

As Rulers Debate Minimum Wage Hike

Profits Soar, Workers Go Under

Six years after plunging the world into the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, Wall Street is making out like the bandits they are. Corporate profits are breaking historical records as devastation continues to stalk the working class, black people, the poor, the sick, the young and the aged. Millions are unemployed, the army of part-time, temporary and casual labor is swelling and even many of those who have full-time jobs number among what are called the “working poor.” According to studies by the World Bank and other capitalist agencies, the U.S. now ranks worse than Nigeria on the scale of income inequality. “Low-wage America” has now become the buzzword for everyone from the White House and the bourgeois media to the reformist left.

There is nothing new or unique about the grinding poverty into which vast numbers of workers have been driven as wages on the whole continue to drop, continuing a trend that began in the 1970s. In *Capital* Vol. 1 (1867), Karl Marx explained the workings of the capitalist system of production for profit, in which the means of production are the property of the few who appropriate for themselves the wealth produced by the workers’ labor: “Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole, i.e., on the side of the class that produces its own product in the form of capital.”

The imperialist rulers reveled in the counterrevolutionary destruction of the former Soviet workers state as proof that Marxism is a “failed experiment.” But the landscape of the U.S. and other advanced as well as backward capitalist countries today is a stark snapshot of the increasing mass misery described by Marx.

Like the police chief in *Casablanca* who is “shocked, shocked” to find gambling going on in Rick’s gin joint, President Obama has now discovered “a dangerous and growing inequality” in America. Following up on the pledge

Fight, Don’t Starve! For a Workers’ America!

Above: Hundreds line up to receive food for the holidays at distribution site in Scranton, Pennsylvania, December 2012. Below: Fast-food workers rally in Brooklyn last December 5 for wage hike to \$15.00 per hour.



Getty

made in his State of the Union address, on February 12 Obama signed an executive order raising the minimum wage of workers employed by federal contractors to \$10.10 an hour. Despite all the fanfare, his pontification that “in the richest nation on earth, nobody who works full-time should have to live in poverty” rang less than hollow. Not only will just a few thousand workers be affected—and then only under new federal contracts—but even with this pay increase they will still be making poverty-level wages.

Peddling “friend of the little guy” snake

oil is nothing new for the Democratic Party, which is no less a party of capitalist rule than the ravingly anti-labor Republicans. While Obama rarely played this card when bailing out the banks and auto bosses, the president currently finds this a useful ploy, particularly for reviving the Democrats’ fortunes in the November midterm elections. Although a good number of CEOs are determined to keep wages at rock bottom, not to mention the Tea Party troglodytes who decry raising the minimum wage as a new installment of “class warfare,” the demand for

a higher minimum wage has support across a wide political spectrum.

For clerical reactionary Pat Buchanan, a higher minimum wage is the means to further slash social programs for the poor by allowing people to “provide for their living without assistance from the government.” The aim of cutting back government “handouts” is also cited by wealthy Silicon Valley entrepreneur Ron Unz in promoting a ballot initiative for California’s November elections to raise the state’s minimum wage to \$12 an hour by 2016. Unz, who authored the 1998 California proposition banning bilingual education for immigrant youth, also wants to make “minimum wage jobs more attractive to ‘Americans’ and thus reduce the flow of immigrants entering the country illegally to take jobs no one else wants” (SFGate.com, 25 January).

For his part, liberal Seattle venture capitalist Nick Hanauer argues in a *Bloomberg* (19 June 2013) article titled “The Capitalist’s Case for a \$15 Minimum Wage” that “the fundamental law of capitalism is that if workers have no money, businesses have no customers.” The fact that the vast majority of the population has little money to spend is a problem for the U.S. economy, which is overwhelmingly based on consumer spending. But the fundamental law of capitalism is hardly the adage, “a rising tide lifts all boats.” On the contrary: the fundamental drive is to *sink wages* so that the capitalist owners can increase their profits by seizing greater and greater proportions of the wealth produced by the workers. Correspondingly, the level of wages at any given time is determined by the relationship of forces between these two decisive classes of capitalist society.

Through mobilizing their collective power, workers can fight to wrest a greater share of the product from the capitalists, who seek to pay out just enough in wages to sustain the workers they exploit. But with the unions headed by a

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Defeat of Reconstruction and the Betrayal of Black Freedom...6



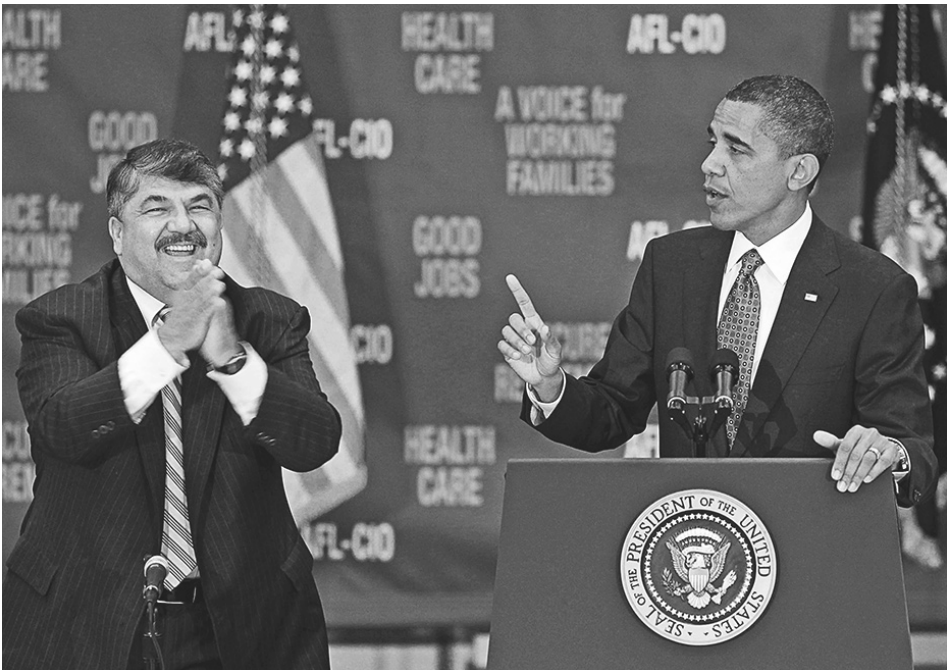
Minimum Wage...

(continued from page 1)

bureaucracy that promotes the profitability of American capitalism, labor struggle is at a nadir. The fruit of the labor misleaders’ class collaboration has been decades of broken strikes and busted unions, helping to drive down wages for the working class as a whole.

The Calculus of the Class Struggle

While the level of deprivation of the working class has been magnified recently, compounded by soaring costs in health care and higher education, the downhill slide in wages did not begin with the 2007-08 economic collapse but started in the early-mid 1970s. With its treasury drained by the long, losing war against the Vietnamese workers and peasants and its former economic dominance challenged by the rising industrial might of Germany and Japan, the U.S. ruling class launched a campaign to increase profitability through jacking up the exploitation of workers. Speedup, wage-slashing and the institution of “two-tier” wages and benefits for new hires increased the rate of exploitation. Auto, steel and other



Reuters
President Obama addressing meeting of AFL-CIO executive council led by Richard Trumka (left), August 2010. Labor tops’ ties to capitalist Democratic Party helped pave the way for decades of attacks on wages, benefits and union organization.

manufacturing production was moved from the heavily unionized Northeast and Midwest to low-wage plants in the “open shop” South and to neocolonies in Latin America and Asia.

Workers resisted by carrying out many

hard-fought strikes. But these were overwhelmingly broken, in no small part thanks to sabotage by trade-union bureaucrats. As union after union went down in defeat, the U.S. rulers were encouraged to believe that they could get away with doing anything to the working class and the poor. Today, some of the more far-sighted elements of the bourgeoisie are beginning to worry that continuing to drive people into ever greater misery could lead to a social explosion.

In “The Case for a Higher Minimum Wage” (8 February), the *New York Times* editorial board promotes the hike as “essential to a functional economy” as well as to restoring “public confidence” in American capitalism. Robert Reich, labor secretary under Bill Clinton, put it more baldly. In a column titled “Working Class Down—But Not for Long” (*S.F. Chronicle*, 7 February), Reich opines that “reform is less risky than revolution, but the longer we wait, the more likely it will be the latter.” As an alternative, this “let’s make a New Deal” liberal harks back to the days of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s Democratic Party administration, which enacted the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act establishing a federal minimum wage.

Like every gain the workers have ever made, this was won not through legislative lobbying or appeals to the “good conscience” of the exploiters but through class struggle. Fearing that the explosion of labor battles in the midst of the 1930s Great Depression could lead to a challenge to capitalist rule, Roosevelt pushed through various measures designed to deflect the upsurge into safer channels. The federal minimum wage was enacted at a time when workers were flocking into the newly organized, militant industrial unions to fight the near-starvation wages imposed by the employers.

Just as surely, the minimum wage, minimal as it always was, has been whittled down in the course of the one-sided class war against the unions. In 1968, the hourly federal minimum wage, adjusted for inflation, was the equivalent of \$10.70 today. Now it stands at \$7.25 an hour.

Meanwhile, unionization in the private sector has fallen to under 7 percent from a high of 35 percent in the 1950s.

Abolish Wage Slavery!

We are for an increase in the minimum wage, as we are for any benefit that ameliorates the conditions of the exploited and oppressed. But any gains, however marginal, that may be legislated today are only as good as the ability of the workers to preserve and extend them. Otherwise, they will be about as real as the federal safety and other regulations that are routinely flouted by the bosses.

For the labor bureaucracy, however, it is all a matter of seeking legislative redress courtesy of the supposed “friends of labor” in the Democratic Party. This strategy is epitomized by the SEIU service workers leadership’s campaign to push Congress and state legislatures to raise the minimum wage. Along the same lines, Socialist Alternative’s newly elected Seattle City Council member, Kshama Sawant, whose central campaign slogan was “Fight for 15,” now serves on a mayoral advisory committee with the rich entrepreneur Hanauer and other local capitalists to work out just how high the city’s minimum should be raised.

The working class must fight to resist attacks on wages, benefits and jobs. Communists champion the felt needs of workers, minorities and the poor—for jobs at good wages; for quality, fully government-funded medical care for all; for quality, integrated schools and housing; for a livable retirement—seeking to link such demands to the fight to overturn the system of capitalist wage slavery. We call for jobs for all through shortening the workweek at no loss in pay, for fully indexing wages to inflation and for a massive program of public works to rebuild this country’s crumbling infrastructure. These demands, which will not be met by this decaying capitalist system, point squarely to the need for a workers government to expropriate the bourgeoisie as a class and use the wealth produced by labor for the benefit of the many and not the profit of the few. The urgent task is to sever labor’s ties to the Democrats and to build the working-class party needed to lead the exploited and oppressed in socialist revolution.

In his 1865 work *Value, Price and Profit*, Marx noted that the working class must not passively give in to the capitalists’ efforts to reduce wages to a minimum. However, he continued:

“Quite apart from the general servitude involved in the wages system, the working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these everyday struggles. They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects...that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady. They ought, therefore, not to be exclusively absorbed in these unavoidable guerilla fights incessantly springing up from the never-ceasing encroachments of capital or changes of the market. They ought to understand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the *material conditions* and the *social forms* necessary for an economical reconstruction of society. Instead of the *conservative* motto, ‘*A fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work!*’ they ought to inscribe on their banner the *revolutionary* watchword, ‘*Abolition of the wages system!*’” ■



TROTSKY

Labor and the Color Bar in the Jim Crow South

Writing when Jim Crow segregation defined the South, veteran American Trotskyist Richard Fraser underlined that the fight to organize unions requires conscious struggle against the racist discrimination wielded by the capitalists to divide labor. While such struggle was key in the building of industrial unions in the North as well as in the mines and steel mills in Birmingham, Alabama, Fraser noted that organizing the “open shop” South had run aground under

the leadership of the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy. Six decades later, organizing the South remains a strategically important task for the labor movement.

At each point, the fundamental interests of the industrial working class and of the Negro people are tied together. At no point is this revealed more strongly than in the problems of unionism.

Working class solidarity is a mighty antidote to race prejudice. Without the overthrow of prejudice unionism itself is always in danger. This is demonstrated in the great struggles against the giant corporations of auto, rubber, steel. Here the working class was forced, in spite of prejudice, to present a united front to the employers or meet sure defeat. This action was the beginning of the overthrow of race prejudice, just as it was the beginning of industrial unionism....

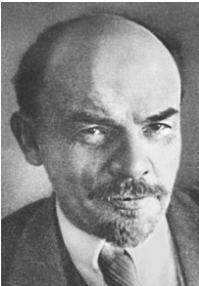
If industrial unionism could not exist upon a racial basis, neither can it be maintained on a regional basis. The low wages of the South are a constant pressure upon all unions throughout the country. Furthermore, the Bourbon dictatorship is the most consistent and steadfast of all the sources of anti-labor reaction in the country....

The open-shop Jim Crow South is therefore lifted as a Sword of Damocles over the head of the labor movement. But the example of the city of Birmingham proves that it is by no means impossible to organize in the South.

Nevertheless, the CIO has failed in all its major attempts. This can only be explained by the limitations of the program of the union bureaucracy.

The organization of a labor movement in the South among the basic industrial and agricultural workers there must take its point of departure from a break with capitalist politics and capitalist parties.

—Richard S. Fraser, “The Negro Struggle and the Proletarian Revolution” (1953), printed in “In Memoriam—Richard S. Fraser,” *Prometheus Research Series* No. 3, August 1990



LENIN

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Lessons of the Unionization of Meatpacking Fast Food Workers Need a Fighting Labor Movement



Minnesota Historical Society

Picket line during successful 1933 sit-down strike by Hormel meatpacking workers in Austin, Minnesota.

Protests in the past year by fast-food workers demanding a pay increase have highlighted the poverty-level wages and contemptuous abuse dealt out by the corporate bosses to this growing segment of the working class. The roughly four million men and women who run the grills and front the counters at McDonald's, Burger King and other giant chains make barely \$9 per hour and average about 26 working hours a week, putting them well below the poverty line if they have a family to support. In the wake of the 2007-08 financial crisis, such poverty-level work accounts for three out of every five new jobs. These are also often the only employment that black and immigrant youth—and, increasingly, laid-off older workers—can get.

The workers who have joined in the fast-food protests, in some cases walking off the job to do so, understand that it is necessary to fight. Yet the hundreds of thousands of small fast-food outlets are the point in the restaurant industry where workers are the weakest. To unionize fast-food workers and win significant gains in wages and benefits poses the need to mobilize the power of workers who are strategically positioned along the supply chain that provides the frozen hamburger patties, French fries and so on to the retail outlets. And that means a struggle against the meatpacking and trucking bosses to again make those industries bastions of union power.

But this is far removed from what the labor traitors at the head of the unions have in mind. Instead, they are pursuing a strategy, announced with great fanfare at the AFL-CIO convention last September, that is a substitute for the direct organization of workers into unions. The new strategy consists of alliances with “alt-labor” organizations—community groups that organize workers outside collective bargaining—as well as recruitment to the Working America lobbying organization. Mobilizing community groups to exert pressure on the bosses can be a useful tactic, but only if it is an auxiliary to hard class struggle—a perspective that is anathema to the pro-capitalist labor tops.

The bureaucrats’ strategy is epitomized by their current campaign on behalf of fast-food workers, as well as by protests against Wal-Mart centered on the Organization United for Respect at Walmart (OUR Walmart). The United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW), which

sponsors OUR Walmart, has repeatedly declared that it has “no intent to have Wal-Mart recognize or bargain with UFCW or OUR Walmart.” This is part of what has come to be called “minority unionism.” Instead of seeking to win union recognition by signing up a majority of workers at particular work sites, the bureaucrats aim to win over isolated individuals at many sites. These small groups of workers bravely risk company retaliation by walking off the job to join protests like the November Wal-Mart Black Friday events that aim to shame the company. What such “strikes” do *not* seek to do is to shut down the bosses’ operations until they are forced to come to terms with the workers.

The premise adopted by the union officialdom is that existing anti-labor legislation is so restrictive that ways must be found to work around the laws without directly confronting them. Yet everything of value the workers movement has won has been achieved by mobilizing the ranks of labor in hard-fought struggle against the capitalists and their whole body of anti-labor legislation. The labor bureaucracy is a relatively privileged layer that long ago separated from its base, the union membership. The labor misleaders long ago renounced the class-struggle methods that built the unions, from picket lines that mean business to secondary boycotts and plant occupations. Through their support to the capitalist system and the Democratic Party, the labor bureaucrats serve to tie the unions to the class enemy and its state, which from the White House on down is not a neutral body “of the people” but an organ of capitalist rule.

Though union power in the food industry has been significantly weakened since the high point of unionization, the UFCW and SEIU service employees union, along with the Teamsters, retain footholds in the slaughterhouses and processing plants. From there to the warehouses and on to the fast-food outlets, there is a critical “cold chain” that must be maintained to prevent spoilage. Fleets of refrigerated (reefer) trucks carry the lion’s share of this produce.

Shutting down the slaughterhouses and processing plants and tying up the cold chain would quickly stop the flow of billions of dollars of profits. Mobilizing the social power of that industrial workforce could lay the basis for a drive to re-unionize trucking and the meatpacking

industry and, based on those strongholds, back up struggles by fast-food workers. The history of unionization of the meatpacking industry provides a graphic example of the kind of hard class struggle that is needed to organize the unorganized and revitalize the labor movement.

Class Struggle and Multiracial Unity

The meatpacking industry was historically centered in Chicago, with major slaughterhouses in other rail centers like Kansas City and St. Louis, and was dominated by the Beef Trust with its Big Four: Armour, Swift, Wilson and Cudahy. Beginning in the late 1800s, the Beef Trust defeated attempts to unionize the massive Chicago stockyards by promoting divisions among the workers. While East European immigrants were set against

Irish, German and native-born workers, what proved fatal to unionizing efforts was the racial division between white and black workers. That division was fostered by the craft unionism of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) leaders, with their hostility to unskilled labor and racist animosity toward blacks, many of whom were hired by the bosses to break strikes. As recounted in the 1985 film *The Killing Floor*, a key stockyard organizing drive was destroyed by the anti-black Chicago riots of 1919, which were encouraged by the packing bosses. Two years later, a strike by the AFL’s Amalgamated Meat Cutters union (AMC) was quickly crushed.

The road to a militant, integrated industrial union of meatpacking workers was paved by the Unemployed Councils organized in the depths of the Great Depression by the Communist Party (CP). The CP had been formed as a revolutionary organization inspired by the October 1917 workers revolution in Russia led by the Bolshevik Party. However, the CP politically degenerated in parallel with the consolidation of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union beginning in 1923-24. Nevertheless, American Communists retained in distorted form the beneficial influence of the Bolshevik-led Communist International’s insistence that the party actively take up defense of the oppressed black population.

In the early 1930s, the CP’s energetic defense of the Scottsboro Boys against legal lynching in Alabama won it widespread respect among black people North and South. The Unemployed Councils fought evictions of jobless workers by mobilizing flying squads to move them back in and organized mass demonstrations demanding increased relief for the unemployed. Uniting black and white, immigrant and native-born workers in common struggle, these actions brought the party authority in Chicago’s Black Belt and undercut the racist backwardness of the whites. Thus the CP acquired a base among black packinghouse workers that proved critical to later union organizing efforts, in which the CP played a prominent role.

When an uptick in the Depression economy enabled workers to raise their heads again, strikes began to break out. A successful 1933 sit-down strike by Hormel meatpacking workers in Austin, Minnesota, galvanized the stockyards and presaged the great explosion of working-class struggle in 1934 that saw victorious city-wide strikes in San Francisco, Toledo and Minneapolis. Those strikes, all led by reds, laid the basis for organizing millions

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Germany

No to Criminalization of Prostitution!

We reprint below an excerpted translation of an article from Spartakist No. 201 (January 2014), published by our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany, addressing a reactionary campaign against prostitution. While prostitution *per se* is not now a criminal offense in Germany, the new coalition government of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) has announced plans to impose new restrictions, under the guise of cracking down on “sex trafficking.”

SPARTAKIST 4

When reactionary bourgeois feminist Alice Schwarzer launched her latest book—a collection of articles with the sensationalist title *Prostitution: A German Scandal; How Could We Turn into the Paradise of Traffickers in Women?*—female sex workers, the German AIDS Service Organization and others in the audience responded with vociferous protests. At this event, which took place in Berlin on 14 November 2013, only Schwarzer’s supporters were on the podium, among them a police detective who called for reinstituting the registration of prostitutes! In the run-up to the event, Juanita Henning (chairperson of the Dona Carmen Association, an advocacy group for prostitutes’ rights) had already accurately stated that Schwarzer was advocating a “police law, pure and simple,” calling her a “German police feminist.” Finally, a speaker calling for more rights for women sex work-

ers garnered such strong applause that the speakers had to vacate the podium.

Since issuing their “Appeal Against Prostitution” last fall, Schwarzer and her journal *Emma* have been waging a campaign for reinstituting the criminalization of prostitution. To that end, she equates prostitution with slavery, demanding “ostracism and, when necessary, legal penalties for their patrons as well.” The CDU/SPD “grand coalition” has already announced that it will “punish...prostitution stemming from poverty as well as forced prostitution more severely, with new statutory offences” (“Future Punishments for Patrons of Forced Prostitutes,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2 December 2013).

We Marxists unambiguously oppose these measures, since the criminalizing of johns would be a decisive step toward a renewed criminalization of prostitution—and of prostitutes. We say that taking money for or paying for sex is not a crime, on the part of either the prostitute or her clients! The assertion that the only clients affected would be those who knowingly purchase the services of someone who has been forced into prostitution is a pretext: not only is this virtually impossible to prove, it serves solely as an excuse for expanding state repression, increasing the number of raids on brothels, and terrorizing prostitutes, many of them immigrants, on the streets and elsewhere.

A similar law has been in effect in Britain for years. Our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain wrote: “In fact, immigrant women ‘rescued’ by police during ‘anti-trafficking’ raids are routinely de-

ported.” (“Down With Labour’s Crackdown on Prostitution,” *Workers Hammer* No. 205, Winter 2008-09). In France, a law based on the 1999 “Swedish model” that makes the purchase of sex a criminal offense has just passed its first reading despite a number of protests going back some time.

Accompanying the government’s propaganda calling for a crackdown on prostitution is a racist invocation of supposed “gang criminality” which, it is claimed, has been inundating the country with “forced prostitutes,” particularly since the extension of the European Union (EU) to the East. This fearmongering is expected to grow even more after citizens of Romania and Bulgaria, with their large Roma [Gypsy] minorities living in desperate poverty, are granted the formal right to work here starting in January 2014.

In West Europe, the ongoing world economic crisis has generated a rapid growth in the number of attacks on the vulnerable Roma minority, who have been marginalized for centuries. Capitalist governments are using Roma as scapegoats, including through a media campaign retailing anti-Roma lies dating back to the Middle Ages, such as that Roma steal children and traffic in human beings. Alice Schwarzer is a vigorous proponent of this campaign, with articles in her book titled “A Trip to the Homeland of Forced Prostitution” (East Europe, centrally Romania and Bulgaria) and “A Trip to the Land of the Vampires,” with quotes from Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*. Her “Appeal” calls for protection from deportation only for “witnesses,” i.e., those who cooperate with the bourgeois state.

The International Communist League has always opposed the EU as an imperialist trade bloc in which Germany, France and Britain have the say-so. Other member countries, among them the former members of the [Stalinist-ruled] Eastern Bloc, supply cheap labor and serve as markets. The wretched situation of the Roma in these countries stems directly from capitalist counterrevolution in the former deformed workers states, which led to interethnic massacres and genocidal nationalism. The desire of Roma to emigrate is often nothing but a desperate attempt to escape racist persecution and the most extreme poverty. Gangs smuggling illegal immigrants can carry out their dirty business only because capitalist governments attempt to keep out foreign workers and operate murderously against refugees. We demand: Full citizenship rights for everyone who has made it here!

Forced prostitution, for instance through debt bondage, rape and brutal

sexual attacks are real crimes! However, we oppose the state’s attempt to equate “sex slavery” and “forced prostitution” with prostitution itself and to portray any exchange of sex for money as potential slavery. Prostitution is very often degrading and exploitative, but criminalization simply forces prostitutes into a lumpen milieu where they have almost no access to social and medical services and where they are much more vulnerable to gang crime and violence from pimps. As Marxists, we warn that any and all intervention of the capitalist state directly increases the misery of all those involved and functions as a pretext for inciting the cops and the courts to attack immigrants, women and sexuality itself.

What Is Prostitution Anyway?

The status of a prostitute is related to the status of women generally, itself a measure of a society’s advancement. Thus the conditions faced by prostitutes vary greatly with time, place and class. As we wrote in “U.S./UN Crusade Against ‘Sex Trafficking’” (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 58, Spring 2004):

“There is a world of difference between the luxury and easy living of a Hollywood madam like Heidi Fleiss (who got locked up all the same) and the AIDS-infected, drug-addicted streetwalker in an impoverished ghetto, with no options and no way out. Nonetheless, *all* prostitutes are subjected to the general social opprobrium of bourgeois moralism and hypocrisy, which sets them up for abuse, beatings, rape and theft.”

The main instrument for the oppression of women in a class society is the institution of the family, as Friedrich Engels



Berlin: Sign at protest tells moralizing bourgeois feminist Alice Schwarzer, author of *Prostitution: A German Scandal*, to “shut your trap,” November 2013.

explained in his brilliant work *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884). In the old hunter-gatherer societies, men and women were equal and maternal descent determined lineage inasmuch as only the mother of the child was known. But with the development of

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December 2013: Sex workers in Paris protest law imposing 1,500-euro fine on clients of prostitutes.

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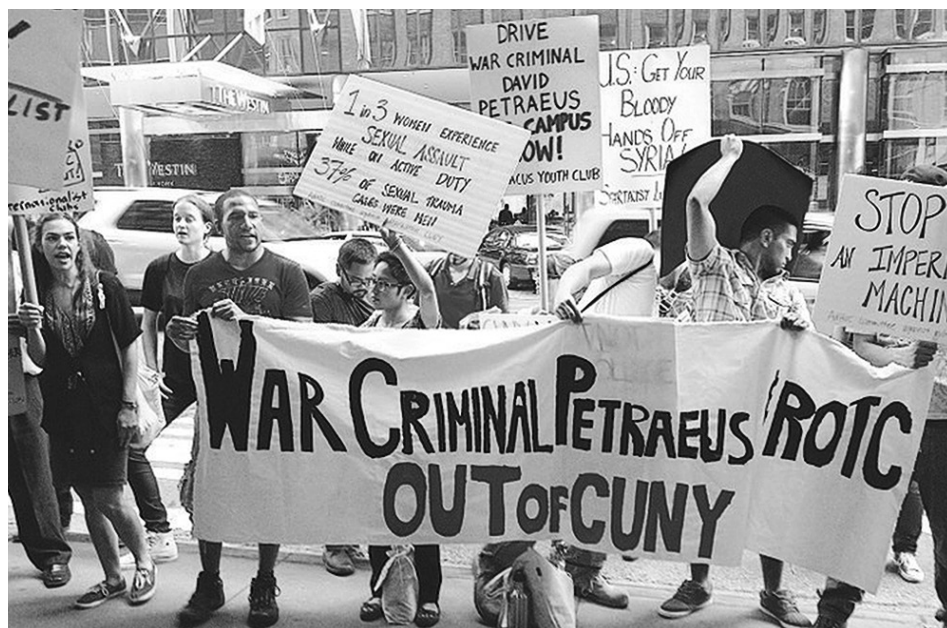
We print below a speech given by Spartacus Youth Club spokesman Mika at the January 9 press conference outside the Manhattan courthouse following the hearings of the CUNY 6, Tafadar Sourov and Khalil Vasquez.

On 17 September 2013, after being brutally attacked by the police, the CUNY 6 (Agustin Castro, Jose Disla, Denise Ford, Angelica Hernandez, Luis Henriquez and Rafael Peña) were arrested for protesting CUNY's appointment of war criminal and ex-CIA head General David Petraeus as a visiting professor outside City University of New York (CUNY) Macaulay Honors College. The six face trumped-up charges including "riot in the second degree" (see "Defend Anti-Petraeus Protesters!" WV No. 1031, 4 October 2013).

In an effort to suppress leftist political activity, the City College of New York (CCNY) administration suspended students Tafadar ("Taffy") Sourov and Khalil Vasquez, both of the Maoist Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee, following a 24 October 2013 protest against the shutting down of the Morales/Shakur Center on campus (see "Reinstate the Morales/Shakur Center! Cops Off Campus!" WV No. 1034, 15 November 2013). After a November 22 disciplinary hearing, the CCNY administration allowed them both to return to CCNY this spring semester, but their suspension will only be expunged from their record if they don't get into "further disciplinary trouble." Ominously, the CUNY administration brought criminal charges of "rioting" and "inciting to riot" against Sourov and Vasquez for exercising their right to free speech and assembly while protesting the closure of the Morales/Shakur Center.

Despite our differing political outlooks, the Spartacus Youth Club has stood with the CUNY 6, Sourov and Vasquez against these outrageous charges from the beginning. The next court hearing for the CUNY 6 is scheduled for February 18 and the hearing for Sourov and Vasquez is set for March 11, both at the New York Crimi-

Drop All Charges!



NYC, September 2013: Spartacus Youth Club joins students protesting against ROTC and former CIA director General David Petraeus, who was invited to teach at the City University of New York.

nal Court, 100 Centre Street. We urge our readers to send letters demanding that all charges against the CUNY protesters be dropped. Statements can be directed to: New York County District Attorney Cyrus Vance, Jr., One Hogan Place, New York, NY 10013; telephone (212) 335-9000; fax (212) 335-4390. Donations to the CUNY protesters' legal defense fund can be made at defendthecuny6.wordpress.com.

* * *

The Spartacus Youth Club stands for the defense of the CUNY 6, Taffy and Khalil in the face of the D.A.'s and CCNY administration's witchhunt. As revolutionary Trotskyists we are firmly committed to the defense of the left and

working-class movement against any attack by the bourgeoisie and their state. It is crucial that students, faculty and workers protest this latest outrage and demand that all the bogus charges be dropped! An injury to one is an injury to all!

The arrests of the CUNY 6 and the charges against Taffy and Khalil are blatant acts of retaliation for protesting against ROTC and war criminal Petraeus at CUNY, as well as organizing against the shutting down of the Morales/Shakur Center. We call for ROTC and all military recruiters off campus! Reinstate the Morales/Shakur Center! Cops off campus!

The new draconian policy on "expressive activity" being proposed by the CUNY Board of Trustees is another attempt to

enhance the powers of the administration to crack down on protest, part of a drive to make the university more exclusive. We say abolish the administration! For worker-student-teacher control of the universities! Fight for free, quality, integrated education with a full stipend for all students and for open admissions!

The events of last semester show once again the danger of having illusions in the CUNY administration. Universities under capitalism serve the purpose of upholding bourgeois ideology and training the next layer of technicians and managers. CUNY cannot become a "liberated" or "sovereign" space divorced from the rest of society. In order to remove the universities from the control of the bourgeoisie, we need a socialist revolution to sweep away the whole capitalist system. Students can be a catalyst for broader protest in society but by themselves they do not have the social power to overthrow capitalism. They must ally with the multiracial working class.

Efforts by the ruling class to crack down on the left and stifle protest must be expected as long as capitalism exists. Democrat Obama, Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism, has surpassed his predecessor Bush when it comes to invading privacy, shredding basic democratic rights and enhancing police powers. Workers must be broken from the Democratic Party, especially its more left-talking elements like de Blasio and Charles Barron, and won to the task of building their own class party, independent of and in opposition to all parties of capitalist rule. A class-struggle workers party would fight in defense of all the exploited, oppressed and dispossessed. We need a workers government that expropriates the capitalists and rebuilds society on the basis of a world-wide planned, collectivized economy. We take as our model the Russian Revolution of 1917 when the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky led the working class to take power and overthrow capitalism.

Once again, defend the CUNY 6, Taffy and Khalil! Drop all the charges now! ■

SYC Speaker at Chicago Holiday Appeal

We print below a speech, edited for publication, by Alan of the Chicago Spartacus Youth Club. The speech was given on 15 December 2013 at the Partisan Defense Committee's Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners in Chicago.

* * *

Hi, I am Alan and I am a member of the Spartacus Youth Club. The Spartacus Youth Club is the youth group of the Spartacist League. We stand in solidarity with the class-war prisoners, many of whom were youth when they were thrown in prison for protesting the injustices of capitalism.

The future for youth under capitalism is bleak, especially for black and Latino youth, who face high unemployment, are driven off campuses due to rising tuition costs and face racist cop terror. Liberal and reformist politicians seek to channel the anger and militancy of youth into voting for the Democratic Party, the other party of Wall Street, war, racism and poverty. Our opponents on the left, some of whom campaigned for Obama, seek to pressure the Democrats to "fight" for a few more crumbs for working people and for the capitalist state to be less repressive. The capitalist state is not a neutral force.

Students Must Ally with the Power of the Working Class!

This state consists of the military, police, courts and prisons which function to protect the class rule of the bourgeoisie and its system of production and exploitation.

Class is the main division in society, but not the only one. Like countless black men, women and children, Trayvon Martin was a victim of the *racist* American capitalist system which was built on slavery and is maintained by black racial caste oppression. The SYC went to protests for Trayvon and met people who were justifiably angry. However, the anger was channeled by the reverends and the reformist left into the idea that the oppressive state which oversees and defends this racist capitalist system can bring justice for Trayvon Martin and can be reformed to meet the interests of the workers and the oppressed. Justice for Trayvon will come, and the needs of workers and the oppressed will be met, once the American

capitalist rulers are swept away by socialist revolution.

As they have done with the class-war prisoners for whose freedom we are fighting today, the U.S. and its allies are doing all they can to silence people like Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden, who have lifted the veil on U.S. imperialism's dirty wars, drone attacks, mass surveillance and torture chambers. Chelsea Manning has been sentenced to 35 years in prison and was given a dishonorable discharge from the U.S. military. Edward Snowden, who has avoided capture by the U.S. rulers, depends on a one-year residency permit granted by Russian president Vladimir Putin who, nonetheless, described the NSA's mass surveillance programs as "The way a civilized society should go about fighting terrorism." Snowden, Manning and Julian Assange deserve full credit for exposing a part of the atrocities of the

imperialists and revealing to the working class the systematic workings of the state run by and for the capitalist rulers.

Students and youth have every reason to protest the atrocities of U.S. imperialist capitalism. While student struggles can ignite social battles, students have no direct relationship to the means of production, meaning they do not have social power. The working class, which does have a direct relationship to the means of production, has the social power to shut down capitalist production and ultimately to overthrow the entire capitalist system. *Students and youth must ally with the power of labor against capital!*

The fight to overthrow capitalism is not going to be spontaneous. The SYC recognizes that a revolutionary party, built from the most advanced layers of the multiracial proletariat and declassed revolutionary intellectuals, is necessary to raise the consciousness of the proletariat to the need to fight for a socialist revolution.

The Russian Revolution of October 1917 pointed the way forward for the international working class. The Bolsheviks led the workers, organized in workers councils (soviets), to power and smashed the rule of the Russian landlords and

continued on page 11

Defeat of Reconstruction and the Betrayal of Black Freedom

We print below, edited for publication, the conclusion of a presentation given by Spartacist League/U.S. Central Committee member Alan Wilde to internal meetings of the International Communist League in Mexico City, New York City and Chicago. Part One appeared in WV No. 1039 (7 February).

PART TWO

On the evening of 12 January 1865, an extraordinary meeting took place in Savannah, Georgia. At it were Lincoln's War Secretary, Edwin Stanton, and Union general William Tecumseh Sherman, who was in the middle of his "Southern Tour." Sherman's "March to the Sea," probably the first expression of "total war" in the world, cut a swath of devastation across the Georgia countryside, from Atlanta to Savannah. Sherman himself was a racist who cared little about the fate of black people. Nonetheless, by force of history, his army was one of liberation that dragged behind it thousands of former slaves escaping the plantations. It was partly to try to figure out what to do with this mass of humanity that Sherman and Stanton called this meeting.

The meeting was held with 20 black ministers and other black leaders from Savannah and surrounding counties, many of them former slaves who had just won their freedom at the hands of the Union Army. For the first time, black people were asked what their definition of slavery and freedom was. One black leader, Garrison Frazier, replied: "Slavery is, receiving by irresistible power the work of another man, and not by his consent." Freedom meant "taking us from under the yoke of bondage, and placing us where we could reap the fruit of our own labor." Frazier continued: "The way we can best take care of ourselves is to have land...we want to be placed on land until we are able to buy it and make it our own."

Following this meeting, Sherman issued his famous Special Field Order No. 15, which set aside the Sea Islands and a portion of the South Carolina and Georgia coast extending 30 miles inland for black settlement. Sherman's order confiscated these lands from Southern planters who had abandoned them in the face of his march. Each black family would receive 40 acres, and the Army would also provide them with one of its broken-down mules to nurse back to health and use as they saw fit. It was out of this proclamation that the phrase "40 acres and a mule" would echo through time. By June, 40,000 freedmen were settled on 400,000 acres of land.

There were other experiments in land confiscation and distribution. Many plantations were being run by former slaves, as their white masters had fled. But the Northern bourgeoisie was not interested in land reforms. The prevailing concern of the ruling class was the discipline and control of Southern labor, which now meant getting former slaves back to work on the plantations harvesting cotton.

Upon coming to power, Andrew Johnson reversed many of the land confiscations, including "Sherman's land," where Union troops now forced black residents to give the land back to its former owners. But the failure of land reform isn't about Johnson per se. Even when they were briefly dominant, the Radical Republi-

cans proved unable to deal with the question, though in the face of mass agitation for land by the freedmen, some tried.

In 1867, Charles Sumner unsuccessfully introduced resolutions in the Senate that would have, among other things, established integrated public schools in the South and provided the freedmen with homesteads. However, even Radicals like Henry Wilson, who would go on to become Ulysses S. Grant's second vice

on political rights for blacks, opposed land confiscation.

They were joined by the bourgeois press. The *New York Times* worried that confiscation "would not be confined to the South," that the Radicals sought to destroy "the inviolability of property rights" through "a war on property...to succeed the war on Slavery." The *Nation* (the same one that exists today) declared: "We totally deny the assumption that the



University of Georgia

Family stands outside former slave quarters on St. Catherines Island on the Georgia coast in the 1880s. The island had served as one of the headquarters for the Georgia Freedmen's Bureau following Civil War.

president, opposed these steps. One Republican declared, "That is more than we do for white men," to which Sumner replied: "White men have never been in slavery."

Far more sweeping was a resolution introduced by Thaddeus Stevens in the House. Stevens proposed to confiscate the lands of about 70,000 "chief rebels" who owned some 394 million acres. As Stevens pointed out, confiscation would affect less than 5 percent of the South's white families. Each black family would receive 40 acres of land, basic tools for cultivation and \$50 to get started.

For Stevens, land confiscation was crucial to altering the South. His plan included providing land to landless whites, which he rightly saw as key to cementing a political alliance between blacks and poor whites. In his speech to the House, he said: "The whole fabric of southern society *must* be changed, and never can it be done if this opportunity is lost. How can republican institutions, free schools, free churches, free social intercourse exist in a mingled community of nabobs and serfs?" Against those who declared it "inhuman" to confiscate the land of 70,000 white landowners, Stevens responded by referring to earlier plans to colonize blacks outside the country: "Far easier and more beneficial to exile 70,000 proud, bloated, and defiant rebels than to expatriate 4,000,000 laborers, native to the soil and loyal to the government."

Stevens' bill and speech electrified blacks in the South, feeding an upsurge in agitation for land, with copies being read aloud at black mass meetings. However, by the beginning of 1868, with the passage of the last Reconstruction act, the issue was off Congress's agenda. Mainstream Republicans, whatever their views

distribution of other people's land to the negroes is necessary to complete the work of emancipation." The fact that the slaves had more than earned the land through centuries of unrequited labor meant little to the bourgeoisie.

In the French Revolution, the early bourgeoisie granted "land to the tiller" as part of breaking the centuries-old feudal system. In the U.S., the situation was very different. The industrial bourgeoisie was squeezed by land agitation in the South and by a growing working-class movement in the North. And the 1871 Paris Commune accelerated a process already under way: it helped to cohere the class-consciousness of the bourgeoisie. For the ruling class, the prewar ideology



Library of Congress

General William Tecumseh Sherman

of "free labor," premised on an identity of interest between labor and capital, quickly dissipated after the war. The bourgeoisie began to see that the fates of the freedmen in the South and the overwhelmingly white working class in the North were deeply intertwined.

The refusal to distribute land to the freedmen was devastating to them. During Reconstruction, the South was starved of capital, with most investment going to the vast lands of the West. As a result, with very few exceptions—such as the New Orleans docks—there was little opportunity for blacks, or whites for that matter, to become part of a modern proletariat. Lack of capital meant that agricultural labor was often paid in kind rather than in cash. Increasing numbers of blacks were driven back onto the plantations as sharecroppers and tenant farmers, where they were allowed to keep a portion of their harvest in exchange for working a plot of land. They were tied to the land through contracts and loans from the landowners and forced into permanent debt peonage. Despite the unprecedented political rights that blacks enjoyed during Reconstruction, economically they were becoming firmly confined to the bottom rungs of the ladder.

Reconstruction and Its Benefits

W.E.B. Du Bois described Reconstruction, writing: "The attempt to make black men American citizens was in a certain sense all a failure, but a splendid failure." Some of the splendor was expressed in the mass involvement of black people in American politics. Union Leagues were formed, drawing black men and women into political debates and discussions. The former slaves were asserting their citizenship as black *Americans*. Through their blood and toil, black people built this country. Through their art, music and literature, they have placed their indelible stamp upon what the world regards as American culture. Yet these most American of Americans have seen generation upon generation of immigrants assimilate, become American, while they themselves remain as the "other" in the only country they know, a bourgeois republic built and maintained upon their subjugation.

During Reconstruction, black people fought to assert their *American-ness*. Throughout the South, it was blacks and their allies who would march, parade and celebrate the Fourth of July, but not out of gross and vulgar American patriotism. Rather, it was part of a struggle to uphold the ideals of freedom and liberty that came with the Civil War and the promise of equality that came with Reconstruction.

Today, Memorial Day celebrates bloody U.S. imperialism, but the first Memorial Day, known as Decoration Day, was initiated in 1865 by emancipated blacks in honor of the Union dead in Charleston, South Carolina (see "Memorial Day: Ghosts of Confederacy in Brooklyn," WV No. 982, 10 June 2011). As Reconstruction began to wane, the holiday was appropriated by former Confederate leaders to honor their dead and by the federal government to honor the dead of both sides—all the while excluding blacks from the holiday they founded.

Whatever shortcomings one can point to, Reconstruction challenged established race relations, in the North as well as the South. One can see the rise and fall of Reconstruction in the story of Charles

Caldwell, a former slave who was elected to the Mississippi State Senate. He was widely hated by local whites for being a “turbulent Negro” and was shot at by the son of a white judge in 1868. Caldwell fired back and killed the man. He was brought to trial, where he argued self-defense before an all-white jury, which actually acquitted him. It was the first time ever that a black man was acquitted for killing a white man in Mississippi. But that was at the height of Reconstruction. Within a few years, black people became the victims of Reconstruction’s defeat. On Christmas Day 1875, as Mississippi fell back under Democratic Party control, Caldwell was shot dead by a white mob.

Contrary to claims of racist opponents of Reconstruction, Southern Republican governments were not dominated by black people but rather by those derisively called “scalawags”—Southern white Republicans accused of “betraying their race”—and “carpetbaggers”—Northern whites who moved South. Nonetheless, blacks were represented at virtually every level of government. Fourteen were voted into the House and two into the Senate. One, P.B.S. Pinchback, briefly served as governor of Louisiana. Nearly 700 sat in various state legislatures, and hundreds of others served on various local posts, including as judges.

Albion Tourgée, an Ohio Radical who moved to North Carolina, described the benefits of the reforms carried out by Reconstruction state governments. Against accusations that these regimes represented nothing but corruption and mismanagement, he pointed out:

“They instituted a public school system in a realm where public schools had



University of Houston
Albion Tourgée, radical abolitionist who told the truth about the betrayal of Reconstruction.

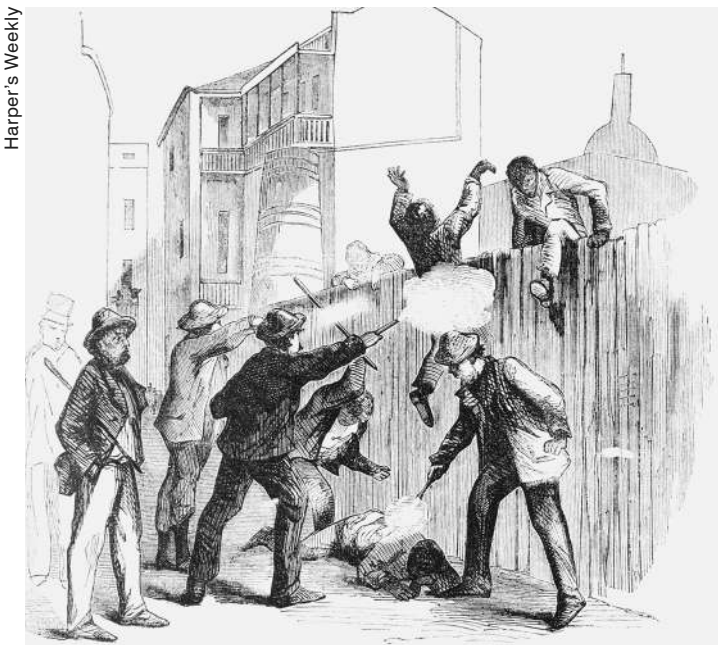
been unknown. They opened the ballot box and jury box to thousands of white men who had been debarred from them by a lack of earthly possessions. They introduced home rule into the South. They abolished the whipping post, the branding iron, the stocks and other barbarous forms of punishment which had up to that time prevailed. They reduced capital felonies from about twenty to two or three. In an age of extravagance they were extravagant in the sums appropriated for public works.”

The most enduring of these works were schools. Thousands of public schools were built to the enormous benefit of blacks and poor whites, although the schools largely remained segregated by race. Some 1,500 schools were built in Texas alone by 1872, and by 1875 half of all children in Mississippi, Florida and South Carolina were attending schools. The drive of the freedmen for education for themselves and their children was insatiable, as it was viewed as a path out of conditions of servitude. They were supported by thousands of Northern teachers, black and white, who flocked to the South to aid the freedmen and were often the target of violence by racists.

Race Prejudice and Labor in the North

There is often a perception that the South is the seat of American barbarism, while enlightenment is found in the North. In reality, the South—because it is where slavery was dominant and where the overwhelming majority of black people lived after emancipation—represented

Sketch from August 1866 issue of Harper's Weekly depicts “The Riot in New Orleans”: former Confederate soldiers, led by mayor, attacked Radical Republican convention, killing 34 black and three white Radicals.



a concentrated expression of the deep racist prejudice that permeated the whole country. Many of the concepts associated with the South originated in the North, found full fruition in the South and were exported back to the rest of the country.

Segregation was no less deeply entrenched in the North—and in some ways, more so. In New York City, white gangs slaughtered some 100 black people during the July 1863 anti-draft riots. New York City was also the birthplace of the Jim Crow minstrel shows that gave their name to the system of legal segregation in the South in the decades following the defeat of Reconstruction. An 1863 NYC Democratic Party pamphlet invented a new word—“miscegenation”—to derisively refer to interracial marriage and sex.

When the Democrats wanted to run an openly racist presidential campaign in 1868, they picked the former governor of New York as their candidate. Even when Lincoln died and his coffin was being carried through NYC, black residents had to fight like hell to be allowed to march behind it. In the end, over 200 black men marched behind his coffin, protected from white mobs by a contingent of Union troops.

One comrade recommended a book by David Quigley, *Second Founding: New York City, Reconstruction, and the Making of American Democracy* (2004), which is very much worth reading. It gives a sense of how the bourgeoisie, with the aid of some labor leaders, manipulated racial prejudices to destroy any potential for interracial proletarian unity. According to the book, NYC’s Democratic Party “emerged as the headquarters of the opposition during Republican Reconstruction.”

In a certain way, the North underwent its own “Reconstruction,” beginning with the Civil War itself. The Civil War was the world’s first truly modern war, involving hundreds of thousands of men. The importance of rapidly moving these troops and supplying them with uniforms and arms served to rapidly accelerate industrialization in the North. Between 1865 and 1873, 35,000 miles of railroad track were laid, a figure that exceeded the entire rail network of 1860. Railways would knit the country together and become a focal point of labor struggle.

There was no real labor movement in the U.S. before the Civil War. However, it came on the scene afterwards. Strikes and other labor protests became rampant. By 1868, the federal government conceded the eight-hour day to federal workers. Marx captured the scene in *Capital*:

“In the United States of North America, every independent movement of the workers was paralysed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded. But out of the death of slavery a new life at once arose. The first fruit of the Civil War was the eight hours’ agitation, that ran with the seven-leagued boots of the locomotive from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from New England to California.”

It was a highly combative labor movement, and that combativity found its culmination in the Great Rail Strike of 1877. The crushing of the strike coincided with the final undoing of Reconstruction. Some of

the federal troops removed from the South were set against the workers, an early example of how labor and black rights are intertwined (see “Defeat of Reconstruction and the Great Rail Strike of 1877: The Shaping of Racist American Capitalism,” WV No. 701, 20 November 1998).

The labor movement was deeply fractured along ethnic lines and deeply disfigured by racial prejudice, which often undid brief expressions of working-class unity. Engels captured these divisions in a December 1893 letter to Friedrich Sorge: “Immigration...splits the workers into two groups, native-born and foreign,” while foreign-born workers are divided between Irish and Germans, as well as “a number of smaller groups, each speaking only its own language.... And, in addition, the negroes.” Engels concluded: “To form a party of one’s own out of all these calls for exceptionally strong incentives. Every now and again a powerful élan may suddenly make itself felt, but all the bourgeoisie has to do is to stick it out passively, whereupon the dissimilar working-class elements will disintegrate again.” The



1893 lynching of black man drew crowd of 10,000 in Paris, Texas.

bourgeoisie promoted the most vicious anti-black racism among Irish workers, who were themselves the victims of virulent anti-Catholic bigotry.

An example of what can, at best, be described as blindness to black oppression among labor leaders is William Sylvis, head of the National Labor Union, which was founded in 1866. While Sylvis advocated organizing black workers, he opposed Reconstruction, denouncing the Freedmen’s Bureau as a “huge swindle.” Part of what motivated him was the very dynamic of bourgeois politics at the time. As Communist Party historian James Allen explained in *Reconstruction: The Battle for Democracy 1865-1876*: “The attitude of the politically awakened labor movement to the questions of Reconstruction was necessarily conditioned by its growing opposition to the Republican Party as the political arm of the industrial and financial aristocracy.”

Many white workers, especially Catholics, supported the Democratic Party, which postured as their defender. In contrast, black people were staunchly

Republican. This contradiction played into the bourgeoisie’s attempts to foment hostilities between organized labor and the freedmen. Essentially what you had was a labor combativity that shook the capitalist rulers but a political immaturity that ensured that the proletariat was in no position to actually challenge the bourgeoisie for power.

Retreat and Reaction

Faced with land agitation by the freedmen in the South and labor struggles in the North, the bourgeoisie began retreating from Reconstruction, and calls for “reconciliation” with the former Confederacy were growing louder. By 1870 a campaign of terror against black people was in full swing in the South. In 1870-71, Congress passed several Enforcement Acts, including the Ku Klux Klan Act, that authorized the President to suspend *habeas corpus* and deploy the military against the Klan. In 1871, President Grant sent the Army to South Carolina to effectively crush the Klan.

But such measures mask the fact that, by and large, racist violence went unanswered by the North. In a letter to a mutual friend in May 1870, Tourgée wrote about the murder of John W. Stephens, a State Senator in Caswell, North Carolina. Stephens was murdered by the Klan in a courtroom, stabbed five or six times and then hanged from a hook for all to see. Tourgée recounted numerous murders, beatings, rapes and atrocities against Southern Republicans, black and white. He saluted the bravery of Stephens in refusing to flee the South and his dedication to the thousands of “colored Republican voters” who “had stood by him and elected him, at the risk of persecution and starvation.” With bitterness, Tourgée cried out:

“I am ashamed of the nation that will let its citizens be slain by scores, and scourged by thousands, and offer no remedy or protection.... I am ashamed of a party which, with the reins of power in its hands, has not nerve or decision

enough to arm its own adherents, or to protect them from assassinations at the hands of their opponents.... Unless these evils are speedily remedied, I tell you, General, the Republican Party has signed its death warrant. It is a party of cowards or idiots—I don’t care which alternative is chosen.”

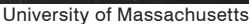
—*Undaunted Radical: The Selected Writings and Speeches of Albion W. Tourgée* (2010)

In the South, the KKK was the military arm of the Democratic Party. Violence and intimidation brought one state after another back under Democratic control. By 1870, all the Southern states had been readmitted into the Union, and by 1872 virtually all laws disenfranchising former Confederates were repealed. Quickly, the states fell under Democratic control: Tennessee and Virginia in 1869; North Carolina in 1870; Georgia in 1871; Texas in 1873; Alabama and Arkansas in 1874; Mississippi in 1875; South Carolina in 1876; Florida and Louisiana in 1877. In every one of these states, “redemption,” as the reactionaries called it, meant racist terror. One of the worst massacres was in

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This massacre and its aftermath became the blueprint for what would be called the “shotgun policy,” or the Mississippi Plan,

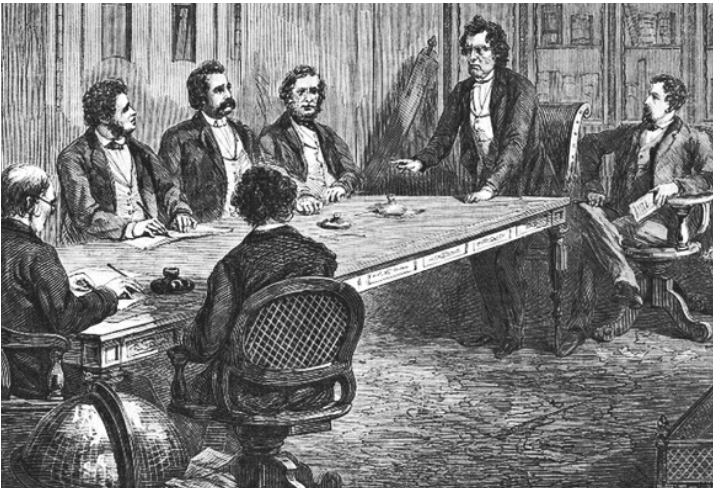


which effectively destroyed the Republican Party in the South. Operating through the “Red Shirts,” who, unlike the secretive Klan, worked openly, the Democratic Party carried out a war of terror. White Republicans were intimidated into voting Democrat or not at all, and blacks were not to vote period. The statewide Republican victory of 30,000 votes in 1874 was reversed a year later by a Democratic victory of the same margin. Hundreds died in anti-black violence.

About the only place where blacks were able to fight back, and did, was South Carolina, particularly during the 1876 election campaign. Armed black Republicans, organized in Union Leagues, attacked Democratic gatherings, and actually dealt a few blows. What particularly drew the freedmen's ire was that some black leaders expressed support for the Democratic Party, whether through bribery or intimidation. After an October 1876 Democratic meeting in Cainho, South Carolina, was attacked by armed blacks, one eyewitness reported: "The cry was that any white man had a right to be a democrat, 'but no damned black man had'." Denied the vote, black women were acutely conscious of what a Democratic victory would mean and fiercely opposed any compromise with the Democratic Party. One black woman denounced her husband as a "damned democratic son of a bitch" who "was voting to put her and

The Liberal Republican candidate for president was former abolitionist Horace Greeley. From the right, the Democratic Party endorsed Greeley. From the left, the Liberals were joined by Radical Charles Sumner, who very wrongly argued that “reconciliation” of the North and South

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper



The answer came in the 1876 presidential elections, which pitted Ohio Republican Rutherford B. Hayes against New York Democrat Samuel J. Tilden. It was a highly contested election, with the results unclear. As backroom negotiations took place, there was widespread worry that the sort of violence that had become the norm in the South would find its way North. In early 1877, a compromise was reached. In exchange for Hayes getting the presidency, the last couple hundred federal troops in the South—assigned to South Carolina, Florida and Louisiana—would be returned to their barracks.



In April 1877, the *Nation* magazine celebrated the end of Reconstruction. It predicted: "The negro will disappear from the field of national politics. Henceforth the nation, as a nation, will have nothing more to do with him." Not quite. While the Compromise of 1877 was the culmination of a process of treachery, it did represent a decisive statement on the part of the bourgeoisie that it would no longer intervene on behalf of black people. But the end of Reconstruction did not mark the end of black people's tenacious and courageous struggle for their rights. They continued to vote in large numbers, and they continued to fight for schools and education.

America's most popular film at home and abroad remains *Gone With the Wind*, which, wrapped in a banal love story, retells and exports to the world the racist lie of a Southern "Lost Cause." To this day, there are far more monuments dedicated to the Confederacy than to the Union, including a massive mountain

8

Meatpacking...

(continued from page 3)

of workers into the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in the following years. These victories were won not by relying on government labor boards and mediators, whose job it was to get strikers back to work by pretending to be neutral arbiters, but by doing whatever was necessary to keep the bosses’ struck operations shut down. In Minneapolis, truckers led by Trotskyists, who had been driven out of the CP for upholding its founding revolutionary program, instituted flying pickets to stop scab trucks in a series of strikes that won union recognition. Organizing the unemployed to join mass picket lines, the truckers defeated scabherding police in pitched battles and defied a National Guard occupation. The Trotskyists then spearheaded a successful campaign to organize over-the-road truck drivers across the Midwest. Key to that victory was a hard-fought, five-month 1938-39 strike in the open shop stronghold of Omaha, Nebraska. Those battles opened the way for the organization of over-the-road drivers nationwide.

The struggles that forged what was to become the United Packinghouse Workers of America (UPWA) were directly inspired by the mass pickets and factory occupations in 1936-37 that brought auto, rubber and steel workers into the CIO. The CIO’s Packinghouse Workers Organizing Committee won unionization through such militant actions as work stoppages on the killing floors, preventing freshly slaughtered meat from being moved, as well as a sit-down strike at Armour in Kansas City. Officially founded in 1943, the UPWA was perhaps

the most integrated union in the U.S., with a history of fighting for the rights of black people. That history holds crucial lessons for organizing the open shop South, where deep, vicious racist discrimination has always served to divide workers and keep unions out.

With the onset of the anti-Soviet Cold War following World War II, the capitalist rulers enlisted the tops of the trade unions in the witchhunt that drove leftists and other militants out of the unions. At the same time, the bourgeoisie instituted a series of ever more restrictive anti-labor laws that banned secondary boycotts, labor solidarity action like refusing to touch scab goods, sympathy strikes and effective picketing. But as the union battles of the 1930s showed, a determined use of these weapons of class struggle can render such anti-labor laws moot.

The Great Retreat

As part of the bosses’ postwar anti-labor offensive, the considerable gains represented by unionization of the meatpacking and trucking industries came under attack. By the early 1960s, the new Interstate Highway system enabled meatpacking companies, no longer reliant on rail transport, to move their slaughterhouses out of the urban centers into rural areas where unions were weaker. New plants were built that further broke down the butchering process to simple, repetitive “dis-assembly line” cutting steps, greatly reducing the need for skilled labor. As the old stockyards closed down, the UPWA sought refuge by merging with the AMC.

In the same period, the ruling class set its gun sights on the Teamsters, then the most powerful union in the country. In 1964, the Teamsters’ National Master Freight contract covered some 450,000



July 1982: National Guard, state troopers were called out to help break militant UFCW strike against Iowa Beef Processors in Dakota City, Nebraska.

truckers. Today, in the aftermath of the union-busting offensive unleashed by Democratic president Jimmy Carter and liberal icon Senator Ted Kennedy’s deregulation of the trucking industry in 1980, it covers only about 30,000, most of them in one company, YRC Worldwide.

In 1969, Iowa Beef Packers (later known as IBP, Inc.), one of the first of a new breed of union-busting outfits that later came to include agribusiness giants like ConAgra and Cargill, provoked a strike at its new, low-wage flagship facility in Dakota City, Nebraska, by AMC Local 222, which had recently won a certification election at the plant. After a bitter battle, the AMC tops instructed the Dakota City local to accept a contract that preserved the union but allowed the company to pay far less than the pay rate in the union’s master agreement with the Big Four. Over the next 25 years, only two contracts at the plant were settled without a strike or a lockout.

During a 1982 strike, the governor called in the National Guard to protect scabs, and a court order banned the combative picket lines set up by the union, by then part of the UFCW. We wrote at the time:

“Unions throughout the region must mobilize their ranks in mass picketing at the plant. Damn the injunction; picket lines mean don’t cross! Elementary labor solidarity demands that not one truck, Teamster-driven or otherwise, must move in or out of the Dakota City plant. Not one unionist must touch Iowa Beef products—Hot cargo scab goods!”

—WV No. 311, 6 August 1982

The UFCW tops, however, relied on an impotent petition to the governor to call off his dogs. In the end, the workers were forced to accept a 12 percent pay cut.

A subsequent UFCW organizing drive targeting more than ten IBP plants failed. IBP subsequently recognized the union only at a Joslin, Illinois, plant in 1988, where the contract was based on the drastically worsened conditions brought about by the defeat in Dakota City. IBP has since been absorbed into the Tyson Foods empire, and the Dakota City and Joslin facilities are the only Tyson beef plants organized by the UFCW.

Spearheaded by IBP’s union-busting success, the rest of the industry followed suit. In what then-UFCW International president William Wynn called a “controlled retreat,” the union bureaucrats made concession after concession. Master agreements virtually disappeared from the industry, and “by the mid-1980s, most of the gains achieved by meatpacking unions over the previous fifty years had disappeared” (Aaron Brenner, Benjamin Day, Immanuel Ness, *The Encyclopedia of Strikes in American History*, 2009). By the time UFCW Local P-9 walked out of Hormel’s pork processing plant in Austin, Minnesota, in August 1985 to fight against demands for more crippling concessions, the UFCW tops had already allowed wages in the industry to be cut by half and speedup was brutal.

The ranks of P-9 fought with courage and determination, reviving militant tactics like roving pickets to shut down other Hormel plants. They did so in the face of an anti-union offensive launched under the Reagan administration with the smashing of the PATCO air controllers strike in 1981. But the UFCW members

were betrayed by the policies of both the local and international union leaderships.

The top UFCW leadership withheld money raised for the strikers, publicly denounced the strike as “mass suicide” and actively herded scabs across P-9’s picket lines. In March 1986, Wynn ordered the union to end the strike and cut off strike benefits. The UFCW International then put P-9 into receivership. In September 1986, a contract on the company’s terms was signed by UFCW Regional Director Joe Hansen, now the union’s International president. Meanwhile, the local union leaders relied on a campaign of demonstrations seeking to pressure stockholders, consumer boycotts and the like. Their “corporate campaign” was counterposed to mobilizing trade unionists and others who had shown their support for P-9 in the kind of hard class struggle needed to beat the union-busters. A quarter of a century later, the union bureaucrats continue their strategy of surrender, most recently repackaged for Wal-Mart and the fast-food industry.

Today packinghouse and processing plant workers are driven to fight against hellish conditions harking back to the Chicago stockyards exposed by Upton Sinclair in his 1906 novel, *The Jungle*. Following the defeat of the Hormel strike, the company built a wall right through the factory separating the lower-skill, front-end killing floor from the processing side and “contracted” with its own shell company to run it at even lower wages with a heavily Latino immigrant workforce. With the line sped up from 750 to 1,300 hogs an hour by 2006, carpal tunnel, cuts and other injuries became routine. One part of the process caused an autoimmune disease that crippled many workers with neurological damage.

Since the late 1960s, the agribusiness bosses have consciously hired immigrants, particularly from Mexico and Central America, many of them undocumented workers. Such workers who try to organize face deportation raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.). In December 2006, I.C.E. carried out one of the largest immigration raids in its history, rounding up nearly 1,300 immigrant workers in six Swift plants, five of which were organized by the UFCW.

The previous month, black and white workers at Smithfield Foods’ pork processing plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina, struck in defense of Latino fellow workers fired by the company in its war against a UFCW organizing drive. Despite I.C.E. raids, the union gained recognition at Tar Heel in 2008. This underscores the crucial need for the labor movement to champion the defense of immigrant workers and demand full citizenship rights for all who have made it to the U.S.

Industries like fast-food have become emblematic of the grinding poverty into which vast numbers of workers have been driven. What is desperately needed is to revitalize the labor movement as a fighting force. Above all, the class-collaborationist labor tops must be swept out and replaced by a class-struggle leadership. This is a necessary part of the fight to build a workers party committed to leading all the exploited and oppressed in sweeping away the capitalist order. ■



November 1979: 500 Detroit auto workers, youth and leftists stopped Ku Klux Klan in labor/black mobilization built by Spartacist League.

carving in Georgia that until the 1950s also featured the Klan.

In the face of the racist lies, a remarkable book came out in 1935, Du Bois’s *Black Reconstruction in America*. Du Bois, a towering figure who can best be characterized as a radical democrat, sought to use Marxist methodology, sociology and categories to challenge the racists on Reconstruction. The book was not always precise—for example, it labeled the Southern Republican governments as representing the “dictatorship of labor”—but it was profoundly daring in its reinterpretation of Reconstruction.

Du Bois challenged the Dunning racists, declaring: “The treatment of the period of Reconstruction reflects small credit upon American historians as scientists.” One of the book’s most remarkable chapters is titled “The General Strike,” in which Du Bois compares the mass abandonment of the plantations by the slaves during the war to a general strike. The very title of the book—*Black Reconstruction*—was a declaration of intent to write black people back into American history. And it was a lone voice among bourgeois academics and historians. In its dismissive review, the *Nation* declared, “The Negro masses did not play a conscious and decisive role in their own emancipation.”

With the outbreak of the civil rights movement, historians began to look back at this period, and it was to this book that they first turned for the truth. Much has changed since Reconstruction. Most importantly, black people, beginning with the Great Migration to the North in the early 20th century, have since become an integral and crucial part of the multi-racial American proletariat. And as such, they will play a vital and leading role not only in their own emancipation but also in the emancipation of labor and all the oppressed.

At the same time, Reconstruction’s defeat continues to define virtually every aspect of political, social and economic life in this country. The subjugation of black people as a race-color caste is a reality that American capitalism cannot fundamentally alter, much less make disappear. This defining feature of U.S. history is one that any serious revolutionary in the U.S. has to grapple with. As Du Bois described it, “The slave went free; stood a brief moment in the sun; then moved back again toward slavery. The whole weight of America was thrown to color caste.” To understand this period is to understand the material basis for our calls to finish the civil war and for black liberation through socialist revolution. ■

COINTELPRO...

(continued from page 12)

charges—the FBI concealed wiretap logs showing he was 400 miles away at the time of the killing—before his release in 1997.

For the *Times*, all this is just a little blood under the bridge. But we remember COINTELPRO’s victims, some of whom are still behind prison walls today, among them American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier and Panther supporters Mondo we Langa and Ed Poindexter. We remember Herman Wallace, who died in 2013 after spending 41 years in solitary confinement on bogus charges in Angola Penitentiary; his Panther comrade Albert Woodfox remains incarcerated.

Unearthing COINTELPRO

Betty Medsger, a reporter for the *Washington Post* at the time of the FBI burglary, was among a handful sent the documents and was the first to publish them. These included a 1970 memorandum calling on agents to step up interviews of antiwar activists and other dissidents in order to “enhance the paranoia endemic in these circles and...further serve to get the point across there is an F.B.I. agent behind every mailbox.” Another was an order by Hoover that *all* black campus organizations be monitored. Hoover declared that “increased campus disorders involving black students pose a definite threat to the Nation’s stability and security,” necessitating more and better intelligence “on Black student Unions and similar groups which are targeted for influence and control by violence-prone Black Panther Party and other extremists.”

Hoover’s directive reflected the bourgeoisie’s fear that the failure of the liberal-led civil rights movement to satisfy black aspirations for equality was driving activists into what in FBI parlance were “black extremist groups.” Malcolm X, the left-moving Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and even black comedian Dick Gregory were all caught in the COINTELPRO web.

What would prove to be the most significant disclosure emerging from the burglary of the unguarded FBI office in Media, Pennsylvania, was a memorandum bearing a routing slip with the esoteric designation “COINTELPRO.” Although it mustered some attention, nobody knew what it meant at the time, nor would they until December 1973, when NBC reporter Carl Stern obtained a few heavily edited FBI documents through a Freedom Of Information Act order. In early 1975, Senate hearings convened by Idaho Democratic Senator Frank Church provided a broader, but still expurgated, picture of FBI, CIA and U.S. military spying, terror and provocations.

The courageous act of the eight men

and women who risked jail to unearth documentation of FBI crimes was a real service to the working class, the oppressed and all who would protest the barbarity of capitalist imperialism. Two of the activists had previously put their lives on the line in the service of their liberal convictions as volunteers registering black people to vote during Mississippi Freedom Summer in 1964. Nonetheless, while the Vietnam War was radicalizing a generation of youth, the burglary’s mastermind, William Davidon, and his colleagues were squarely in the pacifist, “peace is patriotic” right wing of the anti-war movement.

Medsger notes that Davidon’s motivation was “to prove or disprove the per-

son in the dark. But as Attorneys General, Robert F. Kennedy authorized wiretaps on Martin Luther King, while in 1967 Ramsey Clark issued directions to expand COINTELPRO operations against “Black Nationalist Organizations,” specifically targeting the Congress of Racial Equality, SNCC and other groups.

The NSA, CIA and military intelligence were also spying on leftists and black activists, and many big-city police departments had their own Red Squads, working with the FBI and carrying out their own COINTELPRO-like operations. The hundreds of pages of FBI files on class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal record information provided by the Philadelphia police Intelligence Division. Mumia, a

view that the FBI should be investigating organized crime and corruption rather than suppressing dissent. As Medsger puts it, “Hoover had distorted the mission of one of the most powerful and most venerated institutions in the country.” As we wrote shortly after the Church hearings, “It is their class allegiance which blinds the liberals to the simple fact that these agencies’ central purpose is to do the dirty work considered inappropriate to the ‘normal’ administrative mechanisms of bourgeois democracy” (“What Is the ADEX File?” WV No. 151, 1 April 1977). Hoover’s FBI was doing precisely what it was formed to do.

The U.S. entry into World War I, the first interimperialist world war, gave



AP photos

Fighters for black liberation were terrorized and killed by COINTELPRO program under J. Edgar Hoover (above). Right: 1970 police raid on New Orleans Black Panther office.



sistent rumor that the government was spying on Americans for reasons unrelated to suspicion of crime.” Prove to whom? FBI planting of informants and provocateurs in left, civil rights and anti-war groups was no secret to the activists in those movements. As expressed in the name they adopted, “Citizens’ Commission to Investigate the F.B.I.,” the burglars’ political outlook was the belief that protest and exposure could influence those in power to rein in the supposed excesses of the government’s political police.

Medsger’s well-researched and enjoyable book purveys the view that Hoover’s FBI was a rogue agency. As Marxist revolutionists, we understand that the capitalist state exists to defend through organized violence the class rule and profits of the ruling class. This requires an apparatus of repression, of which the FBI is part. A commonplace among liberals is that Hoover’s superiors in the White House and Justice Department were kept

Black Panther spokesman in his youth and later a supporter of the MOVE commune, has been in prison for 32 years, an innocent man framed up on murder charges. For 30 of those years, he was on death row.

Congressional Oversight: The Fox and the Chicken Coop

Medsger’s prescription is oversight by Congress, with the 1975-76 Church Committee hearings as a model. Those hearings were called in response to the growing uproar following the 1972 burglary of Democratic Party national headquarters at the Watergate office complex in Washington, D.C., by operatives of the Nixon administration. The Watergate conspirators incurred the wrath of powerful forces by spying on the respectable bourgeois politicians of the Democratic Party. This was a violation of the accepted rules of the game—rules that have always permitted vicious persecution of leftists, labor leaders and black militants.

The Church Committee’s “reforms” were part of restoring public confidence in the government and its democratic facade after the damage inflicted by the U.S. imperialists’ stunning military defeat in Vietnam and by the Watergate revelations. But they were also intended to rationalize an apparatus of repression that had become unwieldy and evidently unable to tell the difference between Ho Chi Minh and what one might call the real antiwar housewives of Beverly Hills. In 1976, Attorney General Edward Levi implemented FBI guidelines that honed the agency’s targets to a more manageable number of victims.

Also emerging from the hearings was the establishment of the Senate and House Committees on Intelligence, whose “oversight” has consisted of rubber-stamping virtually every intelligence program. Ostensibly to curb NSA/CIA spying, Congress passed the 1978 Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), setting up a special secret court to vet requests for wiretaps in the name of “national security.” Not only has the court authorized all but 11 out of 34,000 surveillance requests, it has given blanket endorsement of the Bush/Obama NSA program monitoring all phone and Internet communications.

Medsger and the burglars share the

impetus to the creation of a far-flung domestic espionage apparatus. But the deadly apparatus employed by this country’s political police—with its vast army of spies and informers, wiretaps and mail interceptions—really took shape in the aftermath of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. At its center was the newly formed Bureau of Investigation and its General Intelligence Division (GID) headed by Hoover. Within months, the GID had compiled a list of 55,000 names. Initially aimed at antiwar dissidents, left-wing Socialists and members of the syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World, the political police went on to pursue the fledgling Communist movement, targeting black militants as well.

In 1935, amid a new wave of working-class radicalization, the investigative bureau was recast by liberal icon Franklin Delano Roosevelt as the FBI. Beginning in the mid ’30s, Roosevelt quietly encouraged Hoover to conduct surveillance of domestic fascists and communists. In 1939, with the outbreak of World War II in Europe, the president expanded the FBI’s jurisdiction to include all cases of suspected domestic sabotage, espionage and subversion. When the Supreme Court outlawed wiretapping, Roosevelt ordered Hoover to keep at it.

The courageous act by the 1971 FBI burglars naturally invites comparison to the actions by Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden that, at great personal sacrifice, exposed to public scrutiny some of the international and domestic crimes of the U.S. imperialists and their government. What is obvious, however, is that none of the exposures or reforms stemming from the era of the break-in have impeded the U.S. government from wielding a police and spy apparatus that today dwarfs anything J. Edgar Hoover could have imagined. Our aim as Marxists is to build a revolutionary workers party—a tribune of the people—dedicated to leading the working class in sweeping away capitalist class rule and replacing it with a workers government. Then and only then will the enormous cache of the government’s secrets and the extent of the capitalist rulers’ terror at home and abroad be made plain for all the world to see. ■

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S. Local Directory and Public Offices

- Web site: www.icl-fi.org • E-mail address: vanguard@tiac.net
National Office: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, (212) 732-7860
- Chicago.....Box 6441, Main PO, Chicago, IL 60680, (312) 563-0441
chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: 1st Sat. of every month, 2-5 p.m., and by appointment, 222 S. Morgan (Buzzer 23)
- Los AngelesBox 29574, Los Feliz Sta., Los Angeles, CA 90029, (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: Sat. 2-5 p.m., 3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215
- New YorkBox 3381, Church St. Sta., New York, NY 10008, (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net
Public Office: 1st Sat. of every month, 1-4 p.m., and by appointment, 299 Broadway, Suite 318, Manhattan
- Oakland.....Box 29497, Oakland, CA 94604, (510) 839-0851
slbayarea@fastmail.net
Public Office: Sat. 1-4 p.m., 1904 Franklin (Buzzer #407)

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA

- Montréal.....CP 83 Succ. Place-d’Armes, Montréal QC H2Y 3E9, (514) 728-7578
trotskyiste.montreal@gmail.com
- TorontoBox 7198, Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X8, (416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com
- Vancouver.....Box 2717, Main P.O., Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2, (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

Prostitution...

(continued from page 4)

a property-owning ruling class, it became necessary to have an unimpeachable criterion for the inheritance of property, one that could unambiguously establish the paternity of children. Hence there arose the monogamous family, in which marriage meant the subjection of women by men—in Engels’ words, “the world-historic defeat of the female sex.”

It is the institution of the family that introduces money into sexual relations. Whether it is the hiring of prostitutes by the hour or the “acquisition” of a wife, the family and the oppression of women are always based on private property; basically, only religious morality and capitalist laws distinguish the wife from the prostitute. The highly-regarded (non-Marxist) sex scientists William H. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson arrived at a similar conclusion: “Prostitution is difficult to define since humans have always used sex to obtain desirables such as food, money, valuables, promotions, and power” (*Sex and Human Loving* [Little, Brown, 1988]).

At the same time, people do not allow themselves to be constrained by reactionary religious conceptions of morality linked to the institution of the family. They disregard “correct” sexual behavior, torn between the compulsion of class

society and their most intimate personal feelings and wishes. At Schwarzer’s presentation of her book, a paraplegic pointed out that visiting prostitutes was often the only course open to him for experiencing sexuality, whereupon Schwarzer set him right, telling him he really should seek out a partner!

This contempt for someone who is harassed and socially excluded in capitalist society goes hand in hand with her promotion of the happy nuclear family, in which man and wife should only have sex with each other (see the article in her book, “Help, My Husband Goes to Brothels”). People who may wish to experience “kinky” sex that they want to keep secret from their wife, husband or friends because it violates the prevailing “public morality” often turn to prostitutes. No, it is not prostitution that “brutalizes lust” or “destroys sexuality” (Schwarzer’s “Appeal” and her book). It is repressive, inhumane capitalist society.

We are against the criminalization of prostitution, but we regard prostitution as one component of the oppression of women, analogous to the institution of the family. In a classless society, communal child care and housework will replace the role of the family, and women will be able to participate fully in social life. Birth control and abortion on demand will be free, just like high-quality health care for all. Only in such a society will sex be gen-

uinely free and based on mutual consent, without guardians of public morality and brutal cop repression. The only way to get there is the *overthrow* of the capitalist system through a workers revolution under the leadership of a Leninist-Trotskyist party, the expropriation of private ownership of the means of production and their transformation into the property of society as a whole. The liberation of prostitutes is inseparably linked to the liberation of women as a whole; prostitution will disappear only when the institution of the family is replaced. For women’s liberation through socialist revolution!

Schwarzer, a bourgeois feminist living well under capitalism, postulates that men are the enemy (naturally not the cops, who are of one mind with her). In 1971, she orchestrated a front-page story in the illustrated magazine *Stern* in which women rose up against the laws governing abortion, proclaiming: “We’ve had an abortion!” This was a good thing. But since then, Schwarzer has become much better known for reactionary witchhunts against Muslims and against International Women’s Day, because of its Communist origin. She even opposes the liberalizing law on prostitution passed in 2002 by the SPD/Green government, which halfheartedly attempted to eliminate the medieval concept of an “offense against public morality.” Since then, prostitutes have been able for the first time to sue for their wages, to be covered by health insurance and to have the right to social benefits.

But by no means did this law signify total decriminalization. To the contrary, says the Professional Association of Erotic and Sexual Services (within which, Hydra, an advisory service for prostitutes, works). The association has launched an “Appeal FOR Prostitution” that states: “The law has changed nothing as to the right of the police to enter places of prostitution at any time. Since then the number of raids has increased” (sexwork-deutschland.de). After 2002, the service workers trade union ver.di set up a “working group” for prostitution within its department of “special services.” But drafting templates for labor contracts and the like is not enough. Ver.di is also one of the largest women’s organizations in this country, with German and immigrant workers often working hand in hand. This integrated trade union must oppose the government’s campaign and mobilize its social power at the head of immigrants and all the oppressed to fight for full citizenship rights for all.

“Leftist” Guardians of Morality

That the current witchhunt against prostitution was kicked off by Schwarzer, whose “Appeal” was signed by the women’s organization of the Christian Democratic parties along with many members of the SPD, is not astonishing. But there are also “leftist” guardians of morality. The Taaffeite Socialist Alternative Voran (SAV), buried in the Left Party, published in its *sozialismus.info* (November 2013) an article titled “A Socialist Perspective on the Sex Industry and Prostitution” by Laura Fitzgerald, a member of its Irish fraternal organization. The article states, “It’s very important that no prostitute is criminalised in any way in the eyes of the

law.” But the SAV is for a law that over- turns or at least modifies the 2002 law, writing in the same article: “Socialists should, however, totally oppose the full legalisation of prostitution.” Following a bit of lip service about the brutality of the police as enforcers of the interests of the state comes their solution: “It’s essential that all Gardai [cops] are compelled to attend regular training on how to deal sympathetically with victims and survivors of sexual violence.”

This is a real scandal and a mockery of the victims of daily police violence, particularly immigrants! The SAV and its international organization, the Committee for a Workers’ International, have long been known for their efforts to “reform” the police and create “better working conditions” for cops (see, for example, the 1994 Spartacist pamphlet “Militant Labour’s Touching Faith in the Capitalist State”). Their deepgoing social-democratic reformism also means that fundamentally they are in agreement with the bourgeois norms and “family values” imposed by the police, armed men of the bourgeois state. We have often called the SAV out on this, for example when one of our woman comrades intervened at its “Socialism Days 2004.” As we reported in “SAV: No Sex, No Fun, No Spartakist!” (*Spartakist* No. 158, Spring 2005):

“She attacked the SAV’s prudish moralism, counterposing to it our Marxist position of being against state intervention into consensual sexual and other personal relations. This also includes so-called pedophiles who are made the victims of state persecution for sex with minors based on *genuine consensual agreement*. That is, for sex with genuine mutual agreement as opposed to sex by force or under pressure to do something one doesn’t understand or doesn’t want to do. The SAV cadres flipped out over this.”

There exists a widespread social uneasiness over yet more police laws. Even the conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* wrote in a 19 November 2013 article, “Do Sex Workers Go About Their Work Gladly?": “Are there people who regard prostitution as a normal job? Yes, there are. Aren’t they hurt by it nonetheless, doesn’t this cause lasting damage? Sitting at a cash register, working as a cleaning woman, selling unnecessary garbage to people, as with [the cosmetics chain] Douglas or the like, keeping this inhumane capitalist wheel of filth running—is this not also mentally very damaging? Does anyone really do this voluntarily?”

We Marxists call prostitution a “crime without victims,” like doing drugs, gambling, pornography and sexual relations with minors—activities that under capitalist law are generally banned or strictly regulated. In many countries, “age of majority” laws dictate living without sex, especially homosexual sex. We are against any meddling by the government in one’s private sexual life. We say that mutual consent and the agreement of all concerned should be the deciding factor in all sexual acts. But we also recognize that genuinely free relations between people are impossible under this class system. Only in a classless society will “moral” and economic compulsion cease to exist in sexual relationships, or as Engels so aptly put it: “there is no other motive left except mutual inclination.”■

SYC Speaker...

(continued from page 5)

capitalists. The working class took state power and got rid of the capitalist profit system altogether. This is our model. ***For new October Revolutions worldwide!***

The Russian question is one of the major programmatic differences that sets the SYC and SL apart from the fake socialists. The International Socialist Organization (ISO), who you probably have heard of or run into in Chicago, called the fall of the Soviet Union a moment when socialists should be rejoicing. The fall of the Soviet Union has meant free rein for the imperialists to redi- vide the world in order to plunder markets, establish spheres of exploitation and carry out all-out attacks on the living conditions of the working class.

As with the former Soviet Union, the SYC and SL unconditionally defend the deformed workers states of China, Cuba,

Laos, North Korea and Vietnam from imperialism and internal capitalist counterrevolution. The parasitic, nationalist, Stalinist bureaucracies who hold political power need to be ousted by proletarian political revolution. The ISO refuses to defend these workers states and instead sides with the imperialist powers in the name of “Democracy.” As Marxists, we ask, “Democracy for what class?”

Answering these types of questions, studying revolutionary Marxism and intervening in labor and student struggles are key to building a revolutionary, multiracial workers party. The SYC seeks to recruit revolutionary-minded youth and students, who want to see the world run according to the needs of humanity. Capitalism can never be reformed to meet the needs of humanity. The emancipation of humanity from sexism, racism and exploitation will come through socialist revolution, *nothing less. Join this fight! Join the SYC!* ■

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

BAY AREA

Thursday, March 6, 7 p.m.

The Russian Revolution: How the Bolsheviks Came to Power

San Francisco State University
Cesar Chavez Student Center
Rosa Parks D

Information and readings: (510) 839-0851
sycbayarea@fastmail.net

LOS ANGELES

Wednesday, March 5, 6 p.m.

The Russian Revolution: When the Workers Overthrew Capitalism

UCLA, Rolfe Hall, Room 3120
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

TORONTO

Thursday, March 6, 7 p.m.

The USSR: The World’s First Workers State

U of T, Sidney Smith Hall
100 St. George Street, Room 2104
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

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

CHICAGO

Saturday, March 8, 3:30 p.m.

Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism

University of Illinois-Chicago
Addams Hall, Second Floor-Library
830 S. Halsted St.

(Take Blue Line to UIC - Halsted)
Information and readings: (312) 563-0441
chicagosyc@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Tuesday, March 11, 7 p.m.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 Part 1: From the February Revolution to the July Days

City College of New York
138th St. and Amsterdam Ave.
Room TBA

(Take #1 train to 137th St.-City College)
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net

VANCOUVER

Thursday, Feb. 27, 6:30 p.m.

India: Imperialist Subjugation, Caste and the Oppression of Women

UBC, Irving Barber Learning Centre
Room 157

Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

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COINTELPRO and the *New York Times*

If a Pulitzer Prize were awarded for euphemizing government terror and repression, the smart money would surely be on the *New York Times*. A recent case in point is its article “Burglars Who Took On F.B.I. Abandon Shadows” (7 January), written in anticipation of the release of *The Burglary* by Betty Medsger, a book that reveals the identities and motivations of those who carried out a 1971 break-in of a small Pennsylvania FBI office. The subsequent exposure of the secret documents they seized ultimately led to the disclosure of the agency’s COINTELPRO (Counterintelligence Program).

The *Times* renders anodyne the FBI’s deadly program of surveillance, disruption, burglary, provocation, frame-up and outright murder, including the killing of 38 members of the Black Panther Party. The *Times* writes that “since 1956, the F.B.I. had carried out an expansive campaign to spy on civil rights leaders, political organizers and suspected Communists, and had tried to sow distrust among protest groups.” For the bourgeoisie’s newspaper of record, the crime of crimes was “a blackmail letter F.B.I. agents had sent anonymously to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.,

1971 Break-In Turned Over FBI’s Rocks

threatening to expose his extramarital affairs if he did not commit suicide.” While such government intrusion into people’s private lives is both repellent and a measure of the capitalist state’s contempt for anyone advocating black rights, the full story of COINTELPRO is immensely more deadly.

Just as with the belated liberal opposition to the McCarthyite anti-Communist witchhunt of the 1950s, the *Times*’ problem is that the “wrong” people were put on the rack along with “legitimate” targets. COINTELPRO was launched

in 1956 against the Communist Party; it was later extended to the Socialist Workers Party, Puerto Rican nationalists, anyone fighting for black rights, the American Indian Movement and protesters against the U.S. counterrevolutionary war in Vietnam. In a feat of journalistic gymnastics, the *Times* manages to write about COINTELPRO without a mention of the Feds’ foremost victim—the Black Panther Party (BPP). FBI director J. Edgar Hoover declared the Panthers to be the “greatest threat to the internal security of the U.S.” and vowed in 1968

that “the Negro youth and moderate[s] must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teachings, they will be dead revolutionaries.”

This was no idle threat. The BPP, which represented the best of a generation of black radicals, was destroyed through a combination of FBI/cop terror and its own vicious factionalism exacerbated by COINTELPRO dirty tricks. For the *New York Times*, those Panthers killed as a direct result of COINTELPRO do not exist. Not “Little” Bobby Hutton, the Panthers’ first recruit, who was gunned down by Oakland cops in 1968. Not L.A. Panther leaders “Bunchy” Carter and John Huggins, who were shot dead by members of the cultural nationalist United Slaves organization of Ron Karenga, inflamed by letters forged by the FBI threatening Karenga in the name of the BPP. Not Chicago Panther leaders Mark Clark and Fred Hampton, assassinated in a December 1969 police raid based on floor plans of Hampton’s apartment supplied by an FBI informant. Not Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), who survived a nearly identical assassination attempt four days later only to spend 27 years in prison on bogus murder

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Framed-Up Protesters Face 30 Years

CHICAGO—In an attack on the right to political protest, Jared Chase, Brent Betterly and Brian Church, known as the NATO 3, were convicted by a Cook County jury on February 7 on two frame-up felony counts of possessing Molotov cocktails and two misdemeanor “mob action” charges. The three were victimized in a sting operation as part of the cops’ efforts to quash protest against the May 2012 gathering of NATO imperialist war criminals in Chicago. Prosecutors had tacked on bogus charges of “conspiracy to commit terrorism,” which the jury rejected, giving the state a partial setback. Nevertheless, Chase, Betterly and Church, who have been imprisoned on \$1.5 million bail, now face possible 30-year prison sentences.

This was a chemically pure case of police entrapment. From start to finish, the real instigators of the purported plot were the cops. Undercover agents Nadia Chikko and Mehmet Uygun infiltrated the Occupy group with whom the defendants, who had driven up from Florida, were bunking. The agents provocateurs hatched a plan, pushed it forward and assembled some Molotov cocktails, goading and dragging Betterly, Church and Chase along at every step. Despite two weeks of intense surveillance, not a single piece of evidence was produced pointing to the NATO 3 as the ones who assembled the Molotov cocktails (made from beer bottles), as charged in the indictment. The setup was undertaken as Democratic mayor Rahm Emanuel and Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy whipped up an atmosphere of fear-mongering and hysteria leading into the NATO summit, assembling a massive display of police power to intimidate protesters (see “Defend Anti-NATO Protesters!” WV No. 1003, 25 May 2012).

The defense noted that the Molotov cocktails “were always in possession of

Free the NATO 3!

the under-cover police who suggested their own provocative ideas for how to use the bottles.” The “evidence” submitted by the state was Church’s fingerprints from a bottle supplied by the cops, who plied the defendants with liquor. It appears that the only actual evidence of law-breaking

Even the conservative *Chicago Tribune* (25 January), which was hostile to the anti-NATO protesters, expressed skepticism about the purported evidence against the three. Oozing with contempt for the defendants, the article stated that “the portrait that emerges from undercover

to society and called for the judge to throw the book at them.

What the jury could not buy were the charges of “conspiracy to commit terrorism” based on the Illinois terrorism statute. This is one of many such laws passed in the U.S. following the September 11, 2001 attacks, when a “war on terror” was declared as a rationale for the occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq and for escalating repression and snooping at home. Calling the proceedings a “terrorist show trial,” the NATO 3’s defense team aptly noted that the state’s definition of terrorism was so vague and broad that it could include “labor strikes, peaceful occupations and sit-ins, political protests and boycotts.” As for “conspiracy,” this is what the government uses to nail those it wants to silence yet cannot charge with demonstrable criminal acts. Organizing against slavery was “conspiratorial,” and labor unions used to be considered illegal conspiracies in this country.

Representatives of the Partisan Defense Committee, a legal and social defense organization associated with the Marxist Spartacist League, attended the Chicago trial, which had a thick air of intimidation of the NATO 3’s supporters. Admission was effectively curbed as those wishing to attend the trial had to register and submit to a background check on site. No papers, buttons, T-shirts or anything else indicating support for the defendants were allowed into the courtroom. The conviction of the NATO 3 is a threat to leftists, labor organizations, immigrants, and all would-be opponents of this racist capitalist system.

Sentencing is set for February 28. The PDC urges WV readers to join us in contributing to the NATO 3 defense fund. Donations can be made at www.wepay.com/donations/freethenato3. **Free the NATO 3 now! ■**



Reuters

Riot police use batons in massive show of force against 10,000-strong anti-NATO protest in Chicago, 20 May 2012.

was the purchase of alcohol for minors by the police. And among the “weapons” presented by prosecutors was a seven-foot piece of plywood with the words “Austerity ain’t gonna happen” painted on it and a slingshot, the latter allegedly to be used for breaking windows at Obama’s re-election campaign headquarters.

recordings and courtroom testimony isn’t of a deadly terrorist cell looking to spark widespread fear but of bumbling young men led by a stoner trying to impress a female police officer on her first undercover assignment.” Once the verdict came down, the *Tribune* declared in a February 10 editorial that the men were a danger