule!

Key to this is the fight to reforge the Fourth International—an internationalist revolutionary party in the spirit of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks, who led the only successful workers revolution in history, the October Revolution of 1917. I want to end with a short quote from Lenin, who wrote to the American workers in 1919 as the Soviet regime was facing down counterrevolutionary forces trying to overthrow the newly formed workers state:

"Everywhere the working people, in spite of the influence of the old leaders with their chauvinism and opportunism penetrating them through and through, become aware of the rottenness of the bourgeois parliaments and of the necessity of the soviet power, the power of the working people, the dictatorship of the proletariat, for the sake of the emancipation of humanity from the yoke of capital. And Soviet power will win in the whole world, however furiously, however frantically the bourgeoisie of all countries rages and storms."

—"To the American Workers"
(23 September 1919) ■

Iran...

(continued from page 1)

makes a military attack by Israel and/or the imperialists that much more of a possibility. As we have repeatedly stressed, in the face of imperialist nuclear blackmail and continuing military threats, Iran has every reason to pursue getting nuclear weapons and adequate delivery systems to deter attack. In the event of military attack by the imperialists or their Israeli accomplices, working people internationally must take a clear side *with Iran*. As Marxists, we do not give the least political support to Iran’s reactionary Islamic regime. But it is the U.S. imperialist rulers who are the principal enemy of the world’s workers and oppressed.

In the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. has demonstrated its capacity to destroy regimes and in the process massacre hundreds of thousands of its victims. It is also clear that one by-product of these imperialist “triumphs” has been the unleashing of myriad national, religious and tribal rivalries, and, in the case of Iraq, the growing influence of Iran’s rulers. Those U.S. allies that sent small military contingents to Iraq and Afghanistan received nothing for their efforts except harsh criticism at home and, for the most part, have withdrawn their forces or are in the process of doing so.

Most significantly, the economies of the major capitalist powers are in the tank. Renewed war-mongering in the region has only served to increase the existing speculative bubble in oil prices and, thus, the prospects for a deepening of the worldwide recession. Faced with epidemic unemployment and savage assaults on living standards, working people in the U.S. are ill-disposed to the continuing presence of military forces in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as to the prospects of new wars. The fight against the depredations wrought by America’s rulers at home and abroad requires that the working class break its ties with the capitalist masters, primarily manifested in its allegiance to the Democratic Party. The road forward lies in forging a proletarian party that is based on the principle that the working class shares no common interest with the bosses and is devoted to the overthrow of the bourgeois order through socialist revolution.

Defend North Korea!

If the hype about Iranian nukes sounds like “Return of Weapons of Mass Destruction,” it is because, at bottom, it is a continuation of Washington’s drive to assert its domination of the planet. That drive was qualitatively increased after the counterrevolutionary overthrow of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92, which removed a strategic counterweight to U.S. imperialism.

The recipe for asserting such dominance varies little, as seen in the lead-up to the war and occupation of Iraq in 2003. Ten years of inspections by the imperialists’ agents of the IAEA guaranteed that

the country was effectively disarmed. During the decade or so of UN sanctions against the Saddam Hussein regime, an estimated one and a half million people, the majority of them children, died due to malnutrition, dirty drinking water and lack of medical supplies.

The arrogant rulers of U.S. imperialism feel no restraint in issuing their ultimatums. At last month’s “nuclear security summit” in Seoul, South Korea, Barack Obama lashed out at both capitalist Iran and the bureaucratically deformed workers state of North Korea. Backed by Japan and Britain, Obama demanded that North Korea stop a satellite launch planned for mid April, claiming that this would violate a ban on missile activity by the country. The Stalinist regime in Pyongyang, which says that the satellite is meant for surveys of North Korea’s countryside, answered that “we will never give up the right to launch a peaceful satellite, a legitimate right of a sovereign state and an essential step for economic development” (London *Telegraph*, 27 March).

Attempting to blackmail North Korea into relinquishing key means of defense,



Reuters

April 8: North Korean soldier stands guard in front of rocket at West Sea Satellite Launch Site near Pyongyang.

the U.S. over the past two decades has offered to provide aid if Pyongyang forgoes all military improvements, including the development of nuclear capacity and of ballistic rockets. In the latest deal, reached at the end of February, Washington agreed to provide 240,000 tons of food aid provided that North Korea end its uranium enrichment program and tests of long-range missiles and nuclear weapons. Mobilizing its Asian allies and client states behind it, the U.S. has threatened to abort the deal if the satellite mission goes forward. Japan and South Korea have threatened to (try to) shoot down the missile if it passes over their territories.

The U.S. launched the Korean War in 1950 to smash social revolution on the peninsula and to pursue the overthrow of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state that was created the year before. A peace treaty was never signed,



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Oman: Smugglers load goods for shipment to Iran, January 18. Imperialist sanctions are crippling Iranian economy.

and America’s South Korean client state refused to sign the armistice agreement between the U.S. and the North. Washington sees the Korean peninsula as a potential staging area from which to launch a counterrevolutionary assault on China. Since the Korean War, the U.S. has maintained a massive military presence

on Chinese aid and trade. Its sole strength is its substantial military power.

Whatever the intent of the upcoming missile launch, North Korea’s efforts to maintain and expand its military strength, including the development of nuclear capability, must be defended. As Trotskyists, we stand for the unconditional military defense of the deformed workers states—North Korea, China, Vietnam, Laos and Cuba—against imperialism and internal capitalist counterrevolution. At the same time, we fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies, whose policies are encapsulated in the reactionary dogma of “building socialism in one country.” Opposing the fight for international proletarian revolution, the privileged bureaucracies instead pursue a futile quest for “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism, undermining the defense of those states against the class enemy.

A stark expression of Stalinist treachery is Beijing’s complicity in attempts to disarm North Korea. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime has joined four capitalist countries in round after round of “talks” aimed at suppressing North Korea’s nuclear development. This only strengthens the hands of the U.S., Japanese and European imperialists, who seek the overthrow of the Peoples Republic of China—the largest and most powerful of the remaining deformed workers states—and the transformation of the Chinese mainland back into a sphere of untrammled exploitation. Defense of China, which is highly dependent on the flow of Iranian oil, is also undermined by the CCP bureaucracy’s support to all four previous rounds of UN sanctions against Iran.

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Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

BAY AREA

Wednesday, April 25, 7 p.m.
For Political Revolution to Oust the Stalinist Bureaucracies
Defend China and North Korea against Imperialism and Internal Counterrevolution
San Francisco State University Hensill Hall Room 201 (near the Science Building)
Information and readings: (510) 839-0851 sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

Visit the ICL Web Site: www.icl-fi.org

LOS ANGELES

Wednesday, April 18, 6:30 p.m.
For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!
Contradictions of the Civil Rights Movement: A Marxist Analysis
UCLA, Rolfe Hall, Room 3131
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239 • slsycla@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Tuesday, May 8, 7:30 p.m.
May 1968: French Workers in Struggle
CCNY, NAC Room 1/211
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025 • nysl@tiac.net

Earlier this month, 180 U.S. Marines arrived in Darwin in northern Australia, the first installment of a planned 2,500 troops to be stationed there as part of the growing encirclement of China. In the name of “fighting terrorism,” the U.S. has in the past decade enhanced its military presence in the Philippines and resumed open military relations with Indonesia, in addition to establishing bases in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Washington has also strengthened military ties with the Japanese imperialists and continues to buttress capitalist Taiwan. We join our comrades of the Spartacist Group Japan in calling to smash the counterrevolutionary alliance of U.S. and Japanese imperialism through workers revolution on both sides of the Pacific.

Intrigues Against Iran

The imperialist powers that have Iran in their crosshairs today have historically provided support for Israel’s nuclear program while helping to maintain a veil over the extent of the Zionists’ nuclear stockpile. The international working class is indebted to Mordechai Vanunu, a former technician at Israel’s Dimona nuclear facility, who in 1986 revealed that Israel had acquired an arsenal of some 200 nuclear warheads. For his heroic exposure of the scale of this doomsday machine, which targeted the USSR as well as countries in the Near East, Vanunu was convicted of treason and served 18 years in prison. He has been forbidden to leave Israel since his release in 2004.

Iran has also been on the receiving end of covert operations by Israel, Britain and the U.S. In January, Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan became the latest victim of a series of assassinations of Iran’s nuclear scientists. This comes in the context of unexplained bomb explosions at nuclear facilities. Earlier the Stuxnet computer virus had disabled many centrifuges in Iran’s enrichment facilities. Today, the U.S. continues to send surveillance drones over Iran, which seized one of the spy vehicles after it crashed last year. As the *Washington Post* (7 April) reports, the drone flights are “only a small part of a broad espionage campaign involving the NSA [National Security Agency], which intercepts e-mail and electronic communications, as well as the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, which scours satellite imagery.”

In their war drive against Iran, Israel’s Zionist rulers have the backing of the venal capitalist rulers of many neighboring Arab states. Exacerbating religious tensions in the region, Sunni Muslim states led by Saudi Arabia have become increasingly belligerent toward Shi’ite Iran. Saudi Arabia, a massively armed and repressive sheikdom, has been a linchpin of U.S. domination of the oil-rich Gulf region since the 1940s. Regarding Iran, Saudi King Abdullah has been egging on the U.S. to “cut off the head of the snake.” While drawing down forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. is reportedly planning to beef up its military contingent in Kuwait while reinforcing its naval presence in the Persian Gulf and strengthening its military alliance

with Gulf states. Meanwhile, NATO has begun operating a new anti-missile radar system on Turkish soil, 435 miles from Iran.

Iran has become further isolated in the region by the instability in Syria, Tehran’s most significant Arab ally. Syria is a patchwork of potentially hostile ethnic, national and sectarian groupings where the ruling minority Alawites hold sway over the Sunni majority, Kurds, Druze and others. For over a year, Bashar al-Assad’s reactionary Ba’athist regime has faced, and brutally repressed, an insurgency dominated by reactionary forces centrally from the Sunni Muslim population and backed by sundry imperialist and regional powers. The U.S., Britain and Turkey have given their blessing to the arming of the Syrian rebels, using proxies to avoid openly flouting UN sanctions against Syria. The three countries have said that “they could welcome Saudi and Qatari efforts to give weapons to the rebel Free Syrian Army” (*Financial Times*, 1 April), while the U.S. is chipping in with “non-lethal” aid as well as drone surveillance flights.

Key Syrian opposition leaders have appealed for imperialist intervention, echoing the “rebels” who became willing tools for the NATO terror bombing of Libya last year (see article, page 12). The Libyan opposition to the rule of the bourgeois strongman Muammar el-Qaddafi initially took the form of a low-intensity civil war overlaid by tribal and regional divisions, a conflict in which revolutionary Marxists had no side. But when the imperialist bombing began, we did have a side: for defense of semicolonial Libya against imperialist attack while giving no political support to the Qaddafi



Tunis, February 24: Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and British Foreign Minister William Hague (second from right) with their United Arab Emirates and Turkish counterparts at conference to aid Syrian “opposition.”

regime. Today we demand: Imperialist hands off Syria! In the event of imperialist attack, we would stand for the defense of Syria while maintaining proletarian political opposition to Assad’s blood-soaked rule.

Iran and Proletarian Revolution

The Near East is a battleground of imperialist rivalries, mainly driven by the need to control the region’s oil reserves. The region is also characterized by deep-



Tehran, January 13: Mourners carry coffin of assassinated Iranian nuclear scientist Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan.

going oppression—of women, of national, religious and ethnic minorities as well as homosexuals. Iran’s working people, youth and women have been chafing under the mullahs’ rule, as have its many national and ethnic minorities, such as the Kurds, Baluchis, Azerbaijanis and Turks. The multinational Iranian working class, leading all the oppressed behind it, must overthrow the Persian-chauvinist, clericalist regime. Key to this perspective is the forging of a Leninist workers party that fights for proletarian rule in Iran and the broader region. This is necessarily linked to the need for workers in the U.S., Britain and elsewhere to sweep away the rapacious imperialist rulers through workers revolutions.

The “Iranian revolution” that brought

and leftists were jailed and executed. Uniquely, the international Spartacist tendency, forerunner of the International Communist League, championed the proletariat’s class interests against the forces of Islamic reaction. We said: Down with the Shah! Down with the mullahs! Workers to power!

Iran’s multinational proletariat has suffered decades of intense repression. Today, along with most other layers of Iranian society, it is further ground down by the imperialist economic stranglehold and the regime’s austerity measures. To emerge as a class fighting in its own interest and in the interest of all the impoverished and oppressed, it must be broken from religious fundamentalism and all bourgeois political forces, including “pro-democracy” outfits like the bourgeois “Green Movement of Hope,” which itself is led by clerical authorities.

That movement emerged in 2009 during the presidential elections between Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Mir Hussein Moussavi, a “reform” cleric who was prime minister for eight years under Khomeini. After losing the utterly fraudulent election, Moussavi placed himself at the head of the subsequent mass protests. About a year ago, Moussavi was placed under house arrest, from which he continues to organize the “Green Movement.” Moussavi is no less a butcher than his rivals in the current regime. While he was prime minister from 1981 to 1989, untold thousands of leftists, Kurds and women’s rights activists were slaughtered in the prisons and buried in mass graves. A decade later, in 1999, militant student protests were drowned in blood by the government of Mohammad Khatami, now a Moussavi ally.

In Iran as elsewhere, the key to mobilizing the proletariat in its class interests is the leadership of a revolutionary workers party modeled on the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, which led the workers to power in the Russian October Revolution of 1917. The International Communist League is dedicated to building such parties throughout the world as sections of a reformed Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. ■

Libya...

(continued from page 12)

onslaught, the imperialist-backed rebels unexpectedly became...agents of the imperialists. An article in the ISO’s *International Socialist Review* (May-June 2011), titled “Libya’s Revolution, U.S. Intervention, and the Left,” declared: “In the short space of a few weeks, it appears that the Libyan opposition...are increasingly putting themselves in a position of providing cover for the Western attempt to roll back the Arab revolution and to maintain the flow of Libyan oil.”

The stark fact is that the ISO & Co. acted as cheerleaders for the Libyan opposition, which never made a secret of their desire for imperialist intervention to back up their drive to oust Qaddafi. Meanwhile, the Workers World Party (WWP) opposed

the NATO intervention, but as champions of the nationalist Qaddafi dictatorship, which long disguised its brutal rule as “anti-imperialist.” But the ISO and WWP found unity last spring by joining hands with liberal pacifist groups in building protests against the Afghanistan and Iraq occupations that raised the timeworn reformist appeal for money for jobs and education, not war.

The role of the reformists is to hide the reality that imperialist war crimes are an inevitable part of the same capitalist system that grinds down the working class, black people, immigrants and the poor at home. In opposing imperialist wars and occupations, revolutionary Marxists in the “belly of the beast” fight to forge a workers party that will infuse the proletariat with the understanding of its historic task of overthrowing the capitalist order through socialist revolution. ■

Available in Arabic

Statement of the International Executive Committee of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

Defend Libya Against Imperialist Attack!

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For Permanent Revolution Across North Africa!

Egypt: Mass Upheaval Challenges Dictatorship

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بيان من اللجنة التنفيذية الدولية لتضحية الشعوبية الإسلامية (رابطة أممية)

دافعوا عن ليبيا ضد الهجوم الامبريالي!

تدعو اللجنة الشعبية الاممية (رابطة اممية) الجدل في جميع أنحاء العالم لوقف الدفاع العسكري عن ليبيا، الدولة التي المستعمر، ضد الهجوم الذي بدأ بالأساس على يد الحلفاء من الحكومات الامبريالية الغربية. الفوج والمواد والموارد التي التي يمتنعون وحكام الولايات المتحدة، والولايات المتحدة مع الحكومات الامبريالية الاخرى وبمباركة الفوج والمواد والموارد التي التي يمتنعون في جامعة الدول العربية لم يقدروا لحظة واحدة في العمل على الدعوة الاخيرة التي حذرت، حيث ان الامم المتحدة يوم الخميس فليح اعداد لا تخشى من الاوردة باسم "محاكمة المظالم" وحسب الامم المتحدة، والهيئات الدولية التي هي في مصر الفرنسية من جانب ما ايجتبه الهيئات الصهيونية من قبل الولايات المتحدة وبريطانيا، وبدأت في اطار النظام العسكري في مصر بترافق الاشارة لوقت المظاهرات في بنغازي، من حيث الصهيونية وبنية الجذور الفكرية التي احتلت العراق ولفلسطين اليوم برامتها وافرسانا تاريخيا. قد لفتنا مناجاة لثوق الوصف في التاريخ الاممي والاربابا وبنية الفكر والهيئات في مصر، التي تقرر الاستعماري لتلك المظالم، وتنتشر ان انجازها التي تقرر الآن في وحدة الجبهة الاممية، التي هي اليوم، هي الصلوة عن مثل ما يحصل الى نصف، مكان الامم برفه في شرق ليبيا حاكمها الاستعماري في قلب الحرب العالمية الثانية.

لقد اتخذ الصراع في ليبيا قبل الهجوم العالمي شكل حرب اعلى منطقة بالانتماءات القبلية والاثنية، بين حكومة العقيد معمر القذافي، وبين الحكومات الامبريالية الغربية في الشمال والشرق واليمين.

NATO War Crimes in Libya

In March 2011, a dinghy packed with 72 black Africans fleeing the NATO bombing of Libya and the poverty and racist persecution they had suffered there ran out of fuel and drifted at sea for two weeks. The boat's desperate occupants sent out repeated distress calls to nearby NATO ships. The imperialist military commanders left the refugees to die of starvation and thirst.

Only nine survived. When they eventually made it to Europe, their harrowing story was picked up by the London *Guardian*. They described how, within hours of the first distress signal, a military helicopter dropped off some bottles of water and a few packets of biscuits before disappearing over the horizon. Days later, after half the occupants had already died, the boat drifted so close to a large military vessel that the refugees could see sailors on the deck taking photos of them. Frantically appealing for help, the despairing passengers held aloft bodies of the dead, but the warship simply pulled away.

This March 29, the Council of Europe, which includes representatives of 47 capitalist countries, issued a report on its investigation of the incident, which took place amid the NATO imperialists' bombing campaign in support of forces arrayed against the regime of Libyan strongman Muammar el-Qaddafi. The Council report is a cynical whitewash, blandly concluding that "NATO did not fully take up its responsibilities" to save the refugees' lives.

Led by the U.S., France and Britain, the NATO war against Libya was a stark illustration of the workings of the imperialist system, in which a handful of advanced capitalist countries terrorize and subjugate the world's weaker and more backward societies in the pursuit of spheres of exploitation. It was sanctioned by the United Nations—an assemblage of imperialist murderers, their victims and accomplices. Some 1,500 refugees from Libya died last year trying to make it to Europe. Citing the succession of boats loaded with refugees that sank in a small sea packed with NATO warships, we wrote at the time: "This cannot be called anything but mass murder" ("Refugees Drown as Imperialists Step Up War on Libya," WV No. 981, 27 May 2011).

Before the imperialist attack, Libya was being racked by what was a low-intensity civil war between Qaddafi's bourgeois regime and an imperialist-backed opposition based in the east of the country, heavily overlaid by tribal and regional divisions. In that conflict, the proletariat had no side. However, with the beginning of the NATO bombing on 19 March 2011, the civil war became subordinated to imperialist military intervention. The anti-Qaddafi forces—a collection of former Qaddafi henchmen, monarchists, Islamic fundamentalists, tribal chiefs and others—acted as the ground troops for the imperialists.

From the start of the bombardment, we said that workers around the world should take a stand for the defense of Libya against the imperialist powers, without giving any political support to the Qaddafi regime. We noted that the imperialist intervention, cynically launched in the name of protecting civilians, would slaughter countless men, women and children.

Last month, a UN Commission of



AFP

Mourners gather around coffins during a funeral after August 8 NATO bombing of the village of Majer, east of Tripoli. Leaflet dropped in Libya by NATO reads: "NATO is here to protect civilians."



Inquiry declared that the "rebels" had engaged in war crimes during the NATO offensive by carrying out such acts as torture of suspected opponents and revenge attacks directed against entire communities. Recurring throughout the litany of atrocities in the UN report are lynchings, beatings and racist abuse directed by the imperialist-backed forces against dark-skinned Libyans and black Africans.

the support of NATO bombing, drove out all of its 30,000 residents. These were mainly black descendants of slaves brought by Arab slave-traders to this part of North Africa in the 18th and 19th centuries. Much of the town was razed, and the word "slave" was scrawled on the walls of buildings left standing. Refugees from Tawergha were pursued throughout the country, including in refugee camps,



EPA

Refugees from Libya reach Lampedusa, Italy. While pounding Libya with bomb attacks, NATO left scores of refugees to die at sea.

Those forces have plumbed new depths in the legacy of racism that was fostered under Qaddafi's regime, which had subjected black African migrant workers to arbitrary arrest and deportation—and at times outright pogromist attacks—while using them as scapegoats for unemployment and other ills. The rebels, as they seized areas formerly held by the Qaddafi government, carried out their own pogroms against black Africans, whom they labeled as pro-Qaddafi mercenaries.

In one case described in detail by the UN Commission, the Libyan opposition in August 2011 attacked the town of Tawergha southeast of Tripoli and, with

and rounded up to be tortured or killed. Scores of Tawerghan men and women told of being forced to crawl on all fours and bark while the rebels called them "dogs" or forced them to acknowledge their tormentors as their slave masters.

The victory of the anti-Qaddafi ground forces was made possible by the campaign of NATO air bombardment—by official count, some 7,700 bombs and missiles were unleashed on the country—that left its own trail of slaughter of civilians. In a single attack on the village of Majer, east of Tripoli, some 34 civilians were slaughtered on 8 August 2011 when NATO warplanes dropped a series

of laser-guided, 500-pound bombs on three homes. Contrast that wanton destruction of human life with the imperialists' painstaking care to avoid the slightest impairment of Libya's 40 critical oil and gas fields: The only damage to speak of, throughout the entire war, was at an oil field in the east where a transformer got knocked out. The massacre at Majer included a tactic that survivors at several other sites also recounted: NATO bombers would restrike targets minutes after the first attack, thus dropping high-explosive ordnance on doctors and other civilians rushing to aid the wounded. The word for this is *terrorism*.

Following the capture and gruesome murder of Qaddafi last October, a gloating President Obama proclaimed: "The Libyan people can now celebrate their freedom." In fact, much of the population has been subjected to an all-sided reign of terror. A provisional government, the National Transitional Council (NTC), oversees the flow of oil, negotiating lucrative contracts with the oil multinationals, and controls the billions in assets of the Qaddafi regime that the imperialists had frozen. Meanwhile, in addition to the NTC's official army, hundreds of militias and tribal-based groups throughout the country are jostling for power—and a share of the wealth—while gunning down rivals, imprisoning suspected opponents and inflicting hideous tortures on a vast scale.

Reports coming from some Western bourgeois liberal organizations offer a glimpse of the atrocities. A January 26 article by Amnesty International titled "Libya: Deaths of Detainees Amid Widespread Torture" reported on the torture of Libyans and migrant workers from sub-Saharan African countries being carried out in detention centers in Tripoli and other cities by "officially recognized military and security entities as well [as] by a multitude of armed militias operating outside any legal framework." Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) announced in January that it was ceasing operations in the city of Misurata after having treated over 100 people with torture-inflicted wounds, since detainees were being brought for medical treatment simply to make them fit for further torture sessions. Since MSF pulled out, local medics have continued treating torture victims. One told of seeing nine prisoners whose genitalia had been cut off (Associated Press, 3 March).

The perpetrators of these acts represent the "free Libya" forces that were hailed in Washington, London, Paris and other imperialist capitals. Echoing the capitalist media in the U.S. and elsewhere, which portrayed the opposition to Qaddafi as the Libyan component of the "Arab Spring," were reformist leftists, from the New Anti-Capitalist Party in France and the British Socialist Workers Party to the International Socialist Organization (ISO) in the U.S. Just two days before the imperialists launched the bombing campaign that the rebel forces had been clamoring for, the ISO posted a 17 March 2011 article on its Web site that enthused over the Libyan "rebellion."

The ISO subsequently tried to cover its tracks by feigning to discover that, some time after the start of the NATO

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