

## Police Reform Is a Hustle

# Racist Cop Terror and the Fraud of Capitalist Democracy



WV Photos

**November 25: National Guard outside Ferguson police station (left) and protest in St. Louis the day after grand jury lets off cop who killed Michael Brown.**

Over 150 years later, Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger B. Taney's 1857 ruling denying black slave Dred Scott's petition for freedom echoes across America: black people "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect." Little more than a week after the cop who executed Michael Brown was given a free pass, a Staten Island grand jury decided that the New York City cop who killed Eric Garner had committed no crime. Among Garner's last words were "it stops today." But it didn't, and it won't short of getting rid of capitalism: an economic and social system rooted in brutal exploitation and racist oppression. It is this system, not "the people," that the cops serve and protect.

Following the standard racist script, the St. Louis County prosecutor portrayed an unarmed black youth, Michael Brown, as a violent, lawless predator and his police killer as the victim. That wasn't so easy in the killing of Garner. Countless millions saw the video of him pleading for his life while he was being strangled to death. Even some Republican Party leaders who usually revel in racist contempt for black people are now calling for a congressional investigation. Such is a measure of the difficulties the ruling class is having in preserving the narrative that the cops are defending society against dangerous "outlaws."

This country's rulers, a minuscule, ruthless class, are very well aware that they are sitting on top of a tinder pile of discontent that could be ignited by the spark of social protest. They own the banks and major industries, producing nothing themselves but reaping massive profits by further grinding down those still lucky

enough to have a job while axing social programs for the rest. In order to keep in check the workers they exploit and the black people and other minorities they oppress, the capitalist class unleashes its repressive state apparatus—cops, courts, prisons and military—whose powers it is augmenting. Such is as clear as the assault rifles of the National Guard troops mobilized to put down protest in Ferguson. At the same time, the ruling class seeks to disguise what is the dictatorship of

capital with the trappings of democracy and the illusion that the capitalist state is some kind of neutral body that represents everyone.

A popular protest slogan has been "black lives matter." But not for the rulers of this class-divided society, built on a bedrock of racist oppression, from chattel slavery to wage slavery. Black people, forcibly segregated as a race-color caste at the bottom of society, have always been over-represented in America's reserve army of

the unemployed, filling less desirable jobs when needed and cast aside in times of economic downturn. With the deindustrialization of much of the country, many black youth have simply been discarded as an expendable surplus population left to scramble to survive, to get gunned down by cops or to rot in America's dungeons.

But there are still significant numbers of black workers in strategic industries who will be instrumental in any fight to

*continued on page 2*

## Drop All Charges Against Protesters!

A new wave of protests has swept across New York City and the country following a Staten Island grand jury's December 3 decision to not indict the police officer who choked Eric Garner to death. The day after the cop walked, the Spartacist League joined a multi-racial crowd of some 10,000 people gathered in Manhattan's Foley Square for a rally against racist cop killings (see photo). Among the signs we held was one reading: "Cops Are the Armed Thugs of the Capitalists—Enemies of Workers, Blacks, Immigrants! Cops Out of the Unions!"

For several nights in a row, protesters marched all over the city, chanting: "Black lives matter!" and "I can't breathe!" They descended on busy holiday destinations, such as Rockefeller Center and Times Square, and stopped traffic on major thoroughfares to draw attention to the cop killings of Garner, Michael Brown and other black men. Giving the lie to Democratic mayor Bill de Blasio's bleatings about the right to protest, police had arrested at least 300 people by the end



WV Photo

of the week, charging many with disorderly conduct. In Ferguson and St. Louis as well as Los Angeles, Oakland and other cities across the country,

hundreds more have been arrested in protests against racist cop killings in recent weeks. We demand: **Drop all the charges now!**



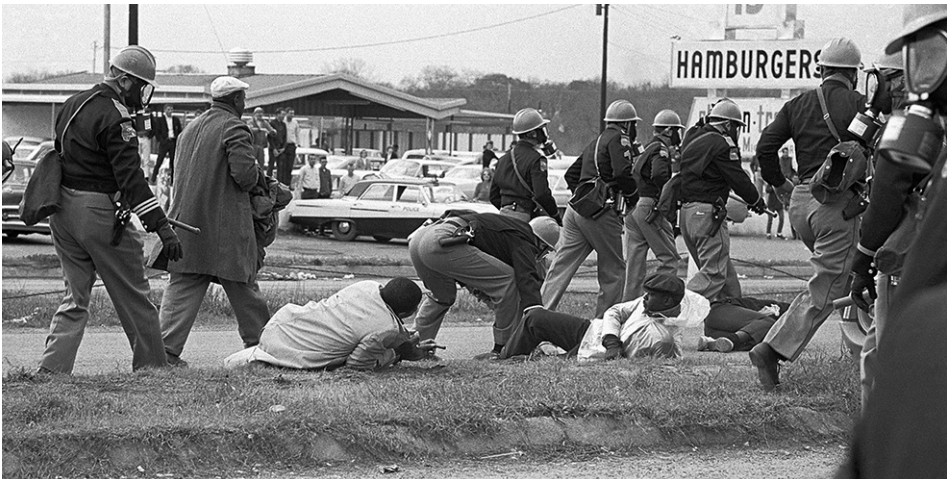
# Cop Terror...

(continued from page 1)

put an end to this racist capitalist hell. The power of the working class is derived from its central role in production; by withholding their labor, workers can cut off the flow of profits, the capitalists’ lifeblood. The capitalist masters have long fomented racial antagonisms to divide workers and weaken their struggles against the bosses, not least by obscuring the fundamental class divide between labor as a whole and its exploiters.

## Federal Investigations and Body Cameras

The Democratic Party, originally the party of the slavocracy, has for decades been the U.S. bourgeoisie’s preferred instrument for trying to douse the flames of protest and channel anger over cop terror back into the capitalist “justice” system. Now Attorney General Eric Holder claims to be carrying out a “rigorous and independent” civil rights investigation into the killing of Michael Brown. Truth be told, Holder & Co. reserve their true rigor for those who have exposed U.S. imperialism’s dirty wars, drone attacks and torture chambers filled with non-white people. Chelsea Manning is behind bars in a military prison for 35 years for this “crime.” Historically, the Feds have set up leftists and black militants for intimidation and terror, most notoriously



Selma, Alabama, 1965: State troopers, acting on orders of governor, assault SNCC members, including John Lewis, and other civil rights marchers.

through the FBI’s COINTELPRO operation, which killed 38 Black Panthers beginning in the late 1960s.

Those who put faith in Holder’s civil rights investigations into the Brown or Garner cases should consider the Department of Justice inquiry into the killing of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin: No charges have been brought against George Zimmerman, the wannabe cop who stalked Martin and shot him dead. Or consider the fact that two federal investigations of the Cleveland police department in the last decade did nothing to prevent a cop from gunning down 12-year-old Tamir Rice last month. On the very rare occasion the Feds do bring charges against a

killer cop and obtain a conviction, such as with the NYPD officer who took the life of Anthony Baez in 1994, the outcome is a relative slap on the wrist. The police then go on brutalizing those at the bottom of society.

After denouncing the “criminal” violence of the protesters in Ferguson two weeks ago, President Barack Obama hosted a carefully orchestrated White House summit meeting of black Democrats, preachers, cops and a select handful of young activists who have organized protests against racist cop terror. The purpose was to reinforce illusions that this brutal system and its police guard dogs can be reformed. To this end, the president announced the formation of a Task Force on 21st Century Policing to build “trust” between the police and the communities they daily terrorize.

Among the appointed leaders of this task force is the commissioner of the Philadelphia police department, one of the most notoriously racist and corrupt in the land. In 1985, the Philly cops dropped a bomb supplied by the FBI on the mainly black MOVE commune. Eleven black people, including five children, were killed and an entire black neighborhood burnt to the ground. Today, the Philadelphia police commissioner is a black man. So was the city’s Democratic mayor, Wilson Goode, at the time of the MOVE massacre.

A black man has sat in the Oval Office for the past six years and black life on the streets is as cheap as ever to the capitalist rulers. Obama’s sizable responsibility for this state of affairs is often excused by the claim that the Republicans in Congress have tied his hands. In fact, Obama has dutifully served Wall Street, acting as the black overseer for U.S. imperialism. Changing the skin color of the forces of state repression or their chief executives doesn’t change the class to which they are beholden.

Nor is the supply of Pentagon hand-me-downs from U.S. imperialism’s wars and occupations abroad to local police forces what makes the cops killers. To be sure, the armored personnel vehicles, helicopters and other high-tech weapons of war are deployed to intimidate and terrorize anyone “at home” perceived as stepping out of line. But like Michael Brown, most black people killed by cops are gunned down in the far more ordinary way, by a cop patrolling the neighborhood for “black suspects.” And Garner was strangled to death.

To quell the outrage over such blatant cop killings, NYC’s liberal Democratic Party mayor Bill de Blasio, working in coordination with the White House, promises to fast-track supplying the cops with body cameras. Why would anyone believe that such cameras will restrain the cops? A bystander videoing the police posse attacking Garner didn’t save his life, nor did it even lead to an indictment of the cop who choked him to death! But you can literally bet your life that the cops will have their cameras, and their guns, aimed right at you.

## “A Nation of Laws”

The collective hypocritical howl against the “violence” of protesters emanating from bourgeois quarters after the Ferguson grand jury decision had Obama intoning, “We are a nation built on the rule of law.” The entire legal edifice of this country has always buttressed the rule of the property owners, including laws sanctifying chattel slavery. It took mass, militant struggle, more often than not met with violent resistance by the forces of capitalist repression, to smash such laws as the Jim Crow segregation codes and the bans on trade unions.

It took the Civil War—a revolutionary struggle in which 200,000 black troops, guns in hand, were crucial to turning the tide—to smash the rule of the slaveholders. The Northern capitalists, worried that the former slaves claiming even a small portion of the property of the plantations might give their wage slaves ideas, soon allied with the Southern propertied classes against the aspirations of the black freedmen. The promise of “40 acres and a mule” was scrapped, with political power in the Southern states restored to the major landowners.

The battles of the civil rights movement brought down the Jim Crow segregation laws in the South. This outcome was assisted by the Soviet Union’s exposures of the vicious racism in the South, which embarrassed a section of the U.S. bourgeoisie at a time when it claimed to be

continued on page 8



TROTSKY

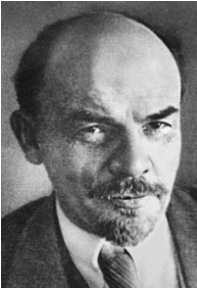
## The Bourgeois State: Machine of Repression

*Anger at and mistrust of the cops must be infused with the understanding that the repressive bourgeois state apparatus cannot be made to serve the interests of workers and the oppressed. In the lecture excerpted below, delivered two years after the 1917 October Russian Revolution, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin explained how the state is not an expression of the people’s will but a machine by which one class holds down another, notwithstanding the efforts of various mouthpieces of the bourgeoisie and capitalist politicians to obscure its true nature. That machine must be shattered in the course of the proletariat seizing power and a workers state established, as happened in 1917 in Russia.*

Nowhere does capital rule so cynically and ruthlessly, and nowhere is it so clearly apparent, as in these countries [Switzerland and the U.S.], although they are democratic republics, no matter how prettily they are painted and notwithstanding all the talk about labour democracy and the equality of all citizens. The fact is that in Switzerland and the United States capital dominates, and every attempt of the workers to achieve the slightest real improvement in their condition is immediately met by civil war...

Whatever guise a republic may assume, however democratic it may be, if it is a bourgeois republic, if it retains private ownership of the land and factories, and if private capital keeps the whole of society in wage-slavery, that is, if the republic does not carry out what is proclaimed in the Programme of our Party and in the Soviet Constitution, then this state is a machine for the suppression of some people by others. And we shall place this machine in the hands of the class that is to overthrow the power of capital. We shall reject all the old prejudices about the state meaning universal equality—for that is a fraud: as long as there is exploitation there cannot be equality. The landowner cannot be the equal of the worker, or the hungry man the equal of the full man. This machine called the state, before which people bowed in superstitious awe, believing the old tales that it means popular rule, tales which the proletariat declares to be a bourgeois lie—this machine the proletariat will smash. So far we have deprived the capitalists of this machine and have taken it over. We shall use this machine, or bludgeon, to destroy all exploitation. And when the possibility of exploitation no longer exists anywhere in the world, when there are no longer owners of land and owners of factories, and when there is no longer a situation in which some gorge while others starve, only when the possibility of this no longer exists shall we consign this machine to the scrap-heap.

—V.I. Lenin, “The State” (July 1919)



LENIN

# Workers Vanguard Subscription Drive Success

The annual *Workers Vanguard* subscription drive ended on October 15, with comrades having surpassed our quota by obtaining 2,149.5 points. This points total represents 1,000 subscriptions to *WV*, 87 subs to *Espartaco* (newspaper of the International Communist League’s Mexican section) and 63 to the press of other ICL sections. Congratulations to comrade Alan from the Bay Area for earning the most points.

Our subscription drive is an opportunity for the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs to pick up new readers of our press nationwide. It also is an opportunity for us to renew and maintain ties in places where we do not have branches and to get a wider sample of the country’s political mood. In addition to visiting various campuses near and far, we also intersected the organized working class through sales at Labor Day events and trips to places where there are strategic concentrations of the proletariat, such as at the ports.

The issues that spurred the most discus-

sion during the sub drive were racist cop killings, particularly of Michael Brown in Ferguson and Eric Garner in New York City; the Israeli Zionist rulers’ latest massacre of Palestinians in Gaza and the U.S. imperialist air strikes in Iraq and Syria. Our position in defense of the Palestinians was polarizing almost everywhere we went, including by attracting rabid opposition from Zionists. At anti-police brutality protests, we argued against illusions in the capitalist Democratic Party and federal government and explained the need to fuse the anger of black youth to the social power of the integrated working class.

By advancing our revolutionary Marxist program as part of addressing these and other struggles of workers and the oppressed, *WV* plays a crucial role in constructing the nucleus of a future Leninist vanguard party. We welcome our new and returning subscribers and encourage all readers to carefully consider our arguments, attend our public events, contact us and let us know what you think. ■

# WORKERS VANGUARD

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# On Ebola and Quarantine

15 November 2014

The Workers Vanguard article titled “Ebola in America: Capitalist Criminality and Racist Indifference” was quite good in what it said about the inequity and racism inherent to healthcare in the United States and the gross disregard with which the imperialists treat the third world. However I am deeply disturbed by what was not said in the article. The article leaves the reader with the mistaken impression that WV opposes the quarantining of non-symptomatic Ebola healthcare workers. WV has in fact taken no position on the home quarantining of such workers. If this position had been honestly expressed it would have given a tacit endorsement of those quarantines which are currently in effect in at least six states. A non-position is not appropriate in this case. Despite the fact that Ebola research has not been adequately funded there is a basic scientific understanding of what Ebola is and how it is transmitted. Under socialism, society would still have to face questions about how to deal with the emergence of new infectious diseases that have not been researched as extensively as we would like.

The medical establishment speaks with one voice on the question of the quarantines of non-symptomatic healthcare workers including the New England Journal of Medicine, Doctors Without Borders, the WHO and the CDC. Many have expressed distrust of these pronouncements due to the bad record of these institutions when it comes to issues of social policy; this is especially true of the CDC. I am willing to ascribe to the CDC all kinds of prejudices and bad practices, which are inherent to the capitalist system of healthcare. The bad treatment and lack of training given to healthcare workers by the CDC is evidence enough to illustrate the bad faith of the CDC. However the only reason that the CDC would lie about the risk posed by Ebola healthcare workers would be to not discourage workers who would volunteer to go to West Africa to treat those infected. It makes no sense for the CDC to place the medical needs of Africans ahead of the safety of U.S. public health generally. Furthermore it is the healthcare workers returning from Ebola-decimated regions of Africa that are fighting these quarantine orders, and these are precisely the people who would know best about what medical precautions are needed to prevent the spread of Ebola. We as communists should be standing with the healthcare workers who are courageously placing their lives at risk to help impoverished Africans decimated by Ebola.

Science and medicine are moving targets. Medical understanding is always incomplete. This is true of all medicine, not just a disease like Ebola which has

been deliberately under-resourced. This however does not indict medicine as a whole. We must rely on the best science we have available at any given moment no matter how insufficient it is. Today all indications are that there is no need to quarantine non-symptomatic healthcare workers returning from Africa. The official position of the SL was obfuscated by the WV article, however if it had been properly described it would be clear that by refusing to side with the healthcare workers and the overwhelming opinion of the medical community that these quarantines are unnecessary, WV would

atic Ebola victim are very unlikely to be at risk of infection, but the risk is not zero. And although much is known about the development and transmission of Ebola, still more remains to be learned.

While many medical authorities have come out against mandatory quarantines of asymptomatic individuals, the same authorities advocate strict monitoring for the length of time that the virus takes to incubate in its host—an estimated 21 days. That course of action is itself a form of social control and closely related to quarantine. The returning health care workers themselves do not speak with one



October 16: Union members of National Nurses United demonstrate in Oakland, demanding proper equipment and safety standards to protect patients, health care workers and public from Ebola.

have given the states political cover for their unscientific hysteria.

Some comrades have pointed out that Cuba has a policy of quarantining those healthcare workers who volunteer to treat Ebola, but also pays the workers for the extra risk and the time in quarantine. The way the Cubans treat their healthcare workers and have conducted these quarantines is in sharp contrast to the treatment dished out in the U.S. and illustrates the more egalitarian nature of the deformed workers state. The policy is still scientifically wrong, and I would warn any comrade against relying on Cuba as a model for good public health policy that as late as 1994 Cuba was quarantining AIDS patients.

Comradely,  
Ken R.

**WV replies:** Our article in WV No. 1055 (31 October) purposely did not take a position on the mandatory quarantining of asymptomatic health care workers exposed to the Ebola virus. We do not rule out the possibility that quarantine might be warranted as a necessary public health measure, even if it comes at the expense of personal rights and liberties. This stance does not preclude us from condemning the manner in which the capitalist government implements quarantine. So when New Jersey governor Chris Christie incarcerated nurse Kaci Hickox in a tent in Newark for three days, we stated the obvious in our article: Hickox “was treated like a criminal.”

In making his case, Ken R. missteps by reducing the issue to one simply of medical science. The control of disease is as much a social question as a scientific one. For various reasons, even medical personnel can sometimes cut corners on voluntary monitoring. By all accounts, community contacts of a newly symptom-

voice. Dr. Craig Spencer, whose fiancée voluntarily submitted to quarantine after he tested positive in New York City, called himself a living example of how protocols for early detection and isolation work. Kaci Hickox favorably cited the European Union guidelines, which include quarantine under certain circumstances.

In this case, we have taken a cautious approach. As a Marxist fighting propaganda group—not a medical organization—it is not incumbent upon us to pronounce on specific policy in all cases, especially in the absence of an epidemic or other overriding public health concern. In this sick capitalist society where there is effectively no public health system, government officials and hospital management lied through their teeth about their ability to

adequately deal with the problems posed by Ebola, giving fuel to the hysteria that Christie and other politicians seized on.

Notably, health care unions like the National Nurses United and SEIU have not opposed the quarantine measures as such. Rather, they have made demands that no worker exposed to Ebola forfeit pay, rights, benefits or seniority while being monitored or treated. In contract negotiations with the University of Michigan hospital system, nurses won an Ebola clause protecting their jobs and guaranteeing that they “will not lose their salary or have to use paid time off or extended sick leave if quarantined.”

Ken raises the argument that Cuba should not be looked to for a good public health policy because “as late as 1994 Cuba was quarantining AIDS patients.” Our article “Cuba: Socialized Medicine and the Fight Against AIDS” (WV No. 1010, 12 October 2012) detailed Cuba’s treatment programs. Noting that Cuba relaxed its mandatory quarantining in 1989 and gave the option of outpatient treatment in 1993, we explained: “Given that HIV cannot be transmitted by casual contact, quarantining proved to be unnecessary as a public health measure.” But we did not criticize the bureaucracy of the Cuban deformed workers state for adopting an extremely cautious policy intended to restrict exposure to a disease that was little understood at the time.

Today, Cuba has by far the lowest prevalence of HIV in the Western Hemisphere, if not the world. The superior quality of health care in Cuba compared to the rest of the Caribbean (not to mention parts of the U.S.) is a result of the overthrow of capitalist rule in the period following the 1959 revolution. Absent the aid Cuba once received from the Soviet Union, there has been an exacerbation of material scarcity on the island amid U.S. imperialism’s ongoing blockade. It is reasonable that a workers state in such hostile waters would exercise a zero-risk policy to keep a devastating disease like Ebola from reaching its shores.

The mobilization of the necessary resources to combat deadly epidemics and other threats to the well-being of mankind will not be forthcoming in a world order dominated by the imperialists, in which the value of the mass of the population lies in its capacity to generate profits for the capitalist masters. An international socialist society will strive to implement the highest levels of technique and culture to the benefit of all. ■

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Chelsea Manning: Exposed Crimes of U.S. Imperialism.....2  
28th Annual Holiday Appeal.....6  
Lynne Stewart Denied Medical Release.....12  
Free Tinsley Park Anti-Fascists!.....13  
Remember the 1985 MOVE Massacre.....14  
For International Solidarity with South African Miners!.....16

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**NOTICE**  
**Workers Vanguard skips**  
**an issue in December.**  
**Our next issue will**  
**be dated January 9.**

# Pakistan: Bloody Origins of the Z.A. Bhutto Regime

We reprint below the second part of an article based on a presentation by Workers Vanguard Editorial Board member Bruce André to a July 2013 meeting in London held by the Spartacist League/Britain, which published the article in Workers Hammer Nos. 227 and 228 (Summer and Autumn 2014). A minor correction has been incorporated accounting for the fact that Arbab Sikander Khan Khalil held the office of governor of North-West Frontier Province. Part One appeared in WV No. 1057 (28 November).

## WORKERS HAMMER

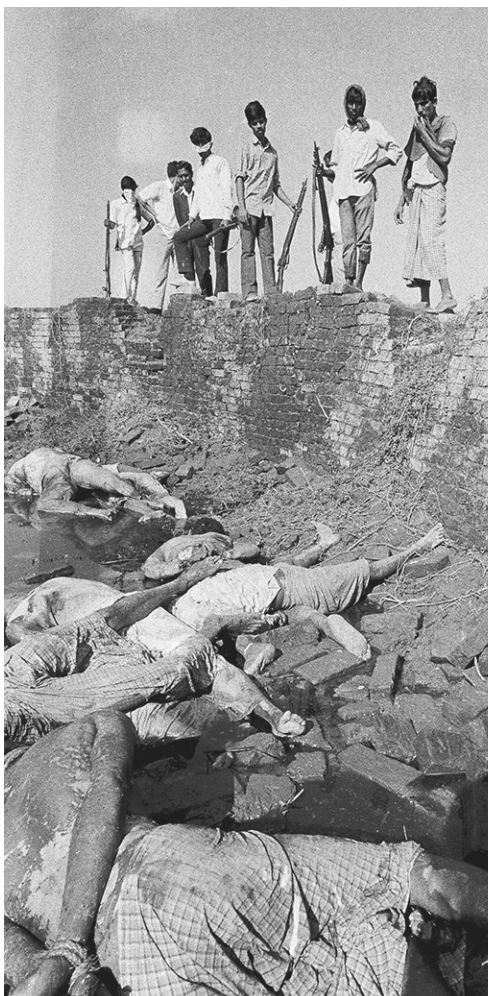
The working-class upsurge of 1968-69 in Pakistan was derailed due to the absence of a leadership of the working class that was independent of the capitalist ruling class. An important political influence in the working class at that time was Stalinism, which is based on the programme of two-stage revolution and “peaceful co-existence” with imperialism. In defence of imperialist “democracy,” the Communist Party of India (CPI) supported British imperialism from 1941 onwards in World War II. During this time the CPI also made overtures to the reactionary, British-backed Muslim League. When the CPI subsequently decided to support the national independence struggle, it did so by subordinating the interests of the proletariat to the bourgeois-nationalist, Hindu-chauvinist Congress party.

The 1947 Partition of the subcontinent and the explosion of communal violence that accompanied it had a devastating effect on the Communist movement in what became Pakistan. In the Punjab, what weak base the CPI had was overwhelmingly among Sikh small landowners in the East, which became part of India. In Bengal, the CPI had one of its stronger bases, but it was mainly Hindu and less than 5 per cent Muslim. With the population transfers caused by the communal massacres of 1947 (and others in 1951 in East and West Bengal) as many as 90 per cent of the Communists left for India. Those who remained in Pakistan formed the Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP), which was largely driven underground by state repression.

In East Pakistan, where the CPP was strongest, the party adopted a policy of working through the nationalist Awami League. In the 1954 provincial elections in East Pakistan, CPP members won 22 seats in the assembly, all but four of them as Awami League members. When Bengali peasant leader Maulana Bhashani split from the Awami League to form the National Awami Party (NAP), most of the CPP members went with him.

The Pakistani left in the 1960s was profoundly shaped by the split between the Stalinist bureaucracies ruling the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China. Pursuing the Stalinist dogma of “socialism in one country”—a rejection of proletarian internationalism—the ruling castes of both workers states sought détente with U.S. imperialism, even if that accord came at the expense of the other. Betraying the internationalist interests of both the Soviet and the Chinese workers states as well as the interests of the working masses of South Asia, the Soviet bureaucracy backed Indira Gandhi’s bru-

## Part Two: The Bangladesh War



Hulton-Deutsch

**Above: Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in London, July 1973. Left: Bhutto presided over brutal repression in Pakistan, including torture and murder of Bengalis during 1971 War of Independence.**

tally repressive capitalist regime in India, while the Beijing regime under Mao Zedong backed Pakistan. Moscow refused to support China in its 1962 border conflict with India, and in fact helped arm India.

In Pakistan, the Sino-Soviet dispute caused a split not only among the Stalinists but within the NAP as well. During the 1965 war with India, both Bhashani’s NAP and the Pakistani Maoists sided with Pakistan. For Pakistani youth radicalised in the 1960s, the Maoists’ “anti-imperialism” translated into support to the chauvinist hysteria directed by the ruling class against India. Such vile Pakistani nationalism would represent a common bond between leftists and the ultra-chauvinist Z. A. Bhutto. Thus, the pro-Beijing Stalinists in Pakistan achieved a degree of influence that belied their limited numbers. In East Pakistan, they did so by hitching their wagon to the petty-bourgeois nationalist Bhashani; in the West, they rallied around

the bourgeois politician Bhutto, providing the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) with much of its initial base of support.

The support for Bhutto by a number of trade-union leaders was a key means by which the combative Pakistani proletariat was chained politically to its capitalist class enemy. As a result, the mass upsurge was diverted onto the parliamentary plane, sidetracked by the promise of elections to a constituent assembly that would draw up a new constitution.

That promise was made by army commander-in-chief General Agha Mohammed Yahya Khan, who took power in a military coup in March 1969 when the ruling strongman Ayub Khan proved unable to crush the popular upsurge. Bhutto supported General Yahya Khan’s imposition of martial law, calling it a step towards elections to a constituent assembly.

As we’ll see, the promise of a bourgeois parliament successfully derailed

the workers upsurge, with devastating consequences for the proletariat and for all the oppressed. In the years following the class struggles of 1969, the Pakistani ruling class broke the back of the workers revolt. It was also during this period that the broad contours of the modern Pakistani police state were established: a fragile veneer of parliamentary democracy, mass-based electoral parties closely linked to the security services and a legal framework heavily integrating the trade unions into the state.

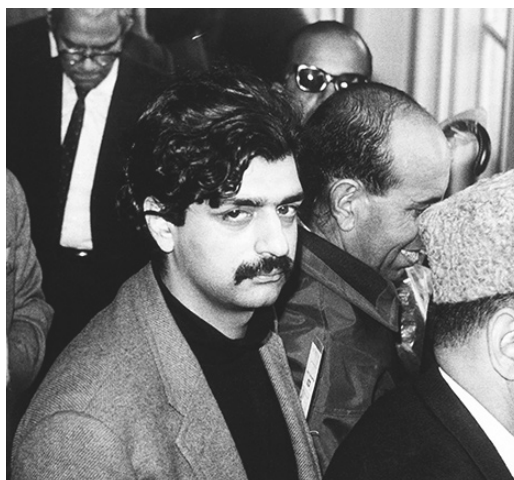
### Constituent Assembly Elections

The first priority of Yahya Khan’s martial law regime was to ensure that the proletarian-centred upsurge of the preceding months was not rekindled. The bosses started large-scale firings, including of many factory-floor leaders. In Karachi alone, 45,000 workers lost their jobs between 1969 and 1971. The military regime decreed an Industrial Relations Ordinance (IRO), aimed at integrating the unions into the capitalist state, setting up a system of government arbitrators and labour courts. It also granted collective bargaining authority solely to local unions as a way of discouraging industry-wide or nationwide unions and strikes. To this day, the IRO is key to defining the structure of the Pakistani trade-union movement.

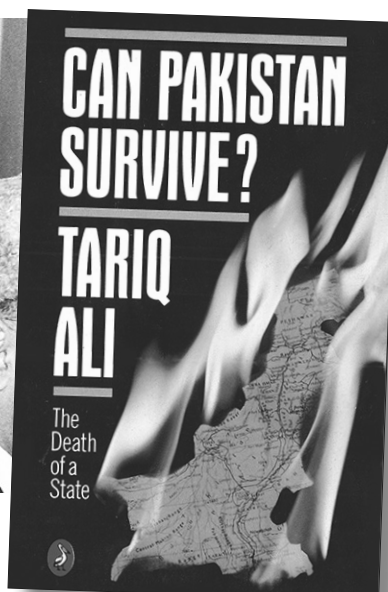
Bhutto continued his demagogic posturing as a friend of the working man. On May Day 1969, he led workers in Lahore on the largest demonstration that the city had ever seen. When union activists at Packages Industries in Lahore were arrested and one was sentenced by a military court to be lashed, Bhutto promised the workers that when the PPP came to power it would have the bosses of Packages Industries whipped. However, in late 1969, when a strike by 65,000 cotton textile workers in East Pakistan spread to industrial areas of West Pakistan, Bhutto denounced the occupation of a textile factory in Multan as “left-adventurism.”

The events leading to the secession of East Pakistan are dealt with in Tariq Ali’s book, *Can Pakistan Survive? The Death of a State*. This book was published in 1983 after Bhutto had come to power, ruled the country for almost six years and been overthrown in 1977 by General Mohammad Zia ul-Haq. Gone were the pro-Bhutto declamations in his previous book, *Pakistan: Military Rule or People’s Power?* Tariq Ali now informed his readers that the PPP in 1970 had “enormous possibilities, which were squandered” but adds that if anyone is to blame, “it is the historical process.” This absolves the Pakistani leftists, including himself, who had helped put Bhutto in office. Nevertheless Tariq Ali highlighted Bhutto’s close ties to the military. This is in contrast to Lal Khan, leader of the Struggle group in Pakistan, who in his 2008 book, *Pakistan’s Other Story: The Revolution of 1968-69*, systematically masks Bhutto’s alliance with hardline generals.

In 1970, General Yahya Khan announced that Pakistan’s first country-wide election would be held. In a gesture to appease the East Bengalis, he declared that East Pakistan would be represented in the constituent assembly proportionate to its population (which, according to the 1961 census, meant 54 per cent). Starting in January, when the Yahya Khan regime




**Tariq Ali in Karachi, February 1969. A self-proclaimed socialist, Ali’s 1983 book absolved himself and other leftists who helped put Bhutto in office.**





Yahya Khan flew to Dhaka on 15 March



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# WORKERS VANGUARD


15 cents

January 1972

No. 4

2012

## Turn the Guns the Other Way! NEW MASTERS FOR BANGLA DESH



The power rivalry between Pakistan and India, has once more broken out in war. Using the pretext of law and foreign struggle for independence...

January 1972

Two years earlier, the police and EPR forces had gunned down untold numbers of striking workers and student protesters during the upsurge of January-March 1969. The Bengali component of those security forces, under the leadership of

The Pakistani regime hammered on the notion that this prison house of peoples embodied “unity” based on Islam and that secession of East Bengal would lead to West Pakistan breaking up and being swallowed by Hindu India. However, after months of state repression against strikes

Bengali national struggle by Mukti Bahini (left) was subordinated in December 1971 to interests of India's bourgeoisie. As Indian tanks entered East Pakistan (below), Marxists said turn the guns against both Indian and Pakistani rulers. Under Mujibur Rahman, pictured in Dhaka in March 1972 with Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi (bottom left), Bangladesh emerged as client state of India.

“The Awami League, however, crossed over the line when it handed full military control over to the Indians and became a

*continued on page 6*

# WORKERS HAMMER

No. 128 • WINTER 2012/13      Newspaper of the Spartacist League

**Unchain the unions!**

## Down with austerity, anti-immigrant racism!



40% of the population of the United States live in poverty. In 2011, the average American family of four had a net worth of \$10,000, down from \$15,000 in 2007. The average American family of four had a net worth of \$10,000, down from \$15,000 in 2007.

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**Kurdish nationalists join imperialist onslaught**

## Down with US/British war against ISIS!

The US/British war against ISIS is a war of imperialist aggression. It is a war of imperialist aggression. It is a war of imperialist aggression.

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Pakistan...

(continued from page 5)

mere pawn in the chauvinist appetites of the Indian bourgeoisie.”

—“Turn the Guns the Other Way!  
New Masters for Bangla Desh,”  
WV No. 4, January 1972

At the same time, we pointed out that the real centre of Bengali class struggle was not Dhaka but Calcutta (Kolkata), where the workers movement was larger and more class-conscious. As we wrote in the above article: “The Indian central government oppresses the West Bengalis as thoroughly as Pakistan oppressed the East Bengalis. Serious support for self-determination in Bengal includes the right of reunification of all Bengal.”

As defeat loomed in East Pakistan, Bhutto joined the military government. He then led a Pakistani delegation to the United Nations to plead for a ceasefire. After the Soviet Union vetoed a Security Council resolution calling for a ceasefire and for troop withdrawals from East Bengal, Bhutto walked out of the UN session, his face streaked with tears, challenging the UN delegates: “Legalize aggression... legalize occupation—I will not be a party to it. We will fight” (*New York Times*, 16 December 1971).

After a two-week war, Pakistan’s Eastern Command surrendered on 16 December 1971. India had affirmed its dominance on the subcontinent. Riding the crest of its victory over Pakistan, the Congress party under Indira Gandhi moved to smash all left-wing opposition to its hegemony in India. For its part, Pakistan had retained its western territory. Thus it would continue to provide a strategic base for U.S. imperialism’s military operations directed against the Soviet Union, a role that Pakistan played from shortly after Partition until the end of the USSR in 1991-92.

Following the Indian army’s victory over Pakistan, the Awami League’s provisional government returned to Bangladesh from Calcutta. Mujibur Rahman established the first of a succession of corrupt and repressive regimes that to this day enforce the grinding exploitation of the Bengali working class. The real losers were the proletariat and impoverished peasants of the entire subcontinent, condemned to continued slavery in the interests of the venal capitalists who oppress and divide them.

Following the defeat in Bangladesh, General Yahya Khan could no longer rule Pakistan with any hope of a stable regime. Some 90,000 troops and collaborators were in Indian POW camps and the Indian army remained entrenched in Kashmir. Universally condemned for its butchery in East Bengal, the Pakistani army needed a more popular instrument. Bhutto’s moment had arrived. As Tariq Ali described the events:

“Within the army itself, there was a strong mood of revolt against the high command. A crack armoured division was on the verge of open mutiny after the war.... At a stormy meeting of senior officers, General Hamid was abused and almost physically assaulted. A new military leader was considered inappropriate. The dissident

officers decided to send for Zulfikar Ali Bhutto....

“Bhutto’s take-over was thus arranged by the Army.”

The night of his return to Pakistan on 20 December 1971, Bhutto delivered a speech that was broadcast to the country. He promised the soldiers that “we will take revenge” and “we shall wipe out the stigma even if it has to be done by our grandchildren.” The London *Financial Times* (21 December 1971) observed that Bhutto “had the most consistent and emphatic record of hostility towards India of any leader who has achieved prominence in Pakistan.”

Bhutto in Power

Bhutto came to power as the country’s economy was reeling from the effects of the war. With the secession of Bangladesh, Pakistan lost its main source of foreign exchange, exports of jute and tea, as well as a captive market for its manufactured goods. In a further blow, independent Bangladesh wasted no time nationalising the considerable assets held in the country by Pakistani conglomerates such as Dawood and Adamjee. With Pakistan



February 1972: Mao Zedong (right) greets Z.A. Bhutto in Beijing.

already crushed under a burden of debt, the Bhutto regime desperately needed further loans from international financiers.

In the first two years of Bhutto’s reign, the amount by which Pakistan’s imports exceeded its exports increased almost tenfold. Bhutto doubled the country’s astronomical military budget in order to reconstitute the shattered armed forces. To make up for the loss of export earnings, Bhutto signed agreements with Saudi Arabia, Iran and the Gulf states to allow large-scale migration to those countries by Pakistani workers and peasants. The labour power of Pakistani workers quickly became Pakistan’s main export. That continues to be the case today, as remittances by workers abroad dwarf the earnings from the country’s other main export items, cotton goods and knitwear.

Bhutto railed against blood-sucking bosses and paraded some capitalists in handcuffs before the TV cameras, while behind the scenes he negotiated an IMF loan package, pledging to impose draconian austerity measures. The IMF imposed a currency devaluation that triggered rampant inflation. By the mid 1970s, annual

inflation reached a staggering 46 per cent, wiping away most wage gains. For the vast majority of the toiling population, the Bhutto years were a period of declining living standards and heightened insecurity.

The Bhutto government launched a number of social programmes, notably in education and health care, but the World Bank categorically refused to fund programmes that focused on benefiting the common people. Bhutto’s promised land reform was so shot through with loopholes that it had essentially no practical effect. His “new” labour policy consisted of some modifications to General Yahya Khan’s IRO which, as historian Zafar Shaheed explained, “further tightened government controls over industrial relations.”

The workers and peasants who had been taken in by the PPP’s cynical promises believed that they now had an ally in the Presidential Palace and they launched a new round of class struggle. Tenant farmers carried out land occupations and fought pitched battles with the landlords’ goons in many parts of Sindh, the Punjab and NWFP. In Karachi on 28 March

1972, 200,000 workers walked off the job, bringing the entire Sindh Industrial Trading Estate to a standstill. Bhutto warned the workers that, if they continued their struggles, “the strength of the street will be met by the strength of the state.” Soon he was using the police and army to break strikes. Bhutto’s ministers asked factory owners to provide lists of “undesirable” workers, who could then be dealt with by state authorities.

The workers’ leaders who had joined the PPP now began to feel the force of state repression brought down upon them by the party that they had helped bring to power. Mukhtar Rana, a trade union leader whose group led a number of unions in Lyallpur had been an early PPP supporter. Now Rana called for a “people’s court” to pass judgment on Bhutto. Rana was arrested in March 1972 under Martial Law regulations and was sentenced to five years’ imprisonment for inciting violence; after his release, he was forced into exile. Rana was among the first of a large number of worker militants who would be imprisoned, brutalised or killed by the Bhutto regime.

A confrontation between the Bhutto regime and the workers ensued when the World Bank decreed that financial aid would depend on the government’s ability to control labour unrest. On 7 June, at the Sindh industrial estate in Karachi, workers at the Feroz Sultan textile mill *gheraoed* (locked up) the management. Police fired on workers, who responded by shutting down both the Sindh and Landhi industrial areas of Karachi for 12 days.

The Bhutto regime’s decisive battle against the militant workers movement came in October 1972 at Karachi’s Landhi industrial area, when workers occupied two mills, Gul Ahmed Textiles and Dawood Cotton. The plant occupations were led by Bhutto’s Maoist supporters. Tufail Abbas’ organisation was in the leadership of the Labour Organising Committee (LOC). One member of the LOC was Rashid Hasan Khan. He had been one of the Maoist student leaders who accompanied Bhutto on his early speaking tours. Meanwhile, Mairaj Mohammad Khan, the other former National Student Federation leader who had joined Bhutto on those early platforms, was now Bhutto’s minister of state for public affairs.

This was the kind of situation that Bhutto’s leftist supporters had been preparing for: they were in the leadership of a nationally important strike, and they were well represented in the PPP government. They were now perfectly positioned, so they thought, to pressure the government into defending the workers’ interests. Needless to say, it didn’t work out that way. In fact *Minister* Mairaj Mohammad Khan was an executive officer of the capitalist state. And as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels taught, the capitalist government is the executive committee that manages the affairs of the capitalist class. The role expected by the bourgeoisie of these labour fakers was to cajole the workers into submission. Mairaj Mohammad Khan argued with the strikers that their action was weakening the government. When they refused to return to work, on 18 October the police and the military attacked the occupied mills, using bulldozers to break down the factory walls and opening fire on workers. After holding out for about a month, the workers were forced back to work under army supervision. According to trade-union leaders more than 100 workers had lost their lives.

With the massacre of the Landhi strikers, the treachery of the reformists in leading the workers into support for Bhutto’s PPP in 1968-69 was apparent. The pseudo-left betrayers had politically disarmed the workers and helped set them up for bloody defeat by counselling them to view the PPP regime as a vehicle for furthering their interests.

The Bhutto regime came down hard on the leaders of the strikes. Shortly after the strike at the Sindh industrial estate ended, shopfloor leader Bawar Khan was arrested and tortured. Tufail Abbas was imprisoned by the Bhutto regime. Mairaj Mohammad Khan, who resigned from the government following the massacre of workers at Landhi, spent nearly four years in Bhutto’s dungeons, where he was

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6

WORKERS VANGUARD



tortured and lost much of his eyesight.

Citing the need for a “people’s army,” Bhutto set up a 15,000-man paramilitary Federal Security Force, which sowed terror among leftists and other opposition forces. As Tariq Ali noted, this force “was headed by veteran policemen notorious for their corruption and sadism; the foot-soldiers were recruited from *lumpen* layers in the cities, armed with repressive powers and weapons” (*Can Pakistan Survive?*). The Federal Security Force was trained in counterinsurgency techniques by the Savak, the Shah of Iran’s dreaded secret police. Trade unionists, peasant organisers and opposition politicians were abducted, imprisoned and often simply disappeared.

Soon Bhutto’s jails were filled with political prisoners. According to a “White Paper” prepared by the Pakistani authorities after Bhutto was ejected from office by the military, Bhutto set up a secret prison in the portion of Kashmir occupied by Pakistan, outside the purview of the courts, where political opponents were detained indefinitely. Bhutto refused to let more than one in three Biharis who requested “repatriation” set foot in Pakistan, supposedly their homeland. More than two decades later, there were still a quarter of a million stateless Biharis surviving in miserable conditions in Bangladeshi refugee camps.

**Bhutto’s Brutal Repression in Balochistan**

The PPP government in Sindh declared Sindhi the sole official language for provincial affairs, in a blatant attack on the industrial working class, which was at that time mainly Urdu-speaking. When the *mohajirs* (migrants from India at the time of Partition, who spoke Urdu) launched a protest movement in July 1972, police shot and killed almost two dozen protesters.

Bhutto also moved to smash local nationalist forces in Balochistan and in the largely Pashtun NWFP, where the PPP had little support. In both of those provinces the pro-Moscow faction of the National Awami Party had formed coalition governments. Bhutto summarily dismissed governors Bizenjo of Balochistan and Arbab Sikander Khan Khalil of the NWFP, both of whom were popular NAP leaders. The NAP was banned and its leaders imprisoned. The Bhutto regime unleashed a more intense version of the scorched earth tactics that had been used against the Baloch people in the 1960s. Bhutto turned to General Tikka Khan, who had carried out that earlier slaughter of the Baloch people and who was known as the “butcher of Bangladesh.” Cobra helicopter gunships provided by the Shah of Iran and flown by Iranian pilots unleashed massive firepower on the defenceless population of Balochistan. Meanwhile, Mao’s China showered the Bhutto regime with modern tanks and MIG fighter jets, while Washington supplied “economic” aid, much of which was spent on military supplies. Masses of Baloch civilians were driven from their homes as warplanes indiscriminately bombed free-fire zones, strafed encampments of nomads and dropped napalm on rural villages.

Lal Khan whitewashes Bhutto’s role in launching the massacre in Balochistan, presenting him as powerless in the face of the generals:

“Bhutto began to feel that the establishment had its own agenda, compulsions and priorities. He could not do much about it. Now the army was going to reassert itself by military action.”

That’s certainly not how Bhutto himself saw it. As he prepared to send the army into Balochistan, Bhutto declared in a 22 February 1973 address to the National Assembly that “if you think that the story of East Pakistan will be allowed to be repeated here then you are sadly mistaken” (*Zulfikar Ali Bhutto: Speeches and Statements* [1973]).

Bhutto’s 1973 Constitution, which (heavily amended) continues in force today, imposes Islam as the state religion and



**Islamic measures introduced under Z. A. Bhutto deepened hideous oppression of women. Veiled woman votes in 1977 elections in Islamabad.**

requires the head of state to be a Muslim. In 1974, ceding to the Islamic fundamentalists, the Bhutto regime declared the Ahmadiya branch of Islam to be non-Muslim. Such discrimination against the Ahmadiyas has steadily intensified over the years. Today, Ahmadiyas suffer discrimination in employment and education, are barred in practice from voting, and are permanently threatened with prosecution—and murderous mob violence—for infringing Pakistan’s anti-blasphemy laws. Bhutto founded a number of official organisations to propagate Islamic theology and introduced the study of the Koran into school curricula. In 1976, Bhutto appointed General Zia ul-Haq, who had links to Jamaat-e-Islami, as Army Chief of Staff.

The efforts by Bhutto to reinforce the Islamists set the stage for the intense campaign undertaken by General Zia, after he overthrew the Bhutto regime in a July 1977 coup, to further strengthen the Islamists. Pakistan became a bastion of Islamic fundamentalism starting in the 1970s as the CIA, working with the Pakistani, Saudi and other intelligence services, funnelled billions of dollars to train and arm a network of Islamist groups based in Peshawar, which became the spearhead in the reactionary jihad against the Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan.

The bitter experience of the PPP in power demoralised the 1968-69 generation of militant workers. By the final year of PPP rule, after more than six years of brutal state repression, strike activity was one quarter of what it had been when Bhutto took office. Bhutto was thrown out of office by the military and accused of ordering the murder of a political opponent. The star witness at the murder trial was Masood Mahmood, who had been selected by Bhutto as head of the paramilitary Federal Security Force because of his proven depravity and unscrupulousness. Mahmood sent his former boss to the gallows.

A major portion of the responsibility for the failure of the proletarian upsurge of 1969 and the subsequent demise of the militant workers movement falls on the leftists at the time who lined up behind Bhutto’s power bid. By counselling support to the bourgeois PPP they, like Lal Khan’s Struggle group today, helped tie the workers politically to their capitalist class enemy and reinforced suicidal illusions in a supposedly “democratic” wing of the military. For his part, Lal Khan draws the following lesson from the experience of Bhutto in power: “It was the preservation of the structures of the bourgeois state that ultimately led to his own demise.” Lal Khan goes so far as to criticise Bhutto for not “dissolving the standing army and building a ‘people’s militia.’”

The idea that the working class can

sweep away the bourgeois state through parliamentary means—by pressuring the bourgeois politician Z. A. Bhutto, no less—is reformist nonsense. A core understanding of Marxism since the experience of the 1871 Paris Commune is that the proletariat cannot simply lay hold of the existing bourgeois state apparatus. It must smash the capitalist state—which at its core consists of the army, the police and other forces of bourgeois repression—and replace it with the dictatorship of the proletariat. On an international scale, this would lay the basis for the withering away of the state and the creation of a classless communist society.

**For a Socialist Federation of South Asia**

Our fundamental programmatic reference on the national question is Lenin’s Bolshevik Party, which was able to cut across national divisions by offering full democratic rights to all nationalities. The Leninist programme is trampled underfoot by Lal Khan. In his book, *Kashmir’s Ordeal—A Revolutionary Way Out* (2005), he does not raise the call for the withdrawal of Pakistani troops from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The same grovelling before the Pakistani bourgeoisie is characteristic of the Socialist Movement Pakistan, section of the Committee for a Workers’ International. When the regime launched a military offensive in Balochistan in 2006, wiping out much of the leadership of the nationalist forces as well as many civilians, they headlined with studied neutrality: “Violence Erupts in Baluchistan Province After Killing of Nationalist Leader.” The article failed to take a side with the nationalist forces against the Pakistani army, and called the killing of nationalist leader Akbar Bugti “a political blunder” which “will give rise to the nationalism, not only in Baluchistan, but also in Sindh and NWFP provinces” (socialistworld.net, 4 September 2006).

Marxists understand that it is a reactionary utopia to imagine that even such basic bourgeois-democratic gains as stable parliamentary democracy, an end to national oppression and formal equality for all could be achieved while Pakistan remains crushed by imperialist exploitation and plagued by poverty, national antagonisms and medieval sexual oppression. The stance taken by reformists of neutrality in the face of depredations carried out by the Pakistani police state against oppressed nationalities is a craven capitulation before the capitalist ruling class.

As in all neocolonial countries, imperialism introduced into the Indian subcontinent a degree of modern capitalist technique while bolstering the most reactionary and repressive aspects of semi-feudal society. Child labour is common,

often in dangerous agricultural or industrial environments. Though bonded labour is formally illegal, there are, according to a 2006 estimate by the International Labour Organization, 1.7 million bonded labourers in Pakistan, children and adults, working in brick kilns, the carpet industry and, especially, on the large agricultural estates in Sindh. Enslaved to pay off never-ending debt that often runs from one generation to the next, hunted down by the landlord’s goons if they try to escape their infernal condition, bonded labourers have virtually no recourse in a system dominated by the large landowners. These modern slaves are often lower caste Muslims or members of religious minorities—such as Hindus and Christians—or of indigenous and other minority ethnic groups.

Oppression is pervasive throughout all aspects of social life. Homosexuals in Pakistan are considered criminals under both *sharia* law and the penal code inherited from British colonialism. Homosexual oppression is linked to the special oppression of women in class society, in which the family, as well as organised religion, enforces the sexual division of labour based on child-rearing. It is in the oppression of women, the slaves of slaves, that all of the medieval backwardness, the class and caste divisions and the weight of religious reaction are concentrated. Pakistani women are subjected to *pardah* [seclusion] and jailed or stoned to death for adultery and similar “crimes” under Islamic law or murdered in “honour killings” by their own families. Rape is perpetrated on a massive scale. The fight for the most basic needs of women—for literacy, education, access to contraception and abortion, an end to forced marriage and a way out of grinding poverty and oppression—requires a struggle to root out the very foundations of capitalist society.

In the imperialist epoch, the semicolonial bourgeoisies, despite formal independence, remain dependent on the imperialists and fearful of any challenge to their class rule by the proletariat standing at the head of the poor peasantry and all the oppressed. The task of liberating all the exploited and oppressed of the Indian subcontinent, with its seemingly intractable national and communal conflicts, demands the forging of Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard parties dedicated to the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisies in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh and the establishment of a Socialist Federation of South Asia. Only an internationalist perspective, uniting class and other social struggles on the subcontinent with the fight for workers revolution in the U.S., Britain and other advanced capitalist countries, can open the door to liberation for the impoverished masses worldwide, which will be achieved through the building of a socialist world order. ■

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# Cop Terror...

(continued from page 2)

bringing democracy to black, brown and Asian peoples of the world. But while ending Jim Crow, the civil rights movement could not win black freedom because it never challenged the capitalist system to which black oppression is integral. In fact, liberal civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King looked to the representatives of this very system, particularly those in the Democratic Party, for redress.

From Harlem to Watts to Detroit, every ghetto upheaval in the 1960s provoked by police terror was an explosion of frustration and fury against relentless poverty, joblessness and dilapidated housing, schools and hospitals. Those conditions were and are interwoven into the economic and social structure of American capitalist society. There is no other road to eliminating the special oppression of black people than the victorious conquest of power by the U.S. proletariat. And there will be no social revolution in this country without the united struggle of black and white workers led by their multiracial vanguard party.

As we wrote in a document adopted at our founding conference in September 1966:

“For the last three summers ghettos across the country have been rocked by elemental, spontaneous, non-political upheavals against the prevailing property relations and against the forces of the state which protect these relations.... Yet despite the vast energies expended and the casualties suffered, these outbreaks have changed nothing. This is a reflection of the urgent need for organizations of real struggle, which can organize and direct these energies toward conscious political objectives.”

—“Black and Red—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom,”  
*Spartacist* Supplement,  
May-June 1967 (reprinted in  
*Marxist Bulletin* No. 9)

Today again the mass outrage against the cops needs an organized political expression. Not one that strengthens the hand of the Democrats, but one that mobilizes the oppressed in opposition to the capitalist rulers and their parties. A revolutionary workers party must be built to weld the social power of the multiracial labor movement, with its strategic component of black workers, to the anger of the ghetto masses.

By uniting in organizations representing their class interests, workers have been able to wrest concessions from the employers. The mass industrial unions were built in the 1930s through pitched battles with the bosses’ security guards, the cops and the National Guard. Black workers, who had been kept out of the lily-white craft unions, were brought into these battles, many of which were led by avowed socialists. Fighting with courage and determination, they wrote a proud page in the history of labor and black struggle in this country.

But short of a revolutionary struggle by the working class to reclaim the fruits of its labor through expropriating the property of the capitalist enemy, these victories still only brought a brief respite in the ongoing class war between the workers



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**Beaten, gassed and jailed over the course of a 64-day strike in Memphis, 1968, sanitation workers protest racist contempt for black people while successfully fighting for union recognition and improved wages.**

and their exploiters. Given that labor has for decades taken a beating in that war, and been mobilized less and less in action, waging such a struggle will take a big leap in consciousness and organization. It will take a fight to replace the current misleaders of the unions who have, for so long now, chained workers to the profitability of American capitalism.

## To Fight for a Future Requires Learning from the Past

In an inchoate way, the boos that greeted Jesse Jackson when he went to Ferguson in August to try to corral protesters behind calls to “get out the vote” in the November midterm elections were a recognition that only a thin layer of black people benefited from the civil rights movement. A lyric from St. Louis rapper Tef Poe, “This ain’t your daddy’s civil rights movement,” has been a refrain of some young black activists in Ferguson. But unless you learn the lessons of previous generations, including of those who challenged MLK’s “turn the other cheek” pacifism and Democratic Party liberalism, you can easily be doomed to the same political dead end.

The civil rights movement was far from homogeneous. Although the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) initially accepted MLK’s strategy as good coin, its militant young activists were not committed to nonviolence as a principle. In 1966, after being arrested for the 27th time, the 24-year-old SNCC leader Stokely Carmichael defiantly said: “I ain’t going to jail no more.” Renouncing the credo of nonviolence, Carmichael raised the call for “black power.”

In its own way, this call reflected an attempt to grasp for solutions outside the framework of U.S. capitalist society. But as we warned in “Black and Red”: “The slogan ‘black power’ must be clearly defined in *class*, not racial terms, for otherwise the ‘black power’ movement may become the black wing of the Democratic Party in the South.” This is exactly what happened. A case in point is Georgia’s longtime Democratic Congressman John

Lewis, who was a radical SNCC leader in the 1960s.

The potential to co-opt these militants was recognized by Republican Richard Nixon, who in his 1968 presidential campaign defended the call for black power as an expression of wanting a seat at the table “as owners, as entrepreneurs—to have a share of the wealth and a piece of the action.” Although black people never got any significant share of the wealth or the real power in this society, the Black Power movement ultimately became a ticket for propelling a few black faces into high places such as big city mayors, whose job was to keep the black masses down.

In the late ’60s, the Black Panthers courageously stood up to the racist ruling class and its kill-crazy cops. Both the Panthers’ glorification of ghetto rage and their rejection of the organized working class as the agent of black freedom and socialist revolution left them more vulnerable to murderous state repression. They ran up against a systematic government campaign of assassination, provocations, frame-ups and imprisonment aimed at beheading the black struggle. In the end, the Panthers could only alternate between heroic adventurism, with its bitter consequences, and appeals to the liberal establishment. Many of the Panthers who were not simply killed or locked away eventually made their way to the Democratic Party.

## Unchain Labor/Black Power!

Among those invited to Obama’s recent summit on Ferguson and the police was Ashley Yates of Millennial Activists United, an organization of young black women who were on the frontlines of the Ferguson protests. She explained her views in an interview:

“We are the generation that was ignited by Trayvon Martin’s murder and placed our faith in a justice system that failed us in a very public and intentional manner. Most of us were raised by parents that inherited the fruits of labor from the Civil Rights movement. They were placated, in a sense, by the stories of a reality that no longer seemed an issue for them. So as we navigate a society where those realities of segregation and oppression are supposed to be far behind us, yet are more present than ever before in our lives, we say no more. We are the descendants of those who already fought for these freedoms and we will not let their sacrifices, blood, sweat and tears be swept away.”

—thefeministwire.com, 3 October

Such young activists, for all their defiance, are going down the same blind alleys: lobbying for a federal investigation, grasping at the illusion of making the police accountable to the community, getting out the vote. It is small wonder these activists see no alternative, as the only force that can actually provide a way forward, the integrated labor movement, has been shackled by its pro-capitalist misleaders.

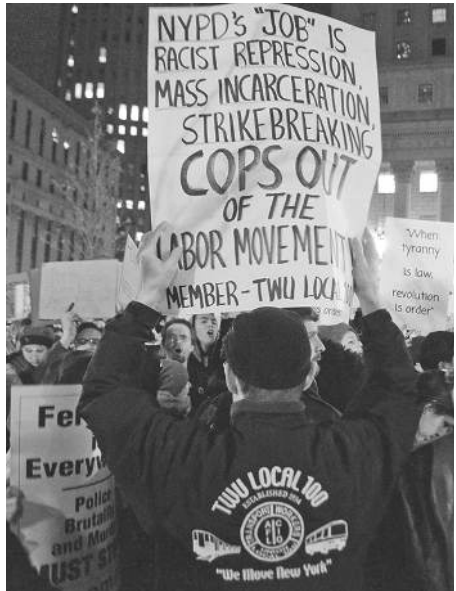
At the September convention of the Missouri AFL-CIO, the labor federation’s president, Richard Trumka, delivered a sometimes eloquent speech on the need for the labor movement to address the reality of racism. Pointing to the 1917 anti-black riots in East St. Louis in which

racist mobs killed up to 200 black people and drove black workers out of industry to make room for white World War I veterans, Trumka recalled the words of Socialist Party leader Eugene V. Debs that the riots were “a foul blot upon the American labor movement.”

Today’s “foul blot” on organized labor is the fact that it includes the very racist killer cops who are taking black lives on a near-daily basis! Indeed, Trumka began his speech by decrying the tragedy that a union “brother”—that is, Ferguson cop Darren Wilson—killed a “sister’s son.” Michael Brown’s mother is a member of an AFL-CIO affiliate, the United Food and Commercial Workers.

Back in the days of the struggles that built the industrial unions, the police weren’t seen as “brothers.” On the contrary, they were correctly recognized as the armed enforcers of the bosses’ interests against the workers. The reason was obvious: the police were beating and shooting, often killing, strikers. Now, when unions even talk of participating in protests against police violence, their “union brothers” threaten retaliation. The NYC Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association did so when the 1199SEIU union and the United Federation of Teachers said they were going to march in a Staten Island demonstration in August. In response, the SEIU tops distributed some signs that read: “Support NYPD. Stop Police Brutality.”

As is the case in many cities, the Greater St. Louis Labor Council has welcomed the local police “union” into its



WV Photo

**NYC transit union militant at December 4 Eric Garner protest.**

fold. Not surprisingly, far from taking up the fight against police terror, area unions have by and large not mobilized for the protests in Ferguson. The cops are sworn enemies of labor and have no place in the union movement. That the labor misleaders embrace the bosses’ thugs—the cops, prison guards and other armed security forces—is simply one of the more grotesque examples of their traitorous role as the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class.

As we wrote in the 1978 preface to *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 (Revised) “What Strategy for Black Liberation? Trotskyism vs. Black Nationalism”:

“Unlike chattel slavery, wage slavery has placed in the hands of black workers the objective conditions for successful revolt. But this revolt will be successful only if it takes as its target the system of class exploitation, the common enemy of black and white workers. The struggle to win black activists to a proletarian perspective is intimately linked to the fight for a new, multiracial class-struggle leadership of organized labor which can transform the trade unions into a key weapon in the battle against racial oppression. Such a leadership must break the grip of the Democratic Party upon both organized labor and the black masses through the fight for working-class political independence. As black workers, the most combative element within the U.S. working class, are won to the cause and party of proletarian revolution, they will be in the front ranks of this class-struggle leadership. And it will be these black proletarian fighters who will write the finest pages of ‘black history’—the struggle to smash racist, imperialist America and open the road to real freedom for all mankind.” ■

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# Subject Index...

(continued from page 12)

- **Cases**—And see **Obituaries; Partisan Defense Committee; School Bus Drivers.**

Occupy Protester Faces Seven Years—Overturn Conviction of Cecily McMillan!, #1046, 16 May (3)

Free Chelsea Manning!, #1051, 5 Sept. (2)

Court Orders More Prison Time for Jose Padilla, #1053, 3 Oct. (2)

Feds Witchhunt Palestinian Activist—Hands Off Rasmea Odeh!, #1055, 31 Oct. (3)

A Visit to Hugo Pinell (CSDN) (L), #1057, 28 Nov. (9)

- **NATO 3**

Framed-Up Protesters Face 30 Years, #1040, 21 Feb. (12)

Chicago: Free the NATO 3 Now!, #1047, 30 May (3)

- **Stewart, Lynne**

Defiant Lynne Stewart Finally Released, #1037, 10 Jan. (12)

Urgent Medical Appeal for Lynne Stewart, #1041, 7 Mar. (12)

- **Woodfox, Albert**—And see also **Partisan Defense Committee.**

Black Panther in Prison for Decades—Free Albert Woodfox! (CSDN), #1045, 2 May (3)

Court Overturns Woodfox Conviction (CSDN), #1057, 28 Nov. (3)

Civil Rights Movement—See **Black Question.** See also **Education.**

## CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION, U.S.—

And see also **Black Question.**

Defeat of Reconstruction and the Betrayal of Black Freedom (S)  
Part One, #1039, 7 Feb. (4, 5, 6, 7)  
Part Two, #1040, 21 Feb. (6, 7, 8, 9)

Cliff, Tony—See **Ukraine.**

COINTELPRO—See **Civil Liberties: General.**

College Athletes—See **Sports.**

Colonialism—See **India; Quote of the Week.** See also **Central African Republic; Ebola Crisis.**

Committee for a Workers' International—See **China; Socialist Alternative.** See also **Crimea; Germany; Roma; South Africa.**

Communist League of America—See **Labor: History.** See also **Port Truckers.**

Communist Party (U.S.)—See **Labor: History.** See also **Black Question; Detroit; Labor: General.**

Communist Party of India—See **India.** See also **Pakistan.**

Con Edison—See **New York City.**

Congress Party—See **India.**

Contraception—See **U.S.: General.** See also **History of the Marxist Movement.**

## CRIMEA—And see also Ukraine.

Ukraine Coup: Spearheaded by Fascists, Backed by U.S./EU Imperialists—Crimea Is Russian, #1041, 7 Mar. (1, 8, 9)\*

Crimea Is Russian—Self-Determination and Russian Intervention: Strengthening Our Position (C), #1043, 4 Apr. (3, 4)

U.S./EU Imperialist Frenzy as Crimea Rejoins Russia, #1042, 21 Mar. (1, 8, 9)

On Russian Intervention in Crimea (L), #1044, 18 Apr. (2)

Yes, Crimea Is Russian (L), #1050, 8 Aug. (2)

## CUBA—And see also Ebola Crisis; Venezuela.

USAID's Cuba Twitter Plot: #counterrevolution, #1044, 18 Apr. (3)

## DEATH PENALTY

Botched Execution in Oklahoma: Racist Torture, #1046, 16 May (12, 11)

Democratic Union Party (PYD)—See **Kurdish Question.**

## DETROIT

Capitalists Gut the Motor City—The Rise and Fall of a Labor/Black Stronghold (S)  
Part One, #1044, 18 Apr. (12, 9, 10, 11)  
Part Two, #1045, 2 May (6, 7, 8)

Spartacist Supporters in Detroit Auto, #1045, 2 May (7, 9)

Detroit Pension Robbery, #1048, 13 June (1, 11)

Water Shutoffs—Detroit Tells Poor: Drop Dead, #1052, 19 Sept. (2)

Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands—See **China.**

Dieudonné, M'Bala M'Bala—See **France.**

Dobbs, Farrell—See **Quote of the Week.** See also **Labor: History; Port Truckers.**

Donetsk—See **Ukraine.**

Drugs—See **Mexico.** See also **El Salvador.**

East China Sea—See **China.**

## EBOLA CRISIS

U.S. Troops Out of Liberia! The Ebola Crisis and the Imperialist Rape of Africa, #1053, 3 Oct. (1, 4, 5)

Ebola in America—Capitalist Criminality and Racist Indifference, #1055, 31 Oct. (1, 9)

On Ebola and Quarantine (L), #1058, 12 Dec. (3)

## ECONOMY—And see Quote of the Week; U.S.: General.

See also **Detroit.**

Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*—A Marxist Review by Gerrit Bogle and Joseph Seymour (R) (S)  
Part One, #1053, 3 Oct. (3, 9)  
Part Two, #1054, 17 Oct. (4, 5)

Eco-Socialism—See **Environmentalism.**

## EDUCATION—And see Black Question; Sexuality; Sports; Teachers.

As Bourgeoisie Touts 1964 Civil Rights Act—Supreme Court Knives Affirmative Action, Again, #1045, 2 May (1, 5)

More on Affirmative Action (L), #1047, 30 May (11)

Wall Street's For-Profit University Rip-Off (YSp), #1052, 19 Sept. (8)

Reformism *Ad Absurdum*—The ISO and the SAT Exam (YSp), #1057, 28 Nov. (4)

## EL SALVADOR—And see also Immigration.

Ex-Guerrillas Remain at Helm of Capitalist State, #1046, 16 May (3, 7, 8)

Engels, Friedrich—See **Archives of the Marxist Movement; Quote of the Week; Woman Question.** See also **Civil War and Reconstruction, U.S.; Economy.**

## ENVIRONMENTALISM

People's Climate March—Toxic Fumes from Eco-Socialists, #1055, 31 Oct. (3, 4)

On the NYC Climate March (L), #1057, 28 Nov. (2)

Europe/European Union (EU)—See **Roma; Ukraine.** See also **Britain; Crimea; Turkey.**

Farmer-Labor Party—See **Labor: History.**

## FASCISM—And see Australia; Crimea; Detroit; France; Israel/Palestine; Ukraine.

See also **Roma.**

Greensboro 1979, Kansas City 2014: Fascist Murder, #1045, 2 May (9)

Fast Food Workers—See **Labor: General.** See also **U.S.: General.**

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)—See **Civil Liberties: General.**

Feminism—See **Sexuality; Woman Question.** See also **Abortion.**

Ferguson, Mo.—See **Black Question.**

Florida—See **Black Question.**

## FRANCE—And see Central African Republic; Syria.

See also **Economy; Iraq; Ukraine.**

Workers Must Combat Racist, Anti-Semitic Poison—Down With French Government Censorship of Black Comedian!, #1039, 7 Feb. (12, 10, 11)\*

Repudiating WV's Liberal Whitewash of Anti-Jewish Demagogue—Dieudonné: Front Man for Fascist Terror (C), #1041, 7 Mar. (3, 10)

Surveillance State à la Française, #1039, 7 Feb. (3, 11)

French Trotskyists Protest Fascist Attacks in Rouen, #1049, 11 July (4, 5)

Fraser, Richard S.—See **Quote of the Week.**

Freedom Road Socialist Organization—See **Ukraine.**

Fryer, Peter—See **Archives of the Marxist Movement.**

Garner, Eric—See **New York City.** See also **Black Question.**

Gay Rights—See **Woman Question.**

Gaza—See **Campus Repression; Israel/Palestine.**

## GERMANY—And see Archives of the Marxist Movement.

See also **Crimea; Roma; Ukraine.**

No to Criminalization of Prostitution! (*Spartakist*), #1040, 21 Feb. (4, 11)

Global Warming—See **Environmentalism.**

Greensboro Massacre—See **Fascism.**

Guatemala—See **Immigration.**

Guerrero—See **Internationalist Group; Mexico.**

Gypsies—See **Roma.** See also **Canada.**

Haiti—See **U.S.: International Relations.**

Hamas—See **Israel/Palestine.**

Health Care—See **Abortion; Ebola Crisis; Mexico; Public Workers.** See also **Detroit.**

## HISTORY OF THE MARXIST MOVEMENT—

And see **Archives of the Marxist Movement; India; International Communist League; Labor: History; Quote of the Week; Ukraine.**

Honoring Antoinette Konikow, Pioneer Trotskyist, #1057, 28 Nov. (5)

Hobby Lobby—See **U.S.: General.**

Home Health Care Workers—See **Public Workers.**

Honduras—See **Immigration.**

Hong Kong—See **China.**

Ikea—See **Canada.**

## IMMIGRATION—And see Abu-Jamal: Message from Prison; Canada; France; Israel/Palestine.

See also **Port Truckers; Teachers.**

Immigration "Reform" and Liberal Hypocrisy—Obama's Deportation Machine, #1044, 18 Apr. (1, 4)

Children Flee U.S.-Made Hellholes—Central American Refugees: Let Them Stay!, #1050, 8 Aug. (12, 10, 11)

Imperialism—See **Iraq; Quote of the Week.** See also **Central African Republic; India; Near East; Ukraine.**

## INDIA—And see also Pakistan.

Communalism in India: Tool of Capitalist Rule—1984 Carnage of Sikhs (*Workers Hammer*), #1044, 18 Apr. (6, 7, 8)

Hindu Far-Right Sweeps Elections, #1047, 30 May (1, 8, 9)

"An Open Letter to the Workers of India" by Leon Trotsky, July 1939, #1047, 30 May (2, 10)\*

Correction on Indian Stalinists, Congress and World War II (L) (C), #1048, 13 June (2)

Infrastructure—See **New York City.**

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM)—See **Aerospace Workers.**

## INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST LEAGUE—

And see **Australia; Britain; Crimea; France; History of the Marxist Movement; South Africa.** See also **Mexico; Roma.**

25th Anniversary: "International Communist League Launched" (*Spartacist* No. 43-44, Summer 1989), #1049, 11 July (6, 7, 8, 9)

International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU)—See **Israel/Palestine; Longshoremen.** See also **Canada; Labor: History; Port Truckers.**

International Socialist Organization—See **Education; Ukraine.** See also **Crimea; Environmentalism; Israel/Palestine; Near East; U.S.: Elections.**

## INTERNATIONALIST GROUP (IG)

For "Independent" Vigilantism (*Espartaco*), #1055, 31 Oct. (7)

Interpenetrated Peoples—See **Ukraine.** See also **Israel/Palestine.**

## IRAQ—And see Kurdish Question.

See also **Near East.**

Iraq in Flames: Legacy of U.S. Occupation, #1049, 11 July (1, 10, 11)

## IRELAND

Anti-Abortion Hell for Women (*Workers Hammer*), #1054, 17 Oct. (2)\*

Anti-Abortion Hell... (C), #1057, 28 Nov. (2)

Islamic Fundamentalism—See **Iraq; Near East.** See also **Pakistan.**

Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)—See **Iraq; Near East.** See also **Kurdish Question.**

## ISRAEL/PALESTINE—And see Campus Repression; Civil Liberties: Cases.

See also **France.**

African Refugees Protest Racist State Crackdown, #1039, 7 Feb. (12, 9)

"Boycott Israel" Campaign and Illusions in Democratic Imperialism (YSp), #1045, 2 May (12, 10, 11)

Defend Palestinians Against Zionist Onslaught on Gaza!, #1049, 11 July (1, 2)

Zionist Bloodbath in Gaza, #1050, 8 Aug. (1, 4, 5)\*

Zionist Bloodbath in Gaza (C), #1051, 5 Sept. (3)

Protests Block Israeli Ship at Oakland Port, #1051, 5 Sept. (12, 11)

SYC at CCNY Rally: Defend the Palestinians! (YSp), #1054, 17 Oct. (7)

<p>On a False Analogy with Nazism (L), #1057, 28 Nov. (2)</p> <p>Japan—See <b>China</b>.</p> <p>Jewish Question—See <b>France; Israel/Palestine; Ukraine</b>. See also <b>Abu-Jamal: Message from Prison; Crimea</b>.</p> <p>Kansas City, Kan.—See <b>Fascism</b>.</p> <p>Khan, Lal—See <b>Pakistan</b>.</p> <p>Khmelnitsky, Bogdan—See <b>Ukraine</b>.</p> <p>King Jr., Martin Luther—See <b>Black Question</b>.</p> <p>Kirschbaum, Stevan—See <b>School Bus Drivers</b>.</p> <p>Kollontai, Alexandra—See <b>Quote of the Week</b>. See also <b>Woman Question</b>.</p> <p>Konikow, Antoinette—See <b>History of the Marxist Movement</b>.</p> <p>Korean War—See <b>South Korea</b>.</p> <p>Ku Klux Klan—See <b>Detroit; Fascism</b>.</p> <p><b>KURDISH QUESTION</b>—And see <b>Iraq; Near East</b>. Down With U.S. War Against ISIS! Syria/Iraq: Kurdish Nationalists Serve U.S. Imperialism, #1056, 14 Nov. (1, 10, 11)</p> <p>Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)—See <b>Kurdish Question</b>. See also <b>Near East</b>.</p> <p><b>LABOR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>General</b>—And see <b>Detroit; Longshoremenn; Port Truckers; Public Workers; Quote of the Week; U.S.: General</b>. See also <b>Black Question; Immigration</b>. Lessons of the Unionization of Meatpacking—Fast Food Workers Need a Fighting Labor Movement, #1040, 21 Feb. (3, 9)</li> <li><b>History</b>—And see <b>Black Question</b>. See also <b>Detroit; Port Truckers</b>. On Stalinists and 1934 Strikes (L), #1043, 4 Apr. (2, 4) Then and Now: 1934 Strikes—Class-Struggle Leadership Made the Difference (S) Part One, #1050, 8 Aug. (6, 7, 8, 9) Part Two, #1051, 5 Sept. (6, 7, 8)* Then and Now... (C), #1052, 19 Sept. (3) <i>Revolutionary Teamsters: The Minneapolis Truckers' Strikes of 1934</i> by Bryan D. Palmer—A Review and Commentary by E. Tanner (R) (S) Part One, #1052, 19 Sept. (6, 7, 11) Part Two, #1053, 3 Oct. (6, 7, 8)</li> </ul> <p>Latinos—See <b>Immigration</b>.</p> <p>Lawrence &amp; Wishart—See <b>Archives of the Marxist Movement</b>.</p> <p>Left Organizations—See <b>Ukraine; U.S.: Elections</b>.</p> <p>Lenin, V.I.—See <b>Quote of the Week; Ukraine</b>.</p> <p>Liberia—See <b>Ebola Crisis</b>.</p> <p>Liebknecht, Karl—See <b>Archives of the Marxist Movement</b>.</p> <p>Long Island Rail Road—See <b>Transit Workers</b>.</p> <p><b>LONGSHOREMEN</b>—And see <b>Israel/Palestine</b>. See also <b>Canada; Labor: History; Port Truckers</b>. Shipping Bosses Accuse ILWU of Tying Up Docks—Showdown Brewing at West Coast Ports, #1056, 14 Nov. (12, 9, 10)</p> <p>Los Angeles—See <b>Black Question</b>. See also <b>Port Truckers; Teachers</b>.</p> <p>Luhansk—See <b>Ukraine</b>.</p> <p>Luxemburg, Rosa—See <b>Archives of the Marxist Movement; Quote of the Week</b>.</p> <p>Lynching—See <b>Black Question</b>.</p> <p>Malaysia Airlines Flight 17—See <b>Ukraine</b>.</p> <p>Manning, Chelsea (formerly Bradley)—See <b>Civil Liberties: General, Cases</b>.</p> <p><b>MAOISM</b>—And see also <b>Pakistan</b>. From Maoism to Trotskyism—Recollections of a Participant (YSp), #1038, 24 Jan. (6, 7, 8, 9, 10)</p> <p>Marx, Karl—See <b>Archives of the Marxist Movement; Economy</b>. See also <b>Civil War and Reconstruction, U.S.; U.S.: General; Woman Question</b>.</p> <p>Marxists Internet Archive—See <b>Archives of the Marxist Movement</b>.</p> <p>McMillan, Cecily—See <b>Civil Liberties: Cases</b>.</p> <p>Meatpackers—See <b>Labor: General</b>.</p> <p>Medsger, Betty—See <b>Civil Liberties: General</b>.</p> <p><b>MEXICO</b>—And see <b>Internationalist Group; Venezuela</b>. See also <b>Immigration</b>. Campaigns Against Tobacco, Soda and Junk Food: “Health Fascism” Against the Poor (<i>Espartaco</i>), #1044, 18 Apr. (8)</p>	<p>Outrage over Police Massacre of Students in Guerrero, #1054, 17 Oct. (12, 10)</p> <p>On Nestora Salgado (L), #1055, 31 Oct. (2)</p> <p>Community Police and the War on Drugs (<i>Espartaco</i>), #1055, 31 Oct. (6, 7, 8)</p> <p>Mexico Erupts Over Massacre of Rural Students, #1057, 28 Nov. (12, 11)</p> <p>Milwaukee—See <b>U.S.: Elections</b>.</p> <p>Minimum Wage—See <b>U.S.: General</b>.</p> <p>Minneapolis Teamsters Strikes of 1934—See <b>Labor: History</b>.</p> <p>National Question—See <b>Britain; Canada: Quebec; Crimea; India; Kurdish Question; Pakistan; Quote of the Week; Ukraine</b>.</p> <p>National Security Agency (NSA)—See <b>Civil Liberties: General</b>. See also <b>France</b>.</p> <p>Native Americans—See <b>Canada</b>.</p> <p>NATO—See <b>Civil Liberties: NATO 3 Case</b>. See also <b>Britain; Crimea</b>.</p> <p>NATO 3—See <b>Civil Liberties: NATO 3 Case</b>.</p> <p>Nazism—See <b>Detroit; Fascism; Israel/Palestine; Ukraine</b>.</p> <p>NCAA—See <b>Sports</b>.</p> <p><b>NEAR EAST</b>—And see <b>Campus Repression; Iraq; Israel/Palestine; Kurdish Question</b>. U.S. Out of Iraq! No Intervention in Syria! Down With Imperialist Airstrikes Against ISIS Reactionaries!, #1051, 5 Sept. (12, 10) Down With Bombing of Syria! U.S. Out of the Near East!, #1053, 3 Oct. (1, 5) Kurdish Leaders Join Imperialist Onslaught—Down With U.S. War Against ISIS!, #1055, 31 Oct. (1, 8)</p> <p><i>New Eastern Outlook</i>—See <b>China</b>.</p> <p><i>New International</i>—See <b>Quote of the Week</b>.</p> <p><b>NEW YORK CITY</b>—And see <b>Campus Repression; Civil Liberties: Cases; Environmentalism; Transit Workers</b>. See also <b>Black Question</b>. U.S. Infrastructure: Ticking Time Bomb—East Harlem Gas Explosion, #1043, 4 Apr. (12, 11) NYPD Frame-Up Machine, #1047, 30 May (12, 11) Rikers Island: Racist House of Horrors, #1048, 13 June (3) Outrage over Cop Choke-Hold Killing of Eric Garner, #1050, 8 Aug. (12, 11) Cops Bash Unions Over Garner Demo, #1051, 5 Sept. (5, 11) De Blasio’s Police “Reform”—NYPD Terror Repackaged, #1057, 28 Nov. (1, 10) Drop All Charges Against Protesters!, #1058, 12 Dec. (1)</p> <p>New York State—See <b>Transit Workers</b>. See also <b>Ebola Crisis; U.S.: Elections</b>.</p> <p><i>New York Times</i>—See <b>Civil Liberties: General</b>.</p> <p>North Korea—See <b>South Korea</b>.</p> <p>Oakland—See <b>Israel/Palestine</b>. See also <b>Port Truckers; Socialist Alternative; Teachers</b>.</p> <p><b>OBITUARIES</b> Honoring Rubin “Hurricane” Carter, 1937-2014 (CSDN), #1045, 2 May (3, 8)</p> <p>Occupy Protests—See <b>Civil Liberties: Cases</b>.</p> <p>Odeh, Rasmea—See <b>Civil Liberties: Cases</b>.</p> <p>Oklahoma—See <b>Death Penalty</b>.</p> <p>Olson, Floyd—See <b>Labor: History</b>.</p> <p>Orange County, Calif.—See <b>Police</b>.</p> <p>Padilla, Jose—See <b>Civil Liberties: Cases</b>.</p> <p><b>PAKISTAN</b> Bloody Origins of the Z.A. Bhutto Regime (<i>Workers Hammer</i>) (S) Part One: Hidden History of the 1968-69 Workers Upsurge, #1057, 28 Nov. (6, 7, 8, 9, 10) Part Two: The Bangladesh War, #1058, 12 Dec. (4, 5, 6, 7)</p> <p>Palestinians—See <b>Campus Repression; Civil Liberties: Cases; Israel/Palestine</b>.</p> <p>Palmer, Bryan D.—See <b>Labor: History</b>.</p> <p>Paris Commune—See <b>Archives of the Marxist Movement</b>.</p> <p><b>PARTISAN DEFENSE COMMITTEE</b>—And see <b>Abu-Jamal: Message from Prison; Civil Liberties: Cases, NATO 3 Case; Spartacus Youth Clubs</b>. See also <b>Obituaries; South Africa</b>. PDC Holiday Appeal: Greetings from the Class-War Prisoners (CSDN), #1037, 10 Jan. (3, 11) 29th Annual PDC Holiday Appeal—Free the Class-War Prisoners! (CSDN), #1057, 28 Nov. (3, 9)</p>	<p>Pavlovich, Mikhail—See <b>Ukraine</b>.</p> <p>Pennsylvania—See <b>Abu-Jamal: General</b>.</p> <p>Pensions—See <b>Detroit</b>.</p> <p>People’s Climate March—See <b>Environmentalism</b>.</p> <p>Petraeus, David—See <b>Campus Repression</b>.</p> <p>Philadelphia—See <b>Teachers</b>. See also <b>Abu-Jamal: General</b>.</p> <p>Philadelphia Federation of Teachers—See <b>Teachers</b>.</p> <p>Piketty, Thomas—See <b>Economy</b>.</p> <p>Pinell, Hugo—See <b>Civil Liberties: Cases</b>.</p> <p>Poland—See <b>Ukraine</b>.</p> <p><b>POLICE</b>—And see <b>Black Question; Civil Liberties: Cases; Internationalist Group; Mexico; New York City; Quote of the Week; Socialist Alternative</b>. See also <b>Abu-Jamal, Mumia; U.S.: Elections</b>. Orange County Outrage—Cops Acquitted in Savage Killing of Homeless Man, #1039, 7 Feb. (2) Albuquerque Cops’ Killing Spree, #1048, 13 June (3, 9)</p> <p><b>PORT TRUCKERS</b>—And see <b>Canada</b>. Break Bosses’ Owner-Operator Scam! For a Class-Struggle Fight to Organize Port Truckers!, #1038, 24 Jan. (12, 10, 11)</p> <p>Prisons—See <b>Abu-Jamal: General; New York City</b>. See also <b>Civil Liberties: Cases</b>.</p> <p>Prostitution—See <b>Canada; Germany; Woman Question</b>.</p> <p><b>PUBLIC WORKERS</b> Threat to Public-Sector Labor—Supreme Court Clobbers Home Health Care Workers Unions, #1049, 11 July (12, 11)</p> <p>Quebec—See <b>Canada: Quebec</b>.</p> <p><b>QUOTE OF THE WEEK</b> The Liberating Promise of Socialism (V.I. Lenin), #1038, 24 Jan. (2) For the Political Independence of the Working Class (Leon Trotsky), #1039, 7 Feb. (2) Labor and the Color Bar in the Jim Crow South (Richard S. Fraser), #1040, 21 Feb. (2) Communism and the Family (Alexandra Kollontai), #1041, 7 Mar. (2) Leninism and National Self-Determination (V.I. Lenin), #1042, 21 Mar. (2) Imperialism and Capitalist Decay (V.I. Lenin), #1044, 18 Apr. (2) Lenin on May Day (V.I. Lenin), #1045, 2 May (2) Socialism and the Fight Against National Oppression (V.I. Lenin), #1046, 16 May (2) The Chinese Proletariat and the Tiananmen Uprising (<i>Workers Vanguard</i>), #1048, 13 June (2) World War I and the Betrayal by Social Democracy (V.I. Lenin), #1049, 11 July (2) A System in Its Death Agony (James P. Cannon), #1050, 8 Aug. (2) Cops Are Enemies of Workers (Farrell Dobbs), #1052, 19 Sept. (2) Socialism and Rational Economic Development (Friedrich Engels), #1053, 3 Oct. (2) The End of Bourgeois Economics (Rosa Luxemburg), #1054, 17 Oct. (2) The Russian Revolution Showed the Way (<i>New International</i>), #1055, 31 Oct. (2) Standing Against Imperialist Aggression (Leon Trotsky), #1056, 14 Nov. (2) Defense of the Workers States (Leon Trotsky), #1057, 28 Nov. (2) The Bourgeois State: Machine of Repression (V.I. Lenin), #1058, 12 Dec. (2)</p> <p>Reconstruction—See <b>Civil War and Reconstruction, U.S</b>. See also <b>Black Question</b>.</p> <p>Reed, John—See <b>Archives of the Marxist Movement</b>. See also <b>Civil Liberties: General</b>.</p> <p>Religion—See <b>India; U.S.: General</b>.</p> <p>Revolutionary Communist Party—See <b>Abortion</b>. See also <b>Black Question; Maoism</b>.</p> <p>Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee—See <b>City University of New York; Israel/Palestine</b>.</p> <p><i>Revolutionary Teamsters</i>—See <b>Labor: History</b>.</p> <p>Rikers Island—See <b>New York City</b>.</p> <p><b>ROMA</b>—And see also <b>Canada</b>. The Russian Revolution and the Roma—Capitalist Europe: State Persecution, Fascist Terror Target Gypsies, #1037, 10 Jan. (4, 5, 6, 7)</p> <p>Russia—See <b>Crimea; Ukraine</b>. See also <b>Roma</b>.</p>
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Salaita, Steven—See **Campus Repression**.  
Salgado, Nestora—See **Mexico**.  
San Francisco Waterfront Strike of 1934—See **Labor: History**.  
SAT Exam—See **Education**.  
Sawant, Kshama—See **Socialist Alternative**.  
See also **U.S.: General**.

**SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS**  
Defend Boston School Bus Union Leaders!, #1056, 14 Nov. (2)  
Scotland—See **Britain**.  
Seattle—See **Socialist Alternative; U.S.: General**.  
Selma, Ala.—See **Black Question**.  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)—  
See **New York City; Public Workers**. See also **Ebola Crisis; U.S.: General**.

**SEXUALITY**—And see **Canada; Germany**.  
See also **Australia; Woman Question**.  
“Yes Means Yes” Law: Anti-Woman, Anti-Sex—  
Sex and Consent on Campus, #1056, 14 Nov. (12, 6)  
The “Date Rape” Issue: Feminist Hysteria, Anti-Sex Witchhunt (From *Women and Revolution* No. 43, Winter 1993-Spring 1994) (W&R), #1056, 14 Nov. (7, 8)

Shachtman, Max—See **Archives of the Marxist Movement**.  
Sharpton, Al—See **New York City**. See also **Black Question**.  
Sierra Leone—See **Ebola Crisis**.  
Sikhs—See **India**.  
Smith Act—See **Labor: History**. See also **Civil Liberties: General**.  
Snowden, Edward—See **Civil Liberties: General**.

**SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE (SAIt)**—And see **U.S.: General**. See also **Black Question; China; Crimea; Germany; Roma; South Africa; U.S.: Elections**.  
“Socialism” That Democrats Can Support—  
Reformists Salivate Over Sawant’s Seattle Election, #1042, 21 Mar. (3, 7)\*  
“Socialism”... (C), #1043, 4 Apr. (3)  
Cops, Crime and Socialist Alternative—Kshama Sawant Greets New Seattle Police Chief, #1049, 11 July (5)  
Socialist Workers Party (Britain)—See **Ukraine**.  
See also **Britain**.  
Socialist Workers Party (U.S.)—See **Labor: History**. See also **Black Question; Civil Liberties: General; Detroit; International Communist League**.  
Solidarity—See **U.S.: Elections**.  
**SOUTH AFRICA**—And see also **Central African Republic**.  
Metal Workers Union Drops Electoral Support to ANC, #1039, 7 Feb. (1, 8, 9)  
Bitter Strike in Fourth Month—Victory to South African Platinum Miners!, #1046, 16 May (12, 10, 11)  
Victory for South African Platinum Miners, #1049, 11 July (12, 9)  
Elections 2014: Twenty Years of Neo-Apartheid Misery (*Spartacist South Africa*), #1052, 19 Sept. (3, 4, 5)  
South China Sea—See **Vietnam**.

**SOUTH KOREA**—And see **China**.  
Defend South Korean Rail Union!, #1037, 10 Jan. (12)  
On the U.S. Occupation of Korea [U.S./Japanese Imperialists: Hands Off China!, #1036, 13 Dec. 2013] (L) (C), #1038, 24 Jan. (2)  
Soviet Union—See **International Communist League; Quote of the Week; Roma**. See also **Britain; Civil Liberties: General; Crimea; Labor: History; Maoism; Ukraine; Woman Question**.  
Spartacist League/U.S.—See **Black Question; Detroit; Israel/Palestine; Maoism; Socialist Alternative; Ukraine**. See also **Civil Liberties: General; Fascism; Workers Vanguard**.  
**SPARTACUS YOUTH CLUBS**—And see **Israel/ Palestine**. See also **Maoism; Woman Question**.  
SYC Speaker at Chicago Holiday Appeal—  
Students Must Ally with the Power of the Working Class (YSp), #1040, 21 Feb. (5, 11)

**SPORTS**  
Pay College Athletes! For Unionization! College Sports Plantation (YSp), #1054, 17 Oct. (6, 7, 8)  
On Sports and Class Society (YSp) (L), #1057, 28 Nov. (4, 5)  
St. Louis—See **Black Question**.  
Stalinism—See **China; International Communist League; Labor: History; Maoism; Quote of the Week; Vietnam**. See also **Civil Liberties: General; Crimea; India; Iraq; Pakistan; Roma; Ukraine**.  
Stewart, Lynne—See **Civil Liberties: Stewart Case**.  
Supreme Court, U.S.—See **Education; Public Workers; U.S.: General**.  
Surveillance—See **Civil Liberties: General; France**.  
**SYRIA**—And see **Iraq; Kurdish Question; Near East**. See also **Civil Liberties: General**.  
Imperialists Put Off Strike on Syria, For Now [#1030, 20 Sept. 2013] (C), #1037, 10 Jan. (3)  
Taiwan—See **China**.  
Tatars—See **Crimea**.  
**TEACHERS**  
California Ruling Pits Minorities Against Teachers Unions, #1051, 5 Sept. (3, 9)  
Government Junks Philly Teachers Contract, #1055, 31 Oct. (12, 10)  
Teamsters/International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT)—See **Black Question; Canada; Civil Liberties: General; Labor: History; Truck Drivers**. See also **Longshoremen; Port Truckers**.  
Texas—See **Abortion**.  
Tiananmen Uprising—See **Quote of the Week**.  
See also **China**.  
Toledo Auto-Lite Strike of 1934—See **Labor: History**.  
**TRANSIT WORKERS**  
NYC Transit Contract—TWU Tops Help Cuomo Knife LIRR Unions, #1046, 16 May (2)  
Transport Workers Union—See **Transit Workers**.  
Trotsky, Leon—See **India; Quote of the Week**. See also **China; International Communist League; Labor: History; Sports; Venezuela**.  
Trotskyism—See **History of the Marxist Movement; International Communist League; Labor: History**. See also **Civil Liberties: General; Detroit; Maoism; Port Truckers**.  
**TRUCK DRIVERS**—And see **Labor: History; Port Truckers**.  
250 Face Firing Over Walkout—No Reprisals Against Queens UPS Workers!, #1043, 4 Apr. (7)  
As Union Tops Accept Penalties—Fired Queens UPS Drivers Reinstated, #1044, 18 Apr. (2)  
**TURKEY**—And see **Kurdish Question**. See also **Near East**.  
Turkish Mine Disaster: Capitalist Murder, #1047, 30 May (1, 6)  
UCLA—See **Black Question**.  
**UKRAINE**—And see **Crimea**.  
Ukraine Turmoil: Capitalist Powers in Tug of War, #1038, 24 Jan. (1, 4, 5)  
Fascist Scourge in Ukraine, Then and Now, #1041, 7 Mar. (9)  
Soviet Power and the Liberation of Ukraine [by Mikhail Pavlovich], #1042, 21 Mar. (9, 10)  
“Letter to the Workers and Peasants of the Ukraine” by V.I. Lenin, December 1919, #1043, 4 Apr. (2, 5)  
Chicago: Right Sector Fascist Provocation at Leftist Event on Ukraine, #1045, 2 May (12, 5)  
Kiev Unleashes Fascist Terror in Odessa: U.S. Imperialism Behind Bloody Repression in Ukraine—For the Right of Self-Rule in Donetsk, Luhansk!, #1046, 16 May (1, 8, 9)\*  
Kiev Unleashes... (C), #1050, 8 Aug. (3)  
On Khmelnytsky, Ukrainian Nationalist Icon (L), #1047, 30 May (2, 11)  
On East Ukraine (L), #1048, 13 June (2)  
Reformist Left: Shills for U.S./EU Imperialists Over Ukraine, #1048, 13 June (4, 5, 10)  
Clarification on East Ukraine Population, #1048, 13 June (4)  
On Malaysia Airlines MH17 Disaster, #1050, 8 Aug. (3)  
The Cliffites and the Ukrainian Nationalists—  
Once They Were (Cold) Warriors (*Workers Hammer*), #1050, 8 Aug. (3, 9)  
Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA)—See **Ukraine**.  
Umbrella Movement—See **China**.  
United Auto Workers (UAW)—See **Auto Workers; Detroit**.

United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)—  
See **Labor: General**.  
United Nations—See **U.S.: International Relations**. See also **Environmentalism; Israel/Palestine**.  
United Parcel Service (UPS)—See **Truck Drivers**.

**UNITED STATES**  
• **General**—And see **Abortion; Abu-Jamal: General, Message from Prison; Black Question; Civil Liberties: General, Cases, Stewart Case; Civil War and Reconstruction, U.S.; Death Penalty; Detroit; Ebola Crisis; Education; Immigration; Public Workers**. See also **Environmentalism; Labor: History; Near East; New York City; Police; Port Truckers; Sexuality; Teachers**.  
As Rulers Debate Minimum Wage Hike—Profits Soar, Workers Go Under, #1040, 21 Feb. (1, 2)  
Dozens Killed in Washington State Mudslide—  
Human Toll of Capitalist Profit, #1044, 18 Apr. (3)  
Fight Poverty Wages Through Class Struggle! Democrats Buy Votes with Minimum-Wage Ploy, #1052, 19 Sept. (1, 10)  
Anti-Woman, Anti-Black, Anti-Labor—Supreme Court Gets That Old-Time Religion, #1054, 17 Oct. (3, 9)  
• **International Relations**—And see **China; Civil Liberties: General, Cases; Crimea; Cuba; Ebola Crisis; El Salvador; Iraq; Israel/ Palestine; Kurdish Question; Near East; South Korea; Ukraine; Venezuela; Vietnam**. See also **India; Maoism; Mexico**.  
U.S./UN Role in Haiti’s Cholera Crisis (L), #1055, 31 Oct. (2)  
• **Elections**—And see **Socialist Alternative**.  
Fake-Socialist Clowns and the Bourgeois Electoral Circus, #1055, 31 Oct. (12, 10, 11)  
Plumbing the Depths in Milwaukee—Reformists Say: Support Your “Socialist” Sheriff, #1055, 31 Oct. (11)  
United Steelworkers (USW)—See **School Bus Drivers**.  
University of Illinois—See **Campus Repression**.  
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—See **Cuba**. See also **Venezuela**.

**VENEZUELA**  
U.S. Imperialism Fuels Right-Wing Protests, #1043, 4 Apr. (1, 8, 9)\*  
U.S. Imperialism... (C), #1049, 11 July (3)  
**VIETNAM**—And see also **Maoism**.  
As U.S. Imperialists Tighten Vise on China—  
Vietnamese Stalinists Fuel Anti-China Frenzy, #1048, 13 June (12, 10)  
Vigilantism—See **Internationalist Group; Mexico**.  
“War on Terror”—See **Civil Liberties: General, Cases, NATO 3 Case**.  
Water Utilities—See **Detroit**.  
Wells, Ida B.—See **Black Question**.  
**WOMAN QUESTION**—And see **Abortion; Canada; Germany; Ireland; Quote of the Week; Sexuality; U.S.: General**. See also **Black Question; Mexico**.  
Women’s Oppression and the Struggle for Liberation (YSp), #1042, 21 Mar. (4, 5, 6, 7)  
On Marriage and Prostitution (L), #1045, 2 May (2)  
Woodfox, Albert—See **Civil Liberties: Woodfox Case**. See also **Partisan Defense Committee**.

**WORKERS VANGUARD**—And see **France; Israel/Palestine**.  
*Workers Vanguard* Subscription Drive 2014 Quotas, #1050, 8 Aug. (8)  
Week One Totals, #1051, 5 Sept. (3)  
Week Three Totals, #1052, 19 Sept. (2)  
Week Five Totals, #1053, 3 Oct. (2)  
Week Seven Totals, #1054, 17 Oct. (2)  
Final Totals, #1055, 31 Oct. (5)  
Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation, #1053, 3 Oct. (11)  
*Workers Vanguard* Subscription Drive Success, #1058, 12 Dec. (2)  
Workers World Party—See **School Bus Drivers; Ukraine**. See also **Vietnam**.  
Workplace Safety—See **Turkey**. See also **Ebola Crisis**.  
World War I—See **Quote of the Week**. See also **Archives of the Marxist Movement**.  
“Yes Means Yes” Law—See **Sexuality**.  
Zionism—See **Campus Repression; Israel/Palestine**. See also **France**.

# WORKERS VANGUARD

## 2014 SUBJECT INDEX

Issues No. 1037 (10 January) through No. 1058 (12 December)

Aborigines—See <b>Australia</b> .
<b>ABORTION</b> —And see <b>Ireland; U.S.: General</b> . See also <b>Woman Question</b> . “Right to Life” Horror in Texas, #1038, 24 Jan. (1, 2) Montana Abortion Provider Under Attack (L), #1050, 8 Aug. (2) For Free Abortion Available to All!, #1052, 19 Sept. (12, 11)
<b>ABU-JAMAL, MUMIA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>General</b> Cops, Congress Ax Nominee Over Mumia’s Case, #1042, 21 Mar. (2) Pennsylvania Adopts Prisoner Gag Law to Silence Mumia Abu-Jamal, #1056, 14 Nov. (3)</li><li>• <b>Message from Prison</b> The World We’re In (CSDN), #1037, 10 June (3) When Children Are the Enemy, #1050, 8 Aug. (10)</li></ul>
<b>AEROSPACE WORKERS</b> IAM Tops Surrender to Boeing Bosses, #1041, 7 Mar. (12, 11)
Affirmative Action—See <b>Black Question; Education</b> .
AFL-CIO—See <b>Labor: History</b> . See also <b>Black Question; Longshoremen</b> .
Africa—See <b>Central African Republic; Ebola Crisis; South Africa</b> .
Albuquerque, N.M.—See <b>Police</b> .
Ali, Tariq—See <b>Pakistan</b> .
Angola 3—See <b>Civil Liberties: Woodfox Case</b> .
Anti-Communism—See <b>China; Ukraine</b> . See also <b>Detroit</b> .
Arab American Action Network—See <b>Civil Liberties: Cases</b> .
<b>ARCHIVES OF THE MARXIST MOVEMENT</b> —And see <b>Black Question; India; Ukraine</b> . See also <b>Labor: History</b> . John Reed on Liebknecht and Luxemburg, #1037, 10 Jan. (2) The Heritage of the Paris Commune (by Max Shachtman), #1041, 7 Mar. (2, 10) Marx and Engels Belong to the Workers of the World (E), #1047, 30 May (3) “Freedom of the Individual” by Peter Fryer, #1056, 14 Nov. (4, 5, 11)
Asian Americans—See <b>Education</b> .
<b>AUSTRALIA</b> Racist Capitalist State Snatches Aboriginal Children ( <i>Australasian Spartacist</i> ), #1041, 7 Mar. (6, 7) Protesters Spike Racist Provocations ( <i>Australasian Spartacist</i> ), #1049, 11 July (4)
<b>AUTO WORKERS</b> —And see <b>Detroit</b> . UAW Tops’ Class Collaboration Paved the Way—Defeat for Labor at Tennessee VW Plant, #1042, 21 Mar. (12, 11)
Bangladesh—See <b>Pakistan</b> .
Benn, Tony—See <b>Britain</b> .
Bhutto, Zulfiqar Ali—See <b>Pakistan</b> .
Black Panther Party—See <b>Civil Liberties: General, Woodfox Case</b> . See also <b>Abu-Jamal: General</b> .
<b>BLACK QUESTION</b> —See <b>Civil War and Reconstruction, U.S.; Death Penalty; Detroit; Education; New York City; Obituaries; Quote of the Week; Sports; Teachers</b> . See also <b>Auto Workers; Civil Liberties: Cases; Sexuality; U.S.: General</b> . Florida: The Killing of Jordan Davis—The Dunn Verdict and Racist America, #1042, 21 Mar. (12, 10) Racist Bigotry and Liberal Nostrums at UCLA (YSp), #1047, 30 May (7, 9) Ida B. Wells: A Black Woman’s Fight Against Lynch Terror (W&R), #1048, 13 June (6, 7, 8, 9) Ida B. Wells and 1905 Teamsters Strike (L), #1049, 11 July (2) Ferguson: The Real Face of Racist Capitalist America, #1051, 5 Sept. (1, 4, 5) Spartacist Leaflet [on Ferguson], August 20, #1051, 5 Sept. (1, 4)

<b>GUIDE TO THE SUBJECT INDEX</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This subject index covers issues of <i>Workers Vanguard</i> published during 2014, from issue No. 1037 (10 January) through the end-of-the-year issue No. 1058 (12 December). During this time, WV was published biweekly except for three alternate issues in June, July and August and skipping the last issue in December.</li><li>• The fullest listing is by SUBJECT. Subject headings are arranged alphabetically. Entries are listed chronologically with two exceptions: all entries comprising a series are listed together immediately following the first entry of the series; corrections immediately follow the relevant entry. An asterisk (*) after the page location of an entry indicates that a correction follows. Corrections to articles from previous years indicate the issue number and date of the corrected article in brackets.</li><li>• Entries are listed under subject heads. In some cases, subject heads are broken down into subcategories. These subcategories are listed immediately after the initial subject head and preceded by a dot (•). The numbers following each entry headline give the issue number, date and page number(s) for the article. Thus: NYPD Frame-Up Machine, #1047, 30 May (12, 11) means the headline of the article, issue No. 1047, dated 30 May, beginning on page 12 and continuing on page 11.</li><li>• No entry is listed twice; refer to cross-references for guidance in locating the subject head for particular articles. Cross-references are of two types: those following the word “see” deal centrally with the subject head; those following the words “see also” are related articles. Subject heads in cross-references are separated by a semicolon, while subcategories of subject heads are separated by a comma. Thus: Communist League of America—See <b>Labor: History</b>. See also <b>Port Truckers</b>.</li></ul>	means that articles about the Communist League of America can be found by going to the subject head <b>LABOR</b> and looking under the subcategory <b>History</b> . Related articles can be found by going to the subject head <b>PORT TRUCKERS</b> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Individuals mentioned in articles are usually not a subject heading unless the article is primarily about the given person. Foreign political organizations are generally cross-referenced to their appropriate countries, while U.S. political organizations are listed under their organizational names.</li><li>• Articles relating to foreign countries are listed under geographical headings and not normally under any other subject heading. Articles relating to Israel and the Occupied Territories will be found under the subject head <b>ISRAEL/PALESTINE</b>. Articles that deal centrally with U.S. foreign policy will be found under <b>U.S.: International Relations</b> or under the relevant geographical heading, for example, <b>CHINA</b>.</li><li>• Articles under the <i>Class-Struggle Defense Notes</i> (CSDN) masthead are by the Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.</li><li>• Abbreviations used in entries are: C: Correction CSDN: <i>Class-Struggle Defense Notes</i> article E: Editorial Note L: Letter R: Review S: Series YSp: <i>Young Spartacus</i> article W&amp;R: <i>Women and Revolution</i> article</li><li>• Entries for articles that first appeared in the press of another section of the International Communist League indicate the name of the press in parentheses, for example: (<i>Le Bolchévick</i>).</li></ul>
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“Conspiracy and Treachery in Alabama” ( <i>Spartacist</i> No. 4, May-June 1965), #1051, 5 Sept. (2, 8) Ferguson Two Months Later—Thousands Protest Racist Cop Terror, #1054, 17 Oct. (12, 8) Same Old Story: Killer Cop Walks—Ferguson Righteous Fury, #1057, 28 Nov. (1, 10) Police Reform Is a Hustle—Racist Cop Terror and the Fraud of Capitalist Democracy, #1058, 12 Dec. (1, 2, 8)	Electoral Debacle... (C), #1052, 19 Sept. (3)
Boeing—See <b>Aerospace Workers</b> .	Cannon, James P.—See <b>Quote of the Week</b> . See also <b>Civil Liberties: General; Labor: History; Partisan Defense Committee</b> .
Boston—See <b>School Bus Drivers</b> . See also <b>History of the Marxist Movement</b> .	Cárdenas, Lázaro—See <b>Venezuela</b> .
Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS)—See <b>Israel/Palestine</b> .	Carter, Rubin “Hurricane”—See <b>Obituaries</b> .
<b>BRITAIN</b> —And see <b>India</b> . See also <b>China; Iraq; Socialist Alternative; Ukraine</b> . Union Bashing at Scottish Oil Refinery [#1035, 29 Nov. 2013] (C), #1044, 18 Apr. (2) In Lieu of an Obituary—Tony Benn, Left Reformist 1925-2014 ( <i>Workers Hammer</i> ), #1045, 2 May (4, 5) Behind Scotland’s No Vote on Independence ( <i>Workers Hammer</i> ), #1053, 3 Oct. (12, 10, 11)	<b>CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC</b> French Troops Out of Central African Republic! ( <i>Le Bolchévick</i> ), #1046, 16 May (4, 5, 6) Central America—See <b>Abu-Jamal: Message from Prison; El Salvador; Immigration</b> .
Brown, Michael—See <b>Black Question</b> .	Chattanooga, Tenn.—See <b>Auto Workers</b> .
California—See <b>Sexuality; Teachers</b> . See also <b>Black Question; Education</b> .	Chávez, Hugo—See <b>Venezuela</b> .
<b>CAMPUS REPRESSION</b> —And see also <b>Sexuality</b> . Defend the CUNY Protesters! Drop All Charges! (YSp), #1040, 21 Feb. (5) Protest Witchhunt at University of Illinois! Reinstate Steven Salaita, Opponent of Zionist Terror! (YSp), #1052, 19 Sept. (9)	Chicago—See <b>Black Question; Civil Liberties: NATO 3 Case; Ukraine</b> .
<b>CANADA</b> Racist State Assault on Native Protesters ( <i>Spartacist Canada</i> ), #1038, 24 Jan. (3, 5) Vancouver, B.C.: Port Truckers Strike Beats Back Bosses’ Attacks, #1043, 4 Apr. (12, 10) Canadian Government Escalates War on Refugees ( <i>Spartacist Canada</i> ), #1043, 4 Apr. (6, 9) Victory to Locked-Out Ikea Workers! ( <i>Spartacist Canada</i> ), #1044, 18 Apr. (5, 11)* Victory to Locked-Out Ikea Workers! (C), #1045, 2 May (2) No to Crackdown on Prostitution! ( <i>Spartacist Canada</i> ), #1055, 31 Oct. (4, 5)	<b>CHINA</b> —And see <b>Quote of the Week; Vietnam</b> . See also <b>Central African Republic; India; International Communist League</b> . U.S., Japanese Provocations in East China Sea [U.S./Japanese Imperialists: Hands Off China!], #1036, 13 Dec. 2013] (C), #1041, 7 Mar. (4, 5, 7)* U.S., Japanese Provocations... (C), #1043, 4 Apr. (3) U.S./Japanese Imperialists: Hands Off China! [#1036, 13 Dec. 2013] (C), #1043, 4 Apr. (3) Workers Must Sweep Away CCP Tops, Princelings—Why China Is Not Capitalist, #1047, 30 May (4, 5, 6) Hong Kong Protests: Spearhead for Capitalist Counterrevolution, #1054, 17 Oct. (1, 10, 11)* Hong Kong Protests... (C), #1057, 28 Nov. (2) China Slashes Pay...of Managers, #1057, 28 Nov. (2)
• <b>Quebec</b> Electoral Debacle for Bourgeois Nationalist PQ—Quebec Liberals Prepare Austerity Onslaught ( <i>Spartacist Canada</i> ), #1049, 11 July (3, 11)*	Cholera—See <b>U.S.: International Relations</b> .

continued on page 9