

Zimmerman Goes Free, Detroit Goes Under



AP



Bloomberg

Capitalist America: Racist Hell

George Zimmerman was given a pass twice, first by the police, then by a jury, for the coldblooded murder of Trayvon Martin. With the racist vigilante again free to go about his business, protests flared up in cities across the country. It was impossible to mistake the message of the verdict in his trial: black life is as cheap as ever in capitalist America, where cops gun down youth in the streets with impunity and the vast majority are locked into the bottom rungs of the economy. This raw reality is playing out with a vengeance today in heavily black Detroit, the one-time Motor City that the auto bosses turned into a bankrupt industrial wasteland, at the cost of tens of thousands of decent-paying union jobs. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court's recent gutting of the 1965 Voting Rights Act is another blow at the democratic rights that black people have wrested through struggle.

As the Spartacist League wrote in a leaflet issued following the Zimmerman verdict (reprinted on page 15): "Here was a case study in the machinery of courts, cops and prosecutors whose job is to maintain and defend a system rooted in the brutal exploitation of the many by the few—a system built on a bedrock of racial oppression, from chattel slavery to wage slavery." The expressions of anger and anguish at Zimmerman's acquittal compelled President Obama—the current boss of that system—to comment on the situation in a "surprise" speech on July 19.

Many black people found solace in his remarks, especially the account of his personal experiences with race prejudice before becoming a Senator and his acknowledgement of "a history of racial disparities in the application of our criminal laws." A common refrain is that the first black president wants to do right by black people, but his "hands are tied" by hostile, mainly Republican, forces. The simple fact is that Obama has done the job that the main body of the ruling class selected him for: overseer for a capital-

Left: July 17 protest in Orlando, Florida, following acquittal of George Zimmerman. Right: Detroit neighborhood in ruins, with headquarters of bailed-out General Motors in the background.

ist profit system that criminalizes young black men and chews up the working people, spitting them out when their labor is no longer needed. Former president Bill Clinton also told black people that he felt for them as he put 100,000 more cops on the streets and ended "welfare as we know it." This speaks to the role of the two parties of capital: While the Republicans openly declare their contempt for blacks, immigrants and the unions, the Democrats say they're your friends...and end up doing the same thing.

Obama's remarks came on the same day that the White House again rejected out of hand the idea that the federal government would rescue Detroit, where what remains of basic public services as well as the jobs, pensions and retiree health care benefits of city workers are on the chopping block. The Wall Street Democrat Obama—whose administration handed out trillions to the banks and tens of billions to the auto bosses—is showing an empty pocket to the city's black masses.

"Justice" System at Work

For all his lecturing on "racial profiling," Obama pronounced New York City police commissioner Ray Kelly "well-qualified" to run the Department of Homeland Security. Kelly is the architect of the city's notorious stop-and-frisk program, which he designed "to instill fear" in young blacks and Latinos. He also set up the NYPD's Demographics Unit, which has dispatched officers in the Northeast to spy on Muslims—fitting credentials for running the domestic "war on terror."

Obama endorsed the propriety of the Zimmerman trial, throwing in a threat against protesters who might engage in "violence." He also poured cold water on hopes about the outcome of the Justice Department's review of the case, intoning that the legal code and law enforcement are "traditionally done at the state and local levels, not at the federal level." Democratic Party liberals and mainstream black leaders widely lauded Obama's speech—as did the ever-obsequious International Socialist Organization (ISO), which wrote in "Why We're Still Marching" (*Socialist Worker*, 1 August) that the imperialist Commander-in-Chief "spoke powerfully" about racism.

When PBS host Tavis Smiley broke the mold and blasted Obama's talk as being as "weak as pre-sweetened Kool-Aid," he was heaped with abuse. Radical academic Cornel West, a onetime Obama supporter, is also getting flak for a July 22 interview with *Democracy Now!*, in which he called the president "a global George Zimmerman" for the lethal drone strikes in Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen that have come to symbolize his execution of the "war on terror."

For his sharp comments, West is persona non grata for Al Sharpton and his National Action Network, the NAACP and others organizing the 50th anniversary March on Washington events this month. A key purpose for the liberal establishment that sponsored the 1963 march, where Martin Luther King delivered his "I have a dream" speech, was to keep the lid on the mass struggles for

black rights that were shaking the country and to channel them into pressure politics for the benefit of the Democratic Party (see article on page 13).

While there is a dearth of class and social struggle today, thanks in no small part to the hat-in-hand labor bureaucracy and black bourgeois politicians, the bankrupt liberal strategy remains the same: pressuring the federal government and pushing the fortunes of the Democratic Party. Even as delicate criticisms of Sharpton and the NAACP are offered, the ISO's "Still Marching" editorial expresses delight that such "mainstream groups" are organizing the protest, not least because it "will widen the mobilization, both for the Washington march and for anti-racist demonstrations generally." They predict, correctly, that criticism of Obama will be verboten from the platform, but that's no matter for the ISO—it's going to be big!

With their calls for federal civil rights charges to be brought against Zimmerman, the liberals sow illusions in the same Justice Department that serves as the top cops of a system of rampant racist police terror, frame-up trials and overflowing prisons. In fact, at a time when state prison populations have declined as a whole, mainly due to budget pressures, the federal prison system has grown by 3 percent annually. Attorney General Eric Holder may well do something to block the openly racist voter suppression measures adopted in Texas and other states in the wake of the Supreme Court decision on the Voting Rights Act. Such a step would simply be in the Democrats' own interest. The black people, immigrants and other minorities denied the right to vote by these measures generally go Democrat.

For the Right of Armed Self-Defense

The Sanford, Florida, jury accepted George Zimmerman's claim of self-defense, which was buttressed by the

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Pseudoscience, Snake Oil and Stalinism in China.....4

On Oakland, L.A. Cop Terror

Los Angeles
30 June 2013

Re: *Workers Vanguard* No. 1021, 5 April 2013. “Oakland Cops: Racist Killers on the Loose.”

The title “Cops...on the loose” suggests that an otherwise “fair and legal” condition exists, seemingly contradicting WV: “...in the inner cities is how the cops have *always* operated, everywhere.” What WV pointed out, however, that the misleadership of the unions—defense organizations a revolutionary workers party would direct against exploitation and the state’s apparatus of coercion and violence—allows the state to “loosen” its leash on their hired thugs. Your chronicling of “Killings and Cover-Ups” show federal “reforms” as a cynical ploy. As bottom-feeders the International Socialist Organization (ISO), et al., epitomize what left-liberals do: advocate blunting social contradictions to declare class struggle “absurd.” To mystify oppression they pose a “realistic” struggle: “What if the Oakland City Council and Mayor...fired all the cops...and exchanged badges for jobs?”, asks the ISO.

Bratton was LAPD chief in 2007 when his cops charged a May Day Rally in MacArthur Park. Women, children, TV, cameramen [were] violently attacked while personnel carriers rushed in as “back-up.” Legal settlements from this were concluded in February 2010 on a Friday. On Monday LAPD-insider, Charlie Beck,

was sworn in “untainted” of this episode of the “reformed” department.

I appreciate mention of black ex-LAPD cop, Christopher Dorner, as again, this was the state bringing its violence to bear. One militant’s stated view was, “well, he was just a cop...”. Trained as a cop, and with his “manifesto,” Dorner had some authority on cop “justice” aimed at the populace. In Los Angeles, the LAPD and Sheriffs virtually compete in shooting down victims first, and... “not answering questions later.” One sentiment expressed was that the LAPD wouldn’t want Dorner on trial to make public details of racism inside the LAPD. He had a zero chance to stand trial for the alleged killings. The bounty for his “capture and conviction” was a public relations stunt. Witness LA’s Police Protective League, et al., attempting to withdraw their bounty after killing him with pyrotechnic bombs shot into the cabin, while on audio cops were heard screaming “burn him!” Two Latina victims wounded by the LAPD were promised a replacement of their bullet-riddled truck. Chief Beck categorized the new truck a “prize”...obligating them to “pay tax” on it! Roundly criticized (including by an editorial of the LA Times, whose employees they were) the LAPD reversed their tack.

This June the LA Times reported on Chief Beck’s investigation: “Dorner had no basis for his claims”; and LA’s Liberal Civil Rights attorney Connie Rice’s (cousin of Condoleezza Rice) op-ed:

“Dorner’s web of lies about the LAPD.” Rice contends Dorner “...was denigrating the very real changes to the department,” and “Beck...works every day to reinforce racially tolerant and just policing.” What of the vicious assault on minority students at a USC sanctioned party in May where on YouTube riot cops are slamming young women to the ground! With Beck and Rice, the State’s agencies and their mouthpieces have burned and buried Dorner again!

B. Montoya

WV replies: We appreciate the writer’s further exposé of the Los Angeles Police Department, helping puncture the myth that former police chief William Bratton transformed the corrupt, notoriously racist LAPD into a “kinder, gentler” police force.

The headline “Oakland Cops: Racist

Killers on the Loose” is in fact simply a description of a police force long notorious for its rampaging bonapartism, particularly directed against the ghetto and barrio poor. Of course, all cops regard their badge as a license to kill. But this license is and has been used with particular abandon by the Oakland Police Department. As indicated by the kicker to the headline, “There’s No Reforming This Gang,” and as B. Montoya himself notes, the article in no way suggested that a “more fair and legal” police force does or could exist.

Our article was in large part devoted to puncturing illusions in police reform schemes peddled by various purported “socialists,” the trade-union misleaders, bourgeois liberals and others. Over many decades, such schemes have been repeatedly implemented to supposedly rein in the Oakland cops. Indeed, this history provides a living refutation of the liberal-reformist strategy, which stands in the way of the struggle to sweep away the capitalist state machinery through workers revolution. ■

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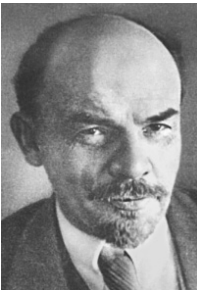
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On Bourgeois Justice

The following excerpt from The ABC of Communism, a textbook for the education of Communist cadres in the early Soviet workers state, explains how the ruling class in capitalist society uses its “justice” system to repress the working class and the oppressed, whatever democratic trappings that system is wrapped in.



LENIN

TROTSKY

Among the various institutions of bourgeois society which serve to oppress and deceive the working masses, must be mentioned bourgeois justice. This estimable institution is carried on under the guidance of laws passed in the interests of the exploiting class. Whatever the composition of the court, its decisions are restricted in accordance with the volumes of statutes in which are incorporated all the privileges of capital and all the lack of privileges of the toiling masses.

As far as the organization of bourgeois justice is concerned, this is in perfect harmony with the characteristics of the bourgeois State. Where the bourgeois State is comparatively frank in its methods, where it is free from hypocrisy in its determination that the decisions of the courts shall be favourable to the ruling class, there the judges are appointed from above; but even when they are elected, only the members of the privileged stratum are entitled to vote. When the masses have been sufficiently brought to heel by capital, so that they are duly submissive and regard the laws of the bourgeois State as their own laws, the workers are permitted to a certain extent to be their own judges, just as they are allowed to vote exploiters and their henchmen into parliament. Thus originated trial by jury, thanks to which legal decisions made in the interests of capital can masquerade as decisions made by the “whole people.”

—Nikolai Bukharin and Evgeny Preobrazhensky, *The ABC of Communism* (1920)

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Union Tops Bow to Profit Drive

Postal Workers Face Jobs Massacre

In the past two years, postal workers have been subjected to waves of draconian layoffs linked to service cutbacks and post office closures. As many as 220,000 union jobs are at stake as Washington, goaded by capitalists standing to profit directly from privatization and by ideologues hell-bent on “downsizing” government, takes the ax to this essential social service. Under Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe’s plans, 211 mail-processing plants will have closed by the end of this year, with more closures projected after that. This alone will eliminate 35,000 jobs while slowing mail delivery. Meanwhile, trucking and custodial jobs are being contracted out to private companies in California, New Jersey and elsewhere. Particularly dependent on the postal service, the poor, the elderly and minorities are hit hardest as post office hours are cut and first-class mail delivery standards are relaxed.

The United States Postal Service (USPS) is the second-largest employer in the country after Wal-Mart. Its unionized public workforce—some 550,000 workers, down from 683,000 in 2007—makes it a big, juicy target for the enemies of labor. The postal cutbacks are a special threat to black workers, who make up 21 percent of the workforce. USPS is also a significant employer of Latinos and Asians, and 40 percent of its workers are women.

For generations, the post office was one of the few places where black people could get decent jobs, including during the Jim Crow era when even college-educated blacks were systematically excluded from most occupations. At the same time, racist discrimination pervaded the postal service. Letter carriers were usually white so as to present a “white face” to the public, and the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) continued to have separate black and white locals in the South until that practice was banned by the federal government in 1962, at the height of Southern civil rights struggles. Black postal workers’ struggles against racism in the workplace and inside the unions in the post-World War II era were an important component of the early civil rights movement. This made them a particular target of the purges of reds and union militants during the McCarthy period.

Universal postal service and national post offices were integral to industrial development under capitalism. The need for speedy mail delivery was a factor in the development of railroads in the 19th century and air transport in the 20th. In the past quarter century, however, postal workers have been hit by privatization, outsourcing and job slashing in a range of advanced capitalist countries, particularly in the European Union and Japan. In the Netherlands, privatization has progressed so far that, in conditions redolent of Charles Dickens’ time, mail sorting and delivery are done out of private houses by casual workers denied contracts and benefits and paid measly piecework wages. In Britain, the former Labour government opened the way to privatizations and forced through tens of thousands of job cuts, longer workweeks, speedup, effective pay cuts and office closures. The current Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition is poised to sell off the Royal Mail outright. In response, the Communications Workers Union has threatened to ballot its members for a national strike.

In the U.S., the pretext for closures and layoffs is the deficits in the postal services budget. The “free market” apostles leading the attack scream that the postal service needs to make a profit. But mail is a basic public service, like garbage collection, running water, public transit, educa-



Bloomberg

Above: Letter carrier at work in Washington, D.C. Right: Postal workers at September 2011 union rally in Springfield, Illinois.



AP

tion and health care. The requirement that the post office generate all its own revenue dates back to the 1970 Postal Service Reorganization Act. In order to expose postal workers to “market discipline,” the Post Office Department was reorganized as the self-funded, semi-independent agency USPS, which nevertheless remained subject to Congressional oversight.

In 2002, the government declared that USPS was “overfunding” pensions paid into the federal Civil Service Retirement System to the tune of tens of billions of dollars. Postal union officials argued that this money—in actuality, deferred wages—be used by USPS to stave off rate increases and otherwise keep the postal service “competitive.” Workers saw the

to pay for the bosses’ economic crisis. Donahoe was elected in 2010 by a USPS Board of Governors packed with corporate lobbyists appointed by the White House. At every turn, Donahoe has sought to bust the postal unions and undermine the service while corporations such as Pitney Bowes, FedEx and UPS jockey for the profits they expect to get if USPS is privatized. When he demanded that Congress invalidate the clauses in union contracts that prohibit layoffs of workers with at least six years of service, he complained that he could not get rid of enough workers fast enough through attrition, buyouts, etc.

The latest attack originating from Capitol Hill is the “Postal Reform Act,” which

from the capitalist masters. This lesson is part of the postal workers’ own history, as seen in the 1970 national postal strike. Defying the government’s anti-strike laws, the strike won huge gains for postal workers and their unions and advanced the cause of the entire labor movement.

By 1970, the struggle for black rights and the U.S. rulers’ counterrevolutionary war in Vietnam had polarized society. While students and others staged mass antiwar demonstrations, workers’ wages were being rapidly eroded by inflation caused by the war. Exemplifying the dramatic rise in rank-and-file labor militancy, in March 1970 the New York branch of the NALC walked out in defiance of their national leadership. Like all federal workers, postal workers were banned from striking. On March 23, President Richard Nixon declared a national emergency and ordered 23,000 troops to occupy the post offices in New York. But the wildcat spread throughout the country, mostly against the will of the union leadership. With young and black militants taking the lead, postal workers defied back-to-work court injunctions. All told, over 210,000 workers struck nationally in the largest strike ever against the U.S. government.

It is not accidental that the action started in New York City, where a series of public workers strikes in defiance of the bosses’ laws had taken place, including the victorious 1966 NYC transit strike. In 1968, Mayor John Lindsay backed off from his threat to use the National Guard against striking sanitation workers after the Central Labor Council, under pressure from the city’s workers, threatened a general strike.

When the NYC letter carriers went out, the Spartacist League issued a leaflet on March 23 headlined: “Postal Strike Aids All Workers! Answer Any Troops’ Use by General Strike!” The leaflet pointed out: “The same army that Nixon is threatening to use in breaking the postal strike is being used to suppress the Vietnamese workers and peasants in order to keep Asia safe for American business.” It went on:

“To win this strike, the postal workers need an aggressive leadership, capable of bargaining hard against the government,

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AP

18 March 1970: Letter carriers picket General Post Office in New York City at outset of strike that defied federal law, spread nationwide...and won!

question differently: they wanted full funding of their pensions and health care!

In 2006, Congress and the Bush White House cooked up a scheme, codified in the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA), to shuffle retiree health care funds onto the Treasury Department’s balance sheet, where they could be used to help offset the federal deficit. Originally supported by the NALC leadership, the measure gave USPS until 2016 to pay 50 years’ worth of projected health care benefits—as much as \$100 billion—into a new Retiree Health Benefits Fund. This has led to the massive postal service deficits that have put wind in the sails of the union-busters and profiteers who want to break up USPS and sell it for a song.

The drive to ax postal jobs, while long in the making, accelerated in recent years as part of the bipartisan, one-sided class war against public employees unions, as working people and the poor are made

was submitted on June 13 by California Republican Congressman Darrell Issa, a point man for the right-wing Heritage Foundation and Cato Institute. The bill would end Saturday delivery for first-class mail and begin to phase out door-to-door delivery. Putting USPS under a “temporary governance authority,” the measure would ban layoff protections from union contracts and target 30 percent of post offices for closure in favor of contracted retail outlets.

1970 Postal Strike Defied the Law and Won

Facing these attacks, postal workers are crippled by union misleaders who have all but relinquished labor’s own weapons, not daring to even threaten a strike in defense of their members’ jobs and benefits. It took hard class struggle—not begging Congress or the White House—for labor to wrest real gains

NOTICE

Workers Vanguard skips alternate issues in June, July and August. Our next issue will be dated September 6.

Pseudoscience, Snake Oil and Stalinism in China



Reuters photos

Quackery vs. science in Hefei, Anhui Province: Herbal and cupping “treatments” for rheumatism, 2012 (left); research on bird flu virus, 2013 (right).



The following is a document submitted to the Spartacist League earlier this year by New York comrade J. Thomas. It has been edited for publication in WV.

Decades after the 1949 Revolution, mysticism is rampant in China. Even among the educated urban population, including overseas students, many are self-professed atheists who embrace modern science but simultaneously to one degree or another accept all kinds of anti-materialist nonsense. While less so than elsewhere in Asia, beliefs in things such as numerology, feng shui, face-reading (like palm-reading), astrology, personality traits based on blood type and especially mystical healing are ubiquitous. The theories behind acupuncture, the related practice of moxibustion, herbal cures, *qigong*, etc., all involve the manipulation of nonexistent vital forces such as qi, yin and yang and various humors. Fighting against these notions is one way to combat the widespread misidentification of revolutionary Marxism in China with Maoist idealism.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has fostered the persistence of medical quackery, giving it a scientific and even Marxist gloss. This is in line with its nationalist Stalinist program of building “socialism in one country” and opposing international proletarian revolution. The glorification of traditions of the “motherland,” the return of all the old crap in the face of scarcity, and the petty-bourgeois character of the CCP bureaucracy all play a role. There are all the contradictions one would expect from a caste sitting on top of the workers state that, issuing out of the peasant-based 1949 Revolution, was bureaucratically deformed from its inception. Among the gains of the revolution were tremendous advances in public health and science. It was necessary to combat superstitions which were a prop for landlord rule in the countryside. But there have been zigs and zags over the

years, and there continue to be conflicts within the bureaucracy on this question.

May Fourth Period

The Stalinist CCP is a qualitatively different party from the one that emerged out of the anti-imperialist May Fourth Movement of 1919 under the impact of the Bolshevik-led workers revolution in Russia. After the imperialist powers crushed the 1900 Boxer Rebellion—which had raised the call “Uphold the dynasty, destroy the foreigners!”—it became clear that resistance to imperialism based on reactionary superstitions was a dead end. Those seeking to liberate China looked toward modern science and were open to ideas imported from abroad, including in medicine. After the growth of a combative proletariat in China during the First World War and the influence of the Bolsheviks, the best of these were won to communism.

Chen Duxiu, a founding leader of the CCP and later a Trotskyist, was the principal modernizing intellectual of the time. In 1915, he wrote in “Call to Youth”:

“Our physicians know no science; not only are they not acquainted with human anatomy, but also they do not analyze the properties of medicines; as for bacteria and contagious diseases, they have never heard of them. They can only parrot the talk about the five elements, their mutual promotions and preventions, cold and heat, *yin* and *yang*, and prescribe medicine according to ancient formulae. Their technique is practically the same as that of an archer! The height of their marvelous imaginations is the theory of *ch'i* (primal force), which even extends to the techniques of professional strong men and Taoist priests. But though you seek high and low in the universe, you will never know what this ‘primal force’ exactly is. All these nonsensical ideas and unreasonable beliefs can be cured at the root only by science. For to explain truth by science means proving everything with fact. Although the process is slower than that of imagination and

arbitrary decision, yet every step taken is on firm ground; it is different from those imaginative flights which eventually cannot advance even one inch. The amount of truth in the universe is boundless, and the fertile areas in the realm of science awaiting the pioneer are immense! Youth, take up the task!”

—quoted in Su-yu Teng and John K. Fairbank, *China's Response to the West* (Harvard University Press, 1954)

Lu Xun, another major figure in the May Fourth Movement, described in “Call to Arms” how as a child he was often sent to the medicine shop by his ill father: “The physician who made out the prescriptions was very well-known, he used unusual drugs: aloe root dug up in winter, sugar-cane that had been three years exposed to frost, twin crickets, and *ardisia*...all of which were difficult to procure. But my father's illness went from bad to worse until he died.” Lu relates how he later was exposed to modern science at school and continues:

“Recalling the talk and prescriptions of physicians I had known and comparing them with what I now knew, I came to the conclusion those physicians must be either unwitting or deliberate charlatans; and I began to sympathize with the invalids and families who suffered at their hands. From translated histories I also learned that the Japanese Reformation had originated, to a great extent, with the introduction of Western medical science to Japan.

“These inklings took me to a provincial medical college in Japan. I dreamed a beautiful dream that on my return to China I would cure patients like my father, who had been wrongly treated, while if war broke out I would serve as an army doctor, at the same time strengthening my countrymen's faith in reformation.”

—quoted in *Selected Stories of Lu Hsun* (Foreign Languages Press, 1989)

In China under the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang, traditional healing was kept out of whatever state health care existed.

There was even a proposal in 1929 by Dr. Yu Yunxiu to abolish it, which was defeated in the face of fierce opposition by traditional healers and the pharmaceutical industry.

The beginnings of a change in attitude toward Chinese medicine by the CCP coincided with its transformation into a peasant-based party, soon to come under Mao Zedong's leadership. This was after the crushing of the Second Chinese Revolution of 1925-27 and the slaughter of tens of thousands of Communists. Responsibility for this disaster lay with the Stalin/Bukharin leadership of the Communist International, which had ordered the CCP to liquidate into the Guomindang.

As David A. Palmer wrote in *Qigong Fever* (2007):

“The CCP's attitude toward traditional healing underwent significant changes since the Party's early days in the first decades of the twentieth century. The first Chinese Marxists, though not especially interested in medical issues, were, as a logical consequence of their modernist orientation, opposed to the traditional healing traditions associated with the old society. In 1929 the Party discussed a policy proposal to abolish the old medicine in order to develop modern medicine and hygiene. But after the experience of the Soviets [CCP-controlled areas] in Jiangxi and Shaanxi, the Long March, and the deepening of the Party's rural roots in the 1930s, the CCP's attitude began to change: far from the cities, the Red Army had to resort to traditional therapists for medical care. A conscious policy was formulated in the ‘Liberated Areas’ in the 1940s to make use of local medical resources within a ‘scientific orientation.’ Mao called on modern-trained doctors to unite with traditional therapists, who were closer to the people, and to ‘help them to reform.’ Traditional doctors were thus no longer seen as enemies of progress.... Such was the context in which official *qigong* was born.”

Both before and after the 1949 Revolution, “uniting” with traditional doctors to “reform” them and put their techniques on a scientific basis was considered part of the anti-imperialist united front.

1949 Revolution

After the CCP came to power, for the first time basic modern sanitation was introduced into many parts of the country and there were massive public health programs, largely modeled on those in the Soviet Union. But as we pointed out in “The Origins of Chinese Trotskyism” (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 53, Summer 1997): “The Maoist ideology of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state reflected the provincial, anti-internationalist consciousness characteristic of the mass of the peasantry, which was perfectly consonant with the conservative outlook of the Stalin bureaucracy in the Kremlin. The only difference was that the Chinese Stalinists



Sidney D. Gamble; Museum of the Revolution, Beijing (portrait)

May 4th Movement, 1919: Students outside Beijing's Tiananmen Gate (left) protest imperialist subjugation and division of China following World War I; May 4th leader Chen Duxiu (center) edited *New Youth* journal, which became organ of Chinese Communist Party founded by Chen and others.



defended ‘socialism’ in a different ‘one country’.”

At first, the incorporation of traditional healers into the health care system was mostly an attempt to educate and regulate them, so the existing doctors would at least have a clue about modern medicine. The call at the time was to study Western medicine. However, this very quickly turned into “Doctors of Western medicine, study Chinese medicine!” There was some resistance in the Ministry of Health to this policy, the goal of which was to unite the two in a new medicine by raising the level of Chinese traditional medicine.

Hundreds of the country’s (precious few and desperately needed) doctors trained in modern medicine were removed from their work for two and a half years to study Chinese medicine under traditional healers. They were, understandably, not enthusiastic. Of the four medical texts they studied, the most recent was written in 1596; the other three were from the second and third centuries.

“The move to make doctors trained in Western medicine now study Chinese medicine has since been criticized as a dreadful ‘waste of human talent, a waste of the nation’s manpower and material resources.’... One of the first rules made in these classes was that *no* questions were to be asked; ‘How the teacher taught, that was how you were to learn.’”
—Kim Taylor, *Chinese Medicine in Early Communist China, 1945-63* (Psychology Press, 2005)

In 1958, Mao pronounced: “China’s medicine and pharmacology is a great treasure-house, and should be diligently explored and improved upon.” But that was for the masses. Mao told his personal physician, “Even though I believe we should promote Chinese medicine, I personally do not believe in it. I don’t take Chinese medicine” (Dr. Li Zhisui, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao* [Random House, 1994]).

During the Great Leap Forward of that

“Barefoot doctor” treating child in peasant village, part of extension of basic health care to countryside following 1949 Revolution.



Wang Tianzhu

ern press. Reston quipped, “I’ve seen the past, and it works!”

In what should have been completely obvious at the time, analysis of photographs and videos of these surgeries have since definitively proven that they were fake. But the quackery found an eager audience in the American petty bourgeoisie, including among New Left counterculture remnants embracing New Age mysticism. It also began its creep into official medicine; the *American Journal of Chinese Medicine* was founded the same year as Nixon’s trip. This trend would explode even further after the counterrevolution in the Soviet Union two decades ago. Furthermore, after the CCP introduced “market reforms” and trade opened up, exporting Chinese medicine became a lucrative business.

“In the Future, We Can Turn Humans into Supernaturals”

In 1979, Tang Yu, a boy in Sichuan Province, was reported to have the ability to read with his ears. A front-page story appeared in *Sichuan Daily*, accompanied

into “extraordinary powers of the human body.” It was claimed that cultivating *qigong* could unleash these powers, which could include X-ray vision, the capability to move objects with the mind and healing abilities. A key figure in pushing for this research was the brilliant and highly influential rocket scientist Qian Xuesen (see our obituary for Qian in WV No. 952, 12 February 2010). His argument expresses the nationalism at work:

“I believe Qigong, TCM (including Chinese medicine, Mongolian medicine, Tibetan medicine), and human special function, once integrated with modern science and technology, would create a Marxist Science.... Through this integration, this new science would also change modern science and promote it. This is our great task.... We can say it will be the scientific revolution of the East.”
—quoted in Lin Zixin et al., *Qigong: Chinese Medicine or Pseudoscience?* (Prometheus Books, 1998)

To quiet the controversy, the CCP’s Propaganda Department established the “Triple No” policy: “no publicizing, no

the rollback of health care under the “market reforms” (massive layoffs from state-owned industries with workers losing health benefits, hospital care unaffordable for masses of people, even minimal “bare-foot doctor” programs abolished) spurred the explosion of reactionary healing cults.

In the mid 1980s, *qigong* was becoming a mass phenomenon. Yan Xin, who had studied at the Chengdu Institute of Chinese Medicine, was reported to have cured a man’s broken vertebrae using *qigong*. He was summoned by a member of the Politburo to treat Deng Jiaxian, a famous atomic scientist who was ill with cancer. Deng died shortly after the treatment, but Yan had so charmed everyone he was deemed to have “considerably alleviated his pain.” Using the same routine as any faith-healing preacher in the U.S., he was heavily promoted by the CCP and was soon giving lectures before audiences of thousands. He was transmitting his “powers” via television and collaborating in laboratory studies at Qinghua University and was brought in by the military to extinguish a forest fire with the powers of his mind. Other *qigong* masters began to emerge and gain mass followings at this time, including Falun Gong founder Li Hongzhi.

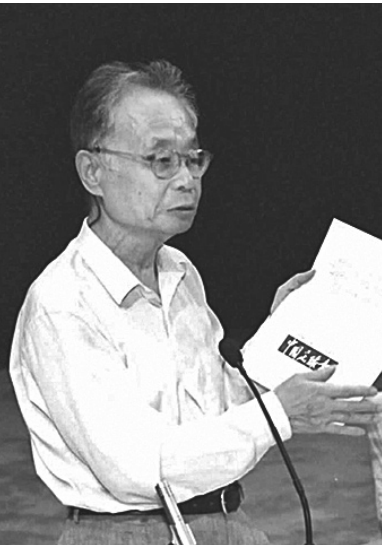
It was in response to an article by prominent nuclear scientist He Zuoxiu criticizing Falun Gong that the group staged its first demonstrations. The first political act of this darling of “human rights” and “democracy” champions was to demand that the Communist Party censor its opponents. Initially this was quite successful, with newspapers and television stations falling all over themselves making retractions. It was only after the mass demonstration at the bureaucracy’s Zhongnanhai compound in Beijing in 1999 that the government turned decisively against Falun Gong.

After the Suppression of Falun Gong

Sima Nan, a journalist who as a youth was enamored with the *qigong* masters, had for years been campaigning to expose them as fakes. While they still had the support of much of the bureaucracy, he was vilified and more than once severely beaten. Now, he often appears on television and his books are published. In 2002, a science popularization law was passed, which requires science communicators to expose pseudoscience. This is extremely controversial. A televised debate on the subject broke out into a physical fight. The science writer Fang Shimin (pen name Fang Zhuozi) was successfully sued for libel when he wrote that in the 1930s the “discovery” of a tenth planet based on the ancient Eight Diagrams theory was pseudoscience. (The “discoverer” was a government official who had died in 1992.)

In 2006, Zhang Gongyao, a professor at Zhongnan University, started an online petition demanding that TCM be removed from the state health care system. This provoked an immediate condemnation from the Ministry of Health and a storm of nationalist vitriol on the Internet. His proposal did get some support from scientists, including He Zuoxiu and Fang Zhuozi. Fang wrote a book titled *Piping*

continued on page 7



AP

Left: Leading Chinese scientist He Zuoxiu delivers speech against reactionary Falun Gong in Beijing, July 1999. Right: Falun Gong protest in Sydney, Australia, 2008.



Demotix

period and the subsequent break with the Soviet Union, nationalist glorification of Chinese tradition was pushed even more. This was not simply a personal proclivity of Mao; fellow CCP leader Liu Shaoqi was if anything more enthusiastic, having proclaimed in 1954 that “despising Chinese medicine is servile and subservient bourgeois thinking.” When it suited his needs during the Cultural Revolution—the massive intrabureaucratic fight that racked China for a decade beginning in 1966—Mao would attack his rival Liu and others for promoting feudal superstitions, and *qigong* was banned for a number of years.

Chinese Medicine Exported

The present popularity of acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) in North America has its origin in China’s anti-Soviet alliance with U.S. imperialism. During Richard Nixon’s visit to China in 1972, it was widely reported that *New York Times* columnist James Reston, who had accompanied Henry Kissinger to China the previous year, had been given only acupuncture anesthesia during an emergency appendectomy. (In fact, he had also been given conventional anesthesia.) Demonstrations of traditional healing and surgery on wide-awake patients supposedly using only acupuncture as an anesthetic were presented to a credulous West-

by a photo of him with the provincial party secretary. The story was picked up in papers nationwide, and suddenly there were children popping up everywhere who could read with their ears and arm-pits and display other ESP powers. Under tests, Tang Yu was proved to be faking, but no matter: Did that prove all the other kids didn’t have the powers? A back-and-forth struggle in the bureaucracy was touched off which was to continue until the crackdown on the Falun Gong cult.

Embarrassed that the party press was reading like the *National Enquirer*—reports of UFO sightings were also widespread in this period—CCP Propaganda Chief Hu Yaobang attempted to call a halt. On the anniversary of the May Fourth Movement in 1979, the *People’s Daily* published an editorial stating: “It is strange that certain comrades in the scientific institutions and in leadership positions don’t go to learn from science and scientists, but take the initiative to applaud conjuring tricks, are full of praise for ‘magical ears’.”

Self-criticisms and retractions rolled in for a bit, but then came the counter-attack. And it was mainly from the scientific, military and medical establishment. The prominent journal *Ziran* (Nature) published studies claiming to substantiate “ear reading” ability and organized major academic conferences promoting research

criticism and no controversy’ in the press in relation to Extraordinary Powers.” After further pressure from Qian Xuesen and others, Hu Yaobang backed off somewhat. In effect, there was no criticism and controversy printed, but still plenty of publicity for the “extraordinary powers.” In 1986, a national, state-sponsored China Qigong Science Research Society was established.

As we pointed out in our article on Falun Gong (WV No. 762, 3 August 2001),

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Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program
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With Foot in Mouth, Don't Bite

IG Brief for Anti-Union Drive in Mexico

The following article was submitted by our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México.

The polemic “IG Chokes on Defense of Mexican Teachers Union” (WV No. 1025, 31 May) seems to have hit the Internationalist Group (IG) where it hurts. In response, the IG has written a 15-page, single-spaced article, “SL on Corporatism in Mexico: Games Centrists Play” (internationalist.org, 5 July), available to date on the Web and only in English. Full of alibis, distortions and petty lies, with a dash of libel, this exercise in demagoguery has but one purpose: to try to hide the simple fact that the IG fails to uphold the elementary proletarian principle of defending the trade unions, no matter how bureaucratic and pro-capitalist their leaderships, against attack by the capitalist state.

Central to the IG's diatribe is our response to the attack led by Mexican president Enrique Peña Nieto of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) on the National Union of Education Workers (SNTE). As part of pushing through an anti-union education “reform,” in February the government arrested Elba Esther Gordillo, a widely hated bureaucrat who headed the SNTE for over two decades. The murderous and extravagantly corrupt Gordillo has committed enormous crimes against the working class. But her arrest was a direct attack on the teachers union and the labor movement as a whole. In a March 4 leaflet, the Grupo Espartaquista de México demanded: “Government, hands off the SNTE!” and called “for the *immediate release of Gordillo and all arrested union officials*” (see WV No. 1019, 8 March). In Mexico as elsewhere, it is labor's task to clean its own house.

In contrast, the IG's *Internationalist* (March 2013) refused to defend the SNTE, writing it off as purely “a state institution, a labor police agency whose purpose is to prop up the regime and regiment the workers.” Denouncing our comrades for defending the union, the IG engaged in centrist double-talk designed to obscure its betrayal. The March *Internationalist* article acknowledged the obvious point that Gordillo's arrest was “intended to crush any resistance from the side of the teachers.” But while raising the demand “Peña Nieto, hands off the teachers!”, it avoided calling the SNTE what it is: a union. As our polemic put it: “You can't have it both ways: either you defend the union under attack, despite its brutal, pro-capitalist leadership, or you add grist to the union-busters' mill.”

Now the IG makes its anti-union stance even more clear, omitting from its massive, turgid response the demand “Hands off the teachers” as well as any hint that Gordillo's arrest may have been an attack on the workers movement. With unusual candor, the IG writes that the WV No. 1025 article “says ‘Gordillo's arrest is a direct attack on the teachers union and the

entire Mexican labor movement,’ part of a bourgeois drive to ‘dismantle the unions.’ Yet Peña Nieto went out of his way to insist he was not attacking the SNTE, that he would maintain ‘a respectful and constant dialogue with the SNTE.’” And if the Commander-in-Chief says it, who is the IG to question it?

Seeking to cover its crass opportunism, the IG relies on a concocted “theory” according to which corporatist unions such as the SNTE are not “workers unions at all” but “the class enemy” and, ultimately, “death squads.” As we explained in our polemic, corporatism has long been a hallmark of the capitalist system in Mexico, particularly since the 1930s left-nationalist regime of Lázaro Cárdenas. Through this system, major unions, primarily grouped in the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM), have been integrated as components of the PRI, with

them when they come under attack. Seeking to manipulate workers' anger with their union leaders in order to push through a union-busting line, the IG provides a thin coating of red paint to widespread petty-bourgeois anti-union prejudices in Mexico and elsewhere.

What drives the IG's attacks on the GEM as “CTM socialists” is its appetite to accommodate to the bourgeois-nationalist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). All of its obfuscations cannot hide the fact that the only unions the IG will recognize as genuine are those whose leaders are loyal to the PRD, while unions closer or affiliated to the PRI are but “the armed fist of the bourgeoisie.”

The pro-PRD union tops tie workers to the Mexican bourgeoisie by pushing nationalist ideology and sowing illusions in reforming the capitalist state, engaging in their own bureaucratic methods to

strike at Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán, which the IG barely mentions in passing. This strike—lasting “all of” 141 days—withstanding an attack, at the cost of two workers killed, by some 800 police and obtained a smashing victory, including economic gains and recognition of the union and its leader. The IG, we pointed out in the same article, “refused to defend the SNTMMSRM leadership or the union itself against the state, undoubtedly given the union's *charro* leadership and history of affiliation with the PRI.” The article continued:

“Prefiguring its line that Gordillo's arrest was a ‘settling of scores among the rulers,’ the IG claimed that Gómez Urrutia's ouster was a ‘settling of accounts within the regime’ (even though the PRI was not then in power). While vaguely calling to ‘reject this frontal assault by the government,’ the IG's *El Internacionalista/Edición México* No. 2 [August 2006] omitted any call for victory to the strikes or for dropping the charges against the union leader.”

Labeling this another one of WV's “smears,” the IG's response quotes their



David Hernández

Left: Joaquín Hernández Galicia (“La Quina,” at right), jailed chief of Mexican oil workers union, January 1989. Right: “Oil workers march on presidential palace, January 12, protesting arrest of union leader. Salinas government has declared war on labor” (caption from WV No. 476, 28 April 1989).



WV Photo

the government installing and removing union bureaucrats (*charros*) at will. “In return,” we wrote, “these *charros* (cowboys) policed the unions for the state, purging and often killing dissident workers while benefiting generously from corruption.” But even those unions most integrated into the state apparatus have been compelled to wage some struggles against the capitalists' drive to extort ever more profit from the labor of their members, particularly in recent decades as cracks appeared in the corporatist setup.

Taking the degree of bureaucratism and violence as its standard, as opposed to a class analysis, the IG dismisses about half of Mexico's unions, refusing to defend

reinforce their hold on the unions. For the IG, this spells “a class difference between the official *state* labor bodies and the new ‘independent’ unions,” as its response proclaims (emphasis in original). While the IG admits that the pro-PRD union leaders are politically tied to the bourgeoisie, it states that “they are not state or ruling-party functionaries or leaders answerable to the government, not the union ranks.” So for the IG, union leaders' support to the PRD is evidence of the members' control of their unions. Militants who raise opposition to those bureaucrats' class collaboration will no doubt come to a different conclusion.

Baffled by Reality

The actions of the SNTMMSRM miners union in particular have put the IG in a real predicament. The SNTMMSRM, which used to be a staunch pillar of the old corporatist system, has been for at least a decade one of the most militant unions in the country. The IG's schema simply cannot account for this fact. In “IG Chokes,” we noted that in 2006 the National Action Party government went after the union by trying to oust and imprison its leader, Napoleón Gómez Urrutia, a move that touched off a series of powerful strikes. Among these was a nationwide strike, which the IG dismisses for lasting “all of 72 hours.”

Most important was the militant 2006

2006 article at greater length, in the process *confirming* that they did not call for victory to the strikes or for dropping the charges against the union leader. After some painful contortions seemingly designed to give the impression that they, too, defend the miners union, the IG quotes a *February 2008* article about a strike in Cananea, Sonora, that started on 30 July 2007. After many strikes carried out by the miners union throughout the country over a period of two years, the IG started to sense that its line was not too popular among militant miners.

Neither quite sticking to their position nor repudiating it—they are as inflexible as they are prone to bending with

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the wind—the IG choked out a couple of lines that they do, in fact, “demand that all the charges against leaders of ostensible labor organizations be dropped.” We do not know how many strikes a union has to wage before the IG drops its sneaky “ostensible” label. But simply defending the miners union, its strikes and its leaders against the bourgeois state was enough for the GEM and the International Communist League to be accused by these windbags of alibiing “death squads”!

Attempting to reconcile the proven militancy of the Cananea miners with its line that their union is essentially a nest of bourgeois cops, the IG now declares with breathtaking disingenuousness that Cananea Local 65 has “partially broken” from the national union. This is a lie that would infuriate any of these miners. Three years after police broke their strike, Local 65 refuses to go back to work. All along, the miners have demanded that the company recognize the union and that the federal government recognize Gómez Urrutia as its leader.

Ever Deeper in Their Labyrinth

The IG purports to show that it inherited its union-busting line from the ICL and is now upholding it against our “degeneration.” To this end, its 5 July tome reproduced 13 quotes from *Espartaco*, newspaper of the GEM, and WV between 1987 and 1996. We only wish that readers would study these articles. They will not find a single statement to the effect that the PRI-affiliated unions are mere agencies of the bourgeois state. Nor will they find any refusal to defend their leaders against the state. As the GEM wrote in “Break with All Bourgeois Parties: PRI, PAN, PRD!” (*Espartaco* No. 14, Autumn-Winter 2000): “Given their conception of themselves as infallible *caudillos*, IG leaders Norden and Negrete imagine that, since they held this or that position behind the back of the party when they were still members of the ICL, theirs had to be ‘the line’ of our organization.”

When confronted with the evidence, the IG opts for stealthy retreat. A case in point is that of Joaquín Hernández Galicia (“La Quina”), head of the PRI-affiliated SRTPRM oil workers union at the national PEMEX oil company. When “La Quina” was arrested in January 1989, we ran articles calling for his defense in both WV (with Norden as editor) and Spanish-language *Spartacist*. In the WV No. 1025 polemic we quoted a central point of those articles, which referred to the Soviet Union, not yet destroyed by capitalist counterrevolution:

“The Trotskyists, who understand the class character of the USSR as a workers

state despite its bureaucratic degeneration under Stalinist rule, and thus defend it against imperialism, likewise defend the unions against the bosses despite the sellout bureaucracy which sits atop these repositories of workers power.... Those who don’t defend the Soviet Union also can’t defend the oil workers union in Mexico.”

—WV No. 470, 3 February 1989
Those articles also quoted Leon Trotsky’s statement from *In Defense of Marxism* (1939): “In the last analysis a workers’

Ávila Camacho, soon to be Mexican president, speaking on platform of CTM labor congress, circa 1939. Corporatist CTM was integrated into government at its inception during regime of left-nationalist leader Lázaro Cárdenas.



state is a trade union which has conquered power.”

Seventeen years after its founders defected from Trotskyism, the IG has finally repudiated these programmatic articles. But even the repudiation is dishonest and politically cowardly. The IG writes that the articles, “while correctly defending La Quina, wrongly equated the STPRM [sic] with U.S.-style unions” and were “ambiguous and contradictory” on the class nature of corporatist unions.

Like a squid sensing danger, the IG’s natural reflex is to squirt a cloud of ink in order to cover its dash toward safety. Thus it tosses in the poisonous slanders that we defend death squads and have “aided and abetted” state repression against the IG—not even bothering to cook up the when, where and how of this “aid.” Slander is the classic recourse of the politically bankrupt. Conscientious readers will not be fooled. As a subscriber wrote in a July 22 letter to WV: “Most noticeably, the IG completely ducks the Russian Question in their article.” The writer continued:

“If the installed leaders of the corporatist unions in Mexico are, as the IG writes, thuggish, murderous, pro-capitalist strike-breakers (and they are) then why were the Russian Stalinists, who murdered Trotsky and the core of the Bolshevik Party, who slaughtered more workers than ‘La Maestra’ [Gordillo] has ever known, not thrown in the same sack as her? By all

accounts, the actions of the Stalinists, in Russia and internationally, did far more harm to the working-class than any of the *charro* leaders in Mexico.”

What about the analogy with U.S. unions? Like garden-variety Latin American nationalists, the IG gringo-baits the ICL while performing quite a facelift on the imperialist-bribed American union bureaucrats. The IG writes that “with supreme imperialist arrogance (and ignorance) [the Spartacists] claim that Mexico

is no different than the U.S., that ‘unions’ with death squads killing scores of their members (over 100 teachers in Oaxaca alone) are the same as the Teamsters under Jimmy Hoffa.” Well, Jimmy Hoffa was no Quaker. More generally, for the IG the AFL-CIO’s help in engineering bloody coups throughout Latin America, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of workers and peasants, is small change compared to the SNTE tops’ murderous violence. And then there is the AFL-CIO bureaucracy’s promotion and funding of “free trade unions” in East Europe—centrally Polish Solidarność in the 1980s, which spearheaded capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet bloc.

“Ambiguous and Contradictory”: The IG’s Lingering Claims to Trotskyism

The claim that the ICL ever held the IG’s anti-union line is simply laughable. The ICL’s Mexican section was consolidated through the July 1990 fusion of the GEM and the Fracción Trotskista (FT), made up of former leaders of the then Partido Obrero Socialista (POS—today the Liga de Trabajadores por el Socialismo). They were expelled from that Morenoite organization because of their solidarity with the ICL’s unflinching defense of the USSR and the deformed workers

states against the rising forces of capitalist counterrevolution and with our call for proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracies. And defense of “La Quina” as a concrete implementation of a proletarian class stand played an important role in the fusion process and the political arming of the GEM, in contradistinction to the bulk of the Mexican left, which refused to defend him with essentially the same arguments now wielded by the IG.

The May 1990 document “Main Points of Agreement” between the ICL and the FT—a comprehensive statement—provided a concise basis, together with the FT’s own Platform, to move toward fusion. Point Nine of the document reads:

“Defense of the labor unions against the attack of the bourgeois state, as in the case of the ‘bazukazo’ against ‘La Quina’ and the PEMEX workers union (historically one of the strongest trade unions in Mexico). This doesn’t mean ‘political support’ to such bureaucratic leaders but a clear class position: complete independence of the unions from the bourgeois state. Condemn the capitulation to the Mexican government made by the [Mandelite] PRT and the PTZ [predecessor of the POS] during those events. Fight for revolutionary leadership of the unions; for trade-union fractions on the basis of the Transitional Program.”

The IG’s Negrete played a key role in writing this document and in the GEM-FT fusion as a whole. But that was then.

Having repudiated the *class basis* on which the ICL defended “La Quina,” how can the IG still claim that defense of this PRI gangster was correct? The IG elucidates: “When La Quina was arrested, it was absolutely necessary to defend him and demand his release, because in going after him, [then PRI president Carlos] Salinas was targeting a leader who had partially broken from the corporatist system, not-so-secretly supporting [PRD founding leader Cuauhtémoc] Cárdenas in the 1988 presidential elections.”

That’s what it takes, then, to at least partially “break from the corporatist system” and to go from a police agency to a (semi?) genuine trade union: support the PRD. We will stick with Trotsky. In his 1940 essay “Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay,” Trotsky encapsulated the guiding principles in the struggle to transform the unions into instruments of revolutionary struggle—in Mexico and other capitalist societies—as “complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state” and “trade union democracy.” In regard to *all* unions, this means a fight to oust the pro-capitalist bureaucrats on the basis of opposition to all bourgeois parties. ■

Snake Oil...

(continued from page 5)

Zhongyi (Criticize Chinese Medicine).

The bureaucracy’s campaign against Falun Gong is entirely in the framework of nationalism. The anti-woman and anti-gay filth spouted by the group is not highlighted. And the kind of anti-materialist, traditionalist crap pushed by the likes of Falun Gong always goes along with attacks on the gains of the revolution made by women.

In the wake of Falun Gong and the SARS epidemic, some of the marketization of medical care has been reversed. But it still remains unaffordable for masses of people. While polls have shown that the majority of the population believes in traditional cures, most say they would choose so-called Western medicine for themselves.

Traditional medicine is written into the constitution of the country: “The state develops medical and health services, promotes modern medicine and traditional Chinese medicine.” In *Chinese Medicine in Contemporary China* (2002), Volker Scheid writes:

“Some of my teachers had studied Western medicine before becoming Chinese medical physicians or had undertaken extensive postgraduate training in biomedical specialties. One had studied Kampo, the Japanese variation of Chi-

nese medicine; another Uigur medical practices. Some regularly practiced meditation or other body techniques to strengthen their *qi* and enhance their healing powers. One doctor took me to his spiritual master, a senior monk at a Beijing Buddhist temple, who writes out prescriptions under the telepathic guidance of Hua Tuo (?-203), a famous physician of the Three Kingdoms period. Another asked me to accompany him to make offerings to Sun Simiao (c. 581-682), a Tang dynasty physician who is venerated as the ‘King of Medicine’ (*yaowang*) at the White Cloud Temple (*Baiyunsi*) in the south of Beijing.”

What he’s describing is in *state-sector* medicine, not the very large sector that does not receive state support because it is based on “feudal superstitions”!

Despite the huge strides made by the revolution that overthrew capitalism, the program of building socialism in one country is an obstacle to removing the material basis for all kinds of religious obscurantism, as the persistence of medical quackery as well as the state-backed revival of Confucianism in China shows. The Stalinist CCP’s nationalist distortion of Marxism led it to give a scientific gloss to ancient Chinese superstitions. The utopian “abolishing” of religion and superstition during the Cultural Revolution did nothing to remove its fundamental material basis: scarcity. And when “market reforms” made previously free health care unaffordable for masses of people,

many turned to the cheaper traditional cures. The promotion within the medical and scientific establishment of concepts like qi and herbal cures balancing yin and yang spawned a mass, imperialist-backed counterrevolutionary movement. Only

Trotskyism—the real continuity of the Chinese Communist Party at its founding—can point the way forward with its program of world proletarian revolution, the one road to achieving a socialist society of material abundance. ■

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Egypt: For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Part One of this article appeared in WV No. 1027 (12 July).

By the end of the 19th century, there were stirrings in Egypt of struggle for independence from British rule as well as for basic rights for women. But it was the proletarian October Revolution of 1917 in Russia that galvanized mass struggle for social and national emancipation in Egypt and elsewhere in the colonial and semicolonial world and inspired workers internationally in the fight to overthrow capitalist rule.

Under the leadership of Lenin's Bolsheviks, the workers of Russia rallied behind them the peasant masses and seized state power. The Revolution overthrew bourgeois rule, sweeping away the tsarist autocracy and the state church, and pulled Russia out of the interimperialist carnage of World War I. In the course of a bloody three-year Civil War against imperialist-backed counterrevolutionary White armies, Soviet power was extended to largely Muslim Central Asia. The workers state's victories there held out the possibility of emancipation for the downtrodden masses of the Muslim East, especially women. An Egyptian observer reported at the time that "news of success or victory by the Bolsheviks" in the Russian Civil War "seems to produce a pang of joy and content among all classes of Egyptians" (quoted in Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* [1978]).

Shortly after the seizure of power, the Bolsheviks, true to their word, published secret treaties from the tsarist archives. Among these was the 1916 Sykes-Picot treaty in which Britain and France agreed to carve up the Ottoman Empire between themselves, notwithstanding their promises of self-determination to the Arab subjects of the Ottoman sultan. The revelations helped fuel a series of national revolts and popular uprisings from North Africa and the Near East to South and East Asia.

In Egypt, a group of nationalist politicians led by one Saad Zaghlul formed a delegation (Wafd) to present a petition calling for Egypt's independence at the 1919 Versailles Conference, where the victorious imperialist powers were dictating terms to defeated Germany following the end of World War I. When Egypt's

Part Two The Bankruptcy of Bourgeois Nationalism

British occupiers responded by arresting Zaghlul and sending him into exile, the country exploded in strikes and protests. As a result of the massive upheaval, Britain agreed to putative independence—with conditions that left military control

changing its name to the Communist Party of Egypt. The party played a leading role in organizing the newly militant working class, including in the industrial districts of Alexandria and Mahalla al-Kobra. One of the party's leaders, Joseph Rosenthal, a

ing foreign-born Communists. The pro-Communist Confederation of Trade Unions was disbanded and a series of anti-labor laws was introduced. As a result of intense repression, by 1925 the Communist Party had effectively disappeared as an organization, later re-emerging in a period marked by the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union and the Comintern.

Nasser and the Myth of "Arab Socialism"

The end of World War II triggered a renewed upsurge in the nationalist movement in late 1945 and early '46. By that time, the Wafd was a spent force, discredited and weakened because of its failure to end British occupation. The upheaval was marked by huge strikes involving textile workers, transport workers, Suez Canal and Alexandria port workers and many others. In this cauldron of social struggle, the Communist-influenced National Committee of Workers and Students (NCWS) as well as the left-nationalist Wafdist Vanguard attracted mass followings. The government under King Farouk clamped down heavily on protesters in February 1946, when British armored vehicles drove into crowds, killing many.

Leading Egyptian Communist Henri Curiel described the period as one in which the "masses were still ready to follow us. But we no longer knew where to lead them" (Gilles Perrault, *A Man Apart* [1987]). The emergence of the NCWS, the growing militancy of the student movement and the radicalization of the Wafdist Vanguard all spoke to the revolutionary potential pregnant in this upsurge. In 1951, trade unions organized demonstrations calling for cancellation of all treaties with the British, extension of democratic liberties, abolition of the political police and friendship with the Soviet Union. It was becoming increasingly clear that the ruling class was incapable of solving the political and economic crisis of Egyptian society.

The 1952 military coup led by Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser and his Free Officers Movement, which overthrew King Farouk, was meant to stabilize the country and stem the tide of the upsurge. The U.S. ambassador in Cairo predicted that the new junta could "save Egypt from the red tide" (quoted in Raymond Flower, *From Napoleon to Nasser* [2011]). One of the Free Officers' first acts upon coming to power was the grisly public execution of two leaders of a textile workers strike. They were arrested, condemned to death for "a grave crime against the state" and hanged on factory grounds. The Communists were banned, strikes were outlawed and a corporatist regime was set up to place the trade unions under state control.

Initially, Nasser's Free Officers leaned toward the Western imperialists, who promised economic aid and financing for the construction of the Aswan High Dam. But the trickle of funds from the U.S. fell far short of what Nasser had anticipated. Frustrated, he appealed to the Soviet Union, souring relations with the West. In 1956, Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal, which generated revenues on the order of \$100 million annually.



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1919: Egyptians at public funeral honoring those who died in clashes with British forces during revolt against colonial rule.

of the country and the Suez Canal in British hands. In 1924, the Wafd formed a government under a constitution imposed by the British.

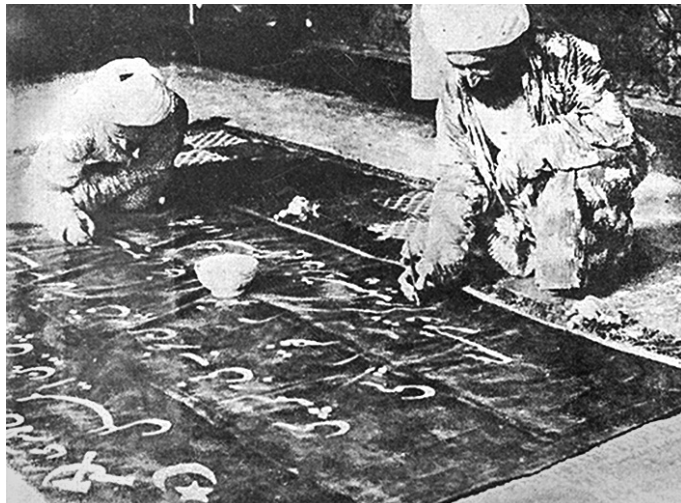
The 1919 revolt marked the decisive entry of the working class into Egyptian political life. In 1919, under British prompting, Egypt's Grand Mufti, Sheik Mohammed Bakheit, issued a *fatwa* against Bolshevism. Delighted, the British published it far and wide. But this backfired as it piqued the interest of the population in something so deeply hated by their brutal colonial overlords.

In 1921, the Egyptian Socialist Party was founded, becoming a section of the Communist International in 1922 and

Russian Jew who had become a naturalized Egyptian citizen, organized the General Union of Workers. By 1923 the union had 20,000 members. The party's program called for the nationalization of the Suez Canal, repudiation of all state debts and capitulation agreements with foreign powers and an eight-hour workday.

When the Wafd came to power in 1924, one of its first campaigns was to savagely crush a series of militant strikes demanding shorter hours, higher wages and improved working conditions. Saad Zaghlul's government declared the strikers "transgressors and outlaws" and went after the Communists with a vengeance, internment the entire leadership and deport-

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Left: Red Army soldiers celebrate first anniversary of Russian Revolution, Moscow, 1918. Above: Azeri Communists paint slogans for Communist International's 1920 Congress of the Peoples of the East held in Baku.

Eager to make Nasser pay for this affront to their interests, Britain and France invaded Egypt, with Israel as a junior partner. But the invaders were forced to withdraw under pressure from the Soviets as well as from the U.S., which feared that its imperialist rivals would reoccupy a region it wished to dominate.

Standing up to the tripartite invasion won Nasser, with his nationalist rhetoric and socialist pretensions, wide adherence throughout the Near East and beyond. In the Spartacist tendency’s first article on the Near East in 1968, at a time when much of the Western left was hailing Nasser as a revolutionary, we addressed this myth:

“In the absence of a viable national bourgeoisie, many ex-colonial countries have seen the development of single-party dictatorships—led by the civil and military intelligentsia, based on national and social demagoguery—which seek to build the economic and social base for native capitalist exploitation. To do this in the face of world imperialism and domestic underdevelopment requires central control and the nationalization of major sectors. But statification of the economy by a bourgeois regime in no sense alters the capitalist character of a society. In this case it is merely symptomatic of the underdevelopment of the economies involved.”

—“Arab-Israeli Conflict: Turn the Guns the Other Way,” *Spartacist* No. 11, March-April 1968

Nasser carried out an extensive nationalization of industry that allowed increased opportunities for employment, expansion of education, free health care and increased social benefits. Nasser’s limited land reform, intended to pressure large landowners to invest in nationalized industry, rallied poor peasants behind him, though it affected less than 10 percent of the cultivable land. Billions in Soviet aid were instrumental in furthering industrial development, including the gigantic Aswan High Dam, and helped improve the standard of living for sections of the population. Women benefited from job opportunities and education and were granted the right to vote—whatever that meant under military rule. Free birth control was made available through thousands of family planning centers, part of the regime’s aim to control population growth, which was straining the country’s limited resources.

By the mid 1960s, however, Egypt was in deep economic crisis. The promised prosperity never materialized. Instead, the “workers’ socialist gains” were served up in the form of IMF-dictated austerity measures delivered through rifle butts as widespread sit-ins and wildcat strikes were suppressed. Israel’s swift victory in the June 1967 Six Day War left the armies of Egypt, Syria and Jordan shattered and large parts of their territories occupied by Israel. This humiliating defeat exposed the fragile foundations of Nasser’s bourgeois regime and triggered an explosive mass reaction. Demonstrations of workers and students engulfed the country from Alexandria to Aswan. The regime was so discredited that Nasser’s right-hand man and army chief, Abdel Hakim Amer, committed suicide. Nasser himself offered to resign. The 1967 defeat signaled the downward spiral of Nasser’s “Arab socialism” scheme, though he did not live to see its final demise at the hands of his successor, Anwar el-Sadat.

Nasser was a bourgeois-nationalist strongman of the era when the U.S.-led Cold War against the Soviet Union allowed him some latitude to maneuver and seek funding from one side or the other (or, in Nasser’s case, both). Still, Nasser could



Bettmann

Amid anti-colonial ferment, woman gives political speech on Cairo street, 1919.

not free Egypt from the control of the imperialists or transform the country into an industrial power. As the failure of both the Wafd and Nasser regimes testify, the indigenous bourgeoisies of the colonial and semicolonial world are incapable of achieving qualitative modernization in the imperialist epoch.

Stalinist Betrayal over Nasser

By the time Communism had again become a factor in the Egyptian working class in the early 1940s, the Soviet Union had undergone a political counterrevolution, bringing to power a parasitic bureaucratic caste led by J.V. Stalin. The Stalinists repudiated the Bolshevik program

the program of the October Revolution, they had not overturned the socialized foundations of the Soviet workers state. While calling for workers political revolution to oust the bureaucracy, Trotskyists remained steadfast in unconditional military defense of the degenerated workers state against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution as part of their revolutionary proletarian internationalist program.

The Stalinists, searching for allies among the emerging bourgeoisies of the colonial and neocolonial world, resurrected the old social-democratic/Menshevik formula of “two-stage revolution.” This meant supporting an alleg-



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Above: Textile workers in Kafr al-Dawwar rounded up outside factory by police and troops under Gamal Abdel Nasser following strike, 1952. Right: Nasser acclaimed by Cairo crowd after signing accord formalizing departure of British troops, October 1954.



Gamma-Keystone

of international socialist revolution in favor of the nationalist dogma of “building socialism in one country.” This was a flat denial of the Marxist understanding that socialism—a society in which class divisions disappear in conditions of material abundance—can be built only on an international basis through destroying capitalist imperialism as a world system and surpassing its level of technological/industrial development and productivity.

The Stalinist bureaucracy’s search for “peaceful coexistence” with world imperialism—a corollary of “socialism in one country”—led to the transformation of the Communist International from an instrument for world proletarian revolution into an agency for Soviet diplomatic maneuvers. But while the Stalinists had betrayed

edly “progressive” or “anti-imperialist” national bourgeoisie—in fact, a class of brutal exploiters—while postponing proletarian revolution to the indefinite future, i.e., never. As seen as early as 1927 with the crushing defeat of the Second Chinese Revolution, which was sealed by the Guomindang (Nationalist) party’s massacre of tens of thousands of Communists and other militants, the end result is not “democracy,” much less socialism, but defeat after defeat for the toiling masses and the slaughter of leftists, workers and peasants. The Soviet bureaucracy sacrificed Communist parties around the world in pursuit of alliances with bourgeois “anti-imperialists.”

In the anti-colonial struggles of the 1940s in Egypt, the refounded Commu-

nist organizations were supported by the dominant and most militant sections of the working class. But the Stalinists’ program subordinated the proletariat’s class interests to bourgeois nationalism. Pro-Soviet and anti-Zionist, the movement was greatly shaken when, after two decades of conciliating and promoting Arab nationalism, Stalin changed tack and supported the United Nations’ partition of Palestine and the creation of the Zionist state of Israel. Compelled to endorse the partition plan, the Egyptian Communists suffered a serious erosion of influence.

In the wake of the partition, confronted with an explosive climate of inflamed nationalism and anti-Semitic pogroms, the Stalinists adapted to the reactionary tide. The Communist organizations had been built largely through the efforts of Jews like Henri Curiel, who founded the Egyptian Movement for National Liberation, which fused with another group in 1947 to become the Democratic Movement for National Liberation (DMNL). DMNL militants had courageously defended Jewish shops against pogromist mobs incited by the Muslim Brotherhood. But in 1949, when a new Communist Party of Egypt was formed out of a merger of a DMNL faction and other groups, it excluded Jews—and women—to avoid “sexual dissolution, moral dissolution,” in the words of Fuad Mursi, one of its founding members. The number of Jews in the movement began to decline, largely the result of the deportations of leftists, among them Curiel, who was deported to Italy in 1950.

Nasser’s repression of the working class and his virulent anti-Communism did not prevent the Egyptian Stalinists from pledging their full support to him, claiming he would achieve the tasks of the “national democratic revolution.” “The fact is,” one Communist leader would later say, “that we and the others all met on the platform of fascination with Nasserism” (quoted in Tareq Y. Ismael and Rifa’at El-Sa’id, *The Communist Movement in Egypt: 1920-1988* [1990]). Even with many of them jailed, tortured and executed, the Stalinists continued to foster illusions in the “anti-imperialist” leader. Prominent Communist Shuhdi al-Shaf’ie continued to support Nasser even while being bludgeoned and hauled to his death. Meanwhile, Moscow continued to lavish arms and funds on Nasser as he repressed the working class and persecuted Communists.

In 1965, the Communist Party capped its capitulation to the regime by formally dissolving itself and liquidating into Nasser’s Arab Socialist Union (ASU). In a telegram to Nasser, who had just been “re-elected” president, the party declared that “the most beautiful thing we present to you on this historic occasion” was the news that its representatives had just decided to “put an end to their independent organization because of their belief in your call for the unity of all the socialist forces in one revolutionary political organization, and that this one party under your leadership is the substitute for our independent organization” (quoted in *The Communist Movement in Egypt: 1920-1988*).

Dissolving their party and joining Nasser’s ASU was consistent with the Stalinists’ historic orientation. The various organizations in Egypt at the time that claimed to be communist shared the perspective of two-stage revolution from their inception, seeing the national struggle as their primary political task. Never promoters of working-class independence, they politically chained the proletariat to bourgeois nationalist forces. Nasser succeeded in isolating the Communists by implementing the nationalist core of their program—ending British occupation, land reform, nationalization, promoting government-controlled economic planning—as well as alliance with the Soviet Union. This was passed off in Stalinist jargon as “the non-capitalist road.” Even as he destroyed their organizations physically and politically, Nasser used the Communists as propagandists and consultants.

The year 1965 saw the annihilation of another Communist party on the eastern

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Egypt, Women...

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end of the Islamic belt. In one of the most savage massacres in modern history, over a million Indonesian Communists, workers, peasants, intellectuals and sympathizers, along with ethnic Chinese, were slaughtered at the hands of General Suharto and Islamic reactionaries with the direct aid of the CIA. Here was, once again, the bloody result of “two-stage revolution.” The Indonesian Communist Party—then the largest in the capitalist world—had paved the way for the massacre by pledging its full support to the “progressive” nationalist regime of Sukarno, disarming the workers as part of a policy of “national unity” with the Indonesian bourgeoisie and its military. Deceived and disoriented, the working class could neither defend itself nor come to the rescue of its leaders when reactionary military leaders turned on them. (See “Lessons of Indonesia 1965,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 55, Autumn 1999.)

Ostensible Trotskyists and “Arab Socialism”

Also seizing on Nasser’s “Arab socialism” was a trend of political revisionism that began to assert itself in the Trotskyist Fourth International under the leadership of Michel Pablo in the early 1950s. According to this revisionist current, various non-revolutionary forces around the world—from Stalinists to social democrats to Third World nationalists—were propelled by events to take a revolutionary course, thus negating the need for Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard parties. In the Near East, Nasser and other militarists were painted as liberators of the Arab working class and peasants, with the role of “Trotskyists” relegated to that of their cheering section. In 1965, Livio Maitan, a leader of the Pabloite “United Secretariat of the Fourth International,” proposed that countries like Egypt that had carried out extensive nationalizations could become workers states without a social revolution.

Gerry Healy’s International Committee (whose descendants today operate as the Socialist Equality Party of David North) initially appeared to be orthodox defenders of Trotskyism, sharply attacking the liquidationist politics of the Pabloites. But by 1967, they were also enthusing over the “Arab Revolution,” eventually carrying this to its logical outcome by acting as paid press agents and finger-men for one or another Arab bourgeois regime. In that capacity, Healy & Co. hailed the 1978 execution of 21 members of the Iraqi Communist Party. (See, for example, “Northite Blood Money,” *WV* No. 523, 29 March 1991.)

The Spartacist tendency emerged out of the struggle against the Pabloite degeneration of the historic party of American Trotskyism, the Socialist Workers Party, and went on to break with Healy & Co. over their own revisionism. As we have always insisted, the idea of a trans-class “Arab Revolution” was a mystification that impeded the task of forging Trotskyist parties as the necessary leadership for proletarian revolution—the only road to national and social emancipation.

Feminism: Obstacle to Women’s Liberation

While the modernizing impulse of the early nationalist movement in Egypt placed the question of women’s emancipation on the agenda, the bourgeois-nationalist leadership’s developing hostility to women’s equality would help spur the rise of a distinct feminist current. Women’s liberation first became an issue in Egypt in the nationalist ferment at the end of the 19th century. In 1894, a Coptic lawyer, Murqus Fahmi, published a book titled *The Woman in the East*. Criticizing Copts and Muslims for secluding women, he attributed Egypt’s backwardness to the conditions of women and the family. Another early proponent of women’s



Members of youth wing of Indonesian Communist Party rounded up by soldiers in Jakarta, 1965. Military coup unleashed slaughter of over a million Communists, ethnic Chinese and others.

rights was Qasim Amin, a lawyer and appellate court judge of Kurdish stock. He called for abolishing the veil, giving women primary education and reforming laws governing polygamy and divorce. Amin’s proposed reforms were modest and colored by a cautious definition of Islamic practice rather than its abandonment. Nonetheless, they evoked a storm of attacks from other nationalists and religious leaders.

Amin was inspired by his experiences as a student in France, where he had been exposed to the writings of Charles Darwin and Karl Marx. In his works, namely *The Liberation of Women* (1899) and *The New Woman* (1900), he espoused a Western model of development. Arguing that there can be no improvement of the state of the nation without improving the position of women, Amin concluded that their liberation was a prerequisite for the liberation of Egypt from foreign domination.

In contrast, Mustafa Kamil, founder in the 1890s of the short-lived National Party, opposed women’s rights as a diversion from the struggle against British domination, a “foreign” idea identified with Western culture. While Amin stood for a slow withdrawal of British domination and the buildup of a native Egyptian ruling class, Kamil appealed to the Ottomans for aid in expelling the British. The aim of these early nationalists was to remove the obstacles to the exploitation of Egyptian toilers by a native ruling class. They accepted the class structure of society and the institution of the family as they existed, proposing limited reforms at most.

Women became a visible factor of political life during the 1919 upheavals. Facing off against armed British soldiers, some 300 veiled women organized by Huda Shaarawi poured into the streets of Cairo to protest the arrest of Wafd leaders. The daughter of a wealthy slaveowner and the wife of a leading Wafd member, Shaarawi was one of Egypt’s first feminists. In her autobiography, *Harem Years*, she recounted coming of age among the upper and middle classes, where the sexes were kept apart. Guarded by castrated slaves, women were secluded at home and carried their seclusion with them when they went out by veiling their faces. Shaarawi is best known for her dramatic public unveiling in 1923 at the Cairo Railroad Station upon her return from a feminist conference in Rome, the first time an Egyptian woman had shunned tradition so visibly.

Around that time, Shaarawi founded the Egyptian Feminist Union (EFU), a classic bourgeois feminist formation. Made up primarily of women from wealthy and prominent families, its goal was to seek equal rights within the confines of existing class society. The EFU sought to reform personal status laws (marriage, divorce, custody, etc.), win the vote and the right to hold office, establish educational opportunities and secure other reforms that, while supportable, posed no threat to Islam or the institution of the family. Shaarawi died in 1947.

One of Shaarawi’s admirers, Durriyyah Shafiq, founded the organization Bint al-Nil (“Daughter of the Nile”) in 1948, amid the upheavals that engulfed the country after World War II. Bint al-Nil’s leaders were more militant than their EFU mentors. In 1951, Shafiq led 1,500 women in a demonstration that stormed the parliament, demanding political rights, equal pay and reform of the divorce laws. This action provoked outrage among Islamic conservatives who petitioned the king to keep women within their prescribed bounds. After she staged a hunger strike against Nasser’s dictatorship in 1957, Shafiq was placed under house arrest and her organization was banned. Her associates distanced themselves, calling her a



Durriyyah Shafiq, fourth from left, with other hunger strikers demanding inclusion of women in constituent assembly, 1954. Inset: Huda Shaarawi, founder of Egyptian Feminist Union.

“traitor to the revolution.” Isolated and demoralized, she committed suicide in 1975.

For a time, the Communist movement carried out special work among women. In the period after WWII, the NCWS included the Association of Egyptian Working Women, the first such organization in Egypt, headed by Communist textile worker Hikmat al-Ghazzali from the Shubra al-Khayma mill. Communists also launched the League of Women Students and Graduates from the University and Egyptian Institutes, which proclaimed that freedom for women “cannot arrive under the shadow of the imperialist” nor “under the shadow of enslavement and exploitation” (quoted in Selma Botman, “Women’s Participation in Radical Egyptian Politics 1939-1952,” in *Women in the Middle East* [1987]). However, for the Stalinists the question of women’s emancipation was subordinate to unity with the nationalists. They subsequently neglected this work, leaving the feminists unchallenged as defenders of women’s rights.

Nawal El Saadawi, a heroic fighter against women’s oppression, lays bare the heinous conditions of women in Muslim Arab society in her writings. She has been sacked, imprisoned, forced into exile and featured on fundamentalists’ death lists.

However, while Saadawi in *The Hidden Face of Eve* recognized the “patriarchal class system that has dominated the world since thousands of years” as a root of women’s oppression, she rejects the understanding that eliminating that oppression requires the overthrow of the class system. As the book makes clear, she sees the struggle through the prism of feminism, as one of women against men. According to Saadawi, “the real reason why women have been unable to complete their emancipation” is that “they have failed to constitute themselves into a political force powerful, conscious, and dynamic enough to impose their rights.” This ignores the fundamental *class* divide in capitalist society: Hosni Mubarak’s wife Suzanne, who postured as a champion of women’s rights, and the textile workers of Mahalla al-Kobra stand on opposite sides of that divide.

Saadawi rejects the Marxist understanding of the working class as the motor force for historical progress. Searching for another agent has sometimes led her to support the very forces that oppress women. As well as serving for a time as a cabinet member in Sadat’s government, she supported Khomeini’s Islamic “revolution” in Iran in 1978-79. In her 1979 preface to the English edition of *The Hidden Face of Eve*, Saadawi vilified those in the West who accused the mullahs’ “revolution” of “being reactionary, of imposing on women the veil and the *chador*.” She claimed, “The Iranian Revolution has lifted the banners of Islam overhead, as banners of freedom from imperialist oppression.”

As we will detail in Part Three of this

article, Khomeini’s movement made no secret of its reactionary program. More than a decade after it took power, long after leftists, union militants, Kurdish nationalists and others had been imprisoned and slaughtered by the Islamic regime, Saadawi along with numerous other feminists and self-styled socialists cynically backtracked on their support for Khomeini. She acknowledged that “Khomeini was terrible,” lamely claiming that the “revolution” had been “aborted” by the “colonial powers,” who are “much happier with a religious, fanatic revolution than a socialist revolution” (*Progressive*, April 1992).

While often courageous and defiant, bourgeois feminists can offer nothing to the deeply oppressed and exploited women of the working class and peasantry. Because it accepts class society, from which the oppression of women springs, feminism is incapable of attaining women’s emancipation. In late 2011, half a century after Nasser dissolved it, the EFU was revived. Now it seeks to “find powerful Egyptian women and convince them to run for election” (London *Guardian*, 1 December 2011). Tellingly, the EFU publication, *L’Egyptienne*, is published in French, accessible only to a narrow sliver of upper-class women.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

Free Jeremy Forrest! Britain: Teacher Jailed in Anti-Sex Witchhunt

The following article is reprinted with a minor factual correction from Workers Hammer No. 223 (Summer 2013), the newspaper of our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain.

WORKERS HAMMER

British society is obsessed with sex—or, more precisely, obsessed with making sure that certain people are not having sex. In the media onslaught of sex scandals, every week brings a new crisis. The gutter press’s frenzy *du jour* is over Jeremy Forrest, a young teacher who had the misfortune of reciprocating the love of a teenage student. Forrest, who was 30 at the time, entered into a consensual relationship with a 15-year-old. After receiving warnings from the school and then visits from the police, the two fled to France to be together—which is ludicrously being spun into a tale of “abduction.” For his so-called crimes, Forrest has been sentenced to five and a half years in prison on five counts of sexual activity with a “child.”

One of the vilest elements in Forrest’s case is the treatment of the woman, now 16, not by the teacher who allegedly “damaged” her, but by the state and its media flunkies. Supposedly for her protection, her lover has been imprisoned, she has been deemed unable to take responsibility for her own actions and had her most intimate affairs spun into front-page news. No normal person would seek this “protection.” The young woman has insisted that she initiated the relationship and that she loves Forrest and wishes to continue her relationship with him: “Running away is what I wanted to do. I wasn’t under any pressure from Jeremy. I wasn’t forced. It was my decision” (thesun.co.uk, 30 June). Now the police are investigating whether Forrest colluded, via a third party, to influence her testimony. Apparently the “poor confused” woman’s opinion is of no consequence.

Unlike the hysterical bourgeois press, we do not believe that merely being older, or having a better job, or a so-called position of authority, enables someone to cast a spell on young people and turn them into sex-crazed automatons unaccountable for their actions. For Marxists the guiding principle in sexual relations is *effective consent*: what two (or more) people agree to do, without coercion, is no business of

the state. Likewise, we oppose all laws against “crimes without victims” such as prostitution, drug use or pornography. These state-dictated, puritanical restrictions on human behaviour leave the lives of innocent people in tatters.

Forrest, a man with a promising career who by all accounts was a very good teacher and very caring, is now being branded a “paedophile” who “groomed” his “victim.” After serving his sentence, he is to be banned from teaching and listed on the Sex Offenders Register. Forrest is one of numerous teachers who have been hounded out of jobs and even jailed

schools, hospitals, and benefits.

There are certainly damaged individuals capable of atrocities. But in contrast to the aggressive prosecution of “age of consent” violations in which no one is harmed, the prospects of justice are bleak for victims of actual rape, who are harassed by the police and put on trial themselves as the courts scrutinise their morals. In the bourgeois legal system, the prosecution of sexual offences has little to do with protecting women against violence. The laws exist for the protection of women as *property*, based on the moral code embodied in the institution of the family. The real crime in patriarchal societies of all kinds is that the woman is “defiled”; her value as a “pure” transmission belt for the inheritance of private property is damaged.

This goes to the crux of women’s oppression. The institution of the family, which the bourgeoisie uses to pass its property on to the next generation, is the source of women’s oppression. For working people, it is the means through which running the household and rearing the next generation are relegated to women’s “second shift,” with children dependent on the whims of their parents and couples bound together by social pressure and economic need. The venomous anti-sex fear and repression that underlie bourgeois morality flow from the role of the family and also provide ideological reinforcement for it.

British society has long had a reputation for upholding the Victorian sexual standards, including the dual standard that, while men are naturally lecherous, “decent” women actually do not like sex (unless of course they’ve succumbed to “binge drinking”). Peter Fryer chronicled the attempts to force this moralism on the population in his book *Mrs. Grundy: Studies in English Prudery* (1963). He ridiculed the hypocrisy of self-appointed guardians of public morals, noting of their attempts to shut down strip shows that:

“Ours is a culture in which most people say they find such exhibitions disgusting; though there are many who, if they had an opportunity of witnessing them without incurring opprobrium, would do so. Why it is less disgusting for men to enter marriage ignorant of the clitoris, or of its role in women’s sexual pleasure, than for men to witness a demonstration of the clitoris being used to secure pleasure (from which they might conceivably learn how to give more pleasure to their wives) is not immediately apparent.”

Criminalising consensual sexual activity has always been a war cry of the fire-and-brimstone religious types and other right-wing forces. However, Britain’s feminists as well as reformists like the Socialist Party (SP) [affiliate of the Committee for a Workers’ International] and [the International Socialist Tendency’s] Socialist Workers Party (SWP) have also flocked to the cause of repression. The “Reclaim the Night” marches they trumpet, like the campaigns to censor stand-up comedy, impose stricter [pub] licensing laws, cover up “page three girls” [tabloid photo feature], etc, invoke the pretext of defending women to demand greater state powers, more policing, more proscriptions, more prison terms.

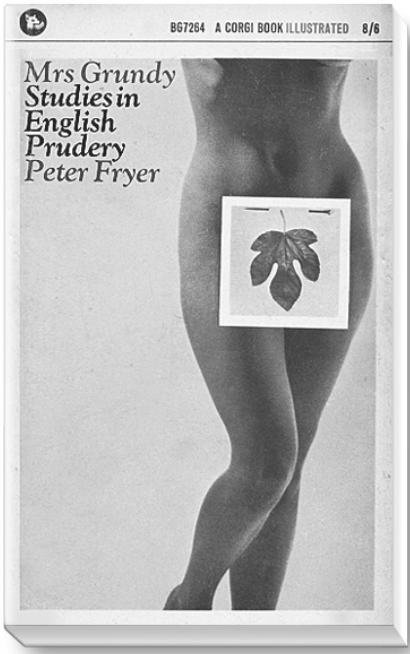
Most telling in this regard is the complicity of leftists and liberals in the imperialists’ vendetta against Julian Assange. Both the SP and the SWP have given credence to allegations that Assange is a rapist and to the attempts to extradite



Jeremy Forrest

him to Sweden, despite the fact that he has not even been charged! The Swedish government is seeking his extradition, not to face trial, but for “questioning” regarding allegations made by two women who, by their own accounts, had consensual sex with him. Assange’s real crime, in the eyes of the U.S. government and their British and Swedish junior partners, was the release of hundreds of thousands of classified documents detailing the brutality of U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. What Assange’s extradition might mean is suggested by the fate of U.S. Army intelligence analyst Bradley Manning. Detained in inhuman “pre-trial” conditions for more than three years, Manning is currently being tried by an American military court, where he faces life in prison for his genuinely heroic role in this WikiLeaks exposure.

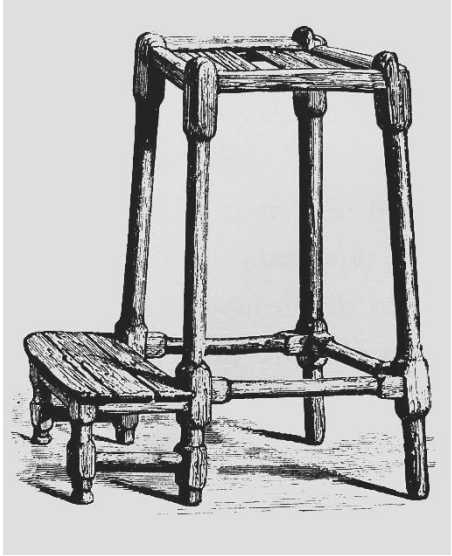
The SP and the SWP, who so blithely enlisted in the witch hunt against Assange, evince an abiding faith in the capitalist state, which they entrust to “protect” women and children, as well as to regulate the sexual activity of youth. It’s like calling on Jack the Ripper to guard a brothel. We demand: *Down with reactionary “age of consent” laws! Government out of the bedroom!* As revolutionary Marxists, we understand that ending the persecution of consensual sexual activity will require smashing the capitalist state and replacing it with one controlled by the workers. Then the task of reorganising society to meet human need can begin. A workers government would provide socialised childcare and kitchens as well as free access to quality healthcare, birth control and abortions. By removing the material need for the bourgeois family, socialism will render irrelevant the restrictive social norms that flow from it. Our defence of victims of puritanical witch hunts is a component part of our Marxist programme for women’s liberation through socialist revolution. *Free Jeremy Forrest! Down with the anti-sex witch hunt!* ■



Book by Peter Fryer defined prudery as “interference in other people’s pleasures.” From Britain to U.S., teen sex is major target of modern-day Puritans.

for consensual sex. For a close and sexual relationship with a 15-year-old student in 2009, music teacher Helen Goddard spent 15 months behind bars. In 2006, William Gibson was suspended from teaching maths when his 1980 conviction for indecent assault came to light—a conviction based on his relationship with a pupil who he had gone on to marry and have three children with. The ordeals inflicted on these individuals are reminiscent of Christian trials of sin whereby a charge of adultery or fornication could see the offender stood barefoot in sackcloth on the public stool of repentance, sometimes every Sunday for years. “Harlots” would be driven out of town after a ducking in “the deepest and foulest pool of the town.”

As bourgeois politicians turn the screws of austerity ever tighter, laying waste to working people, sex scare-mongering grows in proportion. The irrational fear that sexual predators lurk behind every corner is exploited to falsely present the capitalist state as a defender of young people and women, and to feed socially conservative attitudes—and the charge of paedophilia whips Britain into a fervour unlike any other. The capitalist class’s feigned concern for child welfare is a sick joke, as attested by the hundreds of youth arrested in the aftermath of the 2011 London riots [sparked by a racist cop killing]. They were prosecuted at an unprecedented rate—despite being too young in the eyes of the law to make independent decisions! The young offenders’ jails are bursting at the seams, while the government slashes funding for childcare,



Old and New Edinburgh (Cassell and Company) “The Repentance Stool” from Old Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh. Presbyterians used the stool for those who offended “morality.”

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Postal Workers...

(continued from page 3)

going to jail if necessary, organizing mass support rallies, and appealing to other groups of workers. More than that, the postal workers need the active support of the entire labor movement.... If troops are brought in, the *entire* city labor movement must go out on strike.”

The leaflet concluded by demanding the right to strike for all workers and calling for the working class to break with the Democrats and Republicans and build its own party.

Nixon figured out quickly that you can’t sort the mail with bayonets. The Post Office Department quickly conceded wage increases and collective bargaining rights, with no reprisals. Not only was the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) formed out of the strike, but the postal wildcat helped spur the rapid growth of public sector unions in the 1970s. However, strikes by federal workers remained banned, and union officials increasingly used federal and state anti-strike laws, often including the threat of big fines and jail time for union leaders, as an excuse for shelving the strike weapon.

The labor bureaucracy’s subservience to anti-labor laws led to a crushing defeat for all workers when the 1981 PATCO air traffic controllers strike was smashed. PATCO members were among those unionists who had been inspired by the 1970 postal strike, carrying out a number of job actions to win union recognition and better pay and working conditions prior to the decisive 1981 showdown with the government. Using plans drawn up by the Democratic Carter administration, Republican president Ronald Reagan moved to crush the strike he declared illegal. PATCO leaders were dragged off to jail in chains and military personnel were dispatched to help run the system.

With anger in the labor movement mounting against Reagan’s strikebreaking, the SL called for the unions in the industry to shut down the airports in defense of PATCO. But the craven AFL-CIO officialdom refused any such course of action, and the union was busted. The postal union misleaders did their bit by rushing to accept a sellout contract rather

than strike alongside PATCO. The government’s smashing of PATCO ushered in a decades-long drive by the capitalists to gut the unions and drive down wages.

As giveback contracts and tiered wage scales increasingly became the norm, in 1984 postal workers were pressured to accept major contract concessions. Meanwhile, horrendous work conditions were leading to several cases of workers “going postal.” Commenting on this phenomenon, a letter carrier wrote to *Workers Vanguard*:

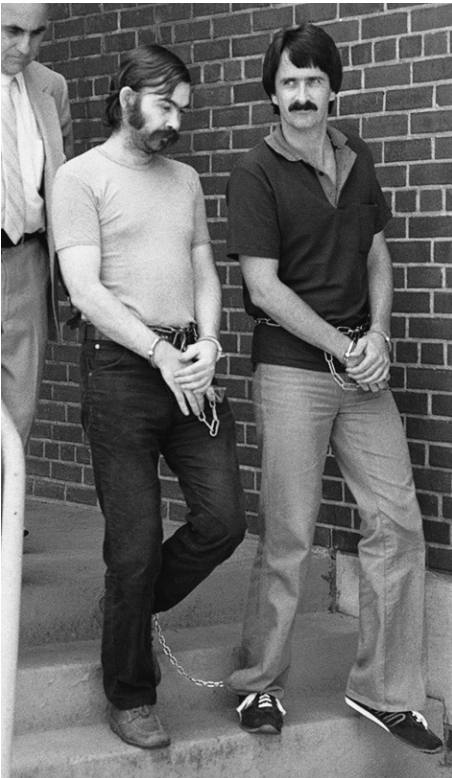
“There hasn’t been a nationwide strike since 1970, and particularly since PATCO was busted in 1981...management has turned the screws ever tighter, getting more work out of fewer workers.... Forced overtime is a way of life.... Back and neck injuries are endemic.... In the absence of strike action and with our union bureaucrats selling us out in every conceivable way, the intense pressure and exploitation have driven some postal workers to desperate and crazy acts. What we really need is some hard class struggle. It’ll take a workers revolution to sweep away our exploiters once and for all.”

—“The Post Office Drives You Crazy,” WV No. 542, 10 January 1992

Begging Democrats, Rejecting Class Struggle

Postal workers today are weakened by being divided into many unions. The largest, with over 200,000 members each, are the NALC and the APWU, with smaller numbers in the National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union (part of the Laborers union). In 2011, the APWU agreed to a concessionary contract while keeping a no-layoff clause for six-year employees. The other three unions got similar contracts through binding arbitration.

Faced with a full-bore assault on jobs and benefits, the union officials have readily accepted a framework in which the only two choices posed are dismantling the postal service or keeping the post office intact by screwing the workers! Calling to “Save America’s Postal Service,” they pitch the problem as the postal service being uniquely and unfairly burdened by the legal requirements for funding these benefits. In thrall to the capitalist profit motive, the union tops complain that the mandate to “pre-fund” retiree health care prevents USPS from competing on level ground with private



PATCO air traffic controllers union leaders hauled off in chains during 1981 strike. Smashing of PATCO set stage for decades of union-busting.

companies like UPS. They also object to the legal ban on developing new products like secure e-mail, which prevents the postal service from grabbing market share from Google.

The kind of “struggle” offered by the leaders of the APWU and NALC is to beg the class enemy in Congress, wooing sympathetic Democrats whom they sell to the membership as “friends of labor,” supplemented by the occasional street protest. Reformists like the International Socialist Organization and the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) aid and abet these trade-union bureaucrats in their diversionary schemes. Both groups enthusiastically back Communities and Postal Workers United (CPWU), which was founded in May 2012 at a Chicago conference of *Labor Notes*, a social-democratic publication associated with the Solidarity organization.

CPWU has mainly organized public-relations stunts and civil disobedience actions in order to pressure USPS, Congress and the White House. Thus a four-

and railroads many to death row, promising Moscow that Snowden would not be tortured (like Bradley Manning) or face the death penalty, was a hoot. Here in the “belly of the beast,” it is delightful to see U.S. imperialism get a black eye and have its pretensions to rule the world on behalf of “democracy” further exposed for the lie it is.

There has been vastly more outrage expressed by bourgeois “public opinion” over Snowden’s revelations than Bradley Manning’s because the former hits the wealthy where they live: their e-mails, their Internet search histories, the GPS data on their smart phones. By contrast, Manning was the lowly working-class soldier who was supposed to protect their class privileges by enforcing U.S. domination of the globe.

In These Times, a social-patriotic journal described by the Democratic Socialists of America as “DSA-ish,” defended NSA spying and denounced Snowden. A July 2 article by Louis Nayman headlined “In Defense of PRISM” railed that a government contractor who runs with classified data to “regimes who fine, imprison and rub out public critics” is not a “People’s Hero.” This was a bit much even for the Democratic Party stalwarts of the DSA, which subsequently printed a polite rebuttal to Nayman, who is described as a longtime union organizer. We suggest that Mr. Nayman register as an agent of a foreign power in the labor movement—the capitalist class.

Daniel Ellsberg, who more than 40 years ago leaked the Pentagon Papers, exposing the lies designed to cover up what the U.S. was really doing in Vietnam, has laudably and energetically defended Bradley Man-

day “D.C. Hunger Strike to Save the Post Office” in June 2012, heavily built by the PSL’s ANSWER coalition, was centered on lobbying Congress. The PSL has even created a Web site, Justicefirst.org, where anyone can print out the placard “Saturday Delivery: The People Want It & It’s the Law!”—a fair summation of the labor bureaucrats’ cringing legalism.

To placate postal workers’ anger, the NALC and other postal unions endorsed March 24 rallies to save Saturday mail delivery. Protests against budget cuts, closures and mail delay took place in 112 cities and drew thousands of union members. Held in out-of-the-way locations on a Sunday, when post offices are closed, these rallies exemplified the role of the reformists as water boys for the bureaucracy. At a rally in Maryland that his group helped organize, PSL leader Brian Becker stood shoulder to shoulder with APWU and NALC officials, who were only too happy to let the workers blow off some steam. Giving their efforts a faintly militant gloss, Becker paid lip service to the 1970 strike while neglecting to mention that this was a *wildcat* strike opposed by most union officials and deemed illegal by the state.

Budgetary shenanigans and outright thievery of workers’ pensions and health benefits by the capitalists are nothing new. In the private sector, bankruptcy has long been a favorite method of airline, auto and coal bosses to dissolve union contracts and discharge pension and retiree health care obligations into thin air. States and municipalities have routinely underfunded pensions or stopped paying altogether in times of budgetary crisis—in Detroit today, this means leaving tens of thousands to twist in the wind. Meanwhile, Wall Street regularly scrapes the cream off the top of massive pension fund investments, to say nothing of profits derived from the 401(k) scam that has largely replaced defined-benefit pensions since the 1980s.

Throughout the labor movement, a new leadership is needed to chart a course of class struggle against the capitalists and their government. Fighting for such a leadership is a key part of building a workers party that can lead all the exploited and oppressed in sweeping away the racist capitalist order through socialist revolution. When those who labor rule, we can begin to rebuild this society through a planned, socialist economy for the benefit of all. ■

Manning...

(continued from page 16)

(“Work of People’s Commissariat for Education,” 7 February 1921). In defense of the interests of *their* class, the government and its mouthpieces in the bourgeois press portray their opponents as criminal and/or of unsound mind. By its own perverse standards, what the ruling class considers normal is dropping atomic weapons, ordering drone attacks on civilians and unleashing the Lieutenant Calleys who burned down entire villages in Vietnam, and later the kill-crazy mercenaries in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The government’s need to conduct its dirty work in secret and the subservience of the capitalist media to their masters made it a massive struggle simply to get the news about Manning’s court-martial. Hundreds of journalists were denied media credentials by the Army, including those from *Workers Vanguard* who managed anyway to get into the Fort Meade courtroom to cover the initial part of the trial.

We are indebted to a few politically committed independent journalists, without whom little to nothing would be known about the dirty war against Manning. For a year and a half, Alexa O’Brien published the only available transcripts of the pre-trial proceedings. Her daily reports from the court-martial punctured the “managed obscurity” (her term), despite intimidation by armed soldiers snooping over her shoulder in Fort Meade’s media pit. Daily trial reports by Nathan Fuller on the Bradley Manning Support Network’s Web site and by Kevin Gosztola on the Firedog-lake Web site have also been invaluable.

Since the U.S. military refuses to release transcripts of the pre-trial hearings and court-martial, the Freedom of the Press Foundation raised funds to hire court stenographers for those sessions that were open to the public.

The Fraud of Bourgeois Democracy

In the wake of the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the U.S. vastly increased its security apparatuses to spy on, well, almost everyone. This created its own security nightmare for the ruling class. The Augean stables of classified information require armies of employees with digital trowels to move the crap around. Close to five million people have security clearances, of which more than 1.4 million are cleared for “top secret” material. Bradley Manning was one with the moral and political conscience to oppose what he discovered U.S. imperialism does every day all over the world, and he had the rare courage to act on his convictions, at great personal sacrifice. His act encouraged Edward Snowden to reveal PRISM—the National Security Agency’s vacuuming of metadata from virtually everyone’s e-mails and Web searches, in cahoots with corporations like Google, Microsoft and Facebook.

Snowden flew to Hong Kong to reveal the nefarious workings of the U.S. intelligence net and then spent more than a month in the transit zone of a Moscow airport while fighting for asylum, which Russia has granted him for one year. The spectacle of Attorney General Eric Holder, who presides over a justice system that massively incarcerates black people

ning. He expresses the views of civil libertarians who think that the prosecution of whistle-blowers damages U.S. prestige in the world and feel embarrassed by the protests of rival imperialist powers. Cold War liberal anti-Communism dripped from Ellsberg’s article in the London *Guardian* (10 June), which, alluding to the East German state spy agency, was titled: “Edward Snowden: Saving Us from the United Stasi of America.” Ellsberg has no fundamental problem with NSA spying; he just wants an informed public to pressure Congress to keep U.S. imperialism’s bloodhounds on a somewhat shorter leash.

Liberals who uphold the fraud of U.S. “democracy” against Soviet-era and Stasi “totalitarianism” prettify the brutally violent rule of the rapacious U.S. ruling class that Bradley Manning exposed. As Marxists, we value and fight hard for democratic rights, which make it easier for labor and the oppressed to fight in their own interests. What the liberals will not tell you is that democratic rights are extended to the working class and poor as gains of arduous class and social struggles; they are not granted from on high by an enlightened ruling class. Moreover, democratic rights in capitalist society are ephemeral and can be taken away in an instant.

Liberal darling Franklin Delano Roosevelt interned Japanese Americans during World War II, adopting the racist argument that this “enemy race” would soon commit sabotage because they had not done so *yet*. Black Panther Party members Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were gunned down in Hampton’s apartment in Chicago in 1969 for challenging systematic racist oppression. The same state persecution of anti-racist, anti-capitalist

Malcolm X on 1963 March: “Farce on Washington”

Anger over the exoneration of Trayvon Martin’s killer will no doubt swell attendance at the August 24 rally marking the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington. It is precisely the role of Al Sharpton and the other Democrats and preachers heading up the event to channel indignation over such atrocities into support for their program of trying to prod the U.S. government—the chief overseer of the racist capitalist system—to bring justice.

It is fitting that Sharpton & Co. are celebrating the 28 August 1963 March on Washington. Officially hailed as an iconic event of the civil rights movement, the March on Washington was expressly organized to enforce the domination of the “moderate” leaders over the massive and convulsive battles for black rights. Dubbed the “farce on Washington” by Malcolm X, the event was organized in collaboration with the Kennedy White House, which wanted to stop any militant struggle in its tracks as well as to corral votes for the Democratic Party.

The main immediate aim of the March on Washington was to get a civil rights bill passed through pressuring President Kennedy. But when Kennedy called the “representative leaders” into the Oval Office, they quickly found out who was calling the shots. The destination of the march was changed from the White House to the



AP
Liberal civil rights, union and religious leaders, including Martin Luther King, meet with Democratic president John F. Kennedy following August 1963 March on Washington.

Lincoln Memorial. March leaders deleted a “statement to the president” and a call to confront Congress from the event’s official handbook. Participation was denied to “subversive” groups and speeches were censored. John Lewis, then a leader of the militant Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and today a Georgia Congressman, was not allowed to deliver the part of his remarks criticizing the Democrats. Even the acclaimed writer James

Baldwin was censored: Fearing he would extemporize, organizers would not let him read his own speech, which instead was delivered by the actor Burt Lancaster.

On November 10, some two months after the March on Washington, Malcolm X gave his famous “Message to the Grass Roots” speech in Detroit. He pointed out that it was only when militants in Birmingham, Alabama, started fighting back against racist violence and cop attacks that the government started to profess support for black people’s rights. As Malcolm put it: “And right after that Kennedy got on the television and said ‘this is a moral issue.’ That’s when he said he was going to put out a civil rights bill.” With Martin Luther King pursuing his liberal-pacifist strategy while protesters were being brutally beaten, Malcolm deemed him and the other well-known leaders “fallen idols,” a sentiment shared by many activists, both South and North.

Accounts of the mass struggle for black equality often omit the ferment that was shaking Northern cities, where for years there were protests against rat-infested housing, decrepit and segregated schools, unemployment and murderous cop terror. By the early 1960s, there were as many protests in the North and West as in the South. Over the summer of 1963, the Justice Department recorded 1,412 separate civil rights demonstrations across the country. In New York City in 1963 and ’64, thousands of Harlem residents formed tenants councils, organizing to withhold rent to force services and repairs from the slumlords.

The images of Birmingham cops unleashing attack dogs on black protesters spurred explosions of anger by Northern blacks, not just over Jim Crow in the South but also over the raw racist reality that was their own American nightmare. When a black minister addressing a Harlem rally in support of the Birmingham demonstrators intoned, “I did not come here to inflame you,” a voice in the crowd shouted out, “We want to be inflamed.”

The largest of the early Northern protests was the 23 June 1963 “Walk to Freedom March” in Detroit—an event that is barely a footnote in official histories of the civil rights movement. Organized by Rev. Albert Cleage and Rev. C.L. Franklin of the Detroit Council for Human Rights, the march was meant, in Cleage’s words, to “show people how we feel about Birmingham but also about conditions here in Detroit” (Peniel E. Joseph, *Waiting ’Til the Midnight Hour* [2006]). Up to 200,000 people marched along Woodward Avenue to Cobo Arena, where King gave an early rendition of his “I have a dream” speech.

The purpose of the march was the same as that of the March on Washington two months later, with King parading at

the front along with Detroit’s mayor and social-democratic auto union bureaucrat Walter Reuther. In the words of Malcolm X, they were the “clowns” leading this “circus.” But unlike the celebrity-studded, tightly censored Washington affair, it was working-class, black Detroit that was in the streets that day, and many had little sympathy for King’s “turn the other cheek” nostrums. Behind a group of children singing “We Shall Overcome” was a contingent of young men carrying a sign reading, “Negroes With Guns Shall Overcome.”

In a letter to the mayor and police commissioner following the march, King praised the Detroit cops, stating, “You have proved to the Negro citizenry of your community that you are a friend rather than an enemy.” For King’s friends in uniform, it was soon time for business as usual. On July 5, they blew away black prostitute Cynthia Scott, shooting her twice in the back and again in the stomach as she lay bleeding on the ground. After the city prosecutor called the shooting justified, 3,000 demonstrators massed outside police headquarters shouting, “Get the killer cops!”

In his “Grass Roots” speech, Malcolm X scathingly recounted how the prominent black spokesmen co-opted sentiment for a militant march in Washington at the behest of the White House, which, he said, was “scared to death” that “this black steamroller was going to come down on the capital.” Malcolm said:

“They called in [Roy] Wilkins; they called in [A. Philip] Randolph; they called in these national Negro leaders that you respect and told them, ‘Call it off.’ Kennedy said, ‘look, you all are letting this thing go too far.’ And Old Tom said, ‘Boss, I can’t stop it, because I didn’t start it.’... And that old shrewd fox, he said, ‘If you all aren’t in it, I’ll put you in it. I’ll put you at the head of it.’...

“And as they took it over, it lost its militancy.... Why, it even ceased to be a march. It became a picnic, a circus. Nothing but a circus, with clowns and all.

“They controlled it so tight, they told those Negroes what time to hit town, how to come, where to stop, what signs to carry, what song to sing, what speech they could make, and what speech they couldn’t make; and then told them to get out of town by sundown. And every one of those Toms was out of town by sundown.”

The liberal-led civil rights movement was able to uproot official Jim Crow segregation in the South, which had become economically outmoded and an embarrassment to the U.S. rulers internationally. But it could not tackle the pervasive oppression of the black masses that is rooted in the U.S. capitalist economy. In fact, the movement ran into a brick wall when it came North. The basic truth is that black emancipation requires sweeping capitalism away through socialist revolution.

For Marxists, Malcolm X was a contradictory figure whose political motion was uncompleted at the time of his assassination in 1965. His break from the religiosity of the Black Muslims was partial and his eclectic politics of Third Worldism and black nationalism were incapable of generating a program that could achieve black liberation. But he was hated and feared by the capitalist rulers for telling the truth about racist America. Malcolm X deeply understood that the U.S. government and its representatives, Democrats as well as Republicans, are deadly enemies of black freedom. For workers and youth today, this understanding would be a good beginning. While liberals and reformist “socialists” fawn over the 1963 March on Washington, we honor Malcolm X, who recognized bourgeois hypocrites and treacherous black “leaders” when he saw them. ■



Wardrop/Wayne State University

June 1963: Mass rally in downtown Detroit, part of wave of civil rights struggles that shook U.S., North and South.

fighters continues today in the frame-up and life sentence of award-winning black journalist and MOVE supporter Mumia Abu-Jamal and the unspeakably cruel imprisonment of leftist attorney Lynne Stewart, who is dying of cancer. The prosecution of Bradley Manning and the drive to capture Edward Snowden and Julian Assange form part of this larger picture.

As opposed to Ellsberg, who argues that U.S. government overreach carries a whiff of Stalinist rule, we argue that the worst crimes of Stalinism were not ham-fisted repression, of which we Trotskyists were the first and foremost victims, but its appeasement of capitalist rule worldwide by abandoning the proletarian, revolutionary and internationalist goals of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. This led, ultimately, to capitalist counterrevolution and economic immiseration in the former Soviet Union and across East Europe. We Trotskyists fought for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. Now, without Soviet power to check the hand of Washington, American imperialism is riding unbridled over most of the world. On the domestic front, a prostrate

labor officialdom and low tide of class and social struggle help enable the government to get away with rampant surveillance and shredding of democratic rights.

The Spartacist League seeks to win opponents of this system to an understanding that it will take a series of socialist revolutions around the world to overturn the capitalist order and establish an internationally planned and collectivized economy based on human need, not private profit. Indeed, communism is America’s and the world’s last best hope. ■

Donate to Bradley Manning’s Legal Defense!

The Partisan Defense Committee has donated to Bradley Manning’s defense and encourages others to do the same. Send checks or money orders earmarked “Manning defense” and payable to: The Courage to Resist, 484 Lake Park Avenue #41, Oakland, CA 94610.

Racist Hell...

(continued from page 1)

state’s “Stand Your Ground” law. Over 20 state governments, centered on the old Confederacy, have passed similar legislation with bipartisan support in recent years. We oppose such laws, which remove the guideline that a person in danger must seek to retreat before using deadly force. These laws thus sanction vigilantism. As we observed in “Trayvon Martin: Killed for Being Black in America” (WV No. 999, 30 March 2012), Florida’s law “allows for the use of deadly force by anyone who claims a ‘reasonable belief’ that such force is necessary, without even attempting to disengage. And in racist America, a black kid in a hoodie is enough to claim ‘reasonable belief’ of danger.”

For that matter, so is a group of black youths listening to rap music. In November 2012, four teenagers at a Florida gas station were in a parked SUV, next to the car of Michael Dunn, a white man. After complaining bitterly of the “thug music,” Dunn opened fire on the SUV, killing 17-year-old Jordan Davis. Since his arrest, Dunn has invoked the “Stand Your Ground” defense on the basis that he believed the teens had a rifle (they did not) and were threatening to kill him.

Many liberals draw a straight line connecting opposition to “Stand Your Ground” with support for gun control. This amalgam is deadly dangerous for workers, black people and the poor. As Marxists, we support the right of armed self-defense and oppose gun control, the effect of which is to strengthen a monopoly of arms in the hands of the capitalist state—leaving guns in the hands of fascists, vigilantes and criminals as well as the cops. Working people must vigorously defend the right to bear arms, which is supposedly guaranteed by the Constitution. Both Trayvon Martin and Jordan Davis were minors, with no right to carry a firearm. If either had been armed, he might still be alive today. Of course, in racist America, survival might well have ended in a lengthy prison term, or even a death sentence. For simply firing a warning shot into the wall of her home during an argument with her husband, Marissa Alexander, a black mother of three, was recently sentenced to 20 years in a Florida prison after a judge denied her “Stand Your Ground” defense.

The crucial importance of armed self-defense for the fight for black rights was captured in a *New Yorker* (29 July) article by Jelani Cobb, despite its conflation of “Stand Your Ground” with the right to bear arms. Cobb noted:

“There is a long history of African-American support for gun rights and the principle of armed self-defense. In 1957, after receiving threats of violence, Robert F. Williams armed the N.A.A.C.P. chapter that he led in Monroe, North Carolina.... The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee activist Fannie Lou Hamer spoke publicly of the loaded guns that she kept under her bed, and members of organizations like the Deacons for Defense and Justice carried weapons with the goal of protecting civil-rights workers in the South.”

Self-defense against racist terror has historically been met with state repression, including through gun control measures. In the 1960s, such laws were passed in New York and California to specifically target Malcolm X and the Black Panthers. State bans were followed by gun control laws nationwide, especially after the ghetto upheavals that broke out following Martin Luther King’s assassination in 1968.

Capitalist Profit Drive Killed Detroit

Key to bourgeois liberal mythology in America is the notion that racism boils down to bad laws and bad ideas, obscuring the truth that black oppression is *materially* based. As Karl Marx explained a century and a half ago in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), the “totality of relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which



Reuters

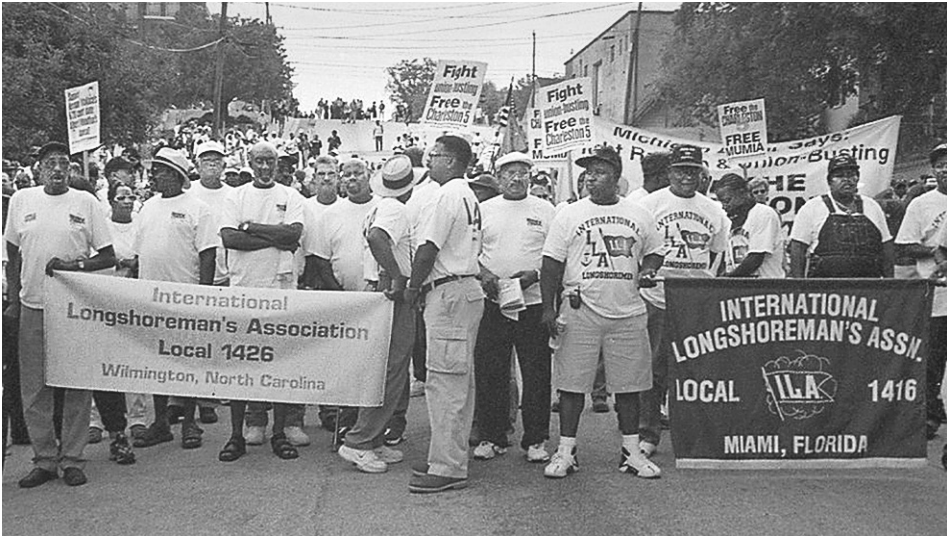
The Commander honoring the troops: Barack Obama hosts White House ceremony for winners of National Association of Police Organizations’ “TOP COPS” award, May 11.

arises a legal and political superstructure and to which corresponds definite forms of social consciousness.”

The plight of Detroit throws into sharp relief the intertwining of black oppression and capitalist exploitation. When the city filed for bankruptcy on July 18, government spokesmen and the bourgeois press pointed the finger at mismanagement by city officials. This was a convenient alibi for the main perpetrators: the auto companies that first brought in waves of labor—white and black, native-born and immigrant—to slave away on the assembly

the Midwest, moving a good deal of production to low-wage areas in the open shop South and overseas.

Shortly after the wreckers’ ball had demolished Chrysler’s Dodge Main, and with it 30,000 jobs, the Spartacist League ran two candidates for city council in 1981 on a platform “For a Socialist Fight to Defend Labor/Black Detroit!” The campaign noted: “Here in Detroit we see the crisis of the entire capitalist system most starkly revealed, most advanced in decay, most anarchic in irrationality, most painful in social consequences. Detroit’s



WV Photo

June 2001: Trade unionists march in Columbia, South Carolina, in defense of Charleston ILA members arrested for defending their picket line.

line, and then mercilessly chunked them out when those plants did not produce sufficient profit. Motown was left to crumble away as the culmination of a decades-long process of deindustrialization—a series of decisions by the barons of capital to pursue profit-making elsewhere.

At its height, Detroit was the hub of the auto industry, and the United Auto Workers (UAW) union, forged through strike action in the 1930s, became the powerhouse of the labor movement in the U.S. But between 1947 and 1963 Detroit lost 140,000 manufacturing jobs. When profit margins increasingly narrowed in the 1970s as a result of Japanese competition, the Big Three began in earnest to carry out waves of plant closures across

skilled proletariat would be the most valuable resource of a rational society—the class that can build a socialist America” (WV No. 287, 14 August 1981). Today, with only two auto factories and 27,000 manufacturing jobs remaining inside city limits, skilled and unskilled workers are trying to survive on low-wage McJobs, unemployment lines and soup kitchens.

Since 1950, Detroit’s population has gone from 1.8 million to 700,000 today, leaving an 82 percent black population that the capitalist rulers consider surplus. From the liberal Coleman Young in the 1970s to the not-so-liberal Dave Bing today, black Democratic mayors have presided over the attacks on the city’s residents. Adding insult to injury, white Republican governor

Rick Snyder appointed an emergency manager, black lawyer Kevyn Orr, to conduct a fire sale of city assets and slash costs to the bone, beginning with unionized labor. Orr’s main qualification to run the city is his having been part of Chrysler’s legal team during the auto bailout.

From the outset, the massive bailout of the automakers focused on how best to gut the UAW and bring wages and benefits down to the level in non-union plants. We opposed the bailout, warning that it “will be purchased through the further destruction of the jobs and livelihoods of working people” (“Bosses Declare War on UAW Workers,” WV No. 926, 5 December 2008). Indeed, plant closures and mass layoffs followed, clearing the way for hiring new workers and temps at half the pay of senior workers when production picked up.

The UAW leadership enthusiastically agreed to these massive concessions, as well as a no-strike pledge good for six years. At the root of the labor traitors’ capitulation is their support to the capitalist profit system—in particular the fortunes of the auto companies—and the “national interests” of U.S. imperialism. As UAW head Bob King told it during the 2012 elections, Obama had saved the auto industry with the bailout. With their program of class collaboration, the union tops have acceded to the proliferation of non-union plants, especially in the South—and now even Michigan has gone “right to work” like the Southern states. A first step in rebuilding the labor movement in this country will be to organize those plants, which means fighting head-on the color bar that has long served to divide workers and weaken their struggles against the bosses.

Such necessary struggles pose the need for a new leadership in the unions that is not beholden to the political parties of the class enemy. Such a leadership would use the weapons of the class struggle, not only to fight for jobs, better pay and conditions but also to wield labor’s power in defense of the unemployed and the ghetto and barrio masses. This is a crucial part of the fight to forge a revolutionary workers party dedicated to the overthrow of the decaying capitalist order, which consigns the black masses to entrenched poverty, unemployment, rotten housing, segregated education and police terror.

A revolutionary leadership would seek to mobilize the working class, with its militant black component, to fight against every instance of racist injustice. This perspective flows from the understanding that black freedom will finally be achieved only when the capitalist exploiters are thrown from power and labor rules this society. This understanding was first imparted to the American Communist movement by the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, which had succeeded in leading the working class in smashing capitalist rule in the October 1917 Russian Revolution. It is in this tradition that the Spartacist League seeks to build a workers party that emblazons on its banners the call: Black liberation through socialist revolution! ■

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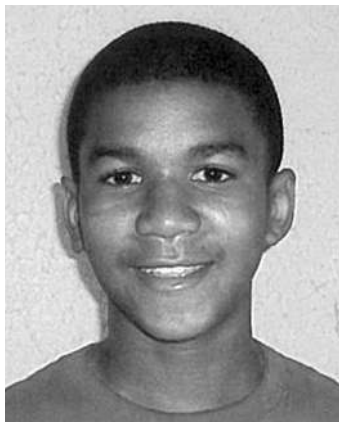
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Zimmerman Verdict— 21st Century Dred Scott Decision



Martin Family

July 15 protest in the Bronx against not-guilty verdict for killer of Trayvon Martin (inset).



WV Photo

There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts!

We reprint below a leaflet issued by the Spartacist League on July 17 and distributed at some of the protests that broke out around the country in the week after George Zimmerman walked. At all levels—municipal, state and federal—the courts are an integral part of the bourgeois state apparatus, dishing out plenty of justice for the capitalist ruling class at one end while workers, minorities and the poor get less than none at the other. The exploited and the oppressed will get due justice only once the capitalist state machinery is swept away through socialist revolution. The reprint incorporates a factual correction.

* * *

George Zimmerman got away with the coldblooded killing of Trayvon Martin. Not even a slap on the wrist, nothing. The verdict is the 21st-century echo of Chief Justice Taney’s infamous declaration in the Supreme Court’s 1857 Dred Scott decision that black people “had no rights which the white man was bound to respect.” Dred Scott was a slave, Trayvon Martin a black teenager walking home from a 7-Eleven store with a bag of candy and an iced tea. But for wannabe cop and racist vigilante George Zimmerman, the 17-year-old Martin was on the “white” side of the tracks in Sanford, Florida, one of the “punks” who “always get away.” So he stalked Trayvon like a fugitive slave and shot him dead. This is what they call post-racial America, where a black man sits in the Oval Office and black life on the streets is as cheap as ever.

The acquittal of Zimmerman—by a jury without a single black person on it—was no aberration in the American justice system. On the contrary, that system worked according to script. Here was a case study in the machinery of courts, cops and prosecutors whose job is to maintain and defend a system rooted in the brutal exploitation of the many by the few—a system built on a bedrock of racial oppression, from chattel slavery to wage slavery.

The only unusual thing was that Trayvon wasn’t gunned down by a cop, the fate of so many young black men in this country. The Zimmerman verdict

coincided with the release of the movie *Fruitvale Station*, based on the last day of Oscar Grant’s life. A 22-year-old black man, Grant was shot in the back by a Bay Area Rapid Transit cop on New Year’s Day, 2009, as he lay handcuffed and prone on the floor of the Oakland station. The movie stands out for depicting Oscar Grant as a human being with all the strengths and frailties of a young black man in capitalist America. This cuts against the grain of this society, where black youth are written off as violent predators, as suspects who are guilty until proven innocent.

It wasn’t George Zimmerman on trial in that Florida courtroom, it was Trayvon Martin. His “crime” was being black in America. After killing Martin, Zimmerman was released without charges by the cops. Only six weeks later did a state prosecutor file an indictment. The same prosecutor had just won a case against a 31-year-old black mother, Marissa Alexander, who was given 20 years for firing a warning shot into a wall when threatened with violent attack by her husband. There was no such zeal when it came to prosecuting Zimmerman. It wasn’t that the prosecution didn’t have a case. The truth is that this wasn’t their field of expertise, which is railroading black people to prison.

The judge ruled that race, the central issue in the case, could not be raised in court. But racist fear and loathing of black people was at the core of the defense case. By repeatedly pounding a dummy into the courtroom floor as “evidence” that it was the lanky teenager who assaulted the far heftier Zimmerman, they turned “the victim into the predator and the predator into the victim,” in the words of black academic Robin Kelley. Contempt and derision for the testimony of Rachel Jeantel, the young black woman who was talking to Martin on his cell phone while he was stalked by the “creepy-ass cracker” Zimmerman, oozed from the courtroom to the media.

When the verdict was announced, black preachers and Democratic Party politicians scrambled to contain the outrage, appealing for peace. Replying to the call for calm, Gary Younge wrote in his London *Guardian* (14 July) column:

“Those who now fear violent social disorder must ask themselves whose interests are served by a violent social order in which young black men can be thus slain and discarded.” The role of the preachers and bourgeois politicians *is* to serve the interests of the rulers of this society by maintaining people’s illusions in the “justice” system. This is what’s behind Al Sharpton’s call for protests at federal courthouses on July 20 to pressure the Justice Department to bring a civil rights case against Zimmerman.

Attorney General Eric Holder may be a black man, but he is the top cop in the vast state apparatus—the police, courts and prisons—whose purpose is to enforce the subjugation of the working class and the oppressed to the capitalist exploiters. As Richard Pryor so incisively put it, “You go down there looking for justice; that’s what you find: just us”—that is, prisons overflowing with black people. As for the kind of investigations the Obama/Holder Justice Department are fervently pursuing, these are mainly aimed at silencing “whistle-blowers” like Bradley Manning and Edward Snowden for exposing U.S. imperialism’s dirty wars, drone attacks and torture chambers targeting brown-skinned peoples around the globe as well as their domestic spying apparatus. The



Louis Schultze

Painting of Dred Scott.

savagery perpetrated against Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib and detainees at Guantánamo is but a concentrated expression of the systematic brutality of the cops and prisons on U.S. soil.

Obama, the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism who keeps a list of people for targeted assassinations abroad, used the Zimmerman verdict to piously ask “if we’re doing all we can to stem the tide of gun violence.” Actually, if Trayvon Martin had been armed he might be alive today, although he would also most likely be behind bars. Zimmerman invoked Florida’s “Stand Your Ground” law, which, like similar laws in other states, allows for the use of deadly force by anyone claiming “reasonable belief” that such force is necessary. In this country, any black kid in a hoodie is enough for someone to claim “reasonable belief” of danger. By eliminating retreat as a criterion for self-defense, these laws are a license to kill. And as shown in the case of Marissa Alexander, black people are not allowed such ground to stand on.

At the same time, defending the right to bear arms is vital for the self-defense of working people, black people and the poor. Gun control is a means of enforcing a monopoly of violence for the capitalist state, leaving guns in the hands of cops, criminals and racist vigilantes while the rest of the population is defenseless. Gun control kills, and as the whole history of this country shows, it kills black people in particular.

It took a bloody Civil War, the Second American Revolution, with 200,000 black troops, guns in hand, to smash the chains of black chattel slavery. But the promise of black freedom was soon betrayed by the Northern bourgeoisie, which allied with the Southern propertied classes against the aspirations of the black freedmen. It will take a third American Revolution—a proletarian socialist revolution that breaks the chains of capitalist wage slavery—to finish the Civil War.

Many of those protesting Zimmerman’s acquittal have spoken out against “the system.” But this has little meaning absent the understanding that the working class is the only force with the social power and class interest to get rid of a system rooted in the exploitation of labor and the forcible subjugation of black people at the bottom. No doubt many view the notion of the workers fighting in their own interests and in the interests of black people and all the oppressed as wishful thinking. Responsibility for this can be laid at the doorstep of the trade-union misleaders, who for decades have allowed the unions to be hacked to pieces while turning a blind eye to the plight of the ghetto and barrio poor. The labor bureaucrats’ accommodation to the rulers’ onslaught flows from their allegiance to the capitalist profit system and to the “lesser evil” Democrats, whose job, no less than the Republicans, is to maintain that system.

But there are real battalions of organized labor, like the overwhelmingly black longshore unions in the Florida ports of Jacksonville, Miami and Tampa. Their labor is essential to the profitability of U.S. imperialism. In this lies their social power to take on the capitalist rulers. In turn, such workers provide a critical link to the defense of the black poor.

The key to unlocking this power is the fight for a class-struggle leadership of labor based on independence from and opposition to the capitalist state and its political parties. The Spartacist League/U.S. is dedicated to forging a multiracial revolutionary workers party that will lead the exploited in wresting the wealth of this country out of the hands of the greedy and corrupt capitalist owners. When the power of the ruling class and its state apparatus is shattered, this wealth will be deployed for the benefit of those who produced it—not least the descendants of the black slaves whose labor was a cornerstone on which American capitalism was built. In an egalitarian socialist America, Justice Taney’s racist decree will be buried once and for all and the cause of black freedom will finally be realized. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Convicted for Revealing Crimes of U.S. Imperialism

Bradley Manning, the courageous and self-sacrificing truth-teller who further revealed the exploitative everyday workings of U.S. imperialism as well as its heinous war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan, was found guilty by a military judge on charges carrying a possible 136-year sentence. Imprisoned for more than three years before trial, including torture in solitary confinement, Manning persevered, aiming to change U.S. policy through exposure and public debate.

Manning's conviction in this court-martial was a foregone conclusion. Indeed, he pleaded guilty to lesser charges that could put him away for 20 years. That was not good enough for the vindictive U.S. government. Now in the sentencing phase, this show trial is a government experiment in political cryogenics to see how deeply it can freeze free speech and dissent by making an example of Manning. It is intended to set the stage for prosecution of WikiLeaks' Julian Assange, still sheltered in the Ecuadorian embassy in London, while U.S. lawmakers scream for his blood. Throwing the book at Bradley Manning also foreshadows what the U.S. would like to do to Edward Snowden, who was just granted temporary asylum in Russia. Fundamentally, the prosecution of Manning is intended to frighten everyone else into passive acceptance of U.S. outrages at home and abroad.

Manning was not convicted of aiding the enemy. This not-insignificant development was widely applauded by the capitalist press, which felt directly threatened by the prosecution's assertion that publication of documents constitutes direct or indirect aid to the enemy because someone, somewhere, sometime might use that information against the U.S. government. However, the judge left open the future use of this ominous catchall by denying a defense motion to throw out the charge. In the end, the court merely found that the prosecution had not proved its case on that count.

Manning's defense team eventually got the government to name two of the three enemies Manning allegedly aided (Al Qaeda and Al Qaeda of the Arabian Peninsula), but the third remained classified information. A July 27 posting on the ProPublica investigative journalism Web site reports that the Pentagon told them that "revealing who we're actually at war with would do serious damage to national security." ProPublica added: "The main reason? They think those groups would use the info as good publicity and allow them to recruit more."

Whether targeted by the CIA or the Pentagon, the people being shot at and bombed are aware that they are being shot and bombed. Some elements in the American ruling class are uncomfortable with the Pentagon's "logic." The Obama administration's fanatical prosecution of whistle-blowers alarms some. Even more are aghast at the revelations by Edward Snowden et al. of the boundless domestic

spying on the population, which includes them too. This disquiet in ruling circles no doubt had an impact on the judge.

Among other charges, Manning was convicted of six counts under the 1917 Espionage Act. The prosecution reached into a Cold War-era tool kit to construct a red scare and portray Manning as an "anarchist." Civil libertarians complain that "whistle-blowing" is not spying, and they're right. But in fact, the draconian Espionage Act has historically been wielded to repress domestic political opposition to imperialist war.

John Reed, a journalist and founding member of the American Communist Party, was prosecuted under the Espionage Act for articles against World War I published in the radical journal, *The Masses*. Reed and others associated with the journal defeated the government in court, but the Feds then yanked the publication's mailing permit because it "skipped" an issue—the one seized by the government as allegedly seditious! Reed aptly summed up the workings of capitalist "justice": "In America law is merely the instrument for good or evil of the most powerful interest, and there are no Constitutional safeguards worth the powder to blow them to hell" ("One Solid Month of Liberty," *The Masses*, September 1917).

It is urgently necessary to continue to fight in defense of Bradley Manning. The organized labor movement, minorities,

all opponents of the depredations of U.S. imperialism have an interest in this fight. As we wrote in "Truth-Teller on Trial: Free Bradley Manning," (WV No. 1026, 14 June): "Lifting the veil on the U.S. war machine was a gutsy act of conscience that objectively helps the victims and opponents of the imperialist system." Key information from the government's own sources that Manning provided to WikiLeaks included:

- Iraq war logs, including a civilian death count, showing that for every dead Iraqi officially classified as a combatant, two civilian men, women or children were killed
- U.S. military support to repression of political dissidents in Iraq and Afghanistan and tolerance of torture as policy toward political prisoners
- Guantánamo detainee files showing the innocence of prisoners and their torture by the U.S. military
- FBI training of torturers for the deposed Mubarak regime in Egypt
- State Department-led opposition to raising the minimum wage in Haiti, the poorest country in the Western hemisphere
- the Obama administration's drone bombing campaigns in Yemen
- Hillary Clinton's authorization of theft of the U.N. Secretary General's DNA [!]
- the notorious "collateral damage" video showing the military's blood lust in gunning down Reuters reporters and Iraqi civilians

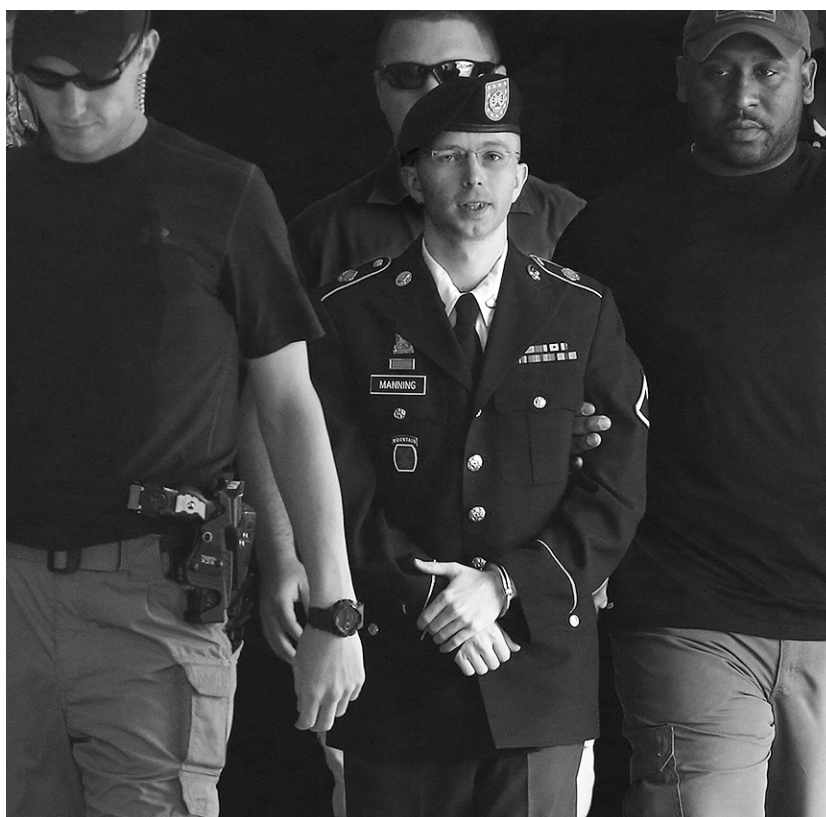
In publicizing this material, and more, Bradley Manning and Julian Assange have helped open the eyes of the working class to the systematic workings of the state run by and for the capitalist class. But as Marxists, we understand that the whole system of capitalist exploitation cannot be changed by simply providing information. This system is based on the exploitation of labor for private profit, buttressed in the U.S. by systematic racial oppression. Imperialist war and subjugation of the Third World are inherent outgrowths of capitalism and will continue until politically conscious workers sweep away the whole system and replace it with an egalitarian socialist society.

Frame-Ups and Omissions by the Capitalist Press

The prosecution of Bradley Manning has provided a diagnostic X-ray of the capitalist media. The *New York Times*, which flatters itself with the motto "All the news that's fit to print," did not initially find the hugely valuable and unsailable evidence of U.S. war crimes that Manning offered them "fit to print." Neither did the *Washington Post*. So Manning submitted the Iraq and Afghanistan war logs and a trove of diplomatic cables to WikiLeaks. The *Times* did not find the lengthy pre-trial detention and torture of Bradley Manning fit to print either; indeed, the paper barely covered the case until its own public editor lodged a protest. Then the *coup de grace*: upon his conviction, the *Times* ran a creepy, character-assassinating portrait of Manning as a psychologically unstable social misfit on the front page.

There is a purpose driven by big economic interests that dictates the behavior of the so-called "free press." As Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin wrote, "Under capitalism, a newspaper is a capitalist enterprise, a means of enrichment, a medium of information and entertainment for the rich, and an instrument for duping and cheating the mass of working people"

continued on page 12



Getty

July 30: Bradley Manning escorted by military police after his conviction, Fort Meade.

Free Bradley Manning!



Getty

Manning supporters protest outside Fort Meade main gate on day of verdict.