

As Bourgeoisie Touts 1964 Civil Rights Act

Supreme Court Knives Affirmative Action, Again

To mark the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, the politicians turned out in droves—the president, both generations of George Bushes, black establishment types. For three days in early April, the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library in Austin, Texas, oozed with oily words about equality and opportunity. Outside, demonstrators shackled themselves to a statue of Martin Luther King Jr. in protest against the Obama administration's massive deportation of immigrants. The high-profile celebration was no solace to the black masses, whose hellish conditions of life—mass chronic unemployment, cop terror, crumbling schools, poverty and hunger—define the racial oppression inherent in American capitalism.

Two weeks after the Austin “Civil Rights Summit,” the Supreme Court took a knife to what remained of affirmative action, upholding in a six-to-two vote an amendment to the Michigan state constitution that bans the consideration of race in university and college admissions. The Supreme Court majority's decision was a bald assertion of “states' rights,” the rallying cry of the slaveholders in the Civil War. The same court that last year gutted the 1965 Voting Rights Act now upheld the supposed democratic right of voters to close yet another door on the victims of racist discrimination.

The Supreme Court ruling was the latest blow in a decades-long offensive to roll back one of the more minimal gains of the civil rights movement. Affirmative action allowed a small percentage of black and Latino youth to overcome racial barriers keeping them out of higher education. For this layer, the shredding of preferential admissions has been catastrophic. Between 2006, when the Michigan ban was passed, and 2012, black enrollment at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor dropped by a third even as overall enrollment grew by 10 percent. Seven other states have similar bans, and now the reactionary Project on Fair Representation is taking aim at affirmative action at Harvard, the University of North Carolina and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The ruling was another victory for Chief Justice John Roberts, whose philosophy of Constitutional originalism grew out of the racist reaction to civil rights-era court decisions acknowledging that black people have some rights. In her dissent, Justice Sonia Sotomayor expressed the sentiment of those in the bourgeoisie concerned with maintaining a layer of black and Latino professionals—supervisors, administrators, marketing agents, etc.—to further ruling class interests in a “global society.” The capitalist rulers have also found

For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

it useful to have minorities serve as government officials (and judges) to shove austerity and racist repression down the population's throat, not to mention as military officers to lead black and Latino troops against dark-skinned people around the world.

In the face of racist attack, the remnants of affirmative action should be defended. But even at its height, this tokenistic measure never made a dent in the deep-seated oppression of the mass of the black and Latino population. Now, as

public education funding is slashed, tuition costs explode and families drown in debt, the top state and private campuses are becoming even whiter and more elite. We call to nationalize the private universities, for open admissions with no tuition and state-paid living stipends, and for remedial programs to enable students in the inner cities to catch up with graduates of well-funded suburban and private schools. These demands cut against the capitalist rulers' use of affirmative action to set whites against minori-

ties and men against women in competition over slices of the shrinking pie.

The Supreme Court case pitted the liberal Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action (or BAMN—By Any Means Necessary) against Michigan attorney general Bill Schuette. In 2012, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals had ruled that Michigan's ban on affirmative action was unconstitutional, leading Schuette to appeal to the Supreme Court. BAMN filed a brief *supporting* that appeal, arguing in a press statement that this would give the Supreme Court an opportunity to “strike down all of the anti-affirmative action laws” (4 February 2013). With this extraordinarily blind faith in the racist legal system, BAMN—whose clarion call is for a “new civil rights movement”—echoes the MLK-era liberals in sowing dangerous illusions in the capitalist state.

The civil rights struggles profoundly shook the racist American capitalist order, shattering the deep conservatism and anti-Communism of the early Cold War against the Soviet Union. The fight against Jim Crow segregation paved the way for the mass protest movements that followed—against U.S. imperialism's dirty war in Vietnam and for the rights of women, gays and others. But from its outset, the civil rights movement was dominated by a middle-class leadership wedded to Democratic Party liberalism. The aim of this leadership, whose most effective exponent was King, was to pressure the courts and the John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson administrations to grant formal, legal equality to black people in the South.

The gains that the civil rights struggles achieved lay largely in the realm of formal democracy, such as voting rights and an end to legal segregation, later extended to increasing college admissions for minorities and women. But the liberal-led civil rights movement did not and could not challenge the root cause of black oppression: the capitalist profit system, which in the U.S. was built on the forcible segregation of the mass of black people at the bottom. The civil rights movement smashed its head against this fact in the mid 1960s when it swept North, where segregation could not be addressed through abolishing outmoded Jim Crow laws. Northern ghettos exploded in rage over unfulfilled expectations of equality.

From the 1970s on, the capitalist rulers have rolled back black rights. Black children are more segregated in the public school system today than at any time since 1968. In the North, busing and other school integration programs were minimal and short-lived, beset by racist mobs and betrayed by liberal politicians. In the South, events played out differently but with the same result. As investigative reporter Nikole Hannah-Jones explained in her study

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Above: Overwhelmingly white 2011 graduating class at University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, five years after affirmative action was banned statewide. Below: Criminalization of black youth has fueled mass incarceration. Men's Central Jail in downtown Los Angeles, March 2012.



Corbis



On Marriage and Prostitution

15 March 2014

Dear Editor,

I strongly support most of your article “No to Criminalization of Prostitution” (*Workers Vanguard*, 21 February 2014). However I take exception to a couple of formulations, in particular your distortion of Frederick Engels’ views through selective quotations from what you correctly refer to as his “brilliant work *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*”.

The article states, “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.’” What Engels actually said was, “The overthrow of mother right was the *world-historic defeat of the female sex*.” This led to “the intermediate form of the family which now emerges, the patriarchal family” followed by “monogamy, which developed rapidly following the overthrow of mother right.”

More seriously you state: “Whether it is the hiring of prostitutes by the hour or the ‘acquisition’ of a wife [Why not the acqui-

sition of a husband? Are women always to be considered passive?], 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.” This is absurd. Women who choose to marry are not prostitutes! Similarly prostitutes who have partners/spouses surely are aware of the difference between their chosen personal relationships and their work. And what of the marriage laws of the early Soviet republic: were they nothing but organised prostitution?

Engels regarded prostitution and the monogamous family as “supplemental”, as “inseparable opposites”. In the section of Engels you are paraphrasing above, he says “marriage of convenience often enough turns into the crassest prostitution”, but here he is talking about ruling-class marriages based centrally on considerations of wealth in money or land, and dynastic alliances. In the very next paragraph he talks of:

“Sex love in the relation of husband and wife is and can become the rule only among the oppressed classes, that is,

at the present day, among the proletariat, no matter whether this relationship is officially sanctioned or not. But here all the foundations of classical monogamy are removed. Here, there is a complete absence of all property, for the safeguarding and inheritance of which monogamy and male domination were established. ...the last remnants of male domination in the proletarian home have lost all foundation—except, perhaps, for some of that brutality towards women which became firmly rooted with the establishment of monogamy. Thus, the proletarian family is no longer monogamous in the strict sense, even in cases of the most passionate love and strictest faithfulness of the two parties, and despite all spiritual and worldly benedictions which may have been received.”

I am not so concerned with how you depict human relations in future “classless” society, but more with the strong whiff of moralistic condemnation of today’s working-class women and men. The Church commands: no sex before, or outside of, marriage! The Spartacist League commands: no marriage before, or after, sex! I felt somewhat relieved to read the following issue’s quotation from Bolshevik leader Alexandra Kollontai and your comments (‘Communism and the Family’, *Workers Vanguard*, 7 March 2014). I was also very happy to see you straighten out the front with regard to the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands.

Comradely greetings,
A. Reader

[All brackets and ellipses are the author’s—ed.]

WV replies:

We agree that Engels identified “the world-historic defeat of the female sex” with the overthrow of mother-right (the practice of tracing descent through the female line). The end of matrilineal society in prehistoric cultures was part of a process accompanying the rise and consolidation of private property out of which the patriarchal, monogamous family became the norm.

In the passage from *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884) quoted by our reader, Friedrich Engels distinguishes between the bourgeois family—the mechanism through which wealth is passed on to offspring—and the proletarian family. For working people, who do not have an inheritance to leave their children, the family serves other functions. In particular, it is an institution that saddles women with the burdens of domestic drudgery, rearing the next generation of wage slaves and care for the old and infirm. As Engels put it, “The modern individual family is based on the overt or covert domestic slavery of the woman; and modern society is a mass composed solely of individual families as its molecules.” The family also acts as a socially conservatizing force by inculcating religious mores, gender roles and obedience to authority.

Although our reader omits it from the

lengthy passage quoted, Engels addressed changes to the working-class family: “Large-scale industry has moved the woman from the house to the labour market and the factory, and made her, often enough, the bread-winner of the family.” However, this development, which chipped away at the foundation of male domination, posed a dilemma. As Engels observed, if a woman “fulfils her duties in the private service of her family, she remains excluded from public production and cannot earn anything; and if she wishes to take part in public industry and earn her living independently, she is not in a position to fulfil her family duties.”

The institution of the family brings money into sexual relations, including in advanced Western societies where retrograde practices like the dowry and bride price are not as common as elsewhere. In the U.S., legally recognized marriage confers certain privileges like medical benefits, tax rebates, visitation rights, custody of children and immigration papers. For poor and working women, a husband’s income can make the difference between having the money to raise her children and being out on the streets. In short, women who “choose to marry” are often compelled to do so in response to economic duress or social pressure or to obtain legal rights.

That’s why the sentence to which our reader objects makes a parallel between marriage and prostitution. As the early German Marxist leader August Bebel explained in his work *Woman and Socialism* (1879): “Marriage constitutes one phase of the sex relations of bourgeois society; prostitution constitutes the other.” In bourgeois society, marriage is considered moral and prostitution immoral; however, in both cases, a sexual/economic exchange is involved.

We don’t condemn individuals for marrying. Neither do we condemn women who make a living by selling sexual favors, or the men who patronize them. As Marxists, we believe that the way consenting individuals choose to conduct their sexual relations is nobody else’s business. Our aim is the proletarian overthrow of the capitalist system of production for profit, so that society can be organized for human need. Then, the domestic labor that today is the burden of the wife will be collectively organized as the responsibility of society as a whole, leaving women free to participate fully in economic, social and political life. We inherited this outlook from the Bolsheviks, who took measures following the October 1917 Revolution to eliminate the economic and social compulsions that influence individuals to marry.

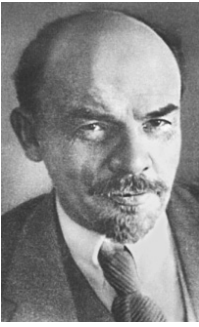
As Engels concluded: “Full freedom of marriage can become generally operative only when the abolition of capitalist production, and of the property relations created by it, has removed all those secondary economic considerations which still exert so powerful an influence on the choice of a partner. Then, no other motive remains than mutual affection.”■

Lenin on May Day



TROTSKY

May 1 is celebrated internationally as the workers holiday, with its origins in the fight for the eight-hour day in Chicago over 125 years ago. In the quote below, taken from an April 1904 leaflet, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin comments on the promise of workers emancipation embodied in May Day. In less than a year, the working class in Russia rose up in the 1905 Revolution, which proved a “dress rehearsal” for the first successful proletarian revolution in history, the October Revolution of 1917.



LENIN

Comrade workers! May Day is coming, the day when the workers of all lands celebrate their awakening to a class-conscious life, their solidarity in the struggle against all coercion and oppression of man by man, the struggle to free the toiling millions from hunger, poverty, and humiliation. Two worlds stand facing each other in this great struggle: the world of capital and the world of labour, the world of exploitation and slavery and the world of brotherhood and freedom.

On one side stand the handful of rich blood-suckers. They have seized the factories and mills, the tools and machinery, have turned millions of acres of land and mountains of money into their private property. They have made the government and the army their servants, faithful watchdogs of the wealth they have amassed.

On the other side stand the millions of the disinherited. They are forced to beg the moneybags for permission to work for them. By their labour they create all wealth; yet all their lives long they have to struggle for a crust of bread, beg for work as for charity, sap their strength and health by back-breaking toil, and starve in hovels in the villages or in the cellars and garrets of the big cities....

The great struggle of labour against capital has cost the workers of all countries immense sacrifices. They have shed rivers of blood in behalf of their right to a better life and real freedom. Those who fight for the workers’ cause are subjected by the governments to untold persecution. But in spite of all persecution the solidarity of the workers of the world is growing and gaining in strength....

The old Russia is dying. A free Russia is coming to take its place. The dark forces that guarded the tsarist autocracy are going under. But only the class-conscious and organised proletariat can deal them their death-blow. Only the class-conscious and organised proletariat can win real, not sham, freedom for the people. Only the class-conscious and organised proletariat can thwart every attempt to deceive the people, to curtail their rights, to make them a mere tool in the hands of the bourgeoisie.

—V.I. Lenin, “May Day” (April 1904)

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CORRECTION

In the article, “Canada: Victory to Locked-Out Ikea Workers!” (WV No. 1044, 18 April), the photo caption of port truckers incorrectly gave the picket location as Deltaport, near Vancouver. In fact, the photo was of a picket at Van Terminal in Vancouver.

Spartacist League/SYC Forum



Mexico, Imperialism and the Struggle for Socialist Revolution

CHICAGO

Saturday, May 3, 2 p.m.

Chicago Public Library, Roosevelt Branch
1101 W. Taylor Street

For info: (312) 563-0441 • chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net

Honoring Rubin “Hurricane” Carter 1937–2014

Rubin Carter died at his home in Toronto, Canada, on April 20, succumbing to prostate cancer at the age of 76. A one-time middleweight boxing contender known as the “Hurricane,” Carter was the victim of a vicious racist frame-up on bogus murder charges in New Jersey, where he was imprisoned for 19 years. After his exoneration in 1988, Carter dedicated himself to the cause of prisoners who were wrongly convicted, for the last decade as the founder and CEO of Innocence International. The Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee were steadfast in our support to his fight for freedom and greatly appreciated his involvement in our efforts to win freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal. A class-war prisoner who spent 30 years on death row, Mumia is now consigned to life in prison on what Carter recognized as equally ludicrous murder charges. Hurricane will be sorely missed.

Carter became a police/FBI target for his advocacy of black armed self-defense. Regarding the 1964 cop riot against black residents of Harlem who were protesting the shooting of 15-year-old James Powell by an off-duty officer, Carter told a *Saturday Evening Post* reporter: “When scores of children were being trampled, stomped, and mutilated by a legion of club-wielding police—while other cops held their guns to the children’s heads—the black community should have arisen right then and fought to their deaths in the streets, if it was necessary. Because self-protection is the absolute right of every living being on the face of the earth.” Depicting Carter’s statement as a call to kill cops, the *Saturday Evening Post* article made Carter a marked man. The Hurricane was repeatedly hauled in by Paterson, New Jersey, cops on traffic citations and other bogus charges and harassed by police in just about every city where he went to box.



Spartacist Canada

Carter, who fought racist injustice after 19 years in U.S. prison hell, addressing March 1995 PDC rally for Mumia Abu-Jamal in Toronto.

Carter increasingly chose to box abroad. Prior to a 1965 bout in South Africa, his guide was Steve Biko, a young anti-apartheid fighter who went on to become a leader of the Black Consciousness Movement and was murdered by his apartheid jailers in 1977. To aid the black freedom struggle in South Africa, Carter bought enough guns in the U.S. to fill four duffel bags, which he delivered to the outlawed African National Congress upon returning to South Africa in February 1966.

Not long after, Paterson cops seized on the fatal shooting of two white men and a white woman at the Lafayette Bar and Grill on June 17 to go after him. Carter and his friend John Artis were picked up

by police “looking for two Negroes in a white car.” When Carter and Artis passed lie detector tests and eyewitnesses failed to identify them as the alleged killers, they were released. Four months later, Carter and Artis were charged with the murders.

As the 1975 Bob Dylan song “Hurricane” put it: “The trial was a pig circus, he never had a chance.” The cops never dusted the murder scene for fingerprints, nor found the murder weapons, nor tested alleged suspects immediately after the killings for gunpowder residue. The only “evidence” was a statement *four months after the fact* by two local criminals, Alfred Bello and Arthur Bradley, “identifying” Carter and Artis as the killers. Bello and

Bradley, who were supposedly carrying out a burglary nearby and had themselves been suspects in the killings, became the state’s chief witnesses. In return, burglary charges against them were dropped and they were given a \$10,500 reward. Cops and prosecutors also intimidated most of the defense witnesses into silence. In May 1967, Carter and Artis were convicted by an all-white jury in Paterson, a city whose population was one-third black.

Seven years after the trial, Bello and Bradley admitted to *New York Times* reporter Selwyn Raab and an investigator that their testimony was a lie. In September 1974, Raab’s exposé appeared on the paper’s front page and Carter’s autobiography *The Sixteenth Round* hit the bookstores. Movie stars, popular sports figures and prominent bourgeois politicians flocked to Carter’s case. Muhammad Ali became cochair of Carter’s defense committee. In 1975, the New Jersey Supreme Court ordered a new trial.

The second trial was an even greater travesty than the first. The prosecution coerced Bello to repudiate his admission of perjury, while suppressing a polygraph test that showed this repudiation to be a lie. Bradley was offered a deal on a pending indictment, which he refused, but was intimidated to not testify for the defense. Meanwhile, Raab was barred from the courtroom. Having presented no motive for the triple slaying in the first trial, the prosecution “discovered” one nine years later: the social unrest of the 1960s and Carter’s militant views. It was claimed that Carter and Artis had been driven by “revenge” for the killing of a black bartender earlier the same night.

Carter and Artis were convicted a second time and sentenced to life terms. Their liberal and celebrity supporters deserted

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Black Panther in Prison for Decades Free Albert Woodfox!

The Partisan Defense Committee has added Albert Woodfox, the last of the Angola Three still incarcerated, to its class-war prisoner stipend program. Along with Herman Wallace and Robert King, Woodfox fought the vicious, racist and dehumanizing conditions at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola and courageously organized a Black Panther Party chapter at the prison. As retribution, authorities framed up Woodfox and Wallace for the fatal stabbing of a white prison guard in 1972 and falsely convicted King of killing a fellow inmate a year later.

The sadistic jailers went after the Angola Three with a vengeance. For over **42 years**, Woodfox has been locked down in Closed Cell Restricted (CCR) blocks, the longest stretch in solitary confinement ever in this country. The now 67-year-old man is confined in a two-by-three-meter cell 23 hours a day. According to his lawyers, he suffers from hypertension, heart disease, chronic renal insufficiency, diabetes, anxiety and insomnia—conditions no doubt caused and/or exacerbated by decades of vindictive and inhumane treatment. Wallace was also confined to solitary until last October, only to die three days after gaining his freedom. King, who spent 29 years in isolation, won his release in 2001. (For more, see “Herman Wallace, 1941–2013,” WV No. 1032, 18 October 2013.)

Woodfox first encountered the Black

Panthers in New York City, where he had fled after escaping a New Orleans courtroom during his sentencing on armed robbery charges. Caught by police and hauled back to Louisiana’s dungeons, Woodfox had become a Panther member before he was shipped in the summer of 1971 to Angola, the largest maximum-security prison in the U.S. Named for the country of origin of the chattel slaves who at one time toiled in the fields of the plantation on which it is built, this institution worked its prisoners, overwhelmingly black, into the ground on its farm. The merciless all-white guards overseeing this forced labor were known as “freemen.” Among their political activities, Woodfox and Wallace organized inmate work stoppages and other protests, infuriating prison administrators.

The subsequent murder trial of Woodfox and Wallace was classic railroading. The prosecution failed to produce any physical evidence linking the men to the murder. A bloody print found at the scene was used as evidence, even though it did not match any of the accused. Since the trial, it has emerged that the main “eyewitness,” Hezekiah Brown, was bribed by prison officials to give statements against the men and that the state withheld evidence that other testimony was perjured. Still other witnesses have retracted their testimony.

So transparent is the frame-up that the slain officer’s widow, Leontine Rogers,

**Angola Three
prisoners
Albert Woodfox
(left) and the late
Herman Wallace,
in 2008.**



Carrie Reichardt

has joined Robert King and others in demanding the release of Woodfox. In a recent interview with Amnesty International, she stated that after reviewing all the evidence she believes the Three to be innocent. Rogers said: “I feel like the state is pursuing them because they need to blame someone and they think they are doing justice. But what they have been doing is an injustice.”

In February 2013, Woodfox won a reversal of his murder conviction for a third time (the first two had been subsequently overturned by higher courts). But Louisiana attorney general James “Buddy” Caldwell immediately appealed that decision. Angola warden Burl Cain also is on a crusade to keep Albert Woodfox in torturous conditions for the rest of his life. In 2008, attorneys for Woodfox asked Cain to assume, if he could, that Woodfox is not guilty of the killing. Cain responded, “Okay, I would still keep him in CCR.... I still know that he is still try-

ing to practice Black Pantherism.”

Woodfox joins 18 other class-war prisoners in the PDC stipend program, including internationally renowned prisoners like Leonard Peltier and Mumia Abu-Jamal. Under the program, which was initiated in 1986, reviving a tradition of the early American Communist movement, these brave men and women, who are behind bars for standing up to racist capitalist oppression, are sent monthly stipends. Other recent additions to the stipend program include the Tinley Park 5, a group of anti-racist militants thrown into prison for dispersing a meeting of fascists outside Chicago in May 2012. Two of them, Alex Stuck and John Tucker, have now been released.

We reiterate our call for Woodfox’s immediate freedom and encourage our supporters to take up his cause and write to Albert Woodfox #72148, NIA #3-CCR, David Wade Correction Center, 670 Bell Hill Road, Homer, LA 71040. ■

The following article is reprinted from Workers Hammer No. 226 (Spring 2014), newspaper of our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain.

The Labour left that Tony Benn exemplified for much of his parliamentary career passed away long before he did. The Labour Party has been moribund as a reformist workers party for some years, and its traditional left wing for even longer. To be sure, Benn was a cut above the rest, as demonstrated by his role in enacting legislation that allowed him to renounce his hereditary peerage. But at bottom he was a classic Labour left, rhetorically and often eloquently espousing the cause of (parliamentary) “socialism” while

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kowtowing to and covering for the right-wing leadership of the party, including as a Cabinet member in the anti-union Wilson-Callaghan government in the 1970s.

However, when Benn challenged the NATO-loyal Denis Healey in the 1981 contest for deputy leadership, his “little England” “socialist” stance threatened to tear the party apart at the seams. We noted: “A distorted and uneven class line is being cleaved in the Labour Party under the impact of renewed anti-Soviet Cold War, between Little England reformists and NATO/CIA-loving ‘internationalists’” (“Labour’s Cold War,” *Spartacist Britain* No. 41, April 1982). In 1981, a year after the imperialists launched a furore over the Soviet military intervention against CIA-backed *mujahedin* in Afghanistan, prominent Labour right wingers such as David (now Lord) Owen and Shirley (now Baroness) Williams had split to form the bourgeois Social Democratic Party (SDP), which later merged with the Liberals to become the Liberal Democrats. Had Benn won the deputy leadership contest, it is likely that Healey & Co. would have decamped as well, placing the Bennite left in a position of responsibility where their left pretensions could have been more easily exposed before Labour’s working-class base. On that basis, the Spartacist League extended critical support to Benn against Healey.

When Benn stood for the safe Labour seat of Chesterfield in early 1984, having lost his seat in the 1983 general election, we again offered to extend him critical support. But Benn refused, making clear, as we stated at the time in a leaflet reprinted below, that unity with the pro-NATO, pro-austerity right wing stood higher for him than the causes he espoused. In doing so, Benn made common cause with the likes of Roy Hattersley, who was then denouncing the National Graphical Association (NGA) strikers as they challenged the Tories’ union-bashing Tebbit Act. Benn also endorsed Labour leader Neil Kinnock, who would soon achieve notoriety in the coal fields for his violence-baiting of the heroic miners during the pivotal 1984-85 strike. With the defeat of that crucial class battle, Kinnock in turn paved the way for [former Prime Minister Tony] Blair, who embarked on the

In Lieu of an Obituary

Tony Benn, Left Reformist 1925–2014



WV Photo

Tony Benn at Columbia University, 1984. Spartacist League/Britain banner outside Labour Party conference, October 1983.



Workers Hammer

project of smashing Labour’s historic ties to the trade unions and turning it into a thoroughly bourgeois party. While Benn would spend many more years appearing at anti-war and anti-Tory protests, in its own way his role at Chesterfield heralded the demise of the Bennite left.

The following leaflet, issued under the title “Why Is Benn Bowing to Labour’s Cold War Right?” and the accompanying exchange with Benn, is reprinted from *Spartacist Britain* (No. 55, March 1984).

* * *

We reprint below a letter from the Spartacist League to Tony Benn, offering him our critical support in the Chesterfield by-election. Many workers see in Benn the representative of their Socialist aspirations within the Labour Party; he has been the most articulate spokesman of that wing of the party out of step with the Cold War austerity right wing exemplified by Denis Healey and Roy Hattersley, whose rightful place is in the SDP. Benn’s voice should be heard in Parliament. We offered to mobilise our supporters for a Benn victory, under our own communist banner. After considering our proposal for five days, Benn replied to an SL spokesman at a public meeting in Chesterfield on Wednesday, 15 February with the following sharply worded rejection:

“I think I ought to explain that our friend is a member of a small society, the

Spartacist society [sic], which has a few members and his desire is to damage the Labour Party by encouraging it first of all to repudiate itself and its members. And I’m very much opposed to that. And I don’t want help from people who are not honestly and seriously in support of the labour movement, which is a broadly based movement and is the instrument of the British working class and always has been. And I don’t think people who go around and spread gloom and despondency about the role of the labour movement are helping. I think they’re harming and I wonder where their support comes from and why they should come here to this by-election to try and make people think that the labour movement is not an instrument capable of achieving its objectives.”

Tony Benn rejected the support of the communist Soviet-defencist Spartacist League with the reason that we oppose unity with the SDP fifth column inside the Labour Party. Benn places unity with open advocates of anti-working-class Cold War austerity above even his own reformist “little England” notion of socialism. The deep division cleaved within the Labour Party under the impact of the Cold War has not gone away, but at least for the moment Benn has chosen to be the dupe of the “nightmare ticket,” to bow before the Cold War right wing in the name of unity. Is Tony Benn making his peace, like Nye Bevan did [left Labour politician], with the Cold War Gaitskellites [followers of right-wing Labour politician Hugh Gaitskell]? The

Labour Party was founded and rests on the trade unions, but it is not equal to the labour movement. History has shown it polices for the bosses when in power.

Benn says, “I don’t want help from people who are not honestly and seriously in support of the labour movement.” Who are the people he thinks are? Roy Hattersley, who made it clear at the opening press conference that it was he and not Benn speaking for the Labour Party in this campaign, denounced NGA strikers as “violent lawbreakers” and wants to loosen Labour’s ties to the trade unions, the better to accommodate the ruling-class union-bashers. Neil Kinnock, the other half of what Benn now calls a “balanced ticket,” prostrated himself before the world’s foremost imperialist warmonger, Ronald Reagan, as a “defender of freedom” and “a man with whom I have a great deal in common.” And then there is Denis Healey, for decades the arch NATO/CIA-loving Atlanticist of the Labour Party leadership who a half dozen years ago was overseeing strikebreaking and IMF [International Monetary Fund] austerity as part of the Callaghan cabinet and who now, riding high once more, vows to be the Labour Party’s “Gromyko” for the next thirty years. Unity with the likes of these acts against the interests of the labour movement and oppressed minorities. Yet this is what Benn is propounding. In this context we cannot call for support to Benn as we would have liked.

And what about Benn’s “I wonder where their support comes from” jibe, in the tradition of the worst McCarthyite red-baiting? Is it any accident he was sharing the platform at the time with Sheffield Council leader David Blunkett, who CIA-baits left-wing opponents like the Spartacist League and most recently linked arms with the Tories to ban Irish solidarity marches? Anthony Wedgwood Benn: you were at least supposed to be an honourable element in the Labour Party if nothing else. Will you now roll in the gutter because you cannot make a break with the CIA-lovers in your party? “Left” verbiage notwithstanding, are Benn’s smarmy “Big Lie” innuendoes another way of signalling his willingness to bow before the Cold War consensus demanded by NATO, the CIA and the ruling class? Such unity is a unity of treachery which can only spread gloom and despondency within the working class. True unity of workers and oppressed requires the forging of a mass revolutionary party through winning Labour’s working-class base to a programme for the overthrow of capitalism. It is to this task that the Spartacist League is dedicated.

19 February 1984

Exchange with Benn

9 February 1984

Dear Tony Benn,

I am writing to ask if you will accept the critical support of the Spartacist League in the Chesterfield by-election. The past few years have seen some hard fights inside the Labour Party against the SDP traitors, and you have been the target of witchhunting attacks from the Tories, their press and the Labour right wing. In the 1981 deputy leadership election we supported you and the wing of the party you represent against the right wing, because we want to see the hard NATO/CIA/IMF lovers, Denis Healey & Co., driven out of the Labour Party. The renewed predominance of the Healeys and Hattersleys under the Kinnock leadership makes us fearful of present developments inside the party. Much of the leadership is clearly unenthusiastic (at best) that you are the candidate for Chesterfield, and some elements like Sid Weighell say openly they’ll oppose you. (We also hear that the U.S. ambassador of the Cold War Reagan regime was upset on hearing you had won the nomination.) Under these circumstances, and without minimising the political differences we have with you, we would like to support your campaign, calling for a class vote against the Tories and the Alliance.

The SL’s positions on certain key

WORKERS HAMMER
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Crimea is Russian

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Right Sector...

(continued from page 12)

presence in the meeting in its account in the online FightBack!news (15 April).

The attempted disruption by the fascists on April 12 came after a March 22 International Day Against Fascism and Racism demonstration that began outside the Ukrainian Consulate in Chicago. There WWP, the FRSO and others ran up against a hostile crowd of over 100 Ukrainian nationalists and fascists. At the time, the FRSO criticized the International Socialist Organization (ISO) for refusing to join in chants against the fascists. But two weeks later when fascists showed up at their meeting, WWP and the FRSO were more inclined to have a civil dialogue with them than to drive them out.

If they had been in Ukraine, the ISO on one side and WWP and the FRSO on the other would have been viewing each other through rifle sights. The ISO called for workers to join the mobilizations in Maidan square in Kiev, which provided the shock troops for the fascist-led Ukrainian coup in February. Meanwhile, WWP and the FRSO opposed the coup and denounced U.S. and European Union (EU) support to the Kiev regime and sanctions against Russia.

Despite their differences over Ukraine, what unites WWP, the FRSO and ISO at bottom is their reformist political perspective: They seek to pressure the capitalist parties, centrally the Democrats, to shift their priorities and carry out policies that benefit the workers and oppressed. However, the bourgeoisie is not about to abandon its drive to dominate the world and to squeeze out its great-power rivals, any more than it will cease to exploit labor for profit. Like the ISO, both WWP and the FRSO gave backhanded support to presidential candidate Barack Obama on the basis that he would supposedly be more susceptible to mass pressure than his Republican counterpart. Now that Obama is the main imperialist patron of the Ukrainian fascists, WWP raises the inane slogan: “Money for jobs, not fascist mobs!”

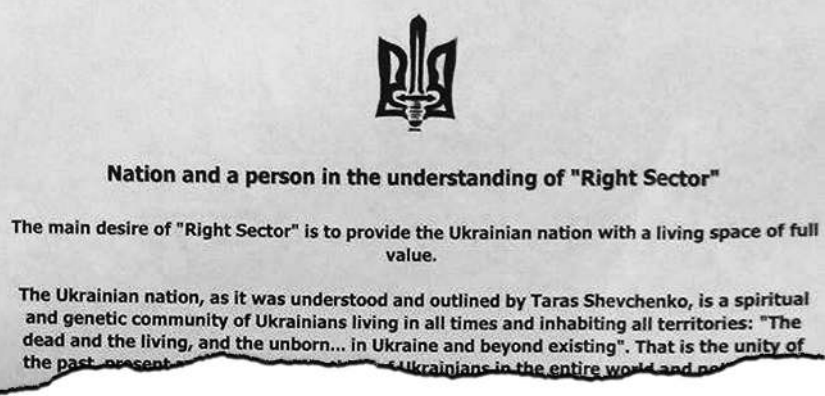
Virulently anti-Jewish, anti-communist, homophobic and anti-Russian, the Right Sector is led by Dmytro Yarosh, who has railed, “I wonder how it came to pass that most of the billionaires in Ukraine are Jews?” From the start, the new Ukrainian government issuing out of the Maidan

issues of the day include the following. We oppose the NATO alliance and its economic adjunct, the EEC, and say No Cruise, no Trident! U.S. bases out of Britain—For unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism and internal counterrevolution! We give no political support to CND [Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament], which is anti-Soviet and peddles the dangerous “little-England” illusion that there can be peace and “disarmament” without the overthrow of capitalism. In Poland we say that Solidarność became a counterrevolutionary movement seeking to restore capitalism which had to be stopped. We demand the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland. We oppose all bourgeois immigration laws and demand full citizenship rights for all workers and their families in Britain. Against racist and fascist attacks we call not for bans or more “democratically accountable” police but for mass trade-union/minority mobilisations to sweep the race terrorists off the streets. We are against the exclusion of all working-class tendencies from the Labour Party, and in particular oppose the witchhunt of Militant [fake-Trotskyist group active in Labour Party] supporters. We oppose the Alternative Economic Strategy/National Economic Assessment for their nationalist protectionism and as a new wage-cutting social contract in all but name. We are for worksharing on full pay and jobs for all. We call for mass strike action to smash the attacks of the Tory government and to bring it down.

2 MAY 2014



ZUMA



Top: Right Sector fascists outside Ukrainian parliament in Kiev, March 27. Bottom: Leaflet distributed by supporters of Ukrainian fascist thugs outside Chicago leftist public meeting, April 12.

protests was a nest of fascists, including Svoboda party leader Andriy Parubiy as head of the National Security and Defense Council, and Yarosh as his deputy. Amid Ukrainian military moves in the heavily Russian provinces of eastern Ukraine, Yarosh recently moved his party headquarters to the eastern Ukrainian city of Dnepropetrovsk and created a battalion to help suppress pro-Russian fighters in the region.

Like Svoboda, the Right Sector harks back to Stepan Bandera’s Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), which collaborated with the Nazi occupiers during World War II and slaughtered tens of thousands of Poles and Jews. After the war, the Banderaites continued, until their defeat in the early 1950s, to fight the Soviets. Many of them fell into the waiting embrace of the

imperialists, helping to swell the ranks of hardcore anti-Communists in the West. Many surviving members of Bandera’s Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists fled to the U.S. with the aid of the CIA. Once there, they transformed themselves into the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA) and were harbored by Democratic and Republican administrations alike. In the 1980s, some UCCA members occupied posts in the Reagan administration.

Affirmative Action...

(continued from page 1)

of Tuscaloosa, Alabama (“Segregation Now,” *The Atlantic*, May 2014):

“Schools in the South, once the most segregated in the country, had by the 1970s become the most integrated, typically as a result of federal court orders. But since 2000, judges have released hundreds of school districts, from Mississippi to Virginia, from court-enforced integration, and many of these districts have followed the same path as Tuscaloosa’s—back toward segregation. Black children across the South now attend majority-black schools at levels not seen in four decades.”

Separate is no more equal today than it was 50 years ago. Segregated schools pack black and Latino students in like prisoners, with metal detectors, video cameras, monitoring by security guards, drug testing and locker searches. Meanwhile, charter schools and voucher programs suck money from already impoverished inner-city schools as well as further the nationwide assault on teachers unions.

Treating poor and minority children like criminals is the “training” the racist capitalist rulers give to those they consider surplus. More black people today have spent time in the U.S. prison system than were enslaved in 1850. With the prisons full to bursting with victims of the racist “war on drugs,” the Justice Department announced on April 23 that it will expand a program of clemency for nonviolent felons who have been locked up at least ten years. The several hundred who are likely to benefit from such a break are a drop in the bucket of the overall prison population. And as the *Black Agenda Report’s* managing editor Bruce Dixon noted in a 23 April article: “At the rate the pipelines are pumping them in, their cells will be refilled in a

We opposed the recent U.S.-backed Ukrainian coup that was spearheaded by the fascists and stand in opposition to the Kiev regime’s provocative military forays in eastern Ukraine. We oppose U.S./EU sanctions against Russia and the U.S./NATO military presence in the Baltics and elsewhere in East Europe. While giving no political support to Vladimir Putin’s Russian-chauvinist regime, we supported Russia’s intervention in Crimea, which allowed the people of that region to exercise their right of self-determination through reunification with Russia.

In WWP’s recounting of the April 12 event, they hail their fictitious eviction of the fascists as “paving the way for future cooperation between anti-fascist forces.” Such dishonest posturing is counterposed to an effective defense against reactionary forces like the Right Sector. The fascists must be stopped from spewing the kind of filth that they were spreading outside the meeting, such as a Right Sector leaflet extolling the need for Ukrainian “living space”—an allusion to the Nazi displacement of “inferior” peoples.

With the pro-Maidan fascists feeling the wind in their sails, there clearly is a need to physically defend leftist events from these thugs. But its militant pretenses to the contrary, WWP coddled the fascists inside their own meeting! In general the reformists politically undercut the struggle against fascism by breeding illusions in bourgeois democracy.

Since capitalism gives rise to and sustains the fascist scourge, the struggle against this scum must be linked to the fight to overthrow capitalist rule. The working class has both the interest and the social power to sweep the fascist enemy off the streets. To the extent of their limited influence, reformists like WWP represent an obstacle to imparting this lesson and to winning workers to the understanding of their historic role as gravediggers of capitalism. Our perspective is, through political struggle against all stripes of reformism, to forge a workers party that fights for socialist revolution. ■

month or two, no problem.” Dixon continues, “It’s hard to avoid the conclusion that this clemency initiative is nothing more than a lazy, cynical and nearly empty gesture” by which the Obama administration “will buy some black votes and good will in 2014 and beyond.”

The same ruling class that for decades has consigned black and Latino youth to prison hell has also been carrying out a full-bore offensive against the trade unions, of which black workers form a significant component. In response, the pro-capitalist labor “leadership” has rolled over and played dead. What is needed is to forge a workers party that can fuse the anger of the ghetto and barrio masses with the latent social power of the working class, whose labor makes this profit system run.

In 1872, Fredrick Douglass, who had fought his way out of slavery, educated himself and served as a radical leader of the abolitionist movement, observed: “The cunning ex-slaveholder sets those who should be his enemies to fighting each other and thus diverts attention from himself. Educate the colored children and white children together in your day and night schools throughout the South, and they will learn to know each other better, and be better able to cooperate for mutual benefit.” Douglass made this statement in the midst of the Reconstruction era following the smashing of the slavocracy in the Civil War. It was the betrayal of Reconstruction by the Northern bourgeoisie that sealed the fate of black people as an oppressed race-color caste.

To bring about genuine equality requires the destruction of existing class relations and the passing of power into the hands of the multiracial working class. The workers in power will use the social wealth produced by labor to rebuild this country, creating the conditions for the full integration of black people in a socialist society. ■

Capitalists Gut the Motor City

Detroit: The Rise and Fall of a Labor/Black Stronghold

We print below the second part of a presentation, edited for publication, given by comrade Barry James at a March 22 forum in Chicago. Part One was published in WV No. 1044 (15 April).

PART TWO

The 1967 ghetto rebellion and the rise of black working-class militancy shook the city rulers, accelerating the auto industry's exit from Detroit and deepening state repression. Police commissioner John Nichols set up a special "decoy unit" called STRESS (Stop the Robberies, Enjoy Safe Streets), which gunned down 21 black people between 1969 and 1972. In 1972, Nichols led a cop charge into Chrysler's Mack Avenue Stamping Plant to arrest the leaders of a sit-down strike.

With the city polarized, the 1973 mayoral election pitted black Democrat Coleman Young against Nichols. Even as he campaigned against STRESS, Young joined Nichols in calling to put more cops on the streets. Young's goal was to restore popular illusions in the police by dramatically increasing the number of black cops. Nonetheless, the Communist Party (CP), a host of other reformist "socialists" and remnants of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers gave open or backhanded support to Young.

Against such opportunists, the SL wrote: "Far from being a working-class victory, the victory of a 'responsible' black 'progressive' fits in nicely with the liberal bourgeoisie's current game plan for siphoning off racial tensions by giving the oppressed minorities the illusion of political power" ("Black Democrat Defeats Cop in Detroit Elections," WV No. 33, 23 November 1973). Expressing the outlook of Detroit's capitalist establishment, department store magnate Joseph Hudson remarked: "The black man has the feeling he is about to take power in the city. But he is going to be left with an empty bag."

After winning the election, Young oversaw the devastation of Detroit. Some 200,000 auto workers lost their jobs as the Big Three moved their operations out of the area. In 1974-75, Young laid off city workers by the thousands. Services were slashed, school funding cut and the streets were flooded with cops. He opposed a proposed ordinance to disband the Detroit "red squad" and busted a city workers strike to make the Motor City "safe" for the 1980 Republican Party convention. As



WV Photo

Spartacists raise class-struggle program at July 1979 protest against Detroit auto plant closure.

Young's capitalist masters had hoped, all this was carried out without any major protest.

Coleman Young was one of the most prominent of the black Democratic Party mayors elected after the ghetto upheavals of the late 1960s. What made him different was his experience as a CP sympathizer and a civil rights activist with a base in Detroit's black proletariat. Young cynically campaigned on his having remained loyal to his original goals. In office, he put a lid on the city's rebellious population and the multiracial auto workforce. Young exemplified the role of black Democratic Party politicians in containing the discontent generated by the capitalist rulers' wars at home and abroad.

A measure of Young's political journey was expressed in his attempt to ban a march against the Ku Klux Klan. Earlier in his life, he had fought the Klan. But in 1979, Young threatened to arrest auto workers who joined a November 10 SL-initiated labor/black mobilization to stop the KKK from coming to Detroit to "celebrate" the fascist massacre of five leftists and union organizers in Greensboro, North Carolina. An SL leaflet calling for the rally declared: "Mayor Cole-

man Young said we who oppose the Klan have no more rights than the KKK killers, that we should not show our faces on fear of arrest."

The mobilization went ahead, and a special 16 November 1979 WV supplement reported, "500 at Detroit Labor/Black Rally Say: The Klan Won't Ride in the Motor City!" Addressing the rally, SL spokesman Don Alexander said: "You know what Coleman Young is—the awful example of what selling your black political soul to the Democratic Party means. You sort of go morally and politically blind. After a while you can't tell the difference between the guys in white sheets and the guys on the other side."

Another sign of the times was the crazed actions of the United Auto Workers (UAW) bureaucracy. In 1973, the UAW tops blamed "reds" for unauthorized strikes over grievances that even the union bureaucracy admitted were legitimate. A 1,000-man goon squad, including UAW leader Doug Fraser and local officials, was composed to break a sit-down strike at the Mack Avenue Stamping Plant. This goon squad was turned loose on radical paper salesmen outside the plants. The Spartacist League and our supporters in the auto plants warned that this campaign against "outside agitators" was a prelude to attacks on the union membership.

To advance class-struggle politics in the unions, the Spartacist League called for building caucuses in the UAW based on the Transitional Program ("The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International," 1938) as expounded by Leon Trotsky. The purpose of the Transitional Program is to bridge the gap between the existing consciousness of the working class and oppressed and the necessity of the conquest of power by the proletariat. The task of the program "lies in systematic mobilization of the masses for the proletarian revolution." Detroit was turbulent and full of all sorts of ostensibly revolutionary and "socialist" groups that rejected our programmatic approach. Rather, they supported one or

another wing of the union bureaucracy or sought to bring the bourgeois courts into the union to unseat the misleaders.

Spartacist in Detroit

What kind of struggles did we intervene into? In November 1973, one month after the Yom Kippur War (also known as the fourth Arab-Israeli war), 1,500 Arab auto workers conducted a political strike against the UAW's purchase of nearly \$1 million in Israeli war bonds. Nearly every Arab worker on the second shift at Chrysler's Dodge Main heeded the call of organizers to strike, shutting down all but one assembly line. Arab workers from Dodge marched 1,000-strong to downtown Detroit to demonstrate against UAW president Leonard Woodcock's acceptance of B'nai B'rith's "Humanitarian of the Year" award.

At the time, the Detroit area's 80,000 Arabs were the largest such concentration in the U.S. Lacking citizenship rights, they constituted an oppressed layer of the



Mayor Coleman Young (center) ran Detroit for banker David Rockefeller (left) and auto boss Henry Ford II.

Marxist Bulletin 5

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Spartacist Supporters in Detroit Auto

The following are edited comments made by Matt, a Spartacist League supporter in the auto industry in the 1970s and '80s, at the March 22 forum.

I arrived in Detroit in winter 1973. The Motor City: auto plants within miles of each other—smokestacks visible whichever direction you traversed—and hiring. The hours of work, speed of the line and blur of activity were a culture shock. Within the first few days, in my haste to eat a can of tomato soup during a short break I sliced open my thumb with the pop-off top of the can. Not even a work injury, but I felt I couldn't screw the lug nuts onto the tires, so I stopped the line to inform the foreman. But before I could even call him, he was there with a relief man for my spot and restarted the line. He wrapped my hand with duct tape, and two cars later I was back fastening on the tires. I learnt quickly that the line doesn't stop!

Spartacist supporters in the auto plants talked about a range of social issues. At that time, there was busing for school integration; the Hyde Amendment, which banned federal funding for abortion; and the economy, which was already spiraling downward, causing skyrocketing inflation along with the new phenomenon of gas lines everywhere. It had even become financially advantageous to pay the round-trip bridge toll and gas up in Canada. We became known as knowledgeable anti-racist, pro-union militants, always pointing out the role of the cops and the two parties of capital, the Democrats and Republicans.

In winter 1977-1978, a small band of Nazis began a provocative campaign of



WV Photo

Demonstration outside Nazi bookstore/recruiting office in Detroit, January 1978.

harassment and intimidation in a racially mixed west side neighborhood. These fascists kept reopening a bookstore after having been evicted by on-site protests and publicity, in which both the Spartacist League and its supporters in the auto industry participated. These events were unfolding in the shadow of the Ford River Rouge plant, where SL supporters

had been raising the issue of the need for labor to do something about this scum. So the UAW Local 600 bureaucrats felt compelled to bluster about driving the Nazis out of town, and they formed a Labor-Community Council Against the Nazis.

At a steering committee meeting in February 1978, the Nazis brazenly showed up. After they had been identified by a trade unionist who appealed for immediate action, some of those present began to advance to deal with the greatly outnumbered fascists. However, the Council chairman handpicked by the Local 600 bureaucrats intervened to break up the imminent confrontation and permit the fascists to depart. The Nazis proceeded to set upon a Workers Defense Committee (WDC) supporter distributing literature outside. Coming to that person's defense, another WDC supporter was slashed viciously with a razor, producing a ten-inch gash in her leg, which bled profusely. The cowardly Nazis ran off as SL supporters and others came running to aid the injured woman.

When the Nazis opened another bookstore, Spartacist supporters in the Rouge plant, including myself, wanted to drive them out of Detroit once and for all. At the next Local 600 union meeting, we raised the following motion: "That this unit of UAW Local 600 initiate a mass, labor-centered demonstration in front of the Nazi headquarters within 2 weeks around the slogan 'smash the Detroit Nazi threat.' We call on the general council, International and the Detroit area trade unions, black and other minority organi-

zations and all other anti-Nazi organizations and individuals to mobilize and join us in this demonstration."

We followed with a leaflet to the entire Rouge plant pointing out that workers should not rely on Mayor Coleman Young and his cops, who had been routinely terrorizing the black community while at the same time standing guard at the Nazi headquarters. We pointed out that the 40,000 UAW members at the Cadillac and River Rouge complexes were only five minutes from the fascist headquarters and had both the interest and power to act decisively. We were agitating for a working-class mobilization to drive the Nazis out of Detroit. Little did we know at the time to what extent this would define our future work.

The Spartacist League had another group of supporters in UAW Local 140 at Dodge Truck who also engaged in the anti-Nazi work. These militants argued against the union bureaucracy-supported 1979 government bailout of the failing Chrysler, which came at great cost to the workforce, proposing instead sit-down strikes and, if necessary, the seizure of company property to be sold to the benefit of the displaced workers. Tens of thousands of Detroit auto workers had already been hit by layoffs.

In 1979, Jimmy Carter—the millionaire peanut boss, former nuclear submarine commander and "born again" Christian—was president, preaching a "human rights" crusade to morally rearm U.S. imperialism following its historic defeat

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population, one that was kept in desperate conditions. Arab workers, separated from their co-workers by a language barrier, were given the dirtiest, most difficult jobs. At Dodge, some 25 percent of the workforce was Arab. There were no Arab foremen or union reps.

Arab workers were brought to Detroit by Chrysler in 1968 in an effort to further divide the workforce, which was becoming militant. The automaker opened a recruiting office in Yemen, and racial/national divisions would soon supplement the divisive role played by black/white hostility on the shop floor. Many black workers resented the Arabs who, because they were desperate and vulnerable to deportation, accepted speedup by the foremen. Black workers were occasionally heard uttering that infamous line: "They ought to send them back to where they came from"...about the Arabs! We said that it was crucial to fight for black-Arab unity and against anti-immigrant oppression. We called for full citizenship rights for Arab workers and special programs under union control for their advancement and training, including special publications in Arabic, as well as programs to learn English.

Six years later in 1979, Chrysler was threatened with bankruptcy. Chrysler CEO Lee Iacocca issued extortionate giveback demands to the union, which would prove the first wave of a government/auto industry attack on auto workers. In response, UAW head Doug Fraser drafted a nationalization plan for the automaker, while at the same time pledging to exempt the company from strike action. Nationalization of dying or bankrupt industries has been an option pursued by capitalist governments elsewhere to buy off working-class discontent and prop up failing enterprises.

We said that Chrysler workers had to fight to regain wage parity with Ford and General Motors and called on auto workers to demand equal pay for equal work, a fundamental trade-union principle. But we noted that Chrysler could go down the tubes due to years of shortsighted mismanagement. If Chrysler went into bankruptcy, the bosses would sell the company's assets to other capitalists and pocket the money. We advocated the mobiliza-



WV Photo

Detroit, 1977: Workers outside Dodge Truck plant during walkout over hellish conditions, as temperatures inside reached 120 degrees.

tion of workers in a sit-down strike to seize the plants. Should the plants have to be sold, the money should not go to the auto magnates and their bankers, but to the workers.

This proposal would have provided more to the workforce than any government bailout scheme and represented a radical attack on capitalist property rights. As Trotsky put it in the Transitional Program: "Every sit-down strike poses in a practical manner the question of who is the boss of the factory: the capitalist or the workers?" Such a strike would point to the need for a revolutionary struggle for a workers government to expropriate the capitalist exploiters and direct the wealth of this country toward satisfying the needs of those whose labor produces it, not the profits of a few.

In the end, Fraser, Walter Reuther's apprentice, settled for a seat on Chrysler's board of directors and proceeded to implement givebacks that would undo decades of union gains and result in the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs. With the UAW tops acting to keep the workforce in line for the capitalists, between 1979 and 1984 black Detroit was decimated. It was the givebacks extracted by the bosses with the complicity of the UAW tops at Chry-

ler in 1979 (under the Democrat Jimmy Carter) that began a wholesale assault on industrial unionism.

The smashing of the strike by the PATCO air traffic controllers union in 1981, synonymous with the Reagan years, followed on its heels. As we said at the time, the Machinists and other airline workers needed to have walked out in solidarity with PATCO, defying Reagan and shutting down the nation's airports. America's rulers went on to demand giveback contracts in other industries and two-tier wages for younger workers. AFL-CIO bureaucrats obliged with a policy of concessions. Meanwhile, these labor statesmen turned a blind eye to the necessity to organize the open shop South. When forays into the South are made, the union tops' loyalty to capitalist profitability has hamstrung organizing efforts. Such was the case in the recent stinging defeat for the UAW at Volkswagen in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where anti-union forces peddled the grotesque lie that union wages and working conditions ravaged Detroit.

Protectionism: Poison for Workers

What accounts for the state of Detroit today? Faced with the declining prof-

itability of the plants, the U.S. capitalists abandoned Detroit and turned the Midwest industrial heartland into a rust bowl. The employers junked the antiquated plants they had milked dry. The capitalists hoped to realize their former profit margins not by modernizing the old plants but by expanding into Southern "right to work" states to exploit non-union labor. Production was also shifted to East Asia and Latin America. Rather than retool a 1950s engine plant, for example, in 1983 Ford rolled out a union-busting strategy to build its new line of "economical" auto engines in Mexico, exploiting cheaper labor.

Previously, after emerging victorious from World War II, the U.S. had by far the greatest productive capacity of any capitalist country. But by the mid 1960s, Germany and Japan had rebuilt their war-ravaged industry. In many cases, the new plants embodied more advanced technology than in U.S. factories. American corporations found themselves facing stiff competition. The failure of U.S. industry to retool to make small cars in the wake of staggering oil price increases in the 1970s sent Japanese auto imports soaring and increased pressures for protectionism, particularly in auto. The U.S. economy was further weakened by the inflationary pressures generated by the long, losing imperialist war in Vietnam.

In the 1980s, the Reagan administration cut taxes for the rich while expanding military spending to advance the anti-Soviet Cold War II. To finance the resulting government deficits, a large amount of new Treasury bonds were sold, mainly to the Japanese. Within the space of three years, the U.S. went from being the world's largest creditor nation to the world's largest debtor nation.

As the Big Three began to move out of Detroit in earnest, Fraser and the other UAW tops found it easier to blame Japanese and German workers for layoffs than to fight for jobs against the auto giants. A sign posted at the union's International headquarters warned: "UAW parking reserved for U.S. and Canadian vehicles only. Please park imports elsewhere." Economic protectionism created a poisonous climate of chauvinism that

continued on page 8

Detroit...

(continued from page 7)

vicious anti-black, anti-union groups like the Klan thrived on. In 1982, a crazed racist auto foreman and his stepson beat to death Vincent Chin, a Chinese American man mistaken to be Japanese American.

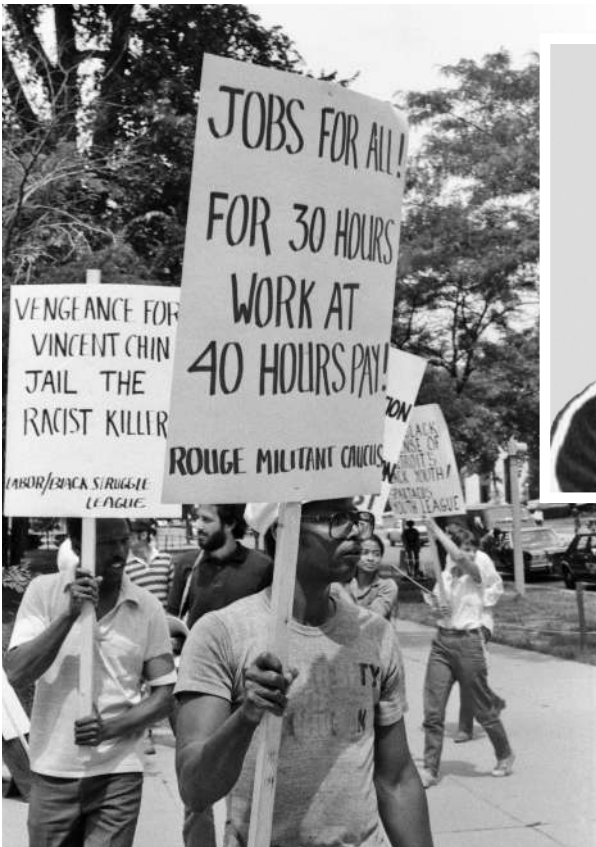
The Rouge Militant Slate of UAW Local 600—a caucus formation in political solidarity with the Spartacist League, vying for leadership of the union—fought the anti-Japanese protectionism and collusion with the auto bosses of both local president Mike Rinaldi and the UAW International. During a 1980 union election campaign, the Rouge Militants wrote: “Fraser blames Japanese workers for U.S. unemployment. Rinaldi and every unit chairman jumped on the ‘Buy American’ bandwagon, singling out the Japanese in racist fashion. This campaign is dangerous. Trade wars lead to shooting wars. This campaign feeds the atmosphere that breeds the Klan and Nazi scum.” Rouge Militant candidates were known throughout Local 600 as leaders of an earlier campaign against a KKK-hooded foreman and as organizers of the November 1979 anti-Klan demonstration. (For more, see page 7.)

In subsequent decades, the union misleaders would in the name of advancing “workers rights” combine national chauvinism and protectionist filth with China bashing, abetting the imperialist drive for capitalist counterrevolution in that country. Albeit on different scales, both the UAW (as well as other unions) and the Chinese deformed workers state are the fruits of historic victories for the proletariat. One resulted from the formation of industrial unions in the U.S. during the 1930s, the other from the overthrow of capitalist rule in the 1949 Chinese Revolution.

Both must be defended unconditionally from attacks that seek to undo these gains, despite the fact that each is led by a bureaucratic layer that puts them in jeopardy. The trade-union bureaucrats with their pro-capitalist program must be ousted and replaced by a class-struggle leadership committed to the overthrow of the U.S. imperialist order through socialist revolution. The bureaucratic ruling caste in China with its nationalist program must be swept away by a proletarian political revolution to preserve and extend internationally the working-class property forms established after the 1949 Revolution.

Karl Marx Was Right!

Under capitalism, industrial development requires maintaining what Marx called a “surplus population” or “industrial reserve army” to facilitate the expansion of production during boom periods and to hold down wages through competition for jobs. The capitalists enlist the ranks of the industrial reserve army to fill dangerous and dirty jobs and to scab on strikes. During the period of black chattel slavery, the Northern capitalists recruited a surplus population from among former tenant farmers driven off their land in Ireland and later migrants from East and



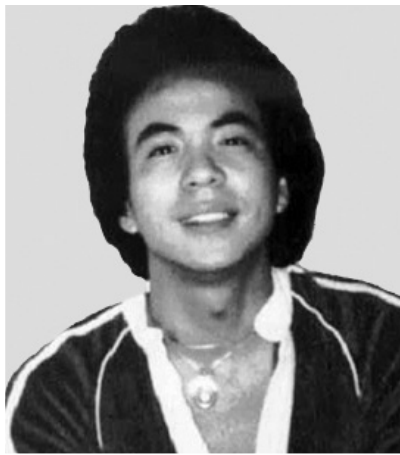
WV Photo

South Europe as well as Asia.

Black emancipation in the Civil War meant the bourgeoisie had a new source for its industrial reserve army in the black population. With the dawning of the epoch of imperialism at the end of the 19th century and later the first interimperialist war, the working class was polarized into a heavily black industrial reserve army at the bottom and a predominantly white, craft-skilled, job-trusted “aristocracy of labor” at the top. This division of the U.S. working class along race lines is a prop of the bourgeois order and obstacle to the forging of a unified proletarian vanguard.

From the mid 1960s on, the weight of manufacturing in the economy plummeted, devastating unionized industrial jobs—the fragile economic base of black communities. As a result, the capitalist rulers could no longer afford improvements in the economic conditions of the working class at the very moment the liberal-led civil rights struggles came North, running up against the discrimination in jobs, education, housing and health care that is deeply rooted in U.S. capitalism. Plant closures, which had a disproportionate impact on the black working class, only made matters worse, a reflection of the intertwining of black oppression and capitalist exploitation. Anything that could be construed to be addressing the needs of the black population became a target.

As deindustrialization gathered steam in the late 1970s, for every place lost on the assembly lines, one was added in the prisons. The “war on drugs” launched by the Feds in the early ’80s became the preferred method of social control of what the capitalist rulers considered an increasingly expendable layer of black youth for whom capitalism in decay offered no productive employment. The anti-drug crusade, which black Democrats like Jesse Jackson promoted, was enforced through cop occupation of the ghettos and barrios



Hyphen

Vincent Chin (inset), beaten to death by auto foreman and his stepson in 1982 amid anti-Asian protectionist frenzy stoked by UAW bureaucracy. Spartacist supporters protesting racist murder at 1983 anti-curfew demo in Detroit.

and mass incarceration. From its outset, we have insisted that the racist “war on drugs” is a war on black America. We say: decriminalize drugs!

The racist state terror and impulse to genocide marking the “war on drugs” is on display in Detroit and elsewhere. Witness the 2010 death of seven-year-old Aiyana Stanley-Jones, who was killed in her home in a military-style raid by a Detroit police Special Response Team. It was no aberration, as WV observed at the time, but a stark example of the state of siege that defines life in black Detroit.

The TV series *The Wire* graphically captured how a whole swath of the population, mainly black, is surplus and has no future in this system. The creator of the show, David Simon, wrote in a *Guardian* article (7 December 2013) that the “social compact...between labor and capital that actually allowed people to have some hope” is now frayed. According to Simon, the notion that “profit is the metric by which we’re going to measure the health of our society is one of the fundamental mistakes.” He went on to observe that Karl Marx was right “diagnostically” in that Marx accurately described the processes that devastate large numbers of people under capitalism. But he opined that Marx was wrong “clinically,” i.e., that Marxism has nothing to offer for the future. Citing Marx to defang Marx is *de rigueur*.

Well, Simon is wrong, and Marx is right. Marx provided the analysis and tools to change the world. Profit is the fundamental “metric” of capitalism.



WV Photo

November 1979: Spartacist-initiated labor/black mobilization, joined by hundreds of auto workers, defied mayor’s arrest threat and stopped planned KKK march in downtown Detroit.

“Hurricane”...

(continued from page 3)

them in droves. Having gotten the new trial they demanded, the liberals were satisfied that justice had been served. Few turned out for the trial and there were no mass protests after Carter’s reconviction.

Artis was released on parole in 1981. Carter’s conviction was finally overturned in 1985 by U.S. district court judge H. Lee Sarokin who declared, “The extensive record clearly demonstrates that petitioner’s convictions were predicated upon an appeal to racism rather than reason, and concealment rather than disclosure.” Even after Hurricane’s release, the Harlem-based *Amsterdam News* (16 November 1985) peddled the line of the cops and prosecutors, portraying Carter as a “bad dude” who was “capable” of committing the mur-

ders. In a protest letter to the paper (which it refused to publish), the PDC wrote: “It is particularly indecent for the *Amsterdam News*, a newspaper which promotes itself as ‘the new Black view,’ to join the vindictive prosecution attempt to railroad Carter back to that prison hellhole for life” (WV No. 392, 29 November 1985). It was not until 1988 that the prosecution ceased its effort to put him back behind bars.

The PDC contributed to the Carter/Artis defense and regularly attended the 1976 retrial. The PDC was later personally invited to Carter’s 29 February 1988 press conference after the prosecution finally threw in the towel. At its close, a PDC representative congratulated Carter, who said warmly, “I would like to thank you people for all your support.” He recalled that after his release in 1985, we sent a small holiday gift that he returned, explaining: “From what I’ve seen since

my release from prison, these funds should be better used for the benefit of someone less fortunate than I—like the homeless, the hungry, or those poor people who still remain *in* prison.”

The obituaries of Carter in the bourgeois press have lauded his dedication to winning freedom for those in prison for crimes they did not commit. Even the *New York Daily News* cited Carter’s effort as he was dying to convince the Brooklyn district attorney to review the case of David McCallum, a black man convicted in 1986 of kidnapping and murder at the age of 16. McCallum’s conviction was based solely on a coerced confession that was immediately recanted and appears to have no correlation with the physical evidence and known facts.

Not surprising is the media’s failure to make any reference to one innocent man whose freedom Carter has championed, Mumia Abu-Jamal. Evidence of Mumia’s

There is no social compact between labor and capital. Despite the rulers’ one-sided onslaught on working people today, Marxism teaches that powerful social struggles will erupt, which the history of the U.S. has shown numerous times. That’s why we look at these formative struggles in Detroit and seek to learn the lessons of history so that we will be better prepared next time. Capitalism destroys, but it also creates again its own gravedigger in multiracial strongholds of workers social power in transport, longshore, manufacturing. And black workers remain proportionally the most unionized sector of the labor force.

The working class is not just one more victim of capitalist austerity within the “99 percent” as today’s populists would have it, or part of the middle-class as the trade-union leaders would have it. Instead, the working class continues to occupy a unique role in the process of production; through its exploitation the capitalists derive their profits. Concentrating workers in large factories and urban centers, the capitalists have created the instrument of their own destruction as an exploiting class.

Socialist revolution, in which black workers will play a vanguard role as part of the proletariat with the least to lose and the most to gain from a fundamental reshaping of the existing social order, is the only means for delivering ourselves from capitalist wage slavery. Will there be a multiracial communist leadership, tested in struggle and based on the program of revolutionary integration, to intervene in future sharp social struggles to change the course of history? We in the Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League, are determined that the leadership will be there. ■

innocence goes directly into the newsroom shredder. In addressing a March 1995 PDC-initiated rally for Mumia in Toronto, Carter noted that after reviewing materials about Mumia’s frame-up: “I detected a foul but familiar odor emanating from the documents. And the more I read, the stronger the odor got. It was a stench that at one time I had hoped was limited to New Jersey, but which I soon discovered is associated with cases of wrongful conviction everywhere” (“Rubin ‘Hurricane’ Carter Speaks Out for Jamal,” WV No. 619, 24 March 1995).

The SL and PDC honor Hurricane by continuing our fight to free Mumia and all the class-war prisoners. In doing so, we seek to instill in class-conscious workers and the oppressed the understanding that only socialist revolution can put the racist frame-up machine out of business once and for all. ■

Greensboro 1979, Kansas City 2014

Fascist Murder

After Frazier Glenn Miller gunned down three people outside a pair of Jewish community facilities near Kansas City on the day before Passover, the arrested killer shouted from the back seat of a police car: “Heil Hitler!” For decades a prominent member of Ku Klux Klan and Nazi outfits, Miller, also known as Frazier Glenn Cross, stood out even among his fellow white supremacists for his virulently murderous hatred of Jews. (None of the victims were in fact Jewish.) Nearly 35 years prior, Miller was in a caravan of KKK and Nazi fascists who shot and killed five union organizers and civil rights activists—supporters of the Communist Workers Party (CWP)—on 3 November 1979 in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Following the April 13 killings in Overland Park, Kansas, the bourgeois media have recounted in some detail how Miller and the Feds struck a plea deal in the late 1980s. In return for his testimony against other white supremacists, Miller claims

that he was shielded in a witness protection program and his family helped financially. But in recounting Miller’s participation in the Greensboro Massacre, the *New York Times* (14 April) in typical fashion steered clear of any mention of the government’s involvement in those killings.

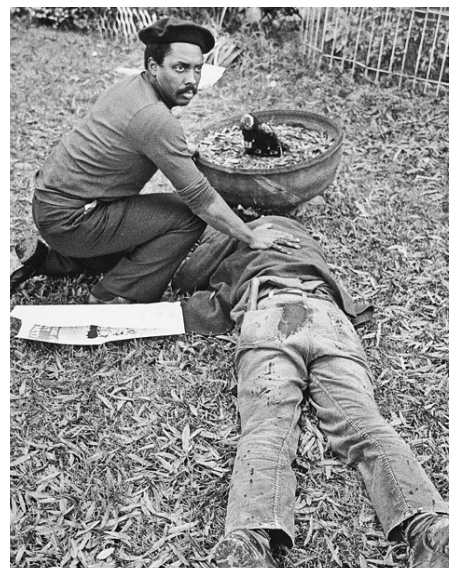
Greensboro was a conspiracy of the fascists and their capitalist state minders. In broad daylight, 30 race-terrorists drove in a caravan to a black housing project, escorted by local police, pulled out their shotguns and rifles and, in full view of television cameras, began pumping lead into a peaceful protest march. From the outset, the fascists were aided and abetted by the government, from a Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agent who helped train the killers and plot the assassinations to a “former” FBI informer who rode shotgun in the motorcade of death.

Greensboro survivors, one of whom was left partially paralyzed, were jailed, fired and blacklisted from work and stalked by

the FBI and local police. Some of the fascist killers were charged but acquitted by all-white juries in farcical trials, affirming once again the meaning of “justice” in this racist capitalist country. Miller was not one of those charged. Signe Waller, the widow of James Waller, one of the CWP activists murdered in Greensboro, declared after Miller’s rampage in Overland Park that he “should not have been walking the streets all these years,” in which case his victims “would probably still be alive.”

Coming near the end of the Democratic Carter administration, the Greensboro Massacre was the opening shot of what would become the Reagan years’ war on labor and black people. When the Klan announced that it would “celebrate” Greensboro in Detroit a week later, the Spartacist League initiated a labor/black mobilization that drew over 500, many of them black auto workers (see accompanying articles). Those 500 militants made sure that the Klan did not ride in the Motor City.

Over the next two decades, the SL actively built such labor-centered mobilizations in several other urban centers, successfully stopping Klan/Nazi provocations. Against those liberals and reformists who sought to derail such protests with calls on the government to “ban the Klan,” we pointed out that the capitalist state would use any such bans to go after leftists as



Greensboro News & Record

Nelson Johnson, wounded in 1979 Klan attack, kneels by his dying comrade Jim Waller.

well as trade-union and black militants. We declared: No more Greensboros! In an exemplary way, the mobilizations initiated by the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee showed the power of the working class, marching at the head of all the fascists’ intended victims, to sweep the race-terrorists off the street and crush the Klan/Nazi menace in the egg. ■

Detroit Auto...

(continued from page 7)

in Vietnam at the hands of the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants. The American economy was tanking, and the fascists were again rearing their ugly heads. On September 27, two foremen at the Dearborn Assembly Plant (DAP) felt emboldened enough to put on KKK hoods and march up and down the trim line. Outraged at the sight, dozens of workers in the area immediately walked off the line. News of the incident spread through the entire Rouge complex instantly.

Not about to allow this racist insult in our “backyard,” SL supporters at Rouge initiated a petition demanding Local 600 mobilize to ensure that the racist foremen be fired and driven from the auto industry and that the threat of discipline against the workers who protested be dropped. The petition was instantly embraced by the workforce. Over 1,000 signatures were obtained with workers standing in line at the gates to sign, while in the plant the petitions were being passed hand-to-hand at lunch tables. Many workers voiced the sentiment that the issue should be “settled outside in the parking lot,” with others astonished that these foremen had made it out of the plant at all. The petitions were delivered to the union hall by an integrated team of Local 600 members, including both skilled and production workers from various units.

Initially, the racists who comprised Ford management took no action. The union leadership acquiesced by allowing one foreman to continue working in the trim department, while the other foreman beat a hasty retreat and had not been seen in the plant after the incident. But he was not fired! This backroom maneuvering to bury the KKK provocation came to an end after a front-page article in the *Detroit News* kicked off a barrage of newspaper, radio and TV coverage. Under pressure, Local 600 president Mike Rinaldi and the head of the union’s Ford department, Ken Bannon, realized they were sitting on a powder keg. Both ended up supporting the demand for the firing of the foremen and—with puffed chests and mock bravado—verbally threatened a strike by the 4,500 DAP workers if any of those who had walked off the line were disciplined.

The victory electrified the Rouge complex and gained us authority. For the first time in years, workers at the plant had a sense of what the union could do if it relied on its own power. But the union leaders eventually backed down, allowing the foremen to be transferred out of the DAP instead of being fired. The almost universal response was “I hope they trans-



WV Photo

Detroit, 1979: Militant auto workers at Ford plant helped organize to stop the Klan.

fer them to my department, they wouldn’t last five minutes.”

The struggle also shed a glaring light on the various fake-left oppositions in the plant. Supporters of the Communist Party at Rouge predictably did nothing to help circulate the petition. In fact, after having voted to table our motion concerning the Nazi bookstore, they cravenly assisted and supported the Local 600 bureaucracy in trying to thwart our efforts at every step. Supporters of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) at Rouge grudgingly signed the petition, but none of them helped circulate it, issue statements about the racist outrage or do anything to assist in driving the foremen from the plant. One SWP supporter even opined to a petitioner that the bosses had “already fired these guys, why don’t they lay off?” Another grouping, the Committee for a Militant and Democratic UAW, affiliated with the Revolutionary Workers League, stood on the sidelines throughout the entire event as well.

At the next union meeting, there was anger over the company’s transfer of the two foremen and the failure of the union misleaders to block it. That same night, as we were leaving the union hall, news of Klansmen massacring five communists and union organizers in Greensboro, North Carolina, was on the radio and TV (see article above). The Spartacist League

responded immediately. In the union, our experience at Rouge and our understanding of the role of the pro-capitalist labor bureaucrats allowed us to not waste time waiting for the union and black misleaders to take action after the Klan announced it was coming to Detroit to celebrate Greensboro. In fact, during our subsequent efforts in the auto plants to build a labor/black demonstration against the fascist killers, these same misleaders joined in a slanderous chorus against “extremists,” meaning us, not the Klan.

A November 4 AP article reported on the DAP resolution that we had put forward, quoting one Spartacist supporter who called on the UAW to hold an anti-Klan demonstration. The mayor joked that he’d watch it on TV and then proceeded to ban both Klan and anti-Klan marches. On November 7, the UAW executive board rejected the demand for a demonstration and later wrote to President Carter and the U.S. attorney general to protest violence on *all* sides.

But 500 people did come out to stop the Klan three days later. Workers in auto and other industries throughout the city participated, the result of years of principled programmatic struggle by SL supporters in the auto industry. It was an impressive and historic rally, labor and black, youth and unemployed, led by union militants and a revolutionary organization with a shared class-struggle program.

I want to emphasize that this was not a one-note campaign against the Klan/Nazis. All along, we brought up the nature of the state as the repressive apparatus of the class enemy, the need for the unions to maintain strict independence from the capitalist parties and the need for workers defense guards. We also argued for a sliding scale of hours and wages to provide work and income to all, the concept of revolutionary integrationism to com-

bat black oppression and the importance of addressing the special oppression of women, all pointing to the need for a workers party to fight for a workers government. In short, we campaigned on and argued for a revolutionary program.

Our success in bringing together hundreds of Detroit area workers to stop the KKK led to the formation of the Rouge Militant Slate (RMS) in the ensuing union elections to the UAW International Convention. The RMS candidates made an impressive showing. These results reflected a real base of support for our program. During these elections, the Big Three threw thousands of workers onto the streets with new announcements of plant closings and shift shutdowns. The RMS fought the reactionary smokescreen of anti-Japanese protectionism and the nationalist, racist “Buy American” campaign initiated by the UAW International. We called for a shorter workweek with no loss in pay along with sit-down strikes backed by labor solidarity when the companies closed plants or axed entire shifts.

An electrician in the Rouge plant at the time, Bob King—the current UAW president—was well known to us. In fact, many times he was responsible for maintaining the electrical panels powering my various welding guns in the white metal department. He always adopted and defended the position of the bureaucracy. We were wary of him. I read recently that he wanted his legacy to be the unionization of a Southern auto plant. His real legacy can be drawn with a straight line from his time in Local 600 to now. Indifference toward the Klan/Nazis, acceptance of mass layoffs, the introduction of the two-tier system of wages that vitiates the concept of equal pay for equal work, the wholesale dismantling of the ranks of the UAW and, of course, Michigan becoming a “right to work” state. ■

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Israel...

(continued from page 12)

“hate-filled, anti-Semitic, pro-terrorist movement” (see “Pro-Israel Furor at Brooklyn College,” WV No. 1018, 22 February 2013). The New York Spartacus Youth Club stood in defense of BDS supporters, holding signs outside with the slogans, “Down With the Zionist Witch-hunt at Brooklyn College! Defend the Palestinians!”

In recent months, Palestinian rights groups on campuses across the country have been suppressed and intimidated, most notably at Northeastern University in Boston where the administration suspended Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) in March until 2015 after the group distributed mock eviction notices throughout campus dorms during Israeli Apartheid Week, simulating those distributed by the Israeli occupiers before they demolish Palestinian homes. The group was recently reinstated for the fall semester on a probationary basis after students held rallies and threatened to sue the university for violating their free speech rights. During the suspension, the administration mandated that representatives from the organization undergo university-sanctioned trainings if they wished to serve in other student organizations. Two of the students who participated in the mock eviction initially faced expulsion and a Jewish spokesman for the group, Max Geller, received death threats. We demand the reinstatement of Northeastern SJP with full student group status! Down with the Zionist witchhunt!

The attack against the Northeastern SJP has been led by the ludicrously named “Americans for Peace and Tolerance,” a Zionist group that viciously smeared several professors there including Denis Sullivan, co-director of the Middle East Center, whom it vilifies for everything from stating that Hamas provides health care in the Gaza Strip to promoting Jewish historian and opponent of Zionist terror Norman Finkelstein. A UC student trip to the Palestinian territories in 2012 was spied on by a Zionist organization, the AMCHA Initiative. The ASA was swiftly ostracized in academia, as over 80 college presidents have condemned its endorsement of BDS and several have withdrawn from ASA membership. Meanwhile, legislation was introduced in February in the House of Representatives that would remove funding from any college that boycotts Israeli academic institutions or scholars.

While the Spartacus Youth Clubs fundamentally disagree with the liberal politics of BDS, we vigorously oppose all state attempts to limit its supporters’ freedom to express their views. **Hands off BDS supporters!**

BDS: An Obstacle to Palestinian Liberation

The SYCs stand for the defense of the Palestinian people against Zionist state terror. We oppose all U.S. aid to Israel, demand the withdrawal of Israeli troops and settlers from the Occupied Territories and call for the right of return for Palestinian refugees and their descendants. Our starting point is the understanding that there can be no just solution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict within the framework of capitalism. Two national populations claim the same small piece of land, and under capitalism the exercise of self-determination by one will necessarily come at the expense of the other. Only through the establishment of a socialist federation of the Near East can the national claims of the Palestinians as well as the myriad other oppressed peoples of the region be equitably resolved. Simply put, the peoples of the Near East will never know justice, peace or prosperity until a series of working-class revolutions overthrow bourgeois rule throughout the region.

By contrast, BDS looks to employ



WV Photo

New York City: Spartacists at protest against Israel’s attack on Lebanon, July 2006.

moral suasion to pressure campus administrations and American corporations to ditch Israel and put their money in presumably more ethical investments. Academics, students and “cultural workers” are called on to “express solidarity” with the Palestinians by refusing, for example, to attend Israeli academic or cultural activities. The liberal idealist nature of this perspective is made clear in a statement by BDS spokesman Barghouti:

“It is the classic right-over-might paradigm, with the right being recognized by an international public that is increasingly fed up with Israel’s criminality and impu-



Demotix

Omar Barghouti, pro-Palestinian activist and cofounder of BDS movement, speaking in Belgium, April 2013.

nity and is realizing that Israel’s slow, gradual genocide places a heavy moral burden on all people of conscience to act, to act fast, and to act with unquestionable effectiveness, political suaveness, and nuance, and above all else with consistent, untarnished moral clarity.”

The background to the growth of BDS is the increasingly desperate plight of the Palestinian masses in the Occupied Territories. Gaza is essentially an impoverished concentration camp, regularly bombed with impunity by Israel, surrounded by an electrified fence, a sealed border with Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea, relying for its survival on whatever UN aid the Israeli regime permits into it. In the West Bank, the Palestinian population has been sealed off by an apartheid wall and subjected to a deadly Israeli military occupation. Separated by settlements containing over 600,000 Zionists who are backed up by thousands more troops, Palestinians are subjected to a series of humiliating military checkpoints and “Israeli only” roads that make travel between towns virtually impossible.

Under such desperate circumstances, the so-called “success” of the movement is not measured by any change in the actual material conditions of the Palestinians, but by publicity alone. BDS leader Ali Abunimah spelled this out in an interview with the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO) titled, “We’re Starting to Win” (socialistworker.

org, March 6). After describing the Zionist backlash against BDS as an indication of the campaign’s success, he says, “It’s pretty remarkable. Another sign of the success and growth of BDS is the fact that U.S. officials, like Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power and others, are speaking out against BDS. It goes to show that they are bringing out all the big guns.”

In reality, the strategy of BDS is to appeal to the very same imperialist forces that are the historic occupiers, colonialists and oppressors of the Near East. For its part, the ISO, in a rare moment of candor, succinctly described the aim of BDS as “to bring sufficient pressure to ‘ensure a change in Zionist strategic calculations’ that would make a democratic state an acceptable option” (socialistworker.org, March 13). To seek to pressure the imperialists to make more “socially responsible” or “ethical” investments is to build dangerous illusions in the supposed benign nature of the imperialists—whose class interests are fundamentally counterposed to those of the workers and the oppressed all over the world—as being somehow better than Israel. It is no accident that advocates of boycotting the goods of “immoral” regimes like Israel do not propose boycotting U.S. goods—they believe bourgeois democracies like the U.S. can be pressured to be a force for good in the world. But the economic and military force of the U.S. and the other imperialists is what keeps the whole world capitalist system in power.

While the Zionists’ crimes against the Palestinians are abominable, they pale in comparison to those of Israel’s main imperialist patron, the U.S., which is responsible for well over a century of mass murder, torture and genocide on a global scale. From the brutal occupation

of the Philippines following the 1898 Spanish-American War to the counter-revolutionary war against the Vietnamese workers and peasants to the invasion and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. imperialists have massacred and tortured their way to global supremacy.

The U.S. imperialist ruling class will pursue its interests in as merciless a manner as it needs to, regardless of what “people of conscience” have to say. The U.S. supports Israel to the hilt because Israel has served and continues to serve U.S. imperialism’s interests in the region. The only route to the liberation of the countless victims of U.S. imperialism is socialist revolution led by the international working class that smashes the imperialist and other capitalist ruling classes around the world and lays the basis for the development of an egalitarian socialist society.

South African Divestment Campaign

Supporters of the BDS campaign draw parallels between their struggle against “Israeli apartheid” and the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. In a 27 February editorial in *Socialist Worker*, the ISO stated, “It was precisely when the South Africa regime could no longer defend its legitimacy that it was clear that apartheid’s days were numbered. The BDS movement is hastening the arrival of those same days for Palestinians, eager to live as equal citizens in their indigenous land.” The BDS campaign is supported by former spokesmen for divestment from South Africa, such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Leaving aside (for the moment) that the end of legal apartheid did not end the oppression of South Africa’s black masses, what the BDS campaign and its ISO tails promote is the liberal fiction that divestment ended apartheid in South Africa. They bury the mass social struggles of the black and other non-white toilers, centered on the powerful working class, which brought an end to direct white-supremacist rule in South Africa. Before the end of apartheid, the significant wage gains won by black class struggle and the instability caused by a growing strike movement deterred investment. This was a direct threat to the continued profits of U.S. imperialism, which began to see the South African regime as a liability.

By the early 1990s, the imperialists and a section of the apartheid ruling class decided to go for a “power-sharing” deal with the African National Congress (ANC). A key factor was the 1991-92 counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, which for decades had supported the ANC materially and diplomatically. As the Moscow Stalinist regime disintegrated, ending the supposed “Communist threat,” the South African rulers came to terms with Nelson Mandela and the ANC.

By and large, divestment from South Africa took the form of overseas corporations signing over their interests to local

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subsidiaries, which often treated their workers even more brutally. In fact, divestment actually worked against the interests of the South African working class. A case in point occurred in 1989 when workers struck against plans by Mobil Oil and Goodyear to pull their investments from the South African economy during the divestment campaign. While the workforce at Mobil Oil received a small payout in return, the 1,200 workers at Goodyear represented by the National Union of Metalworkers were fired en masse.

We would support time-limited, trade-union actions against the Israeli state, such as in response to a particular Israeli atrocity. But we are politically opposed to standing boycotts, divestment and sanctions. Successful boycott campaigns would hurt the working class of Israel—Jewish, Arab and immigrant—with mass layoffs weakening its power, which must be mobilized to smash the Zionist state through socialist revolution. As we said about the anti-apartheid struggle: “The only kind of ‘divestment’ that will benefit the exploited and oppressed will be proletarian revolution, and the expropriation of these riches by a black-centered workers government as part of a socialist federation of southern Africa” (“Black Workers Strike Against ‘Divestment’ Union-Busting,” WV No. 486, 29 September 1989).

Furthermore, the BDS movement *pretifies* the horrific poverty and immiseration that continue unabated in today’s neo-apartheid South Africa. While apartheid’s legally enforced racial segregation is no more, the economic and social foundations of white supremacy, based on superexploitation of overwhelmingly black labor, remain intact. South Africa is today ruled by the same white capitalist class with a sprinkling of a few black faces. Once the leadership of the South African divestment campaign, the ANC through its Tripartite Alliance government now runs this neo-apartheid capitalist order, which dishes out brutal oppression to the South African working class, exemplified by the massacre of 34 striking miners in August 2012.

The analogy is also false at another level. South African capitalism, both under apartheid and since, is rooted in the brutal *exploitation* of black labor in the mines and factories. Thanks to its size and centrality to social production, the black South African proletariat has tremendous social power. In contrast, Zionist Israel is based on reliance on Jewish labor, from the outset marginalizing Palestinian workers as much as possible and now virtually excluding Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories from participating in the Israeli economy. In the years following the 1993 U.S.-engineered Oslo accords, the Zionist rulers displaced hundreds of thousands of Palestinian workers, replacing them with workers from Asia, Africa and East Europe, who are themselves deeply exploited and oppressed. This underlines that Palestinian national and social liberation can only come through common class struggle against both the Israeli and regional Arab ruling classes, which are likewise oppressors of the Palestinians.

“One-State,” “Two-State” Chimera

With the growth of BDS, a debate has emerged in the pro-Palestinian movement between those who support a “one-state solution” in which Israelis and Palestinians would supposedly live under one bourgeois-democratic secular state and those advocating a “two-state solution,” where Israelis and Palestinians would each have their own state. Norman Finkelstein, long a darling of the pro-Palestinian movement, ignited a furor in 2012 with his comments that BDS is a “cult” and that its program seeks to “destroy Israel.”

There can be no genuine expression of Palestinian self-determination while the racist capitalist state of Israel, which inherently oppresses the Palestinians, continues to exist. A Palestinian “state” along some variant of the 1967 borders, consisting of Gaza and the West Bank,

would be, *at best*, a deeply partial and deformed expression of Palestinian self-determination. It would be a statelet ghetto under the stranglehold of Israel and the surrounding Arab bourgeois regimes where neighboring states could dump their unwanted Palestinian populations—which number over three million in Jordan, 1.7 million in Israel and one million in Lebanon and Syria.

While the BDS Call remains agnostic on the question of a one- or two-state solution and the views of its supporters are diverse, several prominent leaders of the BDS campaign do support a “one-state solution.” BDS leader Barghouti, who



Launching of COSATU trade-union federation in Western Cape, South Africa, 1986. Black workers struggles paved way for end to apartheid rule in South Africa.

often refers to Israeli Jews as the “oppressor community,” argues for a “secular, democratic state” that would supposedly ensure rights to both Jews and Palestinians.

In reality, this “secular, democratic” Palestine would exclude the millions of Palestinians living in Jordan, which is a majority-Palestinian country. More fundamentally, this position wrongly denies that Israeli Jews constitute a nation with the right to their own self-determination. This was made clear by BDS leader Haidar Eid:

“A binational state by definition is a state made up of two nations. These two nations are historically entitled to the land. But Jews do not constitute a nation. Israeli Jews constitute a settler-colonialist community, not unlike the whites of South Africa or the French in Algeria. Settler colonists are not entitled to self-determination.”

—socialistworker.org,
16 December 2013

The doctrine that an oppressor nation forfeits its right to self-determination is the ideology of genocidal irredentism. The Zionist state was created by crushing the national rights of the Palestinians. But securing national justice for the Palestinians must not mean reversing the terms of oppression and denying the national rights of Israeli Jews. Basic to our Leninist position on the national question is that *all* nations have a right to self-determination.

Moreover, claiming that Israeli Jews have no rights pushes them more firmly into the arms of their Zionist rulers. The perspective of Eid, Barghouti et al. rejects any possibility of ever winning the Israeli Jewish working class to a program of class unity with their Arab brothers and sisters against all the exploiters and oppressors of the region. And if you do not look to the proletariat to advance your cause, then there is only one other social force to appeal to: the capitalist imperialist rulers and their politicians and institutions. Finkelstein rants about BDS’s supposed refusal to work within the framework of the United Nations. But in fact the BDS campaign, much like Finkelstein, appeals to the UN to enforce “international law.” Opponents of Zionist terror must place no reliance on this imperialist den of thieves and their victims! Time and again, the UN has acted to reinforce Palestinian oppres-

sion. The UN presided over the 1947 partition of Palestine, and its “peacekeepers” disarmed Palestinian fighters in Lebanon in 1982, setting up the massacre at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps by forces acting on behalf of the Israeli army.

What BDS leaders promote is really nothing new. The “one-state solution” is a rehash of a similar formula promoted by the PLO in 1969, while the “two-state solution” apes its support in 1974 for the creation of a “mini-state” in the West Bank and Gaza. The fundamental premise of both perspectives was to appeal to the regional Arab bourgeois regimes and/or the imperialists to pressure Israel

class has only tightened. Indeed, it will likely take a cataclysmic event, such as the conquest of power by the working class in one of the major countries of the region, to dramatically change the political consciousness of the Israeli working class.

The key to the liberation of the Palestinian masses lies not in a Palestinian nationalist framework, which preaches the unity of the downtrodden and exploited with their “own” exploiters and would-be exploiters, but in an *internationalist class* perspective that looks to the overthrow of bourgeois rule throughout the region through socialist revolution. Yet it is precisely the liberal-bourgeois political outlook promoted by the likes of BDS and others—working within a capitalist framework, seeking to pressure one capitalist force or another—that ensured that upheavals like the early 2011 uprising in Egypt, taking place amid massive waves of labor strikes, never for an instant challenged capitalist rule in that country. This was most clearly expressed by the ISO’s fraternal group in Egypt, the misnamed Revolutionary Socialists, which in 2012 called for a vote to the reactionary Muslim Brotherhood, only to support the coup carried out by the bloodsoaked military a year later. The only program the ISO and its cothinkers will never support is that of the class independence of the proletariat and the struggle for workers revolution.

The Arab nationalist view that Israel is a seamless mass of predatory colonialists denies the reality that it is a *class-divided* society, with a capitalist ruling class and an exploited proletariat. If the Jewish working class is to fight for its own liberation from capitalist exploitation, it must champion the national rights of the Palestinians. In turn, the Arab workers will not be won to a perspective of proletarian revolution if they are not broken from nationalism, religious fundamentalism and anti-Jewish bigotry. And that will not happen unless the Arab proletariat upholds the right of Israeli Jews—as well as the Kurds and other peoples—to a national existence. In short, the program of BDS rejects the only *realistic* program for social and national liberation in the region: a socialist federation of the Near East.

The current grim situation underlines that there is no easy road to the liberation of the Palestinian people, which requires the revolutionary overthrow of capitalist rule in nuclear-armed Israel and the surrounding Arab states. This perspective demands the forging of revolutionary Marxist parties committed to the struggle for working-class power and tempered through the most uncompromising struggle against all forms of nationalism and religious reaction. There is no other way. ■

into negotiations. The result is the deepening of Palestinian oppression, with the Palestinian Authority now acting as gendarmes for Israel in the West Bank. In turn, the utter bankruptcy of the Palestinian nationalist movement has fueled the growth of the reactionary, anti-woman, anti-Jewish, anti-Christian outfit Hamas, not only in Gaza, where it holds power, but even among the historically cosmopolitan Palestinians of the West Bank.

For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

Looked at narrowly through the prism of that tiny sliver of land called Israel/Palestine, the situation of the Palestinians does indeed seem intractable. It is only the working class of Israel that has the capacity to destroy the Zionist citadel from within through socialist revolution. Yet Israeli society has moved sharply to the right in recent decades and the stranglehold of Zionism on the Jewish working

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WORKERS VANGUARD

“Boycott Israel” Campaign and Illusions in Democratic Imperialism

Defend the Palestinians!

The pro-Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign has recently gained a foothold on numerous U.S. and European campuses and among small sections of the European bourgeoisies. This liberal movement appeals to “international civil society organizations and people of conscience” to implement boycott and divestment campaigns against Israel, a regional capitalist power that has brutally dominated the Palestinian people for over six decades. It also calls on its supporters to pressure their governments to implement embargoes and sanctions against Israel. The stated goal of the campaign is to force Israel to comply with “international law” and recognize the Palestinians’ right to self-determination.

The American Studies Association (ASA) made national headlines with its endorsement of BDS in December. Over 1,000 professors and academics at U.S. universities have endorsed the U.S. Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, and several university student governments have symbolically voted to divest from Israel. Student governments at Loyola University in Chicago and the University of California (UC) at Berkeley, Irvine and San Diego have voted in favor of divestment from companies such as Caterpillar, Hewlett-Packard, General Electric and Boeing which do business with Israel. Divestment campaigns have caused a stir at University of Michigan, Arizona State University, New York University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

BDS has also been debated interna-

tionally. Some European pension funds have withdrawn investments from Israeli banks, while some European corporations have canceled contracts. The most widely known controversy has involved actress Scarlett Johansson, who quit her role as ambassador with the British charity Oxfam to keep her contract with the Israeli company SodaStream, which has a plant in a West Bank settlement.

Predictably, the Zionists have launched a widespread campaign of slander and repression against all advocates of BDS. Speaking at an American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) conference in March, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu provided marching orders for American Zionists: “Those who wear the BDS label should be treated exactly as we treat any anti-Semite or bigot. They should be exposed and condemned. The boycotters should be boycotted.” According to the London *Times* (February 11), the Israeli government has begun a media campaign to publicly link BDS supporters to “terrorists” and “enemy states.”

Equating any criticism of the racist, semi-theocratic Israeli state with anti-Jewish bigotry is the leading tactic of a well-oiled Zionist propaganda machine, which has the full support of the U.S. government. Their attacks on anyone who wants to defend Palestinian rights go far beyond slander and assaults on students’ free speech: the highly organized and financed pro-Israel cabal works overtime to instigate suspensions of activists from school and to get state legislatures to cut

Young Spartacus



Reuters

Top: Palestinian boy at scene of an Israeli air strike in central Gaza Strip, April 21. Right: BDS activist Ali Abunimah at Boston picket protesting Israeli Knesset members, Northeastern University, April 1.



Demotix

funding from universities that support the boycotts or to ban criticism of Israel under “hate speech” laws.

Last year, in the lead-up to an event featuring BDS spokesman Omar Barghouti

and liberal academic Judith Butler at Brooklyn College in New York City, Democratic city council member David Greenfield slandered the BDS campaign as a

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For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

Right Sector Fascist Provocation at Leftist Event on Ukraine

Chicago

An April 12 meeting in Chicago in opposition to U.S./NATO provocations over Ukraine was the target of a sinister mobilization by supporters of the Ukrainian fascists. A screaming mob of some 30 reactionaries, among them sympathizers of the neo-Nazi Right Sector, amassed outside the meeting, carrying that organization’s red and black flag with trident emblem. Three fascists

made it inside, but no effort was made to alert those at the event until Spartacist League members found out. At which time, the event organizers—Workers World Party (WWP), Freedom Road Socialist Organization (FRSO) and various liberal coalitions—refused our demands for the fascists to be ejected.

Instead, the WWP moderator, Eric Struch, launched a vitriolic tantrum threatening to remove our comrades if they did not stop “interrupting.” He was seconded by a spokesman of the American Party of Labor, who had been invited to speak on...the history of Ukrainian

fascism! Expelling our comrades from the meeting would have meant sending them into the heated mob of fascist scum out front.

One woman then interjected: “Eric, relax. I know it’s tense with fascists in our midst.” She added that our comrade was “asking a perfectly valid question, why are there fascists here?” When our comrades refused to back down, the reactionary goons themselves prepared to leave. Extending an olive branch to the vermin, Struch told them: “If you guys want to listen, that’s fine. We just don’t want any disruptions. That’s what

the issue is. Have a seat.” To which one fascist replied, “Thank you, I appreciate that.” Our comrades, however, were not “fine” with this arrangement, as the fascists are not about debate but about terror, and we continued to protest energetically until the three withdrew from the meeting.

In an attempt to whitewash its abject capitulation in the face of the fascists, WWP published a fabricated version of the events, titled “Chicago Anti-War Meeting on Ukraine Beats Back Fascists” (workers.org, April 15). Noting that “a handful of fascists and extreme nationalists got into the meeting,” the article makes it seem as if the event security team “forced all of them out.” Although the bulk of the reactionaries were blocked from entering by that team, it was our comrades who saved the situation on the inside. For its part, the FRSO simply disappears the fascist

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