

Amid Ongoing Anti-Immigrant Crackdown



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Obama's Cynical Ploy for Latino Vote

In 2008, Barack Obama rode into the White House backed by close to 70 percent of Latino voters, with his promises to open a “pathway to citizenship” for the nearly 12 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. greeted with chants of “Sí, se puede!” But the biggest “pathway” opened was the road out of the country. Some 1.2 million immigrants have been rounded up and deported since Obama took office, the highest rate of deportation in more than half a century.

The Obama administration has vastly expanded the Bush-initiated “Secure Communities” program, which mandates that local police forces send the fingerprints of those jailed to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to check their immigration status. The overwhelming majority of people ensnared in this racist dragnet—more than 90 percent of whom are Latino, and most with no criminal record—are thrown into Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) detention dungeons and then run out of the country. In over 8,000 workplaces nationwide, I.C.E. “desktop raids” involving audits of employee Social Security numbers have driven tens of thousands of immigrant workers from their jobs.

Small wonder, then, that Obama’s “change you can believe in” charade isn’t getting the mileage it did in 2008 as this year’s presidential election approaches. Instead of knocking on doors trying to get out the vote for the Democrats, Latino youth began occupying Obama campaign offices in early June. A sign on the office door in Oakland read: “Closed Due to Deportations.” Liberal Democrats and Latino community leaders urged Obama to make some gesture to secure the Latino vote. On June 15, the president announced a two-year deportation “reprieve” for undocumented immigrants between the

Left: Barack Obama and Homeland Security chief Janet Napolitano at El Paso border facility, May 2011. Right: Undocumented Guatemalan immigrants are frisked at Arizona airport by I.C.E. agents before deportation, June 2011.

No Deportations! Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!

ages of 16 and 30 who have lived in the U.S. for at least five consecutive years.

With consummate cynicism and the usual dose of red-white-and-blue rhetoric, Obama intoned that these youth “are Americans in their heart, in their minds, in every single way but one—on paper.” But a possible two-year work permit notwithstanding, he made clear that no “papers” were on offer, proclaiming: “This is not amnesty. This is not immunity. This is not a path to citizenship.” To even be considered, one has to register as an “illegal,” have no criminal record and have graduated high school or served in the military. Even then, there is no guarantee and no right of appeal if rejected. But once you register, the state will have the information needed to track you down for possible deportation.

“This is the Barack Obama we voted for,” enthused Illinois Democratic Con-

gressman Luis Gutiérrez. Indeed, it is. Running neck and neck in the polls with Republican candidate Mitt Romney, Obama is trying to refurbish the less-than-threadbare image of the Democratic Party as a friend of labor, blacks and immigrants. This con job has long served as a key prop in preserving the rule of racist American capitalism. The purpose is to sucker the working class and minorities into believing that they have a stake in the electoral outcome between two parties that equally represent a system based on the exploitation of labor and rooted in vicious racial oppression.

In the current contest, the Democrats are playing on very real fears that a Republican victory will unleash the dyed-in-the-wool racists, union-busters, Tea Party yahoos, women- and gay-hating Christian fundamentalists and other reactionary lunatics who populate the party asylum. But

while there may be a difference in what they say and how they say it, any policy differences between the Republicans and Democrats boil down to how best to enforce the rule of U.S. imperialist capitalism. In fact, under Obama’s watch the rate of immigration into the U.S. has fallen sharply. As the Pew Research Center reported in April, this drop-off is due not only to the ongoing economic crisis, which has dried up jobs, but also to “heightened border enforcement, a rise in deportations, the growing dangers associated with illegal border crossings” and conditions in Mexico.

Fanning the flames for a racist witch-hunt, Republican state governments from Arizona to Mississippi and Alabama have enacted laws empowering cops to question and detain anyone suspected of being “foreign” and forcing schools to track the immigration status of students. While the Obama administration sanctimoniously intones that the U.S. is a country of immigrants, the suit brought by the Justice Department against Arizona’s SB1070 statute was based not on upholding basic democratic rights but rather on the primacy of federal over state law in policing immigration. In ruling on this suit ten days after Obama’s “reprieve” announcement, the Supreme Court struck down several provisions of SB1070 but upheld its central apartheid-style mandate that local and state police determine the status of anyone they think might be an “illegal” immigrant.

While Obama pontificated that “no

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Partisan Defense Committee

CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

July 2 marked 30 years since a nearly all-white jury declared class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal guilty in the killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner on 9 December 1981. One day later, on the eve of the 4th of July, the jurors sentenced Mumia to death, based explicitly on his political views and activities as a champion of black freedom and an eloquent voice for the oppressed. Beginning in the late 1960s, Mumia was targeted by the police as a Black Panther leader and later as a MOVE supporter and journalist renowned for his searing exposés of cop brutality and racist oppression.

For three decades, police, prosecutors and government officials of both the Democratic and Republican parties screamed for the head of this innocent man. That

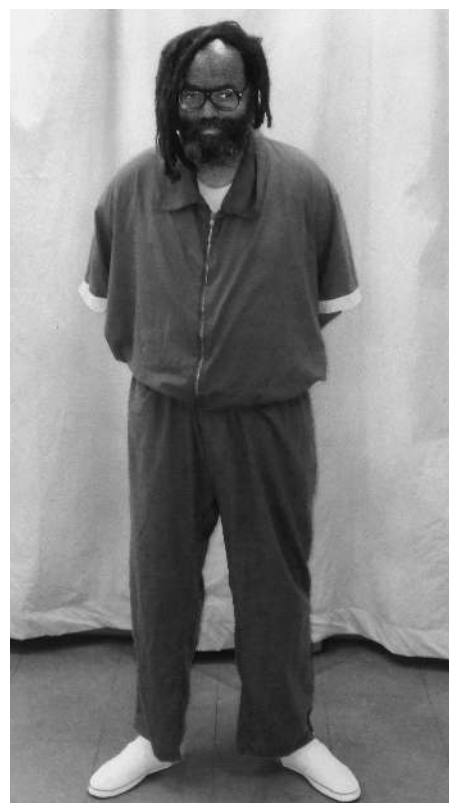
effort finally ran aground on 7 December 2011 when Philadelphia district attorney Seth Williams announced that he would not pursue the death sentence for Mumia. This announcement came in the wake of a U.S. Supreme Court decision last October rejecting the D.A.'s petition to reinstate the death sentence, which was overturned in 2001 (see "Drive to Execute Mumia Halted," WV No. 993, 6 January). Mumia is now left to languish in prison without possibility of parole. Finally removed from death row, Mumia was transferred to Mahanoy prison in Frackville, Pennsylvania, where he was vindictively thrown into solitary for seven weeks before finally being released into the general prison population at the end of January.

Mumia's conviction and death sentence were the result of a political and racist frame-up. Cops, prosecutors and "hanging judge" Albert Sabo ripped to shreds every single one of Mumia's trial rights—from the right to an attorney of his choice to the right to even be present in the courtroom where his life and freedom hung in the balance. Black people were summarily excluded from the jury. Witnesses were terrorized by the cops. Exculpatory evidence was concealed from the defense. Court after court refused to even consider the mountains of evidence proving Mumia's innocence, including the confession of the actual killer. In this, the courts are joined not only by the right-wing tabloids but also by anti-death penalty liberals like those at the *New York Times* and *Philadelphia Inquirer* who are hopeful that Mumia will now be a forgotten man left to rot in prison for the rest of his life.

During the decades of his unjust imprisonment, Mumia has remained unbowed, speaking out for the oppressed and the impoverished through his death row commentaries (which can be heard on prisonradio.org). Mumia has published a number of books, including collections of his commentaries and essays in *Live From Death Row*, *Death Blossoms* and *All Things Censored*, the autobiographical *We Want Freedom: A Life in the Black Panther Party* and *Jailhouse Lawyers: Prisoners Defending Prisoners vs. the U.S.A.*

On July 9, PDC representatives visited Mumia. Dating back to 1987, our comrades have visited him on many occasions, first at Huntingdon prison and later at SCI Greene in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania. In those previous visits, Mumia was separated by a thick wall of Plexiglas, and until a couple of years ago his hands were manacled. Mumia's life on death row also meant that he was confined in an eight-by-twelve-foot cell almost 24 hours a day, with severe restrictions, including on phone calls.

With the restraints of death row finally



WV Photo

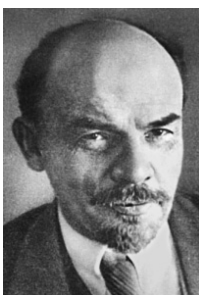
Mumia at Pennsylvania's Mahanoy prison in July.

lifted, Mumia is allowed six hours a day outdoors and is getting all the exercise and soaking up all the sun that he can. Mumia told how a number of fellow inmates had read his books and expressed their solidarity. He has been able to reacquaint himself with MOVE comrade Eddie Africa, also imprisoned at Mahanoy. For the first time, Mumia and our comrades could embrace, sit side by side and even break bread together (or at least the stale fare from the overpriced vending machines). At one point, a woman visiting another inmate came over to hug Mumia and tell how she has followed his case for 30 years. Noticing one particularly playful little girl, Mumia—who for decades could not touch his wife or bounce his children or grandchildren on his knee—expressed how much he appreciated being able to actually see children.

Compared to the death row conditions under which Mumia lived for 30 years, the more ordinary hell of America's prisons is an improvement. But it is a crime that this innocent man has spent even a day behind bars. We remain dedicated to searing the cause of Mumia's fight for freedom into the consciousness of the working class, radical youth and opponents of black oppression. Free Mumia now! ■

Lockouts and the Class Struggle

With the U.S. economy continuing to falter and the labor movement in an extended retreat, lockouts have increasingly been used by the capitalists in their drive to wrest ever-greater concessions from the unions, or destroy them altogether. V.I. Lenin, writing in a period of intense strikes in Russia on the eve of World War I, discussed workers' resistance to lockouts. Despite the different contexts, the role of Marxists in advancing the class consciousness of the proletariat remains unchanged.



LENIN

TROTSKY

Lockouts, i.e., the mass discharge of workers by common agreement among employers, is as necessary and inevitable a phenomenon in capitalist society as strikes are. Capital, which throws the whole of its crushing weight upon the ruined small producers and the proletariat, constantly threatens to force the conditions of the workers down to starvation level and condemn them to death from starvation. And in all countries there have been cases, even whole periods in the life of nations, when the failure of the workers to fight back has led to their being reduced to incredible poverty and all the horrors of starvation.

The workers' resistance springs from their very conditions of life—the sale of labour-power. Only as a result of this resistance, despite the tremendous sacrifices the workers have to make in the struggle, are they able to maintain anything like a tolerable standard of living. But capital is becoming more and more concentrated, manufacturers' associations are growing, the number of destitute and unemployed people is increasing, and so also is want among the proletariat; consequently, it is becoming harder than ever to fight for a decent standard of living. The cost of living, which has been rising rapidly in recent years, often nullifies all the workers' efforts.

By drawing larger and larger masses of the proletariat into the organised struggle, the workers' organisations, and first and foremost the trade unions, make the workers' resistance more planned and systematic. With the existence of mass trade unions of different types, strikes become more stubborn: they occur less often, but each conflict is of bigger dimensions.

Lockouts are caused by a sharpening of the struggle, and in their turn, sharpen that struggle. Rallying in the struggle and developing its class-consciousness, its organisation and experience in that struggle, the proletariat becomes more and more firmly convinced that the complete economic reconstruction of capitalist society is essential.

Marxist tactics consist in combining the *different* forms of struggle, in the skilful transition from one form to another, in steadily enhancing the consciousness of the masses and extending the area of their collective actions, each of which, taken separately, may be aggressive or defensive, and all of which, taken together, lead to a more intense and decisive conflict.

—V.I. Lenin, "Forms of the Working-Class Movement (The Lockout and Marxist Tactics)" (April 1914)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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

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The Spartacist League is the U.S. section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Workers Vanguard (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and skipping the last issue in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116. E-mail address: vanguard@tiac.net. Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/22 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

The closing date for news in this issue is July 31.

No. 1006

3 August 2012

Carlos Montes Saddled with Probation

The court case against Chicano activist Carlos Montes ended on June 5 in Los Angeles when Montes pleaded "no contest" to one count of perjury in exchange for the local district attorney dropping the three remaining felonies against him. Although Montes will receive no prison time, he now must serve three years of formal probation, which will keep him under the thumb of the capitalist state, and 180 hours of community service. He also is prohibited from possessing any weapons. Montes was originally charged with six felonies, two of which were dropped on March 27, and faced up to 18 years in jail.

A leftist political activist for 40-plus years, Montes is a supporter of the reformist Freedom Road Socialist Organization (FRSO) and writes for its newspaper, *Fight Back!* He was one of the victims in an FBI frame-up of 24 leftists, antiwar organizers and union activists. Beginning in September 2010, the FBI raided homes and offices, mainly in the Midwest, as part of an "anti-terror" witchhunt (see "Protest FBI Raids on Leftists, Union Activists!" WV No. 966, 8 October 2010). Early on 17 May 2011, the FBI and an L.A. Sheriff's SWAT team broke down Montes' door and, with auto-

matic assault rifles leveled, ransacked his home, seizing his notes and papers.

The agents arrested Montes under reactionary gun control laws, claiming that he had violated a firearms code because he supposedly had a felony on his record and therefore was prohibited from owning a gun. However, as the Committee to Stop FBI Repression pointed 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). That misdemeanor stems from a 1969 student strike for black, Chicano and women's studies at East L.A. College during which police beat and arrested protesters. On his way home, Montes was arrested and accused of assaulting a sheriff's deputy—with an empty soda can!

While we certainly welcome the fact that Montes will not be imprisoned, the onerous penalties that he has been saddled with are not a "victory against repression" as the FRSO's Web site trumpeted. In fact, what transpired is the normal workings of the American "injustice" system—bogus felony charges threatening decades in prison are routinely leveled in

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On July 26, citing a forecast of severe weather for New York City, Democratic governor Andrew Cuomo intervened to end Consolidated Edison’s 26-day lockout of the 8,500 members of Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA) Local 1-2. Within hours of his announcement that 3,000 union workers would be back on the job for the anticipated storm, Cuomo emerged with Local 1-2 president Harry Farrell and Con Ed CEO Kevin Burke, a tentative contract in hand. The union leadership had *pressed* for Cuomo’s intervention, and Farrell heaped praise on and even hugged the governor for stepping in. Initial reports indicate that the deal, which union members still have to vote on, guts the pension for new hires and includes other givebacks.

The lockout, a brazen attack on labor, came amid all-sided assaults by capital against the unions, including attempts in various states to outlaw collective bargaining. If Local 1-2 had gone out on strike, instead of being locked out, the reaction from the city rulers and bosses’ state would have been furious and immediate: a hysterical outcry, anti-picket injunctions and the dispatch of squads of cops to Con Ed locations.

When the company threw down the gauntlet to the union, the bureaucrats responded not by mobilizing labor’s social power but rather by reaching out to capitalist Democratic Party politicians and government agencies, such as the Public Service Commission. As a result, Con Ed basically got what it wanted out of the lockout, namely further squeezing its workers to enhance its already enormous profit. Chief among the lessons to draw from the lockout is that if the working class is to struggle in its own interests it must be mobilized independently of the political parties and agencies of the class enemy.

The locked-out workers received widespread sympathy from other unions and wide swaths of the city. Con Ed is widely despised. A 2011 AARP study identified the company as a chief culprit among utilities who routinely cut off gas and electric service to poor and elderly customers—disproportionately black and Latino—who can’t pay their bills. In locking out the highly skilled and safety-conscious UWUA workers amid a deadly summer heat wave, the arrogant utility exposed the sick, the elderly and young children to possible heat stroke and death.

Delegations from other unions repeatedly visited the pickets at Con Ed’s Irving Place headquarters, and a New York State AFL-CIO-sponsored rally drew 4-5,000 people with official union contingents of transit, phone, health care, construction, electrical and government unions as well as groups of teachers and Teamsters. But the potential for some real labor solidarity—reinforcing the picket lines to stop scabs from working—was squandered.

Many workers expressed a determination to fight. At the Bensonhurst substation, where a picket line was set up to block

order to coerce plea agreements to lesser charges. In the same posting, the FRSO touted its petition campaign calling on Barack Obama, Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism, and his top cop Attorney General Eric Holder to “Stop the FBI campaign of repression against Chicano, immigrant rights, anti-war and international solidarity activists now!” But the very business of the FBI is repression, and it is Obama and Holder who—in upholding the interests of the racist capitalist ruling class—unleash such agents of state terror against workers and the oppressed.

During the 2008 elections, the FRSO pushed the dangerous myth that the election of Obama would reverse the worst policies of George W. Bush. But Obama’s intent always was to wage a more effective “war on terror,” and he has since implemented repressive measures that go well beyond what Bush accomplished. So-called socialists who seek to pressure the capitalist Democratic Party to “do right” are an obstacle to mobilizing the working class and the oppressed in defense of their own interests. ■

After Four-Week Lockout in New York

Cuomo, Con Ed Strong-Arm Union into Concessions



WV Photo

July 17: Locked-out Con Ed workers and union supporters march to Union Square, New York City.

delivery of a transformer, one picketer told WV, “I’ve worked here 30 years and they want to take my pension away? I’m not going down that easily.” A number of union members voiced anger at the company and at Burke, who rakes in \$11 million in salary annually. One meter reader, a single mother who brought her child to the picket, adamantly stated of the company: “You have three billion in your pocket. Why can’t you pay me?” But at Bensonhurst and elsewhere throughout the system, the union

tops kept the actions of pickets confined to what was considered acceptable to the bourgeois politicians and government officials they were courting.

The picket line is a physical expression of the class line between workers and bosses and a crucial weapon in the class struggle. But over the years the trade-union bureaucracy, which pledges its allegiance to U.S. capitalism and the Democratic Party, has done its level best to eviscerate the understanding that pickets

are military formations to *stop* production and *shut down* plants. “Picket lines mean don’t cross” is one of the traditions that helped build the CIO industrial unions in this country. Local 1-2, which unites electric, gas and steam plant workers with clerical workers, traces its roots back to a CIO organizing committee in 1938.

At Con Ed, the UWUA tops reinforce the false notion that workers and bosses together constitute a “family.” The retirees, local contractors and others brought in from Alabama and Virginia to work during the lockout were readily denounced as strikebreakers by picketers. But many union members were reluctant to characterize the 5,000 managers as the scabs that they are. The fact is, whether a manager was hired straight out of college or worked his way up through the ranks and can still splice cable does not alter the reality that he now stands on the opposite side of the class line.

Throughout the lockout, utility workers were suspicious that Cuomo was in the pocket of Con Ed. Not only does the governor have close ties to its Board of Directors, but it also came to light that Con Ed had earlier contributed \$250,000 to the Committee to Save New York, an anti-labor lash-up of Cuomo supporters. But almost uniformly, workers praised Cuomo’s predecessor, David Paterson, who brokered the 2008 settlement between Con Ed and the union. Then as now, the main issue was the company’s attempt to replace the pension with a 401(k)-like plan. But in 2008 Con Ed dropped the proposal to avoid a possible strike. That hardly makes Paterson a friend of labor. Indeed, he went on at the end of his term to cut the jobs and pensions of state workers, coerce unions into renegotiating contracts and foregoing pay raises, slash state services and jack up SUNY and CUNY tuition.

The Democratic Party is a party that represents the interests of the capitalist ruling class, which owns Con Ed and everything else worth having in this country. The working class needs to fight for a party of its own, one dedicated to eliminating capitalist rule and replacing it with a workers government. That government would replace capitalist production for private profit with socialized production for the benefit of society as a whole. ■

Letter

On “White Privilege” and the RCP

27 July 2012

Dear comrades,

Our *YSp* polemic, “Freedom Road Socialist Organization: Democrats’ Loyal Maoists,” (WV No. 1004, 8 June) apparently hit its mark. Thus, we find FRSO’s Eric Odell taking to cyberspace with gems like this from a 14 June posting: “I don’t think it’s correct to say that FRSO ‘in the main’ supported Obama. I think the majority of individuals on the National Executive Committee at the time did, but within the organization as a whole people were all over the place on the question.” (Odell, of course, as he states in a later posting, is a member of that august body, the FRSO NEC.)

However, we made a sloppy formulation in the piece, i.e., “A particularly repellent contribution to anti-Marxist ‘theory’ by the Avakian RCP as well as PUL [Proletarian Unity League] was the notion that white working people and their bosses are somehow united in ‘white privilege.’” The forerunners of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) certainly associated themselves with the wing of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) that embraced “white-skin privilege” and the RCP still sometimes trots out that same anti-proletarian position. But it did not consistently ply this line, nor did Avakian originate it.

“White-skin privilege” was particularly associated with Noel Ignatin (now known as Ignatiev). Ignatin and Ted Allen’s

pamphlet *White Blindspot & Can White Workers Radicals be Radicalized?* (1969) includes a polemic against Progressive Labor Party (PL), which would become the principal factional rival of the New Left Maoist wing of SDS known as RYM. Our own origin as a youth organization was in the 1969 SDS split, when the SL critically supported the PL wing as a subjectively pro-working-class tendency to the left of the likes of Avakian, while forming our own Trotskyist oppositional caucus within this wing of SDS (see our pamphlet *Youth, Class and Party* [1974]).

However, Avakian & Co. were surely not applying “white-skin privilege,” but rather a type of “Jim Crow Maoism,” when they blocked with rampaging white racists on the streets of Boston in 1974 against school busing to achieve minimal integration, infamously headlining their newspaper: “People Must Unite to Smash Boston Busing Plan.” Small wonder that during the 1970s, one can find them polemicizing against “white-skin privilege.”

At bottom, the political line of the American right-wing Maoists in the late 1960s, following Frantz Fanon, was that the working class in advanced capitalist countries was “bought off” by the spoils of imperialism and hence one could look only to the Third World masses for any revolutionary potential. This outlook changed somewhat after the May 1968 general strike in France. When the Ava-

kian group made its turn to tailing the working class, it adapted to the most backward consciousness—e.g., through its grotesque line on Boston busing.

As for the FRSO, what we wrote about their embrace of this guilty white liberalism is utterly correct. Maybe those FRSO cadres who originated from the RCP are still doing penance for the Boston busing line. In any event, their “white privilege” line today has more to do with quasi-religious moralizing than with a Marxist program for the liberation of the black masses as a strategic component of a third, socialist, American revolution.

The Avakianites, as we noted in our article, “Behind the Split in the RCP, Part 2” (WV No. 199, 31 March 1978) have had two, three, many lines on the black question, all of them wrong:

“In fact, so long as the black nationalists were willing to play footsie with the RU in high-level negotiations, Avakian’s line had little to distinguish it from that later dubbed ‘Bundism.’ Though polemicizing against the ‘white skin privilege’ line so popular in SDS, the RU/RCP has been all over the map on the black question—sometimes sympathetic to the ‘black belt’ theory, sometimes terming U.S. blacks a ‘nation of a new type,’ and sometimes (as in the RCP *Programme*) avoiding the question altogether.”

Thus, our polemic against the FRSO unwittingly gave Avakian too much credit for originality and for having any consistency.

Yours for new Octobers,
B. Brodie

South Africa: Populist Demagogue Malema and the ANC

The following article is adapted from Spartacist South Africa No. 8 (Winter 2012), newspaper of Spartacist/South Africa, section of the International Communist League.

In late February, at the tail end of a bitter, monthlong wildcat strike by mineworkers at Impala Platinum (Implats) in Rustenburg, tens of thousands waited in the blistering late-summer sun to hear Julius Malema speak. The arrival of Malema and his entourage in a convoy of BMWs and Range Rovers was greeted with cheers of “Juju! Juju! Juju!” [his nickname] from the crowd of workers and others from the impoverished Freedom Park township. One striking worker expressed the illusions many have in Malema: “This guy knows the story—he isn’t afraid to tell the truth... I believe he will help us. Because he cares.” Malema played to the crowd’s deep-seated hatred of the bloodsucking Implats bosses, declaring, “These are our mines and we must fight until we benefit from these mines.”

But the real point of Malema’s visit to the Rustenburg mineworkers was shown by his appeal to them to submit to the leadership of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) bureaucrats who had stabbed them in the back, stay loyal to the bourgeois-nationalist African National Congress (ANC) and the ruling Tripartite Alliance, and get back to work: “Workers must be prepared to negotiate and the employer must also talk. It’s give and take, comrades—you can’t demand and do nothing.” Indeed, later that day an ANC-brokered meeting between strike leaders, NUM officials, and Implats management sealed the end of the strike without the workers’ central demands being met.

A week later, similar scenes played out at a rally in Johannesburg for the 7 March Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) general strike protesting against labour broking and the introductions of highway tolls. After the COSATU leaders conceded to the workers’ demands to hear Malema, he appeared and told them, “You are the ANC as am I. We will die the ANC!” Malema was the most popular speaker at this trade-union rally, overshadowing COSATU general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi.

Malema’s appearance on 7 March also highlighted the fractures within the largest trade-union federation, with COSATU



Johannesburg, 30 August 2011: Supporters of bourgeois-nationalist ANC Youth League leader Julius Malema demonstrate outside party headquarters against disciplinary hearings.

Break with the Bourgeois Tripartite Alliance! Forge a Leninist-Trotskyist Party to Fight for a Black-Centered Workers Government!

president Sdumo Dlamini complaining bitterly about Malema receiving a platform to address the general strike. (Dlamini is a close ally of Jacob Zuma, who Malema has been campaigning to remove as president of the ANC and the country.) The COSATU bureaucracy, as a component part of the ruling bourgeois Tripartite Alliance together with the ANC and the reformist, Stalinist-derived South African Communist Party (SACP), is being wracked by the succession battle currently raging in the ANC ahead of its next elective conference, which will be held at the end of the year in Mangaung, in Free State province.

Malema—who has now been expelled

from the ANC as a result of disciplinary charges for sowing divisions and bringing the party into disrepute, and has been removed as president of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL)—has been by far the most outspoken representative of the anti-Zuma faction in the ANC. There are also many others—including top-ranking ANC leaders—working semi-covertly to oust Zuma (to manage the divisions, open campaigning has been suppressed by the official ANC leadership). With control over the access to considerable amounts of government largesse and business connections at stake, the plotting and backstabbing is only going to increase. Things could get hectic: In April, a statement by the veterans’ organisation of Umkhonto we Sizwe [the former military wing of the ANC] in KwaZulu-Natal, which is in the pro-Zuma camp, responded to Malema’s denunciation of Zuma as a “dictator” by threatening that such acts would have been dealt with by a firing squad in the days of the anti-apartheid struggle!

The working class has absolutely *no* interest in supporting either side in the squalid ANC succession battle. There is now widespread working-class anger at Zuma and his allies, who have essentially continued the same anti-working-class, neoliberal policies of Zuma’s predecessor, Thabo Mbeki, since taking over from him. The bitter divisions which are now ravaging the ANC and the Alliance reflect, in a distorted way, the contradictions and massive anger at the base of society caused by the frustrated aspirations for genuine liberation which were not—and could not be—met as long as the system of neo-apartheid capitalism

remains. Malema takes advantage of this genuine anger with populist demagoguery. But if the disillusionment and anger with Zuma among the workers and poor masses is simply channeled into support for another variant of bourgeois nationalism like that peddled by Malema, the demoralisation and defeats will only continue. The populist Malema—not to mention the other anti-Zuma forces in the ANC—is no less than Zuma a political representative of the capitalist exploiters who will stop at nothing to maintain wage slavery. All factions in the ANC are *class enemies* of workers liberation.

What’s desperately needed is a revolutionary proletarian perspective, *independent of and in opposition to* both ANC factions and all forms of bourgeois nationalism. This means breaking the bourgeois Tripartite Alliance along *class lines* and forging a genuinely communist, Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party capable of providing the revolutionary leadership needed for the workers to sweep away this racist capitalist system and replace it with a black-centred workers government which can begin to build a decent, humane society on a socialist basis. Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution provides the answer to the dead end of nationalism and its reformist hangers-on. An important task in breaking pro-communist militants of the SACP and COSATU ranks from the reformism pushed by their leaders and cohering the nucleus of such a Leninist-Trotskyist party is to politically combat and defeat the populist-nationalist false consciousness which bourgeois demagogues like Malema are able to exploit to gain a hearing among the workers.

SACP/COSATU Betrayals Pave Way for Populist Demagogue

The fact that someone like Malema can be seen by many workers as the best representative of their interests is in many ways just obscene. Here is someone who loves to flaunt his expensive Breitling watches, Armani suits, Range Rovers, multiple million rand homes and 139-hectare farm. Bourgeois newspapers have carried prominent exposés about the slush funds he uses to collect kickbacks [of government money] from wealthy “tenderpreneurs,” and the alleged profits he’s made off of his business deals are big enough to owe some R10 million [\$1.2 million] in unpaid taxes. Much of Malema’s fortunes are derived from acting as a parasitic middleman in plundering the state coffers in Limpopo, one of the most bitterly impoverished provinces where much of the population has no access to basic services like running water, roads, etc. Recently, public hospitals in Limpopo could not even provide food to admitted patients because of unpaid bills.

That many workers could come to put their faith and hopes in such a shamelessly bourgeois politician is above all the responsibility of the reformist leaders of the SACP and COSATU. Together with the ANC, the SACP and COSATU tops administer neo-apartheid capitalist misery via the bourgeois Tripartite Alliance. This coalition is a nationalist popular front through which the working class rank and file of the SACP (a bourgeois workers party with a working-class base but a pro-capitalist programme and leadership) and COSATU (still the largest



Striking workers at Impala Platinum’s Rustenburg mines, February 16.

trade-union federation) is subordinated to the capitalist exploiters in an alliance with the outright bourgeois ANC. For years, the SACP and COSATU misleaders have repeatedly sold out working-class interests in the name of this class-collaborationist alliance, leading to increasing demoralisation of the workers, who have continued to defy their own leaders to engage in militant struggles.

Among the most prominent crimes in the long list of SACP/COSATU betrayals: In 1990, SACP leader Joe Slovo and National Union of Metalworkers (NUMSA) general secretary Moses Mayekiso were sent to put a stop to a weeks-long plant occupation by workers at Mercedes-Benz in East London, which threatened the “negotiated settlement” with the white minority rulers. In 1995, under Mandela’s presidency, SACP national chairman Raymond Mhlaba dismissed 6,000 striking nurses as head of the provincial government in the Eastern Cape. In 2010, under Zuma’s presidency, COSATU general secretary Vavi isolated and then strangled a bitterly fought, weeks-long strike by nearly a million public sector workers, bringing it to an end just days before an ANC National General Council meeting in order to avoid embarrassing Zuma. The betrayals continue, as seen recently at Implats in Rustenburg.

At the ANC’s last elective conference, in December 2007 in Polokwane, Zuma replaced Thabo Mbeki as ANC president. The main base of Zuma’s support was provided by a bloc of COSATU, the SACP and the ANC Youth League (including a certain Malema, who at the time vowed that he would “kill” for Zuma). The SACP and COSATU leaders in particular promoted the lie that Zuma was a “friend” of the workers who would restore the populist “soul” of the ANC, which had supposedly been sacrificed by Mbeki and Co. in

COSATU tops have clearly sided with Zuma (the National Education Health and Allied Workers Union [NEHAWU] has publicly declared its support for another term for Zuma), others like COSATU general secretary Vavi have tried to play both sides and maintain a posture of loyal critics of the ANC tops within the Alliance, and some COSATU leaders have flirted with supporting Malema and the Youth League.

Among the latter group is NUMSA general secretary Irvin Jim, who has criticised Nzimande and the SACP for “ideological confusion” and neglecting their duties as the “vanguard” of the working class. Jim and Vavi have both at times come out with demands that Nzimande withdraw from his ministerial post in order to devote himself full-time to the duties of SACP general secretary. But there should be no illusions that these criticisms have anything to do with a *break* from the Tripartite Alliance. They are just an attempt to posture as more “independent,” in an effort to head off working-class discontent and keep it within the framework of the nationalist popular front.

The ANC is a capitalist party which continues to enjoy the overwhelming political loyalty of the black majority because it is seen as the party which brought liberation from white minority rule, and there is currently no viable alternative. The reason why *nationalism*—the false view that all blacks share common interests, regardless of class differences—can play a dominant role in chaining the workers to the bourgeoisie is because the history of white minority rule means that *class* exploitation has mainly been experienced as *race* oppression. *All wings* of the SACP and COSATU bureaucracies promote the ANC as the “leading force” in the “National Democratic Revolution” (NDR) in order to sell the workers this



Reinhardt Hartzenberg

Tripartite Alliance leaders at SACP 90th anniversary dinner, Durban, 30 July 2011. Left to right: KwaZulu-Natal premier Mkhize, SACP chairman and ANC general secretary Mantashe, President Zuma, SACP general secretary Nzi- mande, COSATU general secretary Vavi and COSATU president Dlamini.

After 18 years of so-called majority rule, South Africa remains one of the most unequal societies in the world, in which misery is distributed according to the stark racial lines established under British colonialism and apartheid. For example, statistics from 2005-06 showed that almost 55 per cent of the black population lived below the poverty line of R10 per day, compared to 34 per cent of the coloured [mixed-race] population, 7 per cent of the Indian population, and less than 1 per cent of the white population. Life expectancy has plummeted, falling by 12 years from 1996 to 2008, again with blacks being worst affected. This catastrophe is mainly a result of the devastating HIV/AIDS epidemic and the government’s criminal neglect and refusal to provide free antiretroviral drugs to all who are HIV-positive. Capitalist misery hits black women the hardest—from significantly higher rates of poverty and HIV infection, to the widespread practices of *lobola* (bride price) and even *ukuthwala* (“marriage by capture”) in some rural areas, to studies finding that as many as 40-50 per cent of women are assaulted by their partners. Against this background, the promises of a “better life for all” which the ANC and Alliance leaders made in 1994 increasingly seem like a sick joke, as does the official rhetoric about a “non-racist, non-sexist South Africa” and “reconciliation.”

Permanent Revolution vs. Bourgeois Populism

Malema is a bourgeois-populist demagogue who skillfully tapped into the anger and discontent among the country’s impoverished black majority—especially among young black Africans, almost half of whom have *never* had a job—in order to advance his own political career and enrich himself and his cronies. He ridiculed Zuma for pandering to the Queen of England, the imperialist bankers, and “white monopoly capital.” With his calls to nationalise the mines and expropriate white-owned land, Malema became a lightning rod for the ire and angst of the white racist reactionaries and mouth-pieces of mining and finance capital—which, predictably, only further enhanced his mythology of standing up for the black majority.

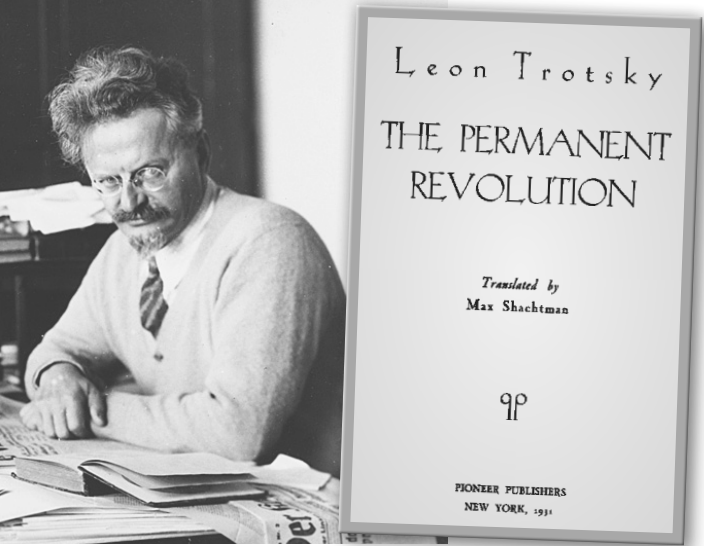
The slogan of “economic freedom in

our lifetime,” which Malema and the ANC Youth League have been paying lip service to as of late, is impossible under capitalism. The capitalists are at bottom only interested in the “freedom” to exploit labour, in maintaining their class rule to continue extracting profits from the blood and bones of their wage slaves. Bourgeois populists like Malema try to conceal the fundamental division of society into *hostile classes* with irreconcilably opposed material interests by throwing around phrases about “the people.” This always means deceiving the working people and defending the rule of their capitalist exploiters—sometimes by throwing the workers some more crumbs, and other times through vicious austerity and brutal repression.

A case in point is the demand for nationalisation of the mines. Malema and the ANCYL have been giving Zuma and his cabinet a lot of headaches by campaigning for this demand in the last few years, threatening that any ANC leaders who oppose it will be kicked out at the Mangaung conference. Despite repeated assurances from Zuma and other government ministers that the ANC has absolutely no intention of nationalising mines, unease grew among the mining bosses as the debate dragged on, and they responded by threatening to pull out their capital. Moody’s and other international rating agencies have cited this debate in downgrading South Africa’s credit rating, and there was a general sigh of relief from the financial press over Malema’s expulsion.

Notwithstanding the angst of the mining magnates, the Malema/ANCYL nationalisation policies are *bourgeois* reform schemes which would not end the super-exploitation of the mineworkers. Their policy document proposes joint share holdings between the current mine owners and the government (with a majority share for the latter), meaning that the bourgeois state becomes a partner in directly exploiting the workers. There have been many cases of bourgeois governments nationalising ailing industries (with generous compensation to the capitalists) in order to improve their profitability through government-enforced austerity, only to reprivatise them later. It is more or less an open secret that Malema began advocating nationalisation of the mines in 2009 in large part because this would serve to bail

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Jean Weinberg

Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky, during exile in Turkey, 1931. *The Permanent Revolution* (1930) applies lessons of 1917 Russian Revolution to countries of belated capitalist development.

the so-called “1996 class project.” At the time, we Trotskyists of Spartacist/South Africa told the simple truth in opposition to these myths: “An ANC run by Zuma would be just as anti-working-class as the current ANC” (*Spartacist South Africa* No. 5, Spring 2007; reprinted in *WV* No. 899, 28 September 2007).

After Polokwane, the main thing which changed with Zuma taking over as ANC president is that the reformist tops became *more directly integrated* in administering and defending racist neo-apartheid capitalism (one of their main complaints against Mbeki had been that he was “marginalising” the ANC’s Tripartite Alliance partners). The result is that the reformists, especially the SACP central leadership, have emerged as the most loyal, craven defenders of Zuma. Some of Malema’s most bitter enemies are those SACP leaders who see him as a direct threat to the power and privileges which they were rewarded with for their support of Zuma—like SACP general secretary Blade Nzimande, who in 2009 became minister of education in Zuma’s cabinet and is now backed by some to become Zuma’s deputy at Mangaung, and SACP chairman Gwede Mantashe, who was elected secretary general of the ANC in 2007.

At the same time, the COSATU bureaucracy (which includes many SACP leaders) has been split over which faction to back in the ANC succession dispute. While some

treacherous “alliance” between exploiters and exploited.

The “NDR” is the South African variant of the time-worn Stalinist “theory” of “two-stage revolution” where, supposedly, first the workers help bring the bourgeois-nationalists to power and then, in the indefinite future, advance to socialism. In reality, the “second stage” is the nationalists slaughtering workers and communists. In South Africa, many SACP and COSATU reformist misleaders have just used the “NDR” as a pseudo-theoretical cover for their wretched betrayals in order to advance themselves into the black elite.

Even the bourgeois “democratic breakthrough” stage of the “NDR” is a bankrupt sham. The negotiated settlement which ended apartheid in the early 1990s was a *betrayal* of the black majority’s struggle for liberation. While the apartheid system of rigid, legally enforced segregation and subjugation ended, the social reality in South Africa remains the superexploitation of mainly black labour, the impoverishment and degradation of the black masses, alongside white privilege—what we’ve characterised as neo-apartheid capitalism. While shamelessly exploiting nationalism to retain the loyalty of the oppressed, the ANC and its Alliance partners act as front men and enforcers for the continued dominance of the (still overwhelmingly white) Randlords and their imperialist backers.

Spartacist South Africa

Newspaper of the South African section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

Issue No. 8 (28 pages)
US\$1 R2

Subscription (4 issues)
US\$4 R10

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out his cronies whose debt-financed BEE [Black Economic Empowerment] mining operations were failing.

Malema and the ANCYL argue for nationalising the mines by citing the statement in the ANC’s 1955 Freedom Charter that “the mineral wealth beneath the soil shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole.” This is intentionally vague, both about what it entails and how the wealth is to be “transferred.” There is absolutely nothing socialist about either this demand or the Freedom Charter as a whole. At best it poses the nationalisation of mines under capitalism by a “democratic” bourgeois state—which, as Marx and Engels put it in the *Communist Manifesto*, is but the executive committee for managing the affairs of the whole capitalist class. In actual fact, once the negotiations with the white rulers began in the early 1990s, the ANC quickly assured them that they did not have to worry about any nationalisations. After the April 1994 elections, Mandela once again restated the ANC position, declaring: “In our economic policies...there is not a single reference to things like nationalisation, and this is not accidental. There is not a single slogan that will connect us with any Marxist ideology.”

Exposing the emptiness of his own rhetoric, Malema alibis the betrayals of Mandela and the other Alliance tops who brokered the power-sharing deal. For example, in a political report to an ANCYL National General Council in August 2010, Malema stated: “We understand that in 1994, certain decisions could not be taken because both domestically and globally, the balance of forces favoured imperialists and therefore [was] hostile to progressive change.” As Lenin explained in his 1916 work *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, the current world system is characterised by the dominance of finance capital and monopoly trusts, where a handful of “great” imperialist powers dominate the world, subordinating the neocolonial and other dependant capitalist countries which they plunder. Malema’s reference to the “balance of forces” favouring “imperialists”—which will always be the case until workers revolutions overthrow them—is a timeworn excuse for the dirty deals carried out by nationalists and reformists in the service of maintaining capitalist rule. Despite his penchant for “anti-imperialist” rhetoric, Malema’s bourgeois programme means he is just as subordinate to imperialism as Zuma, or Mbeki and Mandela before him.

To bourgeois populism, we counterpose the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution. Based on the understanding that the bourgeois-nationalist forces of dependant countries are incapable of solving any of the fundamental problems posed by imperialist domination because of their subordination to imperialist capital and mortal fear of their own proletariat, Trotsky explained: “With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achiev-

ing *democracy and national emancipation* is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation.” But the proletarian revolution, if it is to be ultimately successful in overcoming the backwardness enforced at every level by imperialist domination, cannot stop at the imperialist-imposed national borders: “The socialist revolution begins on the national arena, it unfolds on the international arena, and is completed on the world arena. Thus, the socialist revolution becomes a permanent revolution in a newer and broader sense of the word; it attains completion only



EPA

Left: Malema campaigns for Zuma during 2009 national elections. Right: Malema sings “shower song” ridiculing Zuma at ANC provincial conference in Limpopo, 2011.



Gallo

in the final victory of the new society on our entire planet.” The programmatic core of Trotsky’s permanent revolution is the struggle for the complete political and organisational independence of the working class from bourgeois nationalism and the bourgeois state.

On the Nationalization of the Mines

The NUM bureaucracy has opposed Malema and the Youth League’s calls for nationalisation out of class collaborationism, complaining in November 2011 that the discussion about possible nationalisation of the mines was scaring the capitalists. NUM president Senzeni Zokwana expressed sympathy with the mining bosses’ concern for their profits, stating: “I understand that if you are investing somebody’s money, you should be careful that you do not plant it where there is uncertainty. You have to make sure that the investment is safe” (*Business Day*, 14 November 2011). The SACP tops have also opposed nationalisation calls, using some orthodox-sounding phrases about the need for “socialisation” and pointing out that Malema’s schemes are bourgeois. But this is just a cover for the fact that they are defending the current policies of the Zuma government, which they are a prominent part of!

With regard to the demand for “nationalisation” of the mines and other strategic industries, Trotsky explained in the Transitional Programme (1938) that the socialist programme of workers revolution to expropriate the bourgeoisie does not exclude raising the demand for “the expropriation of several key branches of industry vital for national existence or of

the most parasitic group of the bourgeoisie” when the situation warrants it:

“The difference between these demands and the muddleheaded reformist slogan of ‘nationalization’ lies in the following: (1) we reject indemnification; (2) we warn the masses against demagogues of the People’s Front who, giving lip service to nationalization, remain in reality agents of capital; (3) we call upon the masses to rely only upon their own revolutionary strength; (4) we link up the question of expropriation with that of seizure of power by the workers and farmers.”

Seizing the mine shafts, machinery and mountains of finance capital, which the mining bosses have heaped up through

more than a century of superexploitation of mainly black labour, will be a basic and necessary step in the liberation from capitalist oppression. The Nzimandes, Vavis, Malemas and other demagogues of the Tripartite Alliance are enemies of this struggle for true liberation.

The Bankruptcy of Bourgeois Nationalism

While most countries of belated capitalist development are nationally oppressed as either colonies or neocolonies of the imperialists, South Africa is a peculiar case in that the national oppression of the black majority is carried out not by a foreign colonial power, but by a native white bourgeoisie tied closely to the Anglo-American imperialists. This, and the historical absence of a black property-owning class, was the main factor contributing to the dominance of nationalist consciousness among the mainly black South African working class. The ANC, with the crucial assistance of the SACP and COSATU reformists, has exploited this false consciousness in order to use the working masses as a stepping stone toward its aim of fostering a black privileged elite—the central goal of the ANC since its founding 100 years ago. The black elite which has developed since 1994 are among the most brutal exploiters of the workers, while at the same time remaining subordinate to white capital.

Another expression of nationalist consciousness among the working class is the widespread, mistaken view among pro-socialist militants that socialism amounts to a populist programme of simply redistributing the existing (white) wealth on a more egalitarian basis. Marxists understand that socialism requires a qualitatively higher level of productivity than currently exists under the irrational, anarchic capitalist system. That is why it can’t be built in a single country, and particularly not in a single backward country like South Africa, where waste, irrationality and ignorance have been developed to an extraordinary degree by the white rulers and their black nationalist front men. Our perspective is one of a socialist federation of Southern Africa, which must link up to socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries. As stated in the ICL “Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program” (February 1998):

“On the other hand, the victory of the proletariat on a world scale would place unimagined material abundance at the service of human needs, lay the basis for the elimination of classes and the eradication of social inequality based on

sex and the very abolition of the social significance of race, nation and ethnicity. For the first time mankind will grasp the reins of history and control its own creation, society, resulting in an undreamed-of emancipation of human potential, and a monumental forward surge of civilization. Only then will it be possible to realize the free development of each individual as the condition for the free development of all.”

Malema seizes on the increasingly obvious bankruptcy of the ANC’s official ideology of “non-racialism”—the vague notion that racial oppression and the differences promoted under white minority rule can somehow be overcome under “democratic” capitalist rule—in order to fan racial hatred and divert from his own party’s responsibility for administering neo-apartheid capitalism. Malema’s demagoguery includes his cynical resurrection of the anti-apartheid struggle song “Shoot the Boer” (in fact, the ANC’s bourgeois cops are infinitely more likely to shoot black township protesters than “Boere”), for which he was found guilty of “hate speech” in 2011. While combatting Malema’s racist demagoguery, as Marxists we also oppose laws against so-called “hate speech,” which strengthen the bourgeois state and will always be used by the capitalists against labour and the oppressed. Malema has also spewed crude invective against the Indian and coloured minorities.

We have consistently warned of the danger of such a development from the early days of the “new” South Africa:

“If the many-sided tensions and conflicts in South African society are not centered around a class axis, they will be fought along racial, ethnic and tribal lines. In conditions of unrelieved poverty, if the nationalist principle prevails, Zulu will be set against Xhosa, black Africans against coloureds and Indians, South Africans against immigrant workers and refugees—and this will be done by self-styled ‘progressives’ in the ANC alliance no less than by open reactionaries.”

—Workers Vanguard No. 637, 19 January 1996

The “non-racialism” of the ANC and Tripartite Alliance tops—which is echoed by most of the reformist “socialists” who tail after them—is a lie. It only serves to cover up the reality of racist oppression inherent to South African capitalism, while at the same time providing fuel to demagogues like Malema. We counterpose the fight to mobilise the proletariat in concrete opposition to all manifestations of racist oppression and discrimination, linking this to the understanding that only the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism can resolve the national oppression of the black majority and lead to the elimination of all racial, tribal and other divisions. This is concretised in our slogan for a black-centred workers government, our application of Trotsky’s permanent revolution to the problem of national/racial oppression as specifically posed in South Africa. This is an *inclusive* slogan: “black-centred” precisely means that it is not racially exclusive but includes a full role and democratic rights for coloureds, Indians and those whites who would accept a government centred on the black African toilers and join in building a society based on genuine equality.

While Malema today poses as “friend” of the workers, the logic of nationalism in power is to whip up anti-union sentiment, attacking the organised workers movement for “undermining nation-building.” From Mandela to Zuma, this is something ANC leaders have done repeatedly since taking over the reins on behalf of the white rulers in 1994: using nationalist demagoguery against the unions, claiming that relatively high wages in the industrial and public sectors are responsible for mass unemployment in the townships and abject poverty in the rural areas, blaming strikes and shop floor militancy for repelling multinational corporations from investing in South Africa, etc. In fact, when the Democratic Alliance—an openly neo-liberal party of white privilege—marched to COSATU house on May 15 in a reactionary anti-union mobilisation, this was in support of the policies which they share with the ANC/Alliance government (the

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Revisionists Still Trying to Bury Leninism

In May, comrades from the Canadian and U.S. sections of the International Communist League intervened in a Historical Materialism (HM) conference held in Toronto, where some 400 people attended dozens of sessions over three days. One theme of debate was the 1922 Fourth Congress of the Communist International (CI), following the release by the Historical Materialism Book Series of a useful new English-language volume of the Congress proceedings, edited by leftist historian John Riddell. The Historical Materialism Book Series describes itself as a “publishing initiative of the radical left” and is influenced by the Cliffite Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in Britain among others. Haymarket Books, associated with the American International Socialist Organization (ISO), is publishing paperback editions of the HM series.

HM and Haymarket render a useful service in publishing English-language works of interest to the workers movement. However, HM conferences are driven by the stock-in-trade reformist politics of the SWP and the ISO as well as the SWP-affiliated Canadian International Socialists, whose historic leaders—Paul Kellogg and Abigail Bakan—had a high profile at the Toronto event. These groups from their origins sided with their respective bloody “democratic” imperialist ruling classes against the Soviet degenerated workers state (see “The Bankruptcy of ‘New Class’ Theories,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 55, Autumn 1999). Since the fall of the USSR, they echo the bourgeoisie’s “death of communism” triumphalism and continue to bury the lessons of the Russian Revolution. Illustrating this were comments at one session by Bakan, who assisted Riddell with the Fourth Congress volume and yet asserted that the CI Congresses are not a textbook for leftists today.

On the contrary! The early Communist International provides a vital guide. Although we cast a critical eye on the Fourth Congress in particular, the ICL stands programmatically on the first four CI Congresses (i.e., those that occurred prior to the 1923-24 Stalinist political counterrevolution that resulted in the degeneration of the Soviet workers state). Emerging out of the Russian workers revolution of October 1917, these Congresses represent the highest theoretical and programmatic generalization of revolutionary lessons that the proletariat has ever achieved. The Russian Revolution, carried out under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, was a shaping event of the 20th century: capitalism was swept away and in its place a workers state based on workers and peasants councils (soviets) was established. It was viewed by Lenin and Trotsky as the opening shot in a revolution that could only be completed on the world stage.

The CI’s 1919 founding manifesto stated that as “representatives of the revolutionary proletariat of the different countries of Europe, America, and Asia,” its members were the heirs and executors of Marx and Engels’ *Communist Manifesto*. It proclaimed that its task was “to generalize the revolutionary experience of the working class, to cleanse the movement of the corroding influence of opportunism and social patriotism, and rally the forces of all truly revolutionary parties of the world proletariat.”

Communist parties were only beginning to form in 1919. Advanced workers in most countries were still organized under the banner of the social-democratic Second International, whose leaders helped bring workers to the slaughter of World

War I by peddling poisonous nationalism and embracing the war aims and colonial ambitions of their “own” imperialist rulers. The Bolshevik Party under Lenin had by 1912 achieved a thorough political and organizational split from the opportunists in Russia, the Mensheviks. The Bolsheviks also had acquired an unequalled wealth of practical experience under a rapid and varied succession of conditions and methods of struggle.

The Bolsheviks politically defeated the pro-capitalist opportunists in leading the Russian proletariat to power. Revolutionary workers uprisings that broke out

that is, a revolutionary instrument of proletarian power.” The resolution allowed that the “workers government” designation could apply to Communists participating in a capitalist government run by Social Democrats, i.e., a bourgeois government dressed up in workers clothing. This latter interpretation was defended at the Historical Materialism conference.

For revolutionaries, it is an absolute betrayal of the working class to politically support or participate in a bourgeois government or to hold an executive post at the national, state or local level. However, this view—the illusory and ulti-

As an ICL comrade remarked at the Toronto conference:

“The proceedings of the Fourth Congress, usefully put together in John Riddell’s book, show that the debate on the ‘workers government’ slogan was extremely ill-prepared and extremely confused. Many delegates, not just ultralefts who opposed the united front on principle, spoke against the idea of coalition governments with social democrats and against the idea of so-called ‘workers governments’ based on parliamentary forms.”

He continued, “In contrast, the German leadership, the KPD, who were the central pushers of the final version of the ‘workers government’ resolution as adopted, were trying to do something on the ground in Germany—which was to *form* coalition governments with Social Democrats in various German regional states. At different points, that was opposed and pushed back by elements in the CI leadership, but in the end it went through.”

The consequences were enormous. In 1923, the German workers—plagued by hunger and massive inflation—were in a state of revolutionary turmoil. Unrest was fueled by the French occupation of the heavily industrial western part of Germany, a result of reparations that had been imposed on Germany after its defeat in WWI. In October, the German Communist Party (KPD) entered Social Democratic governments in the states of Saxony and Thuringia. Ignominiously, an insurrection was called off and a golden opportunity for revolution was lost, undermined by elements in the KPD and in the Soviet leadership (as Lenin was on his deathbed). As our comrade noted, looking for a halfway house between bourgeois and proletarian power “only leads to disaster.” (For more on the “workers government” slogan, see “A Trotskyist Critique of Germany 1923 and the Comintern,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 56, Spring 2001.)

In the main presentation on the “workers government” in Toronto, John Riddell accurately captured the Fourth Congress debate, noting that the CI resolution left room for a “workers government” to take office “while the capitalist state, or most of it, was still around,” a position that he embraced. Riddell began by addressing Greece today, where an economic crisis fueled by the austerity diktats of the German-dominated European Union (EU) has engulfed the country. Riddell was critical that the leftist Antarsya and

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Muravei-Guide

Group of delegates to the Fourth Comintern Congress, 1922.

in Central Europe right after WWI were smashed in large part due to the immaturity of the new Communist parties leading them. The CI sought to accomplish a final split of young Communist parties from the Social Democracy and to forge a more politically homogeneous international.

The Fourth Congress and the “Workers Government”

The ICL has a critical appraisal of the Fourth Congress’s treatment of the call for a “workers government.” We agree with Trotsky who in the 1938 Transitional Program made clear that the call for a workers government “represented nothing more than the popular designation for the already established dictatorship of the proletariat,” which also accords with Lenin’s views. Prior to the October Revolution, Lenin wrote *The State and Revolution* to prepare the working class for the seizure of power. In it, he described how a state—that is, the whole repressive apparatus of the ruling class, centrally the army, police and courts—emerges out of the “*irreconcilability* of class antagonisms.” Citing the conclusion drawn by Marx and Engels after the Paris Commune of 1871, Lenin emphasized that workers can’t simply “lay hold of the ready-made state machinery” but must crush it and replace it with a *workers* state.

But various reformist leftists take weak or ambiguous aspects of the decisions at the Fourth Congress to justify their own opportunist and class-collaborationist practices today. A case in point is the confused CI resolution that endorsed multiple interpretations of what constitutes a “workers government.” It detailed how this slogan *could* mean the dictatorship of the proletariat on the model of the October Revolution but *also* argued that “not every workers’ government is truly proletarian,

mately deadly idea that workers parties could run a bourgeois state in workers’ interests—had been championed by an increasingly dominant section of the Second International. In the early years of the CI, the young Communist parties struggled to fully break with this reformist programmatic heritage. “Ultraleft” currents wrongly rejected parliamentary tactics altogether, while right-wing currents continued to cling to illusions in bourgeois parliamentarism, not assimilating the lessons imparted by Marx and Lenin on the state. The “workers government” debate at the Fourth Congress reflected these different political tendencies.



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Regional gathering of KPD youth organization in a Saxony town, spring 1923. Opportunity for proletarian seizure of power was squandered when KPD later entered Social Democratic “workers government.”

Revisionists...

(continued from page 7)

Syriza coalitions had not joined forces, arguing that “if united, the left-wing, anti-austerity parties in Greece could have won the election.” Defending the idea that working-class organizations should consider managing the bourgeois state, he said: “The value of the workers government position rather lies in alerting us to a possibility and expanding our framework of thought and imagination,” adding that “even before the onset of workers revolution, workers can find a way to pose the issue of governmental power and to struggle for it.”

This perspective is precisely that of the Greek Internationalist Workers Left (DEA), a cofounder of Syriza that is associated with the American ISO. In a May 23 interview on the ISO’s Web site, a DEA leader explained: “We have declared before the people that the only government we will take part in or form is a government of the left, a government that will change the Memorandum [EU austerity terms] and all the laws that [sic] of the last three years, during the period of the crisis.” But such a “government of the left” would simply run the bourgeois state to help save the Greek and European capitalists. Syriza gives a “left” cover to the continued brutal exploitation of the Greek working class, while seeking to tinker with the EU-imposed terms of surrender.

As for Antarsya, which includes the Greek Socialist Workers Party (affiliated with the British SWP), it ran candidates in the June 17 election in its own name. However, Antarsya’s purpose was simply to pressure Syriza to the left from the outside, as was made clear in numerous declarations. Following the elections, its efforts have focused on building a pressure group around the Syriza opposition in parliament.

The ICL’s Greek section gave critical support to the Stalinist Greek Communist Party (KKE) in these elections. Despite its reformism and nationalism, the KKE campaigned in opposition to the EU and NATO and refused to participate in any class-collaborationist coalition with bourgeois parties (see “Vote KKE! No Vote to Syriza!” WV No. 1005, 6 July).

The “Anti-Imperialist United Front”

Another HM conference session further addressed the Fourth Congress, concentrating on questions of “Race, Gender, Nation and Class.” An associate of the Prometheus Research Library, our working Marxist archive, spoke on the crucial intervention of the Communist International in driving home the centrality of the fight for black freedom to proletarian revolution in the U.S. (see page 9). Among the other presentations in that session was one on women in the pre-1947 Indian Communist Party and another on “Islamism and Marxism.” The latter painted Islam and Marxism as complementary and compatible, drawing on weaknesses of the Fourth



July 1917 workers demonstration in Petrograd. Bolshevik banners read: “Down With the Capitalist Ministers! All Power to the Soviets of Workers, Soldiers and Peasants Deputies!” and “Long Live Socialism!” Insets: Bolshevik leaders Lenin and Trotsky.

Congress in doing so. In fact, the ICL is also critical of the treatment by the Fourth Congress of the “anti-imperialist united front” as well as of pan-Islamism.

The Fourth Congress passed a resolution endorsing the “anti-imperialist united front,” tacitly posing an ongoing *political* bloc with bourgeois nationalism. Such a perspective could only tie the colonial workers and peasants to their own venal exploiters, who in turn are tied to the imperialists by a thousand threads. The ICL’s *Declaration of Principles* notes: “The ‘anti-imperialist united front’ is the particular form that class collaboration most often assumes in the colonial and ex-colonial countries, from the liquidation of the Chinese Communist Party into Chiang Kai-shek’s Guomindang in the 1920s to decades of prostration of the South African ‘left’ before the African National Congress (ANC).”

Similarly, the Fourth Congress opened the door to support of pan-Islamism, which had a hearing among workers in Muslim countries, such as Indonesia, by endowing Islamic political currents with “anti-imperialist” credentials. The Congress declared that “to the degree that the national-liberation movements extend in scope, the religious-political slogans of pan-Islamism will be more and more replaced by specific political demands.” That resolution stands in sharp contrast to one from the Second CI Congress in 1920 that took a hard position *against* pan-Islamism. The Second Congress’s “Theses on the National and Colonial Questions,” drafted by Lenin, argued that the CI “must enter into a temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy in colonial and backward countries” but insisted that it should “under all circumstances uphold the inde-

pendence of the proletarian movement.”

The disruptions in the imperialist centers brought on by WWI had by 1920 spurred the development of industry in the colonial world and correspondingly the emergence of a small but concentrated proletariat. The Second Congress was breaking new terrain in addressing the emergence of Communism in the colonies, where even bourgeois-nationalist movements were relatively new, reflecting the weak and late development of a native capitalist class. This situation together with the extremely limited implantation of Marxist ideas in these countries had the Second Congress looking primarily toward Western Europe, where revolutions appeared imminent. The sweeping away of capitalist property forms by a workers revolution in an imperialist center would immediately impact its colonies by ending imperialist subjugation. The CI fought to put the struggle against colonial and national oppression front and center as against the pro-imperialist politics of the Social Democracy.

At the conference session on “Race, Gender, Nation and Class,” an ICL comrade noted that “the Comintern leadership had to fight against indifference to the fight against colonial oppression, that’s a given.” But he added, “I want to speak to the other side, which is the strategy within the colonies, and I want to defend the Second Congress against the Fourth,” observing that “Lenin at the Second Congress put forward the idea of unconditional independence of the proletarian movement against all forms of bourgeois nationalism, in which he explicitly included pan-Islamism, however embryonic.” Our comrade also noted that Lenin stressed the importance of fighting against illusions in bourgeois nationalism, even as the Communists defended national liberation movements against colonialism.

The Fourth Congress discussion on proletarian independence in the colonies occurred immediately after the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had been instructed by the CI to enter the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang (GMD). This ultimately led to catastrophe for the young CCP. In May 1925, a Chinese workers revolution was sparked by a general strike in Shanghai that quickly spread throughout the country. The growing strike movement eventually pitted workers against the GMD. Even with the nationalists taking the lead in suppressing the uprising in 1926, the CCP remained inside the GMD. By this time, Stalin and his then-ally Nikolai Bukharin called the shots in the CI, which opposed requests from the CCP leadership to leave the GMD, even though the GMD had insisted that the CCP hand over a list of its members working within the GMD. The decisive crushing of the Chinese Revolution occurred in Shanghai

in April 1927 when GMD leader Chiang Kai-shek carried out a coup, slaughtering tens of thousands of Communists and trade unionists (see “The Origins of Chinese Trotskyism,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 53, Summer 1997).

The bloody defeat of the Chinese Revolution shows where the “anti-imperialist united front” leads: not to “national liberation” from the imperialist yoke but rather to the subordination of the neocolonial masses to their own tinpot rulers and ultimately to bloody defeat. It was in the aftermath of the defeat of the Chinese Revolution that Trotsky generalized his theory of permanent revolution, which deepened and transcended the earlier debates in the CI, as pointed out by one of our comrades at the HM conference. Trotsky extended the model of the Russian Revolution, wherein the Bolsheviks stood in complete independence from, and fought *against*, the bourgeois liberals and vied for (and won) the allegiance of the poorest peasants and the oppressed peoples by championing their interests in the course of fighting for socialist revolution.

The crass pandering by the reformists before all manner of nationalist movements and even religious reaction was on display at the HM session on Egypt, where the ISO’s Ahmed Shawki was one of the speakers. A sharp debate took place between the ICL and the ISO over the pandering to the Muslim Brotherhood by the Egyptian Revolutionary Socialists, which has ties to both the ISO and the SWP. Some attendees sympathized with the ISO/SWP view, arguing that the Muslim Brotherhood was the only organization “big enough and tough enough” to challenge the Mubarak dictatorship and that it had contradictions that leftists could exploit. Shawki demagogically railed against us for holding up Trotsky and Lenin to “lecture” people and hailed the youth of the Muslim Brotherhood who “physically put themselves out there” defending Tahrir Square and “made the revolution.”

But there was no social revolution in Egypt, nor was there any independent political expression of the working class as against the military, religious reactionaries and bourgeoisie. In opposition to the ISO, an ICL spokesman defended permanent revolution and argued that the “fundamentalists are precisely those forces that represent and are ideologically linked to the ruling class in every way, but also they are the mortal enemies of the Copts, of women, of peasants and of the organized working class itself.” She continued: “The clearest example of that is Iran in 1979, where all the [leftist] supporters of Khomeini ended up killed by Khomeini.” The ISO’s program is merely a recipe to keep workers and the oppressed under the neocolonial yoke.

As the philosopher George Santayana put it, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Socialist revolution remains the only fundamental solution to the ills of our time. This is still the epoch of imperialism—where finance capital holds sway and a handful of the most powerful capitalist countries dominate the globe—the same epoch that gave rise to WWI and the Russian Revolution. The inability of capitalism to fulfill even the minimal needs of the masses can be seen in the revolts in Egypt and Tunisia, in the ravages of the recession on workers and the downtrodden, from the U.S. to Greece and beyond. The struggle between anti-Communist revisionism and revolutionary Marxism is the difference between disappearing the lessons of the past in order to repeat the same betrayals and studying the past to point the road to a victorious outcome. ■



1927 Shanghai massacre, marking bloody defeat of 1925-27 Chinese Revolution, was prepared by CCP liquidation into bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang in “anti-imperialist united front.”

NOTICE

Workers Vanguard skips alternate issues in June, July and August.

Our next issue will be dated August 31.

The Black Freedom Struggle and the Comintern

We print below with his permission the presentation of Jacob Zumoff, an associate of the Prometheus Research Library, at the Historical Materialism conference in Toronto earlier this year. It has been slightly edited for publication by the author.

In 1959, James P. Cannon—a founder of the American Communist Party (CP) and historic leader of American Trotskyism—wrote an article called “The Russian Revolution and the American Negro Movement.” He argued “that CP policy on the Negro question got its initial impulse from Moscow, and also that all further elaborations of this policy, up to and including the adoption of the ‘self-determination’ slogan in 1928, came from Moscow.”

This is what I want to talk about today. By necessity, I must leave out rich historic detail in such a short presentation (much of which will be dealt with in the book I am writing on the early American CP). I want to focus on how the Communist International (CI), acting upon its understanding of the need for a revolutionary vanguard party derived from the Bolsheviks’ experience, forcefully intervened in the American Communist movement in the 1920s. The CI called for a sharp break with the traditional “color-blind” approach of the early Socialist movement in the U.S. and for the Communists to place the fight for black liberation at the center of their work.

The tradition of the American Socialist Party (SP) was one of indifference to black oppression, which has been the bedrock of American capitalism since its origins. By the time of the foundation of the CP in 1919, the “Great Migration” of black people from the rural South to the urban North was well underway. Blacks were becoming an important component of the working class, making the fight against black oppression more strategic. Increasingly, black people were integrated into industrial capitalism while being forcibly segregated at the bottom as a race-color caste. World War I sped up this process. Amid a wave of racist pogroms throughout the U.S.—most spectacularly in Chicago—a layer of black radicals, the so-called “New Negro Movement,” refused to accept the murderous violence, as expressed in Claude McKay’s famous poem “If We Must Die” (1919).

In this period, the SP did nothing to battle black oppression. Some right-wing Socialists, like Victor Berger, were open racists. Some black Socialists—most importantly Hubert Harrison—urged the

SP to address racial oppression. But its general position was articulated by Eugene Debs: “We have nothing special to offer the Negro, and we cannot make separate appeals to all the races” (*International Socialist Review*, November 1903). Most Socialists were not racists, and Debs was an anti-racist. His hero was John Brown, and the article that I quoted is an eloquent attack on racial segregation. However, this “color-blind” position dissolved black oppression into class oppression and signaled a refusal to make fighting against black oppression central to the fight for socialist revolution. Essentially, the position was that racism would be solved through socialist revolution, and there was no need to address it specifically.

After the left-wing splits from the SP in the summer of 1919—plural because the result was actually two Communist parties—the Communist movement continued this color-blind approach. Communists at times denounced racism and called for working-class unity, but there still was no sense that fighting for black freedom should be central to the fight for proletarian revolution. (There was only one black person in the ranks of the early Communist Party: Otto Huiswoud, who was from Dutch Guiana.)

In contrast, the Bolsheviks emphasized “special oppression”—that is, oppression not just reducible to class exploitation. In *What Is To Be Done?*, Lenin argued that the revolutionary party must be a “tribune of the people,” fighting against all forms of oppression and linking such to the struggle for proletarian power. In Russia, which Lenin called a “prison house of peoples,” this meant fighting the oppression of the myriad national and ethnic groups by Great Russian chauvinism. In the context of the betrayal of international Social Democracy—by those whom Lenin called the social-chauvinists—during the interimperialist slaughter of WWI, this meant opposing all forms of support to colonialism and imperialism.

From this revolutionary internationalist perspective, the Comintern *forced* American Communists to take up what was then called the “Negro question.” At the Second Comintern Congress (1920), Lenin made John Reed give a report on the issue. I went through Reed’s papers at Harvard University, where there is a note stating that Reed would have preferred to speak on the trade-union question, but Lenin insisted that the report on black oppression was “absolutely necessary.”

Early Black Communists

Early Soviet Russia was a beacon for the oppressed. The anti-imperialist, anti-chauvinist positions of the Comintern attracted black militants. Independent of the Communist parties in the U.S., a movement of black radicals was formed from the “New Negro Movement,” many of whom were black Caribbean immigrants with few illusions in racist European imperialism or American capitalism. The most notable of these radicals were in a group, the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB), to which most of the early black Communists belonged.

The ABB did not originate as a socialist group but rather embraced a contradictory mixture of race-centered, pro-labor positions. Some of its members, such as Richard B. Moore, Wilfred A. Domingo and Grace P. Campbell, had been active in the SP in Harlem and remained active

in the SP *after* the Left-Wing split in 1919. The leader of the ABB, Cyril V. Briggs, was a journalist who was not a socialist. But he had become politicized by the hypocrisy of U.S. imperialism pontificating about “self-determination” in WWI as blacks were lynched in America.

By itself, the early CP would not and could not have recruited the ABB. However, the anti-imperialism of the Comintern attracted such black radicals, and by 1921 most of the Harlem leadership of the ABB had joined the Communist Party. It is important to underline that they joined the American CP because it was the representative of the Communist International in the U.S.

Otto Huiswoud (left) and Claude McKay, American delegates to the Fourth Congress of the Comintern, Moscow, 1922.



I am going to have to gloss over the details of Communist activity over the next decade. However, it can be summed up by noting that the leadership of the CP dragged its feet in making the fight against black oppression central to its work, the black Communists complained to the Comintern and the Comintern fought to make the party address the issue. The CI had to wage an implacable struggle against the social-democratic approach inherited by the Communists.

The Fourth Congress of the Comintern (1922) is a key signpost. The American CP had two black representatives: Huiswoud, who was the official delegate, and McKay, who despite CP opposition managed to be seated as a fraternal delegate. John Riddell’s valuable new book on the Congress—which I recommend that people read—contains the session on the U.S. black question, the first time it had been discussed at length at a CI meeting. After the Congress, McKay stayed in Russia. Trotsky commissioned him to write a short study of black oppression in the U.S., *Negroes in America*. McKay was harshly critical of the American CP for neglecting the fight for black liberation. He criticized it for dropping its demand for full “social equality” for blacks. Significantly, the CP never published this book, and it was not published in English *until the 1970s* when it was discovered in the Russian-language division of the New York Public Library.

The next period includes several attempts by the American party to address the black question, including the founding of the American Negro Labor Congress in 1925. It was to be turned into a black transitional organization, in line with the Comintern’s recognition of the need for special organizational forms to draw specially oppressed segments of the population into the revolutionary movement. But these attempts were not particularly successful. To some degree, this outcome was a reflection of the internecine factionalism that wracked the party in this

period. It also showed that the party leadership still did not get the importance of the fight for black liberation.

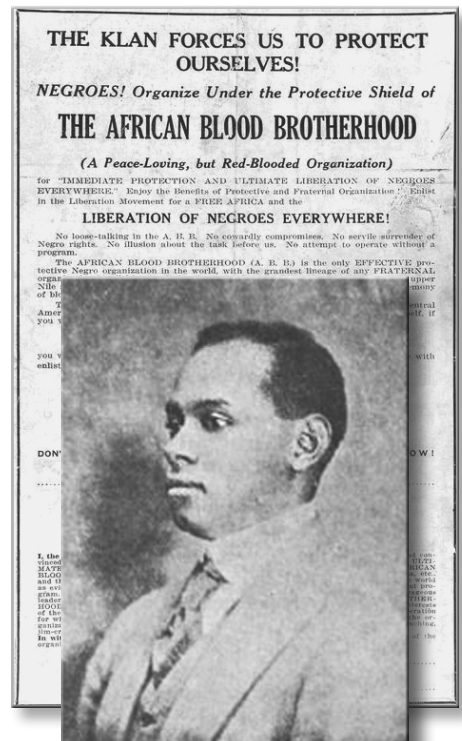
The Sixth Congress and “Self-Determination”

By the mid 1920s, the CI was not the revolutionary organization it had been under Lenin and Trotsky. The pressure of imperialist encirclement, the devastation of the Russian working class in the Civil War, the defeat of post-1917 revolutionary uprisings and the lengthy isolation of the workers state issuing out of the Russian Revolution enabled a bureaucratic layer headed by Stalin to usurp power in a political counterrevolution in 1923-24. Instead of the Bolshevik program of world revolution, the Comintern adopted Stalin’s anti-Marxist theory of “socialism in one country” at its Sixth Congress.

In 1928, the Comintern decreed the so-called “black belt” theory, which claimed that the black population in the American South was a nation and that the key task was to fight for “black self-determination.” This so-called “theory” flew in the face

of reality and was initially opposed by most black Communists. I do not have time to go into the origin of this theory, except to say that it was part of the Stalinist degeneration of the Comintern.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the Communist Party carried out valuable and dangerous work in the fight for black liberation. Its activities included organizing sharecroppers in the South, fighting for the freedom of the Scottsboro Boys, organizing integrated unions and organizing tenants in Harlem. This work was done *despite* the Stalinist degeneration of the CP and *despite* the black belt theory. However, as Cannon stressed in the essay I quoted at the beginning of my presentation, the CP became known for its stand in fighting for black rights *because of the repeated intervention of the Comintern into the American party*. ■



George Meany Archives

Cyril V. Briggs, founder of African Blood Brotherhood. ABB membership application (above) calls for “immediate protection and ultimate liberation of negroes everywhere.”

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Walker later won his recall election. The hidebound AFL-CIO bureaucrats are old hands at subordinating the interests of workers to those of the capitalist rulers, most often expressed through support to the Democratic Party. Contrary to popular perception, CTU President Karen Lewis and Vice President Jesse Sharkey, whose Caucus of Rank-and-File Educators (CORE) swept union elections two years ago, are cut from the same cloth. A “grassroots opposition” within the union that is open to parents and community members, CORE promised to build a “different kind of union” when it was formed in 2008 to much fanfare from the reformist left. Since taking office, CORE members have mobilized teachers for school board meetings and demonstrations, giving the regime a facade of militancy.

But behind the rallies and sound bites describing the abject poverty that plagues many CPS students lurks the same old class collaborationism. Acting every bit the labor statesman for the capitalist government, Lewis willingly signed off on the final version of SB7. This bill mandated a longer school day and longer year without a pay raise for union members and contained various measures making it more difficult to strike. Among them is the stipulation that 75 percent of the entire union membership must vote in favor of strike authorization for it to be valid, with ballots not cast counted as “no” votes. (By this standard, you can probably count on one finger how many bourgeois politicians would make it into office.) SB7 is a stacked deck *against* the union. A prominent school board backer even opined that it would “basically end collective bargaining rights in Chicago as we know it.”

In a letter to the membership following her approval of the bill, Lewis lamented: "Everyone at the table swallowed more than one bitter pill." To hell with swallowing the "bitter pill"! When you only play by the bosses' rules, you tie your own hands. The benefits that members of the CTU have today are a product of bitter struggle and several strikes, and it is going to take real class struggle by the unions to reverse their decades of decline. Hard-fought union action now could well provide a springboard for a drive to unionize the charter schools that repre-



CTU president Karen Lewis and Jesse Jackson at Operation PUSH meeting, Chicago, February 25.

sent a direct assault on teachers unions. CORE leaders are no strangers to supporting the political representatives of the class enemy. In a 4 August 2010 interview with the "Real News Network" Web site, Lewis referred to Obama as her "guy" in the same breath that she derided his "Race to the Top" education program. Under the leadership of CORE, the CTU has endorsed numerous Democrats, such as Pat Quinn for governor, and thrown away nearly \$200,000 to elect them. Since 1989, the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association together have poured over \$76 million of union dues into Democratic Party coffers. The problem with the Democrats is not just one of particular policy. Rahm Emanuel is no loose cannon. The Democrats, no less than the Republicans, represent the interests of big business. They just appeal to a different constituency, using different rhetoric. The particular role of the Democrats in American bourgeois politics is to tie the aspirations of the working class and oppressed black and Latino masses to this rotten capitalist system, all the better to stab them in the back when it counts. Take Jesse Jackson Sr., with whom Lewis is closely aligned. Over the years, he has specialized in dousing the embers of social and class struggle. In fact, Jackson sabotaged the CTU during its strikes in 1973 and again in 1983 when his Operation PUSH organized scab schools.

brand of “narrow Africanist” nationalism. For example, after being booed at a conference of the Young Communist League in December 2009, Malema lashed out: “There is everything wrong with the communists trying to take over the ANC.” As usual, Malema’s anti-communism goes along with the most reactionary social backwardness, including disgusting anti-woman bigotry. For example, Malema has recently joined in the “shower man” song and dance ridiculing Zuma for his ignorant and dangerous statement that he had taken a shower to prevent HIV infection. But during the 2007 rape trial where Zuma made that statement, Malema stood out as one of Zuma’s biggest supporters, including making disgusting apologies for rape.

In the course of the class struggle, the working class must be broken from its current, treacherous leadership and learn to trust only its own revolutionary strength. Our aim is to build a vanguard party of the working class—the only class in modern society which is capable of leading the revolutionary struggle necessary for genuine national emancipation, for women’s liberation from hideous patriarchal oppression, for social and technological progress needed to overcome backwardness and superstition. A Leninist-Trotskyist party would intervene to provide uncompromising, class-struggle leadership to the countless struggles of the proletariat and other oppressed layers for their immediate, burning needs, linking these struggles together and pointing the way to the necessary conclusion of overthrowing the rotten capitalist system through workers revolution. ■

In 1980, he gave the same treatment to Chicago firefighters during their strike when he unsuccessfully tried to get black firefighters to scab on their white union brothers. And in 2000, Jackson was key in scuttling a transit strike in Los Angeles. Some “friend” of labor!

Among CORE's most laudatory and uncritical supporters is the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO), whose supporters are active in CORE. Union VP Sharkey is himself a longtime contributing writer for the ISO's newspaper, *Socialist Worker*. In a 12 June interview on the CBS2 *Morning News* following the strike authorization vote, Sharkey stated: "What every teacher understood is that this was never a vote about striking. This was a vote to essentially give the union the bargaining power to try to negotiate a fair contract over the course of the summer." Such timeworn overtures to the bosses are commonplaces for run-of-the-mill union bureaucrats intent on defusing class struggle.

For such reformists, union struggle is to be considered only within the parameters permitted by the capitalist rulers. A *Socialist Worker* article headlined “How Can the Chicago Teachers Union Win?” (26 June) laments that other school unions “are contractually obligated to cross CTU picket lines” without a word of the need to defy such “obligations.” This article derides SB7 but assiduously avoids mentioning the CORE bureaucracy’s endorsement of the bill or its support to Democratic Party politicians. At the time of the showdown in Wisconsin, the ISO disparaged the call for a statewide strike as “unlikely to get very far.” Indeed, in the view of the ISO, the entire purpose of labor protest is to pressure the Democrats to “fight” for a few more crumbs for working people.

What is needed is a class-struggle leadership of the unions—one based on the understanding that the interests of working people and the oppressed cannot be reconciled with those of the capitalist rulers. The woeful state of public education in this country is a searing indictment of racist capitalist America with its deep class divisions. The capitalist rulers have relegated ghetto and barrio youth to menial jobs, to the armed forces or to a life behind

bars. As such, they have no interest in spending the money to upgrade schools in the inner city or pay teachers union wages to educate these kids. The stark reality is that these schools are overwhelmingly segregated and becoming little more than holding pens. In a sign of the times, the money earmarked for the teachers' raise that Emanuel canceled was handed out to the Chicago Police instead to pay for more cops to patrol school hallways.

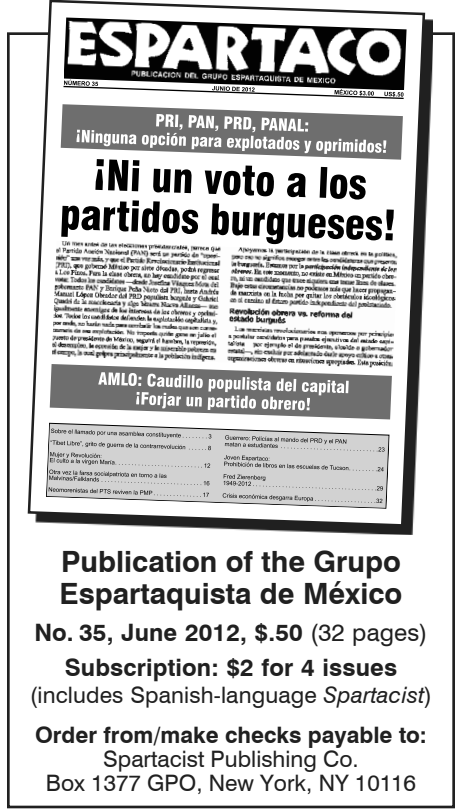
The *Chicago Tribune* has published a barrage of anti-union articles and editorials, bemoaning the fact that there supposedly is no money in the tight city budget to pay teachers and imploring the CTU to be "reasonable." Expecting compensation for a longer workday is not unreasonable. But at issue is not just fighting a pay cut. Teachers work in overcrowded, underfunded classrooms and spend countless hours planning lessons and grading papers at home. The solution is to hire many more teachers, reduce class sizes and fully fund all the schools.

The problem is not that such demands are “unreasonable” but rather the anarchic capitalist profit system itself. In their drive for ever greater profits, the capitalists have run industry, schools, hospitals and vital infrastructure into the ground. Untold numbers of workers have been thrown onto the scrap heap as the economy continues to falter. As Leon Trotsky, co-leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, stated: “If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish. ‘Realizability’ or ‘unrealizability’ is in the given instance a question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle.”

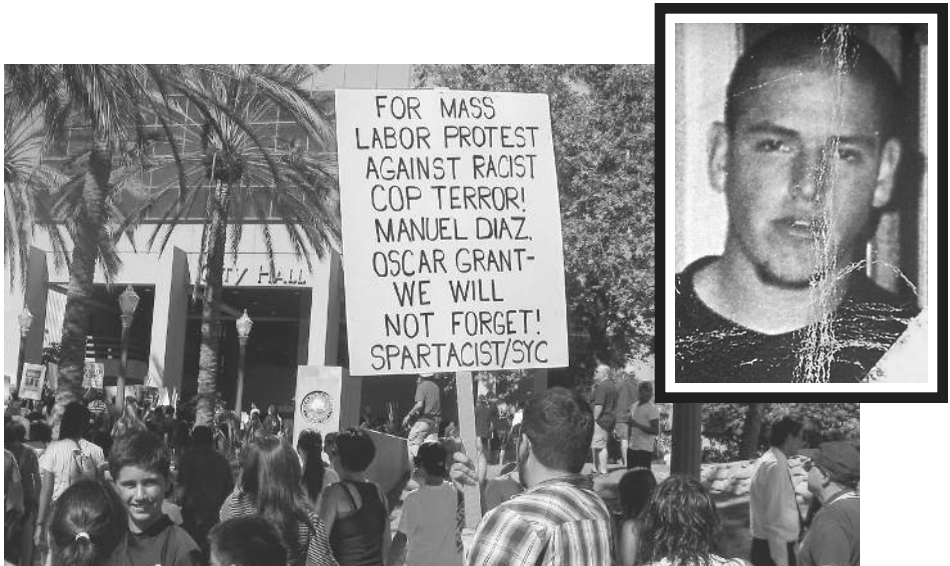
The money and resources exist to provide quality, integrated education for all but to seize that wealth requires breaking the bourgeoisie's hold on power. Working people need a party that fights for *their* class interests, a multiracial revolutionary workers party, independent from all parties of capital. The Spartacist League is committed to building the party that will lead all of the exploited and oppressed in the struggle to sweep away this decaying capitalist system and establish an egalitarian socialist society. ■

(continued from page 6)

Such anti-union demagoguery is something which a populist of Malema's ilk would no doubt take to new heights as ANC leader. Malema has already provided glimpses of this, at times displaying the virulent anti-communism which is an integral part of his



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Anaheim protest against cop killing of Manuel Diaz (inset), July 24.

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defense of the interests of the capitalists. Civilian review boards have been around in this country since the first one was set up in Berkeley in the early 1970s. Today, according to government estimates, there are about 100 of them in cities across the country. Of course, that has done nothing to stop cops in the ghettos and barrios from blowing away blacks, Latinos and others with virtual impunity.

Placards at the Anaheim protests by the reformist Party for Socialism and Liberation called to "Jail Killer Cops!" This demand helps to channel anger over cop terror right back into the very "justice" system that upholds its monopoly of violence in every way. On the rare occasions when the rulers find it necessary to punish one of their murderous gendarmes, the

aim is to refurbish the image of the state and its armed bodies of men in order to make it more effective. That is the goal of the investigation by the U.S. Attorney of the killings of Diaz and Acevedo that was announced last week, which was requested by both the Anaheim city council and the Republican mayor.

Anger burns in the ghettos and barrios all over this country. But to effect any fundamental change, it must be linked to the social power of the multiracial working class, mobilized in class-struggle opposition to the capitalist state and all of its political parties. There will be no end to police terror short of the destruction of this system of exploitation and oppression—which is what the cops truly “serve and protect.” Our purpose is to build the revolutionary workers party that can lead the fight for a socialist America. Only then will there be justice for working people and the oppressed. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Democratic Mayor Emanuel Out to Gut CTU Chicago Teachers: Strike to Win!

CHICAGO—Ever since Rahm Emanuel stepped down as Barack Obama's chief of staff to become mayor of "Segregation City," he has been hell-bent on crippling the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU). In an early salvo last August, this arrogant Democrat unilaterally canceled a pay raise for teachers. Well before the union contract expired at the end of June, Emanuel and Chicago Public Schools (CPS) CEO Jean-Claude Brizard were beating the drum for a 20 percent longer day and two-week longer year in return for a paltry 2 percent wage increase. City Hall also wants to impose a "merit" pay system in place of one based on seniority, cost of living and teachers' continuing education.

Not about to be steamrolled, thousands of incensed teachers and school-related personnel flocked to a union rally on May 23, filling the 4,000-seat Auditorium Theatre to capacity as thousands more gathered outside. At its conclusion, union members poured out of the building, joining those outside, and proceeded to take over the streets in the downtown Loop during rush hour, chanting: "Strike!" and "CTU!" A couple weeks later, nearly 90 percent of the 27,000-member CTU voted to authorize a strike, far more than required under an anti-union state law known as SB7 passed last year to put the clamps on the CTU.

In an agreement announced on July 24, the CTU tops gave the green light to a "modest" increase in the school day in exchange for CPS hiring 477 additional teachers, prompting both Emanuel and the



Thousands of Chicago teachers flood downtown streets, chanting "Strike!" after union rally, May 23. Reuters

union to declare victory. But the dispute is far from over. Left unresolved are many contentious issues, from pay to class size. The deal also does not preclude layoffs when the new school year begins.

Both sides are acutely aware that a lot is riding on this contract battle. With teachers unions under siege across the country—part of a broad government attack on public employees—what happens in Chicago may well set the tone for educators for years to come. Indeed, the city's public schools

have long served as a testing ground for schemes to slash school budgets, regiment classes and trample on union standards, as well as for other "reform" programs now pushed by the Obama White House in its war on public education. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan earned his spurs as CPS CEO, closing down over 60 public schools and greatly expanding non-union charter schools and military academies (see "Obama's War on Public Education," WV No. 967, 22 October 2010).

The city schools held up as a model by the Chicago cabal of Obama, Duncan and Emanuel are dilapidated and starved of funds, with the graduation rate hovering around 50 percent. Not coincidentally in racist capitalist America, these schools also are overwhelmingly attended by black and Latino youth. A strike by the heavily integrated CTU would win wide support not only from parents and students but also from working people and the ghetto and barrio masses, especially if teachers were to link their cause to a fight for fully funded, integrated, quality education. To beat back the union-busters, teachers must turn to their union allies in the schools and city—such as the transit workers and firefighters embroiled in their own contract disputes—not Democratic Party politicians who falsely parade themselves as "friends of labor."

The clash between the CTU and mayor's office has drawn comparisons to Wisconsin last year, when 100,000 outraged unionists massed in Madison to fight a major anti-labor assault on public workers by the Republican-led state government and Governor Scott Walker. Chicago teachers would do well to heed what happened next: labor officials channeled the potential for strike action into reliance on the Democrats, demobilizing the protests in favor of a campaign to recall the Republicans. As a result, the public employee unions were clobbered and are now hemorrhaging members, even as

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Anaheim: Outrage Over Cop Killings

JULY 30—Residents of working-class Anaheim, just southeast of Los Angeles, are seething in the wake of two coldblooded killings of Latino youth by the racist cops. On July 21, police shot Manuel Diaz in the back and, as he fell to his knees, again in the back of the head. With the unarmed Diaz on the brink of death, the cops slapped handcuffs on him. After pushing back people in the area who were trying to help Diaz, the cops then offered them money to get them to turn over any cell-phone videos of the incident. The next day, the thugs in blue gunned down Joel Acevedo after they claimed that he had stolen an SUV and fired on the police. But a witness has come forward stating that she heard only five consecutive shots, not an exchange of gunfire.

There have been eight shootings by Anaheim cops so far this year, five of them fatal. All but one of those killed were Latino. As one resident said, "This is not quite 'The Happiest Place on Earth,' and now the world knows it." Despite the Disneyland facade, this Orange County city of some 340,000 is starkly race-divided. While white families are concentrated in the upscale "planned community" of Anaheim Hills, most of the city's majority-Latino population lives in the poor section of town known as the Flatlands. Young men there describe being constantly stopped and harassed by the cops for

doing nothing more than walking down the street.

For four days after the killing of Diaz, hundreds of angry people from

Police." On the first day of protests, police fired beanbags and pepper-spray pellets and "accidentally" unleashed an attack dog that injured many in



July 24: Anaheim police fire projectiles at demonstrators protesting death of Manuel Diaz and other cop killings. KABC-TV

the neighborhood staged protests. In a reference to the cops labeling the victims as "documented gang members," supposedly at fault for their own deaths, one demonstrator carried a placard reading: "#1 Gang Here is the

crowd after heading straight for a baby—who was saved only by the actions of others.

At the largest protest, on July 24, many demonstrators who sought entry into a City Council meeting on the kill-

ings were barred and again brutally attacked by the cops. The Spartacist League attended this protest with placards reading: "For Mass Labor Protest Against Racist Cop Terror! Manuel Diaz, Oscar Grant—We Will Not Forget!" and "Break with the Democrats!—Party of Racism and War! For a Workers Party that Fights for Socialist Revolution."

Dozens of demonstrators have been arrested, some on charges that include assault with a deadly weapon. Meanwhile, the city police chief railed that "the vast majority" of protesters were "from outside" Anaheim and had come "to create havoc, damage property, cause injuries and in effect just attack the democratic way." During the night of July 23-24, the L.A. office of the leftist ANSWER coalition, which had participated in the Anaheim protests, was ransacked. **Drop all charges against the protesters!**

A number of protesters, as well as the reformists of the International Socialist Organization in a 30 July article on their Web site, have called for the establishment of a civilian review board. This demand is based on the liberal illusion that the bourgeois state, namely the cops together with the courts, prisons and military, can be cleaned up and made accountable to "the people." In fact, the purpose of the state is the repression of the working class and oppressed in

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