

# U.S. Rulers Fuel East Ukraine Slaughter



Reuters



AFP

FEBRUARY 3—Since the start of the year, there has been a dramatic increase in fighting between the Ukrainian government and forces of the breakaway People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk that are backed by Russia. The civil war in eastern Ukraine, in which over 5,300 people have been killed and 1.5 million displaced, is the direct result of U.S. imperialist machinations. In building up a client state on Russia's border, Washington aims to spike the influence of Moscow, a potential rival, in countries of the former Soviet Union.

To that end, the Pentagon has also launched Operation Atlantic Resolve under which it has strengthened its air, ground and naval presence in East Europe and conducted a series of expanded military exercises in Poland and the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Washington plans to send an additional 100 armored vehicles and 3,000 troops to Europe as well as advisers to train the fascist-infested Ukrainian National Guard. U.S. Navy ships regularly patrol the Black Sea with the Ukrainian navy.

Every few days, another report emerges of dozens killed in artillery or rocket barrages that have damaged homes, schools and hospitals in numerous cities and towns across the Donbass (Donets basin). Last October, Human Rights Watch and the *New York Times*, both pro-imperialist mouthpieces, reported that the Ukrainian army had fired cluster munitions at civilian targets. These weapons are designed to kill indiscriminately over a wide area and children often pick up unexploded bomblets. In the rebel-held territory, the Kiev government has ceased the payment of pensions and cut off virtually all banking services. The population of the Donbass has been saved from starvation only by a series of humanitarian aid convoys from Russia that have delivered some 15,000 tons of food, medicine and building materials. Across Ukraine, economic dislocation caused by the war has brought greater hardship to working people, the poor and the elderly.



White House

**Top left: Victim of cluster bomb fired by Kiev government forces into heavily populated area of Donetsk city, 2 October 2014. Top right: Artillery and rocket fire have devastated wide swathes of eastern Ukraine. Above: Imperialist-backed Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko at White House, September 2014.**

## Down With Imperialist Sanctions Against Russia!

## For the Right of Self-Rule in Donetsk, Luhansk!

The recent upsurge in fighting was effectively instigated by the U.S. government. In December, President Barack Obama signed the Ukraine Freedom Support Act authorizing an additional \$350 million in military aid to Ukraine over the next three years and further economic sanctions against Russia. The sanctions aim not only to force Russia to back down in regard to Ukraine but also to head off Russian support to separatists in Georgia and Moldova (as well as to the Syrian government). The legislation, which sailed unopposed through a Congress known for its partisan deadlock, also bolsters attempts to undermine the Vladimir Putin regime in Moscow in the guise of "support for Russian democracy." Some \$30 million per year was allocated for increased broadcasts by Cold War relics

like the Voice of America and the mobilization of the CIA-linked U.S. Agency for International Development and National Endowment for Democracy.

Thus encouraged by its masters in Washington, Kiev launched an offensive against Donetsk on January 18. After repulsing the government forces, the Donbass militias launched a counteroffensive, capturing the Donetsk city airport, advancing on Mariupol and threatening to encircle thousands of Ukrainian troops in Debaltsevo, a strategic town on the railroad connecting Donetsk and Luhansk. With the latest battlefield defeats for Kiev, the White House and NATO generals are now mooted the supply of additional arms to Ukraine. **Down with the imperialist sanctions! No U.S. military aid to Ukraine!**

We presently have a military side with

the insurgents against the imperialist-backed Kiev government. At the same time, we give no political support to the Great Russian chauvinist rebel leaders of Donetsk and Luhansk, nor to Putin's capitalist regime. We are implacable opponents of not only Ukrainian but also Russian nationalism. On this score, we support independence for Chechnya and defended the Chechen people against the brutal Russian military campaigns waged by Putin and his predecessor Boris Yeltsin.

### Kiev Government, Made in USA

Last February, Ukraine's corrupt president, Viktor Yanukovich, was toppled by a fascist-spearheaded coup arising out of the Maidan protests engineered by Washington with the able assistance of the European Union (EU) imperialists. The post-coup government, which included fascists of the Svoboda party, quickly moved to ban the official use of the Russian language. (The proposed ban was tabled to accommodate imperialist discomfort with this too-frank expression of reactionary nationalism.) That and other moves by the Kiev government sparked justified fears among Russian-speaking people, who launched protests throughout the country.

With the overwhelming support of the ethnic Russian majority in Crimea, historically part of Russia, Putin moved to reclaim the peninsula and secure the longstanding base of Russia's Black Sea fleet. In the ethnically mixed but predominantly Russian-speaking provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk, militants took up arms in the face of government and fascist attacks. The Ukrainian government's first two attempts to mount military offensives in eastern Ukraine last spring directly followed visits to Kiev by CIA chief John Brennan and Vice President Joe Biden. At the time, Obama pontificated: "The Ukrainian government has the right and responsibility to uphold law and order within its territory."

The leaders of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics held a referendum last May that resulted in an overwhelming vote in favor of self-rule, which could mean autonomy within a federated

*continued on page 10*



# On Federal Troops in Little Rock

To commemorate Black History Month, we reprint a 10 October 1957 letter by Richard S. Fraser to the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) Political Committee opposing the party's craven support to the dispatch of federal troops to Little Rock, Arkansas. In the wake of the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision ordering the desegregation of public schools, Dixiecrat Democratic Party politicians unleashed the forces of "law and order" as well as extra-legal terror by KKK-infested lynch mobs to attack black people fighting for equal rights across the South. The crisis reverberated internationally, chipping away at the U.S. government's democratic veneer and posture as top cop of freedom at the very height of the Cold War.

A flash point came in September 1957 when Arkansas governor Orval Faubus ordered the state militia to draw guns on nine black students who attempted to enter Little Rock's Central High School. Howling racist mobs surrounded the students and threatened to lynch them. Later that month, President Dwight D. Eisenhower sent in the 101st Airborne. The big lie that has been accepted as official history is that the federal government stepped in to defend the helpless local black people. The true story is that Eisenhower sent in the troops to crush a local upheaval that included the organization of black self-defense against racist terror. As the *Amsterdam News* (28 September 1957), a New York black newspaper, headlined: "Ike Moves as Negroes Hit Back."

The issue of looking to the federal government to defend the oppressed black



AP

**26 September 1957:**  
101st Airborne Division outside Little Rock's Central High School. Socialist Workers Party's newspaper (30 September 1957) wrongly promoted intervention of troops as measure to protect black youth.



"the most probable condition under which the Federal Government will send troops to the South will be that the Negroes hold the initiative in the struggle.... When the Negroes take the initiative it is a 'race riot' and the public security is threatened and an excellent reason is given to the government to intervene."

In the early civil rights movement, the SWP tailed the middle-class preachers like Martin Luther King Jr., who opposed black self-defense and sought to contain the struggle within the framework of reliance on the federal government. King sent a telegram to Eisenhower "to express my sincere support for the stand you have taken to restore law and order in Little Rock." The call for federal troops was an important signpost in the SWP's degeneration to centrism (revolutionary in words, reformist in deeds) and later abject reformism and explicit junking of a Trotskyist program.

Dick Fraser was a veteran Trotskyist and tenacious fighter who illuminated a program of *revolutionary integration*: the integration of black people into an egalitarian socialist society. Fraser's lifetime of revolutionary scholarship on the black question sprang from his conviction that to forge a program for black liberation, it is necessary to study the social forces that created the institutions of racial oppression in the U.S. Fraser showed that the systematic subjugation of black people is too inextricably bound up with the historical development and economic, social and political reality of the American capitalist system to permit a reformist solution or separation of the struggle for black freedom from emancipating the working class as a whole.

Although we had political differences with Dick Fraser, we credit him as our teacher on the nature of racial oppression in the U.S. More of his writings can be found in "In Memoriam, Richard S. Fraser: An Appreciation and Selection of His Work" (*Prometheus Research Series* No. 3, 1990) and in "For the Materialist Conception of the Negro Question," (*Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 [Revised], "What Strategy for Black Liberation? Trotskyism vs. Black Nationalism").

\* \* \*

The editorial on the action by the Federal government in sending troops to Little Rock, published on the front page of the *Militant* of September 20th, brings the dispute over this question into sharp focus.

This episode has posed the fundamental question point-blank: shall the struggle in the South be waged in abject dependence upon the government, or independently by the masses?

The entire Negro community of Little Rock, numbering 25,000, was poised and ready for action. Their eagerness to participate in the struggle at times *overflowed in dramatic eruptions, as testified*

*to by the Negro press.* Moreover, this mass eagerness occurred within a favorable relationship of forces.

The Negro middle class leaders refused the masses any part in the struggle, demanding that they cease aspiring to act and to accept a passive role meekly. Having betrayed the masses' desire for action, the leadership appealed instead to the government to solve the crisis.

The demand for Federal Troops to the South is revealed in action, not as an adjunct to but as a substitute for the organized action of the masses and is counterposed directly to it.

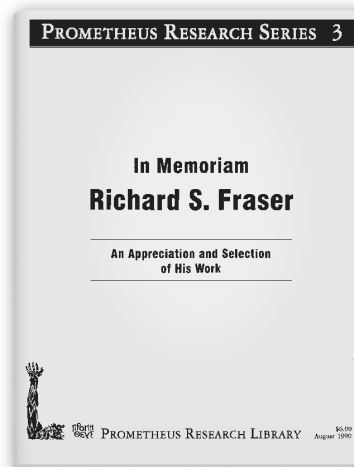
The editorial sees in this situation a "Valuable Precedent"—"For the use of federal troops in Little Rock constitutes a precedent for the Negro people that the capitalist politicians—much as they will squirm and try to weasel out of—will never be able to get away from. At each crucial stage in the fight for the enforcement of the rights they now possess on paper, the Negro people will be in a position to demand federal intervention if they need it...."

If they need it? Who is to determine if they need it? The editors of the *Militant* seem quite willing to take the word of the middle class leadership whether the Negro people need Federal soldiers—and this leadership will continue to prefer governmental action to mass action, as has been their tradition.

This perspective for the struggle is justified by the *Militant* in the following manner: "The resulting political pressure...can blow the Republican-Democratic political monopoly sky high." Such a formula provides a political justification for continued dependence on the government and for perpetuation of the policy of *no organization of the masses*.

Spokesmen for the P.C. [Political Committee] convention resolution have repeatedly claimed that one of its central points was the question of *mass action vs. dependence on the government*. The editorial in question, however, illustrates the contradictory character of the resolution which at one and the same time calls for a class struggle policy in the Negro movement, but also endorses parts of the consciously collaborationist and anti-revolutionary program of the middle class leadership.

I request that this letter be circulated to the N.C. [National Committee] as soon as possible. ■



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masses was hotly debated inside the then-Trotskyist SWP. The party and its newspaper, the *Militant*, had first called on the federal government to send troops to Mississippi two years earlier. Dick Fraser opposed that call and, in a 1956 document titled "Contribution to the Discussion on the Slogan 'Send Federal Troops to Mississippi,'" noted presciently that

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## Spartacist Black History Month Forums

### Racist Cop Terror and the Fraud of Police Reform For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

**Speaker: Diana Coleman, Veteran Activist  
in the Southern Civil Rights Movement**

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Sunset Redline Metro Station)

For info: (213) 380-8239  
[slsycla@sbcglobal.net](mailto:slsycla@sbcglobal.net)

#### NEW YORK CITY

**Saturday, Feb. 21, 3 p.m.**

322 West 48th Street, First Floor  
Manhattan

(Between 8th and 9th Aves.—  
Take A, C or E to 42nd Street)

For info: (212) 267-1025 or [nysl@tiac.net](mailto:nysl@tiac.net)

#### BAY AREA

**Saturday, Feb. 14, 2 p.m.**

Rockridge Library  
5366 College Ave, Oakland  
(5 blocks south of Rockridge BART)

For info: (510) 839-0851  
[slbayarea@fastmail.net](mailto:slbayarea@fastmail.net)

#### CHICAGO

**Saturday, Feb. 28, 2 p.m.**

Chicago Public Library  
Rudy Lozano Branch  
1805 S. Loomis St.

(4 blocks east of Pink Line 18th St. stop)

For info: (312) 563-0441  
[chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net](mailto:chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net)



# Cleophas C. (Hawk) Hawkins

Our friend and collaborator “Hawk” died on January 9 in Chesapeake, Virginia, at the age of 80. His health had been failing for over a year. We share the sorrow of Hawk’s family—his wife Ann, his three daughters Edna, Cheryl and Gail, and his son Harry, as well as his 10 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren. Ann, in particular, was generously hospitable and friendly to comrades who worked and stayed in the Tidewater Area.

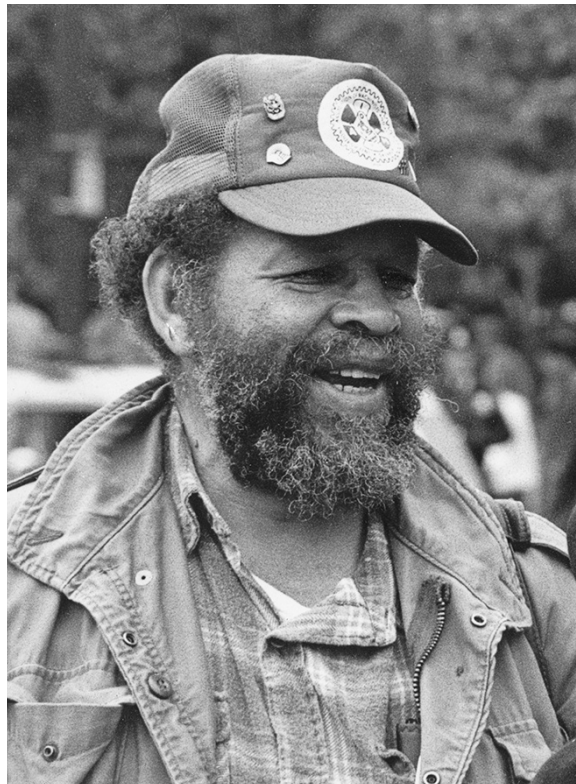
Hawk was a longtime sympathizer of our party, facilitating our work at crucial junctures by providing insight on and opening doors to the black proletariat in the South and contributing commentaries to *Workers Vanguard*. Hawk regularly received bundles of WV, which he distributed to trade unionists and black activists.

We first met Hawk, a shipyard worker in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1981 at a massive AFL-CIO labor rally in Washington, D.C., in support of the fired PATCO air traffic controllers (see “For Labor Action to Bring Down Reagan!” WV No. 289, 25 September 1981). He subscribed to our press, and comrades then made trips to meet with Hawk and some of his co-workers. He had attended a few Socialist Workers Party forums in Newport News. A militant shop steward in his International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) local, Hawk was looking for bigger answers, and he found them in the SL/ICL’s program of class struggle and revolutionary integrationism.

In 1982, Hawk played a key role in making possible our labor/black mobilization that stopped the Klan in Washington, D.C., on November 27. Labor participation from the D.C. area was *crucial* for this action. When two of our organizers went to Tidewater to meet with Hawk, he didn’t hesitate. Hawk helped us secure the endorsements of his union local’s officers and then started calling other locals in the yard, leading to the endorsements of the two black International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA) locals in Norfolk. ILA International president Teddy Gleason also endorsed. The ILA and IBEW put up the money for a bus for the demo contingent from Tidewater—the Nat Turner Brigade!

This support unlocked the entire situation: D.C. unions and community groups began to endorse and publicize the mobilization to their members and to allow comrades to speak and leaflet at union meetings and work locations. Momentum was building—unions and other groups in cities as far away as Chicago endorsed and signed up to form contingents. It was the unions that provided the labor muscle that made our mobilization the force that could stand up to then-mayor Marion Barry’s cops. There were no arrests and the Klan did not march (see “We Stopped the Klan!” WV supplement, 3 December 1982). That victory flowed from Hawk’s initial efforts.

Through this work, Hawk saw that it is possible to mobilize the power of the working class to stop race terror, in this case on the basis of a united front centered on labor but including other organizations and individuals. He became convinced that our party was serious and knew how that power



WV Photo

## 1934–2015

could be unchained to smash the capitalist system of exploitation and oppression. Hawk started to read basic Marxist works with us and to bring other workers around. He had a keen interest in the Russian Revolution and understood its relevance to abolishing capitalism today. Hawk had discussions with workers trying to raise their consciousness about the need to learn from history and apply its lessons in struggle. Those conversations were reflected in his contributions to WV.

Hawk became a part of the fabric of our movement, developing relationships with many comrades. We had our occasional differences, which Hawk wasn’t shy about arguing out. He was hardheaded and could be cantankerous, which is what made him what he was. In the mid ’80s, Hawk corresponded with veteran Trotskyist Dick Fraser, whose groundbreaking document “For the Materialist Conception of the Negro Question” provided the foundation for our program for black liberation. He joined in rough-and-tumble, raucous political repartee, giving as good as he got. As Fraser said when asking Hawk for a comment on his “Two Lectures on Black Liberation” (presented in 1953): “Don’t spare me with your criticism. I can take it, as well as dish it out.”

Hawk continued to organize black Tidewater workers to participate in SL and Partisan Defense Committee activities. In 1988, when fascist skinheads and the Klan declared their intention to march in Philadelphia, Hawk reassembled the Nat Turner Brigade

for the PDC-initiated November 5 mobilization in that city (see “Labor/Black Power Stopped the Klan!” WV No. 465, 18 November 1988). On that tense morning, with skinheads lurking around the perimeter and the cops menacing the rally, comrades described it as “exhilarating” when Hawk and his contingent arrived and stepped off the bus.

In the ’90s, Hawk became frustrated with the lack of struggle and drifted from our political moorings as he approached and entered retirement. He turned his attention to community work. Feeling his predominantly black neighborhood was being neglected by the city, Hawk led efforts to establish a youth recreation center, a park, an extended bus route, a storm drainage system, a fire station and to remodel the local library.

Despite this political distance, Hawk always remained a friend of our party, introducing people to WV and to comrades when we were in the area. In a recent call, Hawk expressed great pleasure in hearing about a new statue in Charleston commemorating Denmark Vesey, who was hanged for leading a slave rebellion in 1822.

Hawk was born Cleophas C. Hawkins (although nobody ever called him that, including his wife) and raised in rural North Carolina. After leaving the Air Force, having served as a mechanic in Korea in the mid ’50s, Hawk went to work in a shipyard in Boston. He began investigating various organizations that were part of the black struggle at the time and met Malcolm X and Louis Farrakhan. Although having great respect for Malcolm, Hawk was never attracted to black nationalism or Islam.

Hawk always considered Farrakhan a hustler, noting he used to be a “song and dance man.”

When the Boston shipyard closed, Hawk transferred to the Tidewater area, getting a job in a Norfolk shipyard as an electronics technician. While his co-workers respected his skills and knowledge, he made a name for himself as a militant when a racist foreman threw the coats of the workers, who were predominantly black, into a trash can because they had left them on the shop bench. Hawk retrieved all the coats, brushed them off, neatly hung them up... and then threw the foreman’s coat in the trash. He was elected steward and subsequently secretary-treasurer of his IBEW local. Hawk fought for a greater role for the predominantly black locals in the yard’s union council and defended workers victimized by racist managers.

Comrades who spent time with Hawk have fond memories of talking with him, his glasses dangling from one ear, mysteriously affixed under his red beard. They learned what life was like for blacks in the American South and the constant struggle against racist victimization—often humiliating, frequently violent—as well as the struggles of the unions. Hawk was the advanced worker that we strive to draw around our party, who bring with them links to broader layers of the working class. Hawk’s work with us shows that in the course of future struggles, the promise of our revolutionary program will attract more workers like Hawk to our banner.



WV Photos

Left: Hawk as a union marshal at PDC-initiated demonstration to stop the KKK, Philadelphia, 5 November 1988. Right: 27 November 1982 labor/black mobilization in Washington, D.C., that stopped the Klan cold.

# Report from Australia Dirty Deeds Down Under

We print below a report written by our comrades of the Spartacist League/Australia in November 2014. It has been excerpted and edited for publication. In Australia today, the federal government of Prime Minister Tony Abbott is a right-wing Liberal/National Party coalition. Since this report was written three months ago, support for Abbott and his government has plummeted.

For a more detailed account of the capitalist offensive against the trade unions, see “For a Class-Struggle Fight Against Bosses’ Onslaught!” in Australasian Spartacist No. 223, Winter 2014. Concerning the strategic objective of the imperialists, led by the U.S., to destroy the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state through military provocations as well as other means, see for example “For Unconditional Military Defense of Chinese Deformed Workers State! U.S., Japanese Provocations in East China Sea” (WV No. 1041, 7 March 2014). Articles from the press of all ICL sections are available on our website at icl-fi.org.

By the beginning of 2014, Ford, General Motors and Toyota had all decided it was no longer profitable to produce cars in Australia, signalling the demise of the domestic auto industry. The government—which seeks to blame job losses on the pay and conditions of unionised workers—is glad to let previously subsidised companies with unionised workforces go under as a means to gut union power. By 2017, tens of thousands of auto workers are slated to lose their jobs and will join the hundreds of thousands of other manufacturing workers who have been made redundant [laid off] over the last six years.

Last May, the Abbott government introduced a budget that took the axe to social welfare, education and health. These deeply unpopular cuts sparked widespread anger, resulting in sizeable protests across the country, including some limited strike actions in the state of Victoria. International events—the shooting down of the Malaysian airliner [see “On Malaysia Airlines MH17 Disaster,” WV No. 1050, 8 August 2014] and the renewed imperialist war in the Near East—allowed the government to recoup some support through whipping up patriotic fervour, in which it was assisted by the leaders of the Labor Party (ALP), who backed the government’s repellent flag-waving.

Amid the bloody Near East intervention, which was baptised as “humanitarian,” and a racist campaign against “homegrown jihadists,” the anti-budget rallies shrivelled. The ALP and union tops along with small “I” liberals were paralysed by that fear campaign. There

has been almost no opposition to the U.S.-led war in the Near East, even of the pacifist character of the 2003 rallies calling for “No War on Iraq.” Today, the biggest demonstrations—of a couple hundred people—have called for imperialist intervention; these have been organised by Kurdish groups, backed by various reformist left organisations.

death of Miss Dhu, a young Aboriginal woman incarcerated in Western Australia. Arrested for unpaid fines, she spent three days in agony, vomiting day and night with a high fever and paralysis in her lower body. It was reported that police mocked her as a “druggie.” Twice taken to a hospital and thrown back in prison, she finally died either in prison or on her

of sending Australian soldiers to fight in Iraq alongside their Kurdish *peshmerga* buddies makes the need for the budget cuts in other areas even more pressing. This has swelled the growing chorus for even more heavily taxing the working class. A new fuel tax is projected and the ground is being prepared to increase the GST, Australia’s broad-based tax on most goods and services.

While pushing measures to increase revenue, the bourgeoisie has been trying to sear into the collective memory of the Labor parliamentary caucus that the ALP should never again try a stunt like its attempted tax on the large mining magnates a few years back. Other plans of the previous ALP government—such as the National Broadband Network, a supposed national needs-based education system and a National Disability Insurance Scheme—are withering on the vine or being trashed. Amid this slashing and burning, Labor reformist icon and former prime minister Gough Whitlam died [see page 5].

His death has provided an opportunity for the bourgeoisie to reflect on this “towering leader”—the main message being, however, that for the foreseeable future there should not be another Gough Whitlam. Amid the flood of articles and obituaries, there has been minimal discussion about why Whitlam was ousted by the British Queen’s Australian representative, a move engineered by the CIA with the connivance of British intelligence.

## Attacks on the Trade Unions

Despite the government’s savage attacks on workers and the oppressed, the hidebound ACTU [Australian Council of Trade Unions] tops haven’t even coordinated token labour resistance, while aggressively pushing economic nationalism. At the same time, the union tops have acceded down the line to the government’s Royal Commission into “corruption” in the union movement. Abbott is planning to unleash a special posse of federal and local police to hunt down so-called “rogue” unionists. This witchhunt has the full backing of Bill Shorten, federal leader of the Labor Party (the supposed Opposition).

The bosses are wielding accusations of union corruption in their campaign to pressure the ALP to break its links with organised labour. Particular attention is focused on the CFMEU construction union in Victoria. Its leader John Setka could now be charged with “blackmail” because he allegedly organised secondary boycotts during a big dispute in Melbourne in 2012. During the dispute, Setka reportedly said that “we’re at war” and “in a war you cut the supply lines.”

The government is working various angles to undermine the unions. The High Court recently upheld the sacking of a CFMEU delegate from a struck mine because during a week-long strike in 2012 he waved a sign “No Principles SCABS No Guts.” The executive director of the bosses’ Mines and Metals Association declared that “abusive conduct on picket lines should be treated as workplace bullying,” adding, “Times have changed: industrial abuse belongs in the dustbin of history.” Under threat of tough sanctions, Aboriginal people and thousands of youth are now being forced into work-for-the-dole schemes. These schemes are used as a wedge to drive down the wages and conditions of all workers.

The Maritime Union (MUA), which has carried out a couple of recent strikes on the east and west coasts, is locked in a dispute with a non-union marine company



Above: Thousands protest in Sydney, part of nationwide demonstrations last July against federal budget cuts. Below: Protest in Melbourne against witchhunts of Muslims, October 2014.



In the context of the current round of imperialist plunder and war, the Australian capitalist rulers have seized the opportunity to shred more democratic rights under the bogus “war on terror.” In September, carefully orchestrated “anti-terror” raids in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne provided justification for a new tranche of repressive laws. It also reignited anti-Muslim hysteria, including a media debate over banning the *burka* (head-to-toe Islamic dress) that made some of the ravings of fascist demagogue Pauline Hanson seem mainstream.

The small fascist groups that inhabit this country are certainly emboldened. The Australian Defence League now openly threatens to kill Muslim leaders. This fetid reactionary climate melds with the government’s ongoing hate campaign against refugees. Fleeing imperialist devastation of their homelands in Afghanistan and Iraq, or imperialist-backed terror in Sri Lanka, refugees continue to be rounded up and dumped in hellhole offshore camps on Nauru and Manus Island in the Pacific. Australia has also just signed a deal with Cambodia that will allow asylum seekers to be dumped there.

State terror against the small Aboriginal population continues unabated. This was recently highlighted by the horrific

third trip to the hospital on the floor of a police wagon.

Murdoch’s *Australian* newspaper is reporting that if the state cannot get so-called Muslim “hate preachers” under existing “anti-terror” laws, they will get them “Al Capone style” on immigration, tax or welfare fraud. Despite the supposed budget crisis, lots of money is being poured into the state security agencies. Meanwhile, the military alliance with the U.S. is being strengthened. A new international “counter-terrorism” base being built in Geraldton, Western Australia, will assist in drone assassinations and enhance the U.S. Pacific fleet’s access to military satellites, aiding the encirclement of China. Former army chief Peter Leahy’s ravings about a long and savage war, including drones and special ops ready to go into any country “under threat” from jihadist forces, barely raise an eyebrow.

That said, even some of the most right-wing bourgeois scribes are nervous about new “anti-terror” laws that would make it illegal to report on special intelligence operations—an Orwellian state of affairs. The bourgeoisie worries out loud that the white Anglo-Celtic composition of its security agencies undercuts its ability to prosecute the “war on terror.” The government is arguing that the financial cost

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# Australia's Gough Whitlam, 1916-2014

## The CIA, the Queen's Agent and the Man Who Got in the Way

When onetime Australian Labor Party (ALP) prime minister Gough Whitlam died at the age of 98 last October, the *Sydney Morning Herald* (26 October 2014) ran an obituary headlined “Martyr for a Moment, Hero for a Lifetime.” Whitlam’s moment of martyrdom came when his government was deposed on 11 November 1975 by Queen Elizabeth’s representative, Governor-General Sir John Kerr, using the English monarchy’s dubious “reserve powers” in Australia, which is part of the Commonwealth. What this and many other obituaries in the bourgeois media covered up or dismissed is that Whitlam’s ouster was a CIA-engineered “constitutional” coup, executed by Kerr in league with Australia’s conservative Opposition. Insofar as this social-democratic politician has become a retrospective hero in the eyes of sections of the Australian bourgeoisie, it is because he not only helped quell a massive working-class outpouring against his ouster but took what he knew of CIA spying and subversion, including against his regime, to his grave.

At the heart of the Whitlam affair, as far as the CIA was concerned, was its secret Pine Gap spy base in central Australia. Described by former CIA agent Victor Marchetti as a “giant vacuum cleaner,” Pine Gap collected data from

**Whitlam addresses press from steps of Parliament following dismissal of his government, Canberra, 11 November 1975.**



U.S. spy satellites monitoring the Soviet Union. One of several U.S. installations in Australia, the base was key to Washington’s counterrevolutionary designs against the Stalinist-led Soviet workers state, including plans for a nuclear first strike. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, Pine Gap shifted its sights to China, the most powerful of the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states.

Having worked with pliant, conservative Liberal Party governments for 23

years, mainly under Prime Minister Robert Menzies, the CIA and its underlings in the Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) were mistrustful of Whitlam from the moment he was elected in December 1972. A classically educated son of a Commonwealth Crown Solicitor who was proud of his own elevation to Queen’s Counsel (the top rank of lawyers), Whitlam was no radical. Whereas the Menzies era could be described as “trog-lodyte Australian capitalism,” Whitlam wanted to modernize this former British

colonial outpost, now beholden to Washington, so that it could play a more effective role as a regional imperialist power in Asia.

We headlined our article on Whitlam’s victory: “Capital’s Labor Trustee: Australian Labor Party Elected” (WV No. 17, March 1973). Whitlam was elected with support from sizable sections of the Australian bourgeoisie (including right-wing media magnate Rupert Murdoch), which both welcomed modernization and hoped that a government of the Labor Party—a party based on the working class but with a pro-capitalist leadership—could contain a rising tide of class struggle. Only three years earlier, some one million workers had gone on strike nationally in defense of an avowedly Communist union official, Clarrie O’Shea, who was jailed for his defiance of anti-union laws. Class struggle continued to mount after Whitlam’s election. The Christmas 1972 U.S. bombing of Hanoi, the capital of North Vietnam, brought waterfront workers out on a political strike against American shipping companies.

In his first few months in office, Whitlam implemented a number of significant reforms aimed at appeasing the restive proletariat. He introduced a national

*continued on page 6*

called Aboriginal Maritime Pty Ltd. Run by Aboriginal business and sports entities, this company undercuts MUA union wages and conditions, particularly in the lucrative oil and gas projects in the West and North. While the MUA leadership has correctly noted that Aboriginal people should receive the same pay and conditions as other workers, we’ve seen no evidence that they have sought to organise the Aboriginal workers. Instead, the dispute is being fought out in the courts. In a similar vein, the MUA tops occasionally talk about protecting the rights of overseas guest workers. But far from fighting to organise these workers, the Western Australian branch of the MUA has for years been waging a chauvinist campaign, including in the courts, against employment of overseas labour by the large offshore oil and gas companies.

While declaring that the ALP must rebuild relations with the business community, Labor’s Shorten offers the proletariat occasional rhetoric against government cuts, mixed with large doses of vile protectionism. In a recent speech to South Australian shipyard workers, organised by the AMWU manufacturing workers union, he railed against Japan building submarines for the Australian navy. This rant was firmly in the racist tradition of “White Australia” Laborism. Shorten called on the workers to remember World War II, proclaiming that “under Labor we will build ships and submarines in Australia because we love this country.” Shorten called on Abbott to “buy a map of the world” and declared, “This is a government with a short memory.”

### Trade with China and Obama’s “Pivot to Asia”

Obama’s anti-China “pivot to Asia” is part of the backdrop to Australia’s strengthened military alliance and new free trade agreement with Japan. These agreements, signed when Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe visited Australia in July, are all about targeting the Chinese deformed workers state. Addressing



**November 2011: Air force base in Darwin, where some 1,100 Marines are currently stationed to bolster counterrevolutionary U.S./Australia alliance against Chinese deformed workers state.**

a joint session of the Australian federal parliament, Abe declared that Japan chose to strengthen ties with Australia because both countries value “peace, freedom and democracy” and that “there are many things Japan and Australia can do together...with the United States, an ally for our nation.”

Abbott strongly endorsed Abe’s “re-interpretation” of Article 9 of the Japanese constitution to remove any impediment to Japan going to war in defence of its allies. Chinese government media responded that Abe’s move was a militarists’ “coup” and the act of a warmonger. Abe’s “re-interpretation” complements the pivot of U.S. maritime forces toward the Pacific. The tensions between the U.S./Japan and China create particular difficulties for the Australian jackal imperialists, whose main trading partner is China. Australia embraces the counterrevolutionary alliances with the U.S. and Japan, acting as a southern anchor for U.S. interests in the

region, while at the same time trying not to offend the ruling Chinese bureaucracy and thus undercut trade.

The government was taken aback in mid October when China slapped import tariffs on Australian coal: 3 percent on coking coal for steel and 6 percent on soft coal for electricity. A quarter of Australia’s coal exports go to China. Largely due to exports to China, Australia has experienced a mineral resources boom for years, which helped prop up its economy during the world economic crisis. Four of Australia’s top ten exports are minerals—iron ore, coal, gold and bauxite. Currently, there is an oversupply of mineral resources on the international market and commodity prices are dropping.

China is prioritising whom it deals with. As such, elements within the Australian bourgeoisie know they need to tread warily. For example, China recently lifted a ban on massive sea vessels (Valemax) operated by Brazil’s Vale iron ore owners.

These vessels, which are capable of transporting 400,000 tons of iron ore, allow Vale to reduce shipping costs and better compete with Australian iron ore producers. Meanwhile, Russia has increased its energy exports to China. Around the time that China imposed the tariffs on Australian coal, Beijing was busy signing all sorts of agreements with Moscow, spanning energy, finance and technology. As part of these agreements, Chinese banks will provide credit lines to Russian banks and companies, thus somewhat cutting against the imperialist sanctions against Russia over Ukraine.

Another development that is troubling to the imperialists is China’s proposal for an internationally funded Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to help finance projects in that region. This overlaps with China’s push for a free trade agreement for the Asia-Pacific region, which would make the seemingly stalled U.S.-led Trans-Pacific Partnership redundant. The proposal for an AIIB makes the U.S. Treasury Department apoplectic because Washington sees it as undercutting the imperialist-dominated World Bank and Asian Development Bank. It was reported that 22 nations, including India, Vietnam, Singapore, Laos and the Philippines, have signed on to this new Beijing-backed bank. Interestingly, the AIIB has also won support from Saudi Arabia and Qatar, currently part of Obama’s “coalition of the unwilling” in the Near East. Staunch U.S. allies Australia, Japan and South Korea all refused to join the AIIB.

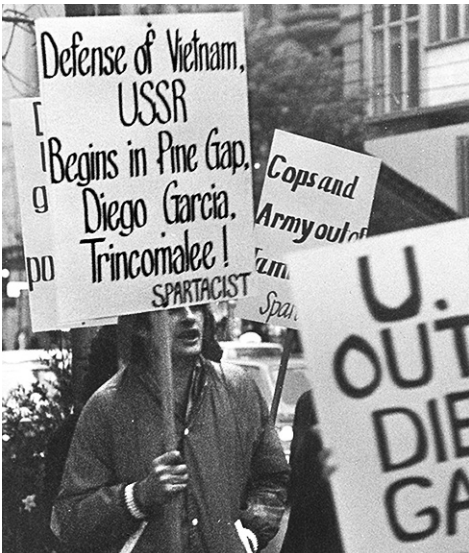
There are differences in the ruling class, with some arguing that Australia should have signed on to the AIIB and not allowed itself to be strong-armed by the United States. However, whatever conjunctural concern sections of the Australian bourgeoisie may have over the AIIB and the country’s lucrative trade with China, there should be no doubt that the bourgeoisie here fully shares U.S. imperialism’s counterrevolutionary aim to restore capitalist rule in China. ■

Whitlam...

(continued from page 5)

health service, made higher education free for all and granted women workers in the public sector equal pay. Applying a fresh coat of paint to the hoary facade of racist “White Australia,” Whitlam promised to alleviate the misery of the downtrodden Aboriginal people and liberalized immigration rights for Asians and Pacific Islanders. Whitlam pulled Australian troops out of the losing U.S.-led counterrevolutionary war in Vietnam, while senior cabinet minister Jim Cairns denounced the Nixon administration as “corrupt” for its bombing of Hanoi. The security services saw Cairns, a prominent antiwar campaigner and in the left wing of the ALP, as little short of a “commo.” Frank Snepp, a CIA officer then stationed in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City), later recalled: “We were told the Australians might as well be regarded as North Vietnamese collaborators.”

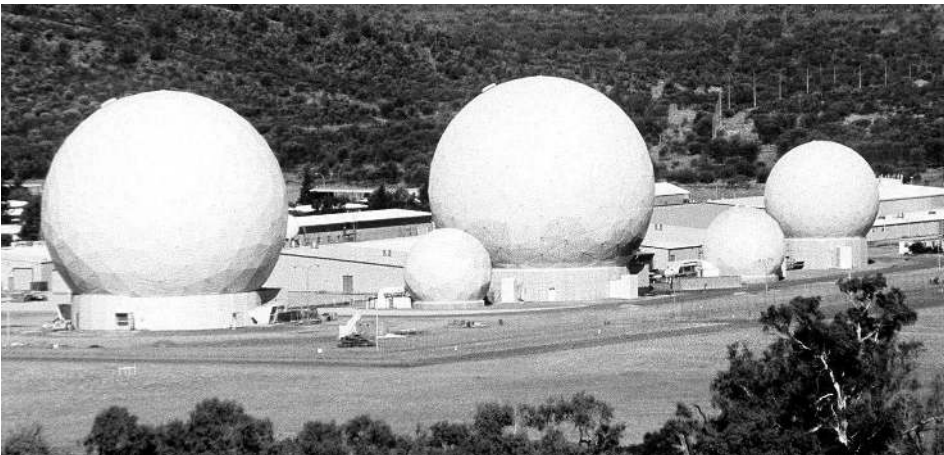
Whitlam would draw increasing ire from the CIA and ASIO. The day after he took office, he told ASIO that it could not vet members of his staff; a few months later he poured salt on the wound when he authorized a raid on ASIO offices in Melbourne. At his first meeting with the U.S. ambassador, Whitlam promised to maintain the secret U.S. bases in Australia—as long as Washington didn’t try to



Australasian Spartacist

were lost to strike activity as in 1971. The bourgeoisie was losing patience with the ALP for not moving hard enough or fast enough against its working-class base, and the erstwhile pro-Whitlam Murdoch press, in collaboration with the conservative parties, spearheaded a sustained media campaign to unseat him.

Cairns was forced out of his post as treasurer in July 1975, followed a few months later by a second cabinet minister. The Senate, controlled by the conservative Opposition, refused to approve a federal budget until Whitlam agreed to new elections. On November 2, Whitlam openly accused the Opposition of being



AFF

Left: Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand takes stand against anti-Soviet war drive at 1981 Melbourne protest. Above: Radar domes of Pine Gap spy base, now repurposed to snoop on China.

tion with the CIA going back to its WWII predecessor, the OSS, and various CIA fronts like the Asia Foundation and the Australian Association for Cultural Freedom. “All this was on the record,” writes Pilger, when Whitlam nominated Kerr to be governor-general in 1974.

Around the same time that the CIA & Co. were putting in place the scenario for Whitlam’s sacking, an idealistic young Californian with a penchant for falconry was working for a CIA contractor, TRW Inc. (formerly Thompson Ramo Woolridge), which decoded messages from Pine Gap. Coming across information of CIA dirty tricks in Australia, Christopher Boyce was enraged by the duplicity of the U.S. government. With his friend Andrew Daulton Lee, Boyce took documents from TRW and made them available to the Soviets. Their story inspired the book and film, *The Falcon and the Snowman*. After nearly a quarter-century of incarceration on espionage charges, Boyce was released in 2003, refusing to this day to recant. As our comrades of the then Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand wrote three decades ago: “All opponents of imperialist war, particularly in Australia, owe this man a debt. He told us more about what was really happening to this country than any Labor politician” (see “Reagan Bombs Down Under,” WV No. 375, 22 March 1985).

When the Boyce revelations first emerged, *Australasian Spartacist* No. 43 (June 1977) commented in an article headlined “The Long Arm of the CIA”: “None but a fool could doubt that the US would maintain an intelligence operation in a strategic component of its worldwide counterrevolutionary military alliances—ANZUS [the Australia-New Zealand-U.S. alliance] is hardly a secret—nor that it would keep secrets from what is after all a *very junior* imperialist partner.” Gough Whitlam was certainly no fool. The late Gore Vidal, a friend of Whitlam’s, quipped: “It was an unusual experiment for Australia to choose as its Prime Minister its most intelligent man.”

When Whitlam was ousted, workers across Australia spontaneously poured into the streets in outrage. Ports around the country were brought to a virtual halt, rail and public transport were disrupted and calls for a general strike were rife. Seeking to break workers from the framework of parliamentary reformism, our Australian comrades pointed to the need for an extraparlimentary government based on workers organizations. The banner they carried at a mass rally in Sydney on November 13 read: “For a General Strike to Dump Fraser! For an ALP/ACTU Government Pledged to Expropriate the Capitalist Class!”

But the potential for such a challenge to capitalism was nipped in the bud, thanks largely to the efforts of Bob Hawke, then head of the ACTU (Australian Council of Trade Unions), as well as the Labor Party chiefs. Hawke proclaimed, “We are not going to allow this to snowball” and ensured that seething anger was channeled into parliamentary impotence. Elections held a few weeks after Whitlam’s ouster gave Fraser a solid victory, and a renewed anti-labor offensive opened that continues to this day. As Labor prime minister from 1983-91, Hawke was the staunchest of U.S. allies during Ronald Reagan’s Cold War II offensive against the Soviet Union. Whitlam himself, ever loyal to the capitalist order, did his best to stifle working-class resistance to his ouster and quite often denied any CIA role.

Whitlam was a modernizing social democrat whose political horizons extended no higher than to administer the capitalist state and to mollify the working class with measures that would help assure class peace for the bourgeoisie. Yet he fell afoul of the bloodiest and most crazed ruling class on the face of the earth—the U.S. bourgeoisie. An end to the spying and subversion, to the counterrevolutionary intrigues and wars carried out by both the major and minor imperialists will come only when capitalist rule is swept away by an insurgent proletariat led by a revolutionary internationalist party. ■



Australasian Spartacist

Spartacist banner at November 1975 rally in Sydney after Whitlam government was deposed by governor general.

“screw us.” In April 1974, he told Parliament that he would honor agreements on existing U.S. bases but would not allow any new ones. By then, Washington had appointed a new ambassador, one Marshall Green, known as the “coupmaster.” The moniker was well-earned, as Green had a habit of turning up in places about to undergo bloody, U.S.-backed coups (e.g., Indonesia 1965).

Whitlam was also facing growing dissatisfaction on the home front. A sharp spike in the price of oil in 1973 had drawn Australia into recession. The reforms that may have earlier appeared affordable to the bourgeoisie no longer seemed so. Whitlam harped on the need to fight inflation; his labor minister denounced unions for “bloody-mindedness” and “selfishness” and demanded that they accede to a “voluntary” wage freeze and no-strike pledge. In 1974, twice as many workdays

funded by the CIA and vowed to provide details, including the names of CIA operatives, to the next session of Parliament, nine days later. On the morning of November 11, Whitlam met Kerr, the Queen’s representative, who proceeded to sack Whitlam and appoint Liberal Opposition leader Malcolm Fraser in his place.

According to Australian journalist John Pilger, the CIA was terrified that Whitlam “was about to ‘blow’ the cover of the man who had set up Pine Gap” and “was certain Whitlam would announce the cancellation of the Pine Gap agreement” when notice of renewal came due a month later (*A Secret Country* [1989]). Whether these fears were valid or not, the CIA certainly had plenty of reason to want to see the back of Whitlam, as did the Australian bourgeoisie. The Americans turned to “our man Kerr,” as the CIA called him. Kerr had a long history of associa-

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WORKERS VANGUARD



# Gays and the 1984-85 British Miners Strike

The following article is reprinted from Workers Hammer No. 229 (Winter 2014-15), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain.

## WORKERS HAMMER

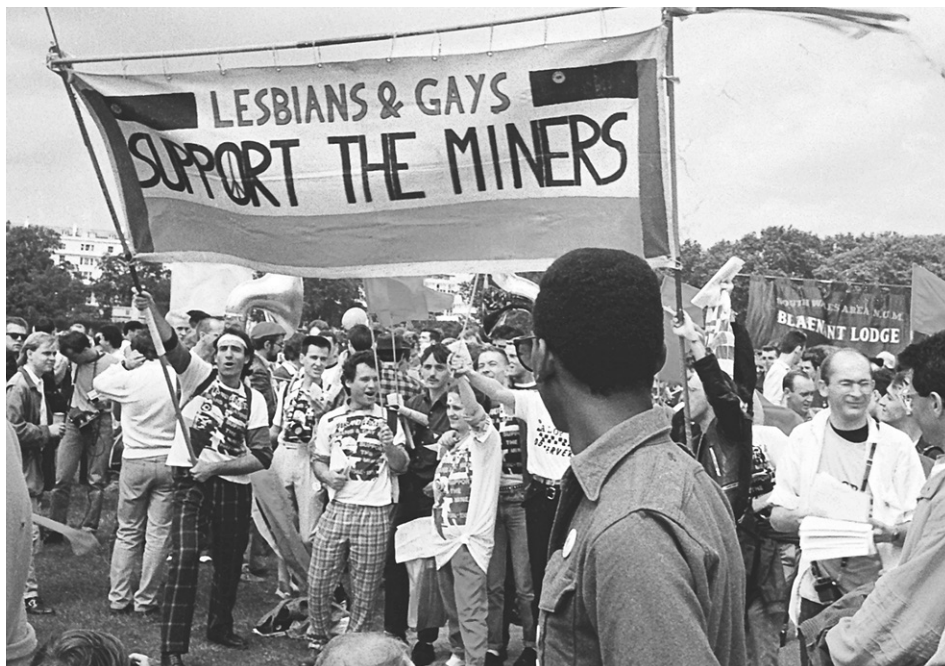
The new movie *Pride* has been met, deservedly, by a raft of rave reviews. Released 30 years after the launch of the heroic 1984-85 miners strike, *Pride* offers an exhilarating glimpse at what remains one of the most combative expressions of the class struggle in Britain and at the electrifying impact it had on broad layers of the oppressed. For those, especially younger people, who know only the occasional one- or two-day token strike in response to the incessant and unrelenting attacks by the bourgeoisie against wages and living conditions and the onslaught of racist, anti-immigrant and “family values” reaction, this film is a reminder that another world is, indeed, possible.

The year-long struggle led by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) exposed the threadbare social fabric of decrepit British capitalism. Intent on taming and destroying the most powerful union in the land, the Tory [Conservative] government of Margaret Thatcher provoked a torrent of class-struggle opposition that nearly brought the union-busting, anti-Communist “Iron Lady” to her knees. In building mass pickets and defying an army of scab-herding cops that flooded the coalfields, the miners inspired tens of thousands of railway and transport workers and other unionists to risk their jobs by engaging in concrete acts of labour solidarity. The NUM’s struggle against the despised Thatcher also galvanised the support and solidarity of the oppressed black and Asian communities, Irish Republicans and others chafing under the heel of the capitalist ruling class and its state, first and foremost the miners wives’ and women’s support groups that sprang up in every pit locality. In turn, this upwelling of support, and their own experience in struggle, dramatically changed the consciousness of the strikers and their families.

*Pride* focuses on an organisation of one such layer of the oppressed, Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM). The film begins with the June 1984 Gay Pride parade in London, where the central figure, Mark Ashton (played by Ben Schnetzer), encourages his friends from Gay’s the Word bookshop to carry collection buckets for the strike. A raucous meeting follows where Ashton, joined by a handful of other gay men and a sole lesbian, Steph (Faye Marsay), founded LGSM in the face of narrow gay sectoralist concerns and hostility to the working class (derived in part from memories of beatings by backward workers). The

## A Celebration of Solidarity

### A Review by Len Michelson



Colin Clews/gayinthe80s.com

London, 1985: Lesbian and Gay Pride march. South Wales National Union of Mineworkers banner is in background.

LGSM activists are then confronted by prejudice from the other side, as one pit after another turns down support from an openly gay group. Finally, after a series of comic misunderstandings, Dai Donovan (Paddy Considine), a strike leader from the Dulais Valley in South Wales, comes to London to meet them. Donovan’s quiet and sober demeanor contrasts sharply with the ostentatious gay lifestyle flaunted by some of the LGSM.

The theme of solidarity in struggle (and human warmth) creating bonds and understanding between seeming opposites

weaves through the film. The flamboyant Jonathan (played by Dominic West, previously Detective McNulty in *The Wire*) becomes the hit of the mining village after disco-dancing on the tables in the miners welfare club and teaching some of the younger strikers to dance (“Welsh men don’t dance,” complains one local woman). The older women in the village insist on a tour of gay clubs (including the “rubber scene”) while visiting London for a strike benefit. The venerable Welsh village elder (played by Bill Nighy) confesses before the film’s end that he has been in the closet all these years.

Feel-good Hollywood cliché and schmaltz abound, but they speak to a deeper truth about the strike. As we noted repeatedly in our press at the time, as the strike went on it began to break down longstanding sexual, racial, regional and national barriers. Dai speaks for the many strikers who became powerful public speakers in the course of the struggle. The fiery women portrayed in the film did become among the most intransigent and articulate fighters for a strike victory after breaking down the resistance of their husbands and sons to women playing a full part in the struggle. Women not only participated in running the communal kitchens and dining halls but also joined the picket lines and spoke publicly to motivate support for the strike at meetings and rallies. More than one of the thousands of miners who came to London to collect donations confessed to knowing “friends” who had been racist until they encountered resounding support

for their struggle within the black and Asian communities. These miners were welcomed into the homes of strike supporters, just as supporters who visited the pit communities were welcomed into the homes of strikers.

In motivating gay support for the strike, Ashton declaims that Thatcher hates the miners as much as she hates gays and that the cops have now found someone else to “pick on.” In our articles on the strike we, too, made the point that the miners were being subjected to the same brutality the bosses’ state had long meted out to more vulnerable layers of the oppressed. But there was a more fundamental reason why blacks and Asians, women, gays and Irish Catholics rallied behind the miners cause. The miners had *social power*, a power derived from the workers’ organisation and their ability to stop the wheels of the capitalist profit system from turning. Many saw the NUM, which had brought down the Tory Heath government in 1974, as the vanguard of the trade union movement and looked to the miners to bring down the universally hated Thatcher and open the road to a better future.

But to achieve victory the solidarity the miners needed most was not money and friendship. From the outset of the struggle, we said: “Miners must not stand alone!” The only way to defeat the full might of the capitalist state arrayed against the NUM was to bring out other unions in struggle on the picket lines. With the Labour Party leadership under Neil Kinnock and the TUC [Trades Union Congress] under Norman Willis openly hostile to the strike, we pointed to the urgent need to draw the left-led unions, whose leaders *claimed* to support the miners struggle, out on strike alongside the NUM. When two brief dock strikes in the summer of 1984 threatened to bring the economy to a standstill (plunging the pound sterling to an all-time low), we agitated for a fighting Triple Alliance to shut down the country through joint strike action of miners and rail and other transport workers around a series of demands in the interests of the whole trade union movement. This would have amounted to a general strike, posing the question of a struggle for power. And this is what frightened the Labour and TUC tops, “left” as well as right, more than anything else.

While tens of thousands of miners and other workers showed their contempt for Kinnock and Willis (including by lowering a noose in front of the podium when Willis appeared in Wales in 1984), [NUM leader Arthur] Scargill and prominent Labour “left” Tony Benn did not challenge these scabherders, nor did they criticise their “left” TUC allies for refusing to bring out their unions. As we wrote at the end of the strike, “In the final analysis, it was not the cops and courts that defeated the NUM; it was the fifth column in labour’s ranks” (*Workers Hammer* No. 67, March 1985). The scene depicted in *Pride* of the Dulais miners marching back to work, heads unbowed, was repeated in pit villages around the country, and inspired our headline: “Thatcher Vindictive in Victory—Miners Defiant in Defeat.” We drew a balance sheet of the strike:

“The NUM leadership under Arthur Scargill took the strike about as far as it could go within a perspective of militant trade union reformism, and still it lost. Why? Because militancy alone is not enough. From day one it was clear that the NUM was up against the full power of the capitalist state. What was needed was a party of revolutionary activists rooted in the trade unions which fought tooth and nail to mobilise other unions in strike action alongside the NUM. But all Arthur Scargill had was the Labour Party, and it would rather see the NUM dead than organise to take on the bosses’ state in struggle.”

*Pride* makes no mention of the broader social and political questions at stake in

*continued on page 10*



Workers Hammer

Spartacist League/Britain banner during miners strike. We called for a Triple Alliance of miners, railway and other transport workers to shut down the country through all-out strike action.

# 29th Annual Holiday Appeal

## Free All Class-War Prisoners!

The Partisan Defense Committee's 29th annual Holiday Appeal events raised many thousands of dollars to sustain the monthly stipend program for 15 class-war prisoners and provide holiday gifts to them and their families. Held over the last two months, fundraisers in Oakland, Chicago and New York, and smaller gatherings in Los Angeles and Toronto, drew longtime PDC supporters, youth activists and trade unionists. Notably, scores of workers in the Bay Area snapped up tickets to the Oakland fundraiser, while in Chicago the United Auto Workers civil rights committee presented a check to the PDC at that union body's Martin Luther King Jr. tribute dinner.

The Holiday Appeal took place following the nationwide outpouring of protest against racist cop terror touched off by the refusal of grand juries to indict the cops who killed Eric Garner in New York and Michael Brown in Missouri. The Bay Area fundraiser was attended by a representative of the Black Friday 14, a group arrested while protesting the exoneration of Brown's killer on November 28. Those activists had briefly stopped Bay Area Rapid Transit trains between San Francisco and Oakland (see page 9).

With the stipend program, which began in 1986, the PDC regularly sends money to the class-war prisoners, men and women locked up for their opposition to racist capitalist tyranny. The \$50 monthly stipends are not charity but basic acts of working-class solidarity, a reminder to the class-war prisoners that they are not forgotten. The prisoners use these funds to buy basic necessities like food, or to pursue literary and artistic endeavors that help ameliorate the living hell of prison life.

The class-war prisoners have spent decades behind bars, singled out for standing up to the system of exploitation and oppression. Mumia Abu-Jamal spent three decades on death row, and



WV Photo

Leftist attorney and former class-war prisoner Lynne Stewart, with husband Ralph Poynter, addresses Holiday Appeal in New York City, January 24.

now remains condemned to life in prison without parole. A former Black Panther Party spokesman, supporter of the MOVE organization and award-winning journalist known as "the voice of the voiceless," Mumia was framed up for the 1981 killing of a Philadelphia police officer.

Other class-war prisoners include Leonard Peltier, the American Indian Movement activist framed up in the 1975 killing of two FBI agents, and Albert Woodfox, who has languished in solitary confinement for decades in retaliation for organizing a Black Panther Party chapter in Louisiana's Angola prison and fighting the wretched conditions there. Jaan Laaman and Thomas Manning were part of the Ohio 7, a radical group that took credit for bank "expropriations" and bombings of symbols of U.S. imperialism

in the late 1970s and '80s. Ed Poindexter and Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa were leaders of the Omaha National Committee to Combat Fascism. Like so many other former Black Panther supporters, the two were targets of the FBI's deadly COINTELPRO program, which left 38 Panthers dead.

Hugo Pinell, the last of the San Quentin 6 still in prison, is a militant anti-racist activist who led struggles for prisoner rights. A year ago, he was transferred from Pelican Bay solitary, where hunger strikes drew attention to the torture of such isolation. His daughter, Allegra Taylor, read a letter from Pinell to the Oakland Holiday Appeal (see page 9), and concluded: "It is my dad's wish that *every* solitary confinement unit throughout the world, not just the state of California, be *shut down*."

Several of the class-war prisoners took note of the recent anti-police brutality protests in their letters to the Holiday Appeal. Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Club speakers at the events linked the struggles of the prisoners with those of today, seeking to educate a new generation of fighters in the lessons of the past. Above all is the vital precept that the capitalist state, with its repressive machinery of the police, courts and prisons, cannot be reformed to serve the interests of working people.

The PDC is guided by the class-struggle defense work of the International Labor Defense (ILD) of James P. Cannon, who went on to become a founder of American Trotskyism, in the 1920s. The ILD's stipend program initially included over 100 class-war prisoners. Among them were California labor leaders Tom Mooney and Warren Billings, framed up for a bombing at the Preparedness Day parade in San Francisco during World War I in 1916, and Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, immigrant anarchist workers executed in 1927 for a robbery/murder they did not commit. The list of ILD stipend recipients grew rapidly to include striking Passaic textile workers, as well as Illinois miners whose fights with the bosses over wages pitted them head-on against the KKK.

The prisoners in the PDC program are drawn heavily from the ranks of fighters against racial oppression, which is woven into the social fabric of this capitalist society. The PDC is prepared to defend, as was Cannon's ILD before it, "any member of the workers movement, regardless of his views, who suffered persecution by the capitalist courts because of his activ-

ities or his opinion" (Cannon, *First Ten Years of American Communism*, 1962). Affiliated to the early Communist Party, the ILD fused the militant traditions of the Industrial Workers of the World (that popularized the injunction "An injury to one is an injury to all!") with the internationalism of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. That revolution was made not just for Russian workers but for the workers and the oppressed of the entire world.

We stand unconditionally on the side of working people and their allies in struggle against capitalist savagery. As the SL speaker Marianne Clemens observed at the Oakland fundraiser: "The fight to defend these heroic class-war prisoners is integral to the fight to overthrow capital. In the end, our work links them with the struggle to forge the multiracial revolutionary Leninist party that can lead the workers to victory, open the prison doors and uproot this rotten, death-dealing capitalist system once and for all."

With sorrow and bitterness, we reported in WV No. 1060 (23 January) that Phil Africa, a longtime stipend recipient, died at the State Correctional Institution in Dallas, Pennsylvania, on January 10. Phil had been incarcerated since he was framed up, along with eight other MOVE family members, for the killing of a Philadelphia police officer during the 1978 cop siege of MOVE's Powelton Village home. We will keep Phil's memory alive by continuing to fight for all class-war prisoners.

We were honored to welcome Lynne Stewart as a speaker at the New York Holiday Appeal on January 24. A leftist attorney who had for over three decades defended Black Panthers, left radicals and many others reviled by the capitalist state, Stewart herself was imprisoned in 2009, the victim of a "war on terror" show trial. She was convicted of giving material support to terrorism because she had communicated a client's views to Reuters news service. That client was a blind Egyptian Islamic fundamentalist cleric who had been convicted in an alleged plot to blow up New York City landmarks in the early 1990s. Her conviction set a precedent for tearing up the basic right to counsel.

Diagnosed with terminal Stage IV breast cancer, Stewart had her sentence vindictively quadrupled at the instigation of the Obama administration. The 75-year-old Stewart remained unbowed and was finally granted a compassionate release from a federal prison hospital in Texas at the end of 2013. While in prison,

## In Memory of Samiya (Goldii) Davis Abdullah

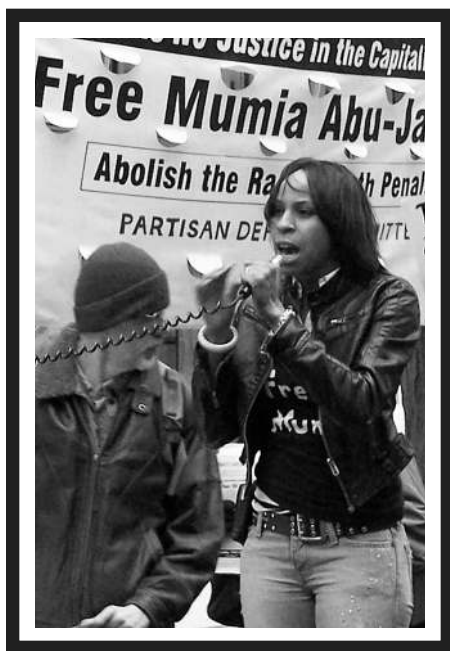
It is with sadness that we inform our readers of the untimely death on December 17 of 36-year-old Samiya Abdullah after a protracted struggle with cancer. She was the daughter of Mumia Abu-Jamal, America's foremost political prisoner, who has been incarcerated since he was framed up for the shooting death of a Philadelphia cop in 1981, when Samiya was just two years old. Samiya was a fighter for her father's freedom. In a moving tribute, Mumia observed:

"For most of the activist world she was Goldii, a rapper and activist whose sweet voice could strike like bricks when she cracked into rap or sang a song. To us she was Sami, short for Samiya, a brilliant, sparkling young woman who never ceased to surprise us. She was many things: daughter, mother, student, activist, artist, orator, rapper, graduate and more. To us she was the baby, the youngest, and as such she had a special shine."

—"Samiya Abdullah Makes Transition" by Mumia Abu-Jamal, 19 December 2014 (transcribed from Prison Radio)

He also spoke of Samiya's incredible fortitude in graduating with a master's degree while undergoing wrenching cancer treatment.

The PDC has sent a donation to Mumia's wife Wadiya to help with expenses at this terrible time. Readers who want to assist



WV Photo

Goldii speaking at PDC-initiated rally demanding freedom for Mumia, New York City, 28 March 2008.

the family in caring for Goldii's two young daughters can send donations made payable to Wadiya Jamal to: P.O. Box 19404, Kingsessing Postal Station, Philadelphia, PA 19143-9998.





East Ukraine...

(continued from page 1)

Ukraine or independence or unification with Russia. After the vote, we wrote: “We defend the democratic right of the population in these areas to conduct the referendum and act on the vote for self-rule” (“U.S. Imperialism Behind Bloody Repression in Ukraine,” WV No. 1046, 16 May 2014). This position is an expression of our support for the democratic right of national self-determination, i.e., the right of peoples to amalgamate or to separate. As Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin underlined, the recognition of the right of self-determination is essential to combating national antagonisms and creating conditions where working people of different nations are able to see that the real enemy is their respective capitalist exploiters, not each other.

The imperialists blather on about “Russian aggression” to mask their own predatory appetites. A compliant U.S. capitalist media has done its part, parroting claims that the Russian army is engaged in combat in Ukraine while all but disappearing the presence of American mercenaries and neo-Nazis from West Europe fighting alongside the Ukrainian army. In truth, Putin has been quite restrained in the face of repeated provocations by the Kiev government and its imperialist patrons. There is little indication that Moscow has annexationist appetites toward the eastern Ukrainian provinces.

Those in Kiev pressing the military conflict are desperate for whatever imperialist assistance they can get. The Ukrainian army recently launched its fourth conscription drive since last March, and has plans for two more drafts, which will sweep up mainly working-class and poor people. There have been numerous protests against conscription, mostly led by women furious that their sons and husbands are being made cannon fodder. Many potential conscripts are hiding in forests and fleeing the country to avoid the draft. Ukraine’s Defense Ministry announced at the end of January that nearly 7,500 people are facing criminal charges for draft evasion.

The real shock troops of the Ukrainian army are fascist-dominated volunteer units accused of carrying out rape, kidnapping and murder across the Donbass. Among these are the Aidar and Azov battalions, the latter of which sports insignia based on the Black Sun and the Wolf’s Hook (*Wolfsangel*) emblems of the Nazi SS. When the Kiev government announced a “rebranding” of the Aidar battalion at the end of January, the fascists attempted to storm the Ministry of Defense in protest. These scum, politically represented by the Right Sector and Svoboda, trace their lineage back to the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) of Stepan Bandera that collaborated with the Nazis during World War II. The UPA is notorious for its mass murders of Jews, Communists, Soviet soldiers and Poles. In a salute to the fascists,



Reuters map (adapted by WV)

Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko established a national holiday, the Day of Ukraine’s Defenders, on October 14—the anniversary of the UPA’s founding.

Imperialist Sanctions and Unintended Consequences

In cutting off access to international capital, the imperialist sanctions have compounded the damage done by the collapse in oil prices to the Russian economy, which is heavily dependent on oil and natural gas exports. Oil is fetching less than half the price it did a year ago due in no small part to increased production in the U.S. and continuing high production in Saudi Arabia. The value of the ruble against the dollar plummeted by 46 percent last year and another 17 percent in January, while inflation has soared to 13 percent. With the costs of food and medicine in particular skyrocketing, working people and retirees are scrambling to get by.

Differences are growing, especially in the EU, over continuing the sanctions. At the beginning of the year, French president François Hollande expressed a desire to ease sanctions if some basis for compromise could be found. In echoing this sentiment, German Social Democrat Sigmar Gabriel, vice chancellor in Angela Merkel’s Christian Democrat-led government, expressed concern that some want the sanctions to “cripple” Russia.

Such statements reflect the worries of sections of Europe’s capitalist rulers that the more effective the sanctions are, the more they could threaten their own beleaguered economies. Several countries in the EU, notably its dominant power Germany, have extensive trade links with Russia and rely on fossil fuel imports from that country. Furthermore, the continued fall in the value of the ruble raises the prospect that Russia could default on its debts, which would be yet another blow to Europe’s struggling banks.

The recent election victory of the petty-bourgeois Syriza party in Greece also briefly raised the prospect of a speed bump for the EU sanctions regimen. Elected on

promises to roll back the grinding EU-enforced austerity that has impoverished Greece and driven unemployment to over 25 percent (around 50 percent among youth), Syriza had also expressed opposition to sanctions against Russia. But just three days after its formation, the capitalist government led by Syriza joined the rest of the EU in unanimously agreeing to extend the existing sanctions for another six months and to prepare a list of other individual Russians to target.

Syriza’s denunciation of the austerity



Reuters

Fascist-dominated Azov battalion on “Day of Ukraine’s Defenders,” with Nazi SS Wolfsangel emblem on banner, demand ban of Communist Party, 14 October 2014.

diktats (and sanctions on Russia) is shown to be so much hot air by its support to the imperialist EU. Originally established as an economic battering ram against the Soviet Union, the EU remains the vehicle by which the European capitalists jointly exploit the European workers. Its weaker states like Greece are lorded over by its more powerful imperialist members, who also gain competitive advantage from the EU trade bloc at the expense of their

imperialist rivals, the U.S. and Japan. In the Greek elections, our comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece called for “no vote to Syriza” and gave critical support to the Communist Party, which stood in opposition to the EU and all pro-EU parties, including Syriza. *Down with the EU! For a Socialist United States of Europe!*

Russia is not now imperialist, although it has the potential to become so (however remote that prospect appears today). A regional power, Russia has significant military might, especially its nuclear arsenal, making it harder for the U.S. to push around. But Moscow does not play a role in the carve-up of the world on a global scale. The efforts of the existing imperialists, led by the U.S., to keep Russia out of their club have stymied its imperialist ambitions. Washington’s increased bellicosity toward Russia comes in the context of its so-called pivot to Asia, strengthening ties with India and other maneuvers aimed at containing the Chinese deformed workers state. Such moves reflect the overriding concern of the U.S. imperialists to effect a counterrevolution in China, where capitalism was overthrown following the 1949 Revolution, in order to reopen that country to untrammelled imperialist exploitation.

However, the attempts to isolate Russia have served to push it into China’s arms, an illustration of the U.S. rulers’ difficulties in pursuing their strategic interests around the world. Russia’s fossil fuels

and high-grade military technology could both fill needs in China, which in turn has massive foreign exchange reserves. Russia’s vast land mass also provides a major route for China’s project of a New Silk Road for trade with Europe that avoids the threat of U.S. naval disruption of shipping lanes.

In contrast to Merkel’s Atlanticism, a wing of the German bourgeoisie favors an economic and political alliance with

Spartacus Youth Club Events

LOS ANGELES

Wednesday, February 18, 7 p.m. Capitalism to Communism: A Marxist Understanding of the State

UCLA, Bunche Hall, Room 3150 Information and readings: (213) 380-8239 • slsycla@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Monday, February 9, 7 p.m. The Russian Revolution of 1917, Part 1

CCNY, NAC Rm. TBA 138th St. and Amsterdam Avenue (Take #1 train to 137th St.-City College) Information and readings: (212) 267-1025 • nysl@tiac.net

Visit the ICL website: www.icl-fi.org

TORONTO

Thursday, February 26, 6:30 p.m. Down With Ottawa’s “Anti-Terror” Laws! “War on Terror”: Marauding Abroad, Repression at Home

U of T, OISE, Room 2199 252 Bloor St. West (at St. George subway) Information and readings: (416) 593-4138 • spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Wednesday, February 25, 6:30 p.m. From Ferguson to Vancouver: Down With Racist Cop Terror!

University of British Columbia Irving Barber Learning Centre, Rm. 315 Information and readings: (604) 687-0353 trotskyist\_vancouver@shawcable.com

Pride...

(continued from page 7)

the strike, aside from a seemingly jocular exclamation by Steph when the LGSM is founded: “Terrific—let’s bring down the government!” The film does not indicate that Mark Ashton was actually a leading figure in the Young Communist League. Yet, as Ray Goodspeed, one of the founding members of LGSM, told [the left group] rs21 (21 September 2014): “Of the eleven people who started LGSM, we were all either Trotskyists, communists or very close friends of communists.” Goodspeed was then a longtime member of the Militant group, which was buried deep inside Kinnock’s Labour Party. Goodspeed acknowledges that Militant “had a very dismissive position on gay rights.” One wing of the divided Communist Party openly braintrusted for Kinnock (and later [Tony] Blair) while the other acted as “left” apologists for

the Labour/TUC tops. Many groups on the left shared Thatcher’s visceral hatred for the Soviet Union and/or joined her in calling for a strikebreaking “ballot” after the strike was already underway.

Sectoralism—be it feminism, nationalism or gay lifestyleism—accommodates the divisions fostered by the capitalist ruling class and undermines the struggle against special oppression. The closing scene of *Pride*, as hundreds of Welsh miners and their families pour out of coaches to proudly place themselves, marching bands and all, at the head of the 1985 Gay Pride parade in London, points symbolically to another alternative: that of the organised working class standing at the head of all the oppressed. That sort of unity can be achieved only under the leadership of a revolutionary vanguard party that acts as a Leninist tribune of the people, championing the rights of gays, women, ethnic and national minorities and all the exploited and oppressed as part of the struggle for workers revolution. ■



# Holiday Appeal...

(continued from page 9)

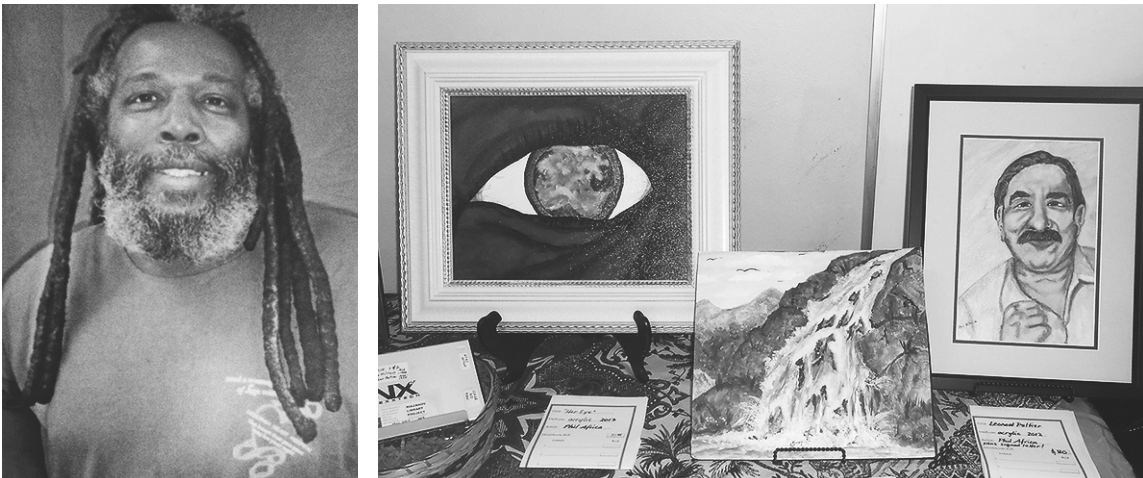
And you do everything you can, and you just say, “Well, something’s gonna work someday.” And then when it does, it’s a revelation. That’s all I can say, it really is a revelation....

We have a lot to do, there’s no question about that. But I’m just glad I can step up again and do that. And of course, having been behind those walls, I understand how dehumanizing it is to be beset every day by what is arbitrary authority. Just as these young people were stopped by cops and confronted arbitrary authority, to their detriment, and ended up dead, so in jail every day that arbitrary authority wears on you. It’s a guard who says “A” on Thursday, and on Friday he’s saying “B.” And you say, “But you said,” and he says, “Don’t tell me what.” Anything and everything is operational. You can be written up for anything. And that is brain numbing and it is mind killing and it is heartbreaking.

And as I say, I have never met anyone who got out of jail who didn’t feel that the worst thing was leaving the people behind them, that you could not go back and somehow rescue all of them. Because so many of them deserve to be rescued, not necessarily because of the crime they committed, or they were innocent, or any of that, but because they were treated so badly by this system, which your young Spartacist so eloquently described, that this system betrayed them from the moment they were born, and that they

**Phil Africa, class-war prisoner who died behind bars on January 10, donated art work for Bay Area Holiday Appeal event.**

On a Move



WV Photo

have never gotten recompense for that....

When I was in jail, I got a poem that Ed [Poindexter] had written, which I actually distributed far and wide, among the women at Carswell. It was a poem about the use of the word “n---a” and how young people use the word n---er all the time: “he’s my n---a,” “let’s do that n---a,” and about how they just don’t get it. They don’t have the background to know what that word meant. And this poem just puts it so well, and I gave it to people and they’d come back and they’d say, “Thank you. I gave that to my friend, and we decided we’re not going to do that anymore.”

And I think that is the most remarkable thing: from behind the walls, these folks continue to operate politically; they continue to put out their thoughts. Jaan Laaman is another one. He puts out a magazine; he’s constantly in touch with Prison Radio. Now he’s a person, another name, you may not know real well. But they are worth getting to know, and I tell you, if you have the time to be a corre-

spondent, to correspond with someone in jail is really a treat. It’s a wonderful thing, because it’s so important to the person in jail, and it can be so enlightening to all of us....

I have stories of women who died, literally almost before my eyes, and they died because of neglect. And so these places are death camps, as Ralph says. And it’s only us, the vigilance from people on the outside, that can save the people on the inside.

## Paula Daniels, Chicago Spartacist League

Obama came into office trumpeting the myth of an end to racism, declaring that the civil rights movement had brought the country 90 percent of the way to racial equality. What crap. I need only mention the names Eric Garner and Michael Brown to explode the deadly lie of an alleged post-racial America. The Grand Jury exonerations of the killer cops expose the class nature of the capitalist courts.

In this same two-week period, 12-year-old Tamir Rice and 28-year-old Akai Gurley were blown away by cops less than 48 hours apart. The bourgeoisie has made clear that the essence of the words of U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Taney, delivered in the infamous Dred Scott decision nearly 160 years ago, is still very much alive. The black man has no rights a white man is bound to respect....

We are here tonight to honor a small handful of capitalism’s victims, locked away for taking a stand against racism, capitalist degradation, injustice—some locked up for much longer than the 29 years that we have been sending stipends to these fighters. I would be remiss if I didn’t pay tribute to the 45th anniversary of the murder of Black Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark. Shot down just blocks from here almost to the day. Amid the blood and bullet holes (76 bullets from the cops, one from the Panthers), lay a

copy of Lenin’s *The State and Revolution* on Hampton’s bed. There was no indictment for these killer cops either. The Panthers shared our desire to see capitalism smashed, though they looked toward the lumpenproletariat as the instrumentality rather than the organized working class as the agent for black freedom and socialism. For the most part, they were hunted down and imprisoned....

On the eve of the great revolutionary upheavals in Europe in 1848, British Lord Palmerston was speaking to the Austrian ambassador about the reactionary and repressive measures of the hated State Chancellor Prince Metternich. He said, “Your repressive and suffocating policy is also a fatal one and will lead to explosion just as certainly as a boiler that was hermetically sealed and deprived of an outlet for steam.”

We too live in a bit of a boiler of repression and contradictions today. Though not completely hermetically sealed—there are some built in outlets. The black Democrats and preachers help blow off some steam and the trade union bureaucrats keep a lid on class struggles. All of these are obstacles to the independent mobilization of the working class to fight in our own interests. Obstacles, but not fool-proof. In Ferguson, Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton clearly had lost some credibility, receiving boos and catcalls from protesting youth. That’s a good thing. However, absent a class struggle perspective, this anger will only be recycled back into the dead end of pressuring the “powers that be” to behave in a more just and humane manner....

Help us build the multiracial revolutionary workers party dedicated to fighting for black liberation, women’s liberation, and lead the struggle to free the working class and the oppressed across the globe from the chains of exploitation, poverty, and imperialist war. Those who labor must rule! ■

# Free Sundiata Acoli!

The grotesque vindictiveness of the racist rulers against the courageous black radicals who joined the Black Panther Party decades ago knows no bounds. Like so many other militants, Sundiata Acoli was railroaded to prison, together with Assata Shakur (see “Hands Off Assata Shakur!” WV No. 1059, January 9). The two were framed up for killing a cop following a 1973 ambush by New Jersey state troopers, during which one of the cops died from his own revolver’s bullet. While Shakur escaped prison hell in 1979 and fled to Cuba, where she still resides, Acoli has been in prison for over 40 years.

Last September 29, a judicial panel ordered that Acoli—now 77 years old—

be released on parole, reversing a 2011 parole board decision. In its order, the court noted that the parole board had “acted arbitrarily and capriciously” by dismissing evidence favorable to Acoli and ignoring positive psychological test results. Over the years, Acoli’s parole had been denied repeatedly on the basis of his radical political views and activities.

Acoli still rots in an American dungeon. Immediately after the court ruling, the New Jersey State attorney general and the parole board announced plans to appeal it, indefinitely postponing Acoli’s release. The Partisan Defense Committee demands: Freedom for Sundiata Acoli, now! ■

Russia (shades of Otto von Bismarck) as a counterweight to U.S. global hegemony. Meanwhile, trade between Germany and China has increased dramatically in recent years. The prospect of an Eurasian alliance was addressed by the rad-lib journalist Pepe Escobar in a December 16 article titled “Go West, Young Han” on tomdispatch.com: “One day, Germany may lead parts of Europe away from NATO’s ‘logic,’ since German business leaders and industrialists have an eye on their potentially lucrative commercial future in a new Eurasia. Strange as it might seem amid today’s war of words over Ukraine, the endgame could still prove to involve a Berlin-Moscow-Beijing alliance.”

Much of the reformist left in the U.S. and internationally went along with its own capitalist rulers in supporting the coup in Ukraine last year. Typical was the International Socialist Organization, which hailed the reactionary demonstrations in the Maidan as an “action from below.” Other groups, like the Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI), of which Socialist Alternative is the U.S. section, have gone to greater pains to strike a neutral posture between the imperialists and the Russian-backed rebels, but in fact also give left cover for the imperialists.

In a January 21 article titled “Facing a Turbulent 2015” on the CWI website

(socialistworld.net), Rob Jones retails the imperialist lie that Russia is responsible for the fighting in Ukraine. Writing that “Russia, in words, claims to want a settlement but continues to support the rebels” while all but disappearing the role of the U.S. and EU, Jones draws an equal sign between supposed “Russian imperialism” and the real imperialists of NATO. The CWI, like all reformists, has always been at peace with imperialism, which found its greatest expression when it lined up on the side of counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. CWI members in Moscow were literally standing shoulder-to-shoulder on the barricades with Boris Yeltsin’s capitalist-restorationist forces when he grabbed power in August 1991.

At every level, what is going on in Ukraine is the product of the capitalist counterrevolution that destroyed the Soviet bureaucratically degenerated workers state and ravaged the economies and peoples of the former Soviet republics. The Ukrainian economy, which had been integrated into an all-Union economic division of labor, was dealt a severe blow as living standards plummeted. We in the International Communist League fought politically tooth and nail to defend the Soviet Union against capitalist counterrevolution. Despite its degeneration under the misrule of the Stalinist bureaucracy that had usurped political power in 1923-24,

the USSR embodied the social gains of the 1917 October Revolution led by Lenin’s Bolsheviks.

The seizure of power by the proletariat in Russia was a beacon pointing the way to a future free of exploitation and oppression. All that the imperialist system offers for the masses is greater poverty and misery, with increasing conflicts among nations and peoples who hope to better their prospects at others’ cost. It is

necessary to build revolutionary workers parties internationally, sections of a reformed Fourth International, to make the working class conscious of the need to combat the depredations of its own bourgeoisie. Such parties will lead the proletariat in fierce struggle against all manifestations of national and religious bigotry and great power chauvinism in the fight to overturn capitalist rule through international socialist revolution. ■

Бюллетень Спартаковцев

SPARTACIST

Выпуск № 22

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## — Ferguson and the Feds — Another Whitewash of Cop Terror

Two days after Martin Luther King Day, the Feds put out the word: Justice Department lawyers would recommend that no charges be brought against the cop Darren Wilson for gunning down unarmed black teenager Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, last August. The FBI investigation found “no evidence” that Brown’s civil rights had been violated! Although the Justice Department has not yet closed the case, the message is clear: a cop’s badge is a license to kill in capitalist America.

When Ferguson erupted in protest last summer, President Barack Obama sent his attorney general Eric Holder to cool things down with promises of a “rigorous and independent” civil rights investigation into Brown’s killing as well as a review of the town’s police department. The preachers, black Democrats and trade-union misleaders got on board, pushing illusions that federal oversight would clean up the Ferguson police. Ferguson activists in Hands Up United raised the demand for “Eric Holder to use the full resources and power of the Department of Justice to implement a nationwide investigation of systematic police brutality and harassment in black and brown communities.”

We warned in a leaflet issued soon after Brown’s killing:

“There should be no illusions in the Democrats or the federal government, which oversees this rotten system that the cops ‘serve and protect.’ The notion that the Feds will rein in racist local law enforcement is a lie. FBI agents have been embedded in the Ku Klux Klan and involved in heinous crimes, such as the 1963 Birmingham church bombing and the 1979 Greensboro massacre of leftists and union organizers. With many in Ferguson seeking redress from a Department of Justice investigation, we warn that Attorney General Eric Holder & Co. are the top cops who step in to get people off the streets with the promise that justice may come in the sweet by-and-by, at best enacting cosmetic reforms.”

—“Ferguson: The Real Face of Racist Capitalist America,” reprinted in WV No. 1051, 5 September 2014

The purpose of federal investigations of the police has never been to rein in racist cop terror, which is a daily part of life for the black and Latino masses whether or not the Feds have been in town. In Cleveland, Ohio, last year, cops gunned down 12-year-old Tamir Rice as he played in a park and then threw his 14-year-old sister to the ground and cuffed her. This after two previous federal investigations of the city’s police. Indeed, the very purpose of a federal investigation is to defuse anger over police atrocities and prevent social explosions, keeping the system of capitalist exploitation running smoothly.

The law establishing the guidelines for federal civil rights investigations into local police departments was cooked up in 1991 after the sadistic beating of black motorist Rodney King by a gang of Los Angeles cops was broadcast on national television. In April 1992, a jury in state court acquitted the four officers who had actually gone to trial, and L.A. exploded. The federal government dispatched military troops, federal agents and Border Patrol officers against poor, black and Latino Los Angeles. Months later, the Feds also “investigated” whether King’s civil rights had been violated. Only two of the more than a dozen cops involved were convicted and they served short sentences.

It’s no accident that Obama’s nominee

to replace Eric Holder, Brooklyn federal prosecutor Loretta Lynch, flaunts her tough-on-crime credentials under the catchphrase “Nana’s going to jail.” The function of the Department of Justice—which includes the FBI and the Bureau of Prisons—is to spy on political activists, enforce the racist “war on drugs,” victimize militant trade unionists and run pris-

Luther King Jr. has been co-opted by the political establishment. In reality, King was always a part of that establishment, a figure whose entire political career was based on brokering reforms from the Democratic Party of Kennedy and Johnson. King was the best representative of the petty-bourgeois black leaders who advocated a program of reliance on federal



WV Photos



**Above: Thousands march against racist cop terror, New York City, December 13. Left: Spartacist contingent at protest warns against illusions in Feds, civilian review boards.**

ons. Calling on the top overseer of the whole plantation to protect black people from his local subordinates is like asking the fox to guard the henhouse.

For protesters who have taken to the streets across the country, the unrelenting cop killings have posed the question: which way forward? Given that federal oversight, civilian review boards and body cameras have made no difference, some express frustration with the Obama administration. But these activists then argue for more militant tactics...to pressure the government to clean up the police and enact other reforms to alleviate the desperate conditions of black people in America. Militancy in pursuit of the same reformist program is no answer. It is necessary to *break* with the strategy of pressure politics. To end police brutality and racial oppression in America requires a class-struggle fight for socialist revolution.

Activists at “Reclaim MLK” protests around the King holiday were motivated by the belief that the legacy of Martin

intervention against the Jim Crow South. This strategy reflected fear and loathing of the poor and more militant black masses, who were beginning to organize self-defense against racist terror as part of the struggle against segregation in all spheres of life: schools, transportation, lunch counters, housing (see “On Federal Troops in Little Rock,” page 2).

MLK pushed a pacifist, turn-the-other-cheek solution to corral those working-class blacks and courageous youth whose militancy was starting to escape the bounds of impotent pressure politics. And in response to the unorganized upheavals of the ghetto masses against police terror, such as occurred in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles in 1965, King proclaimed: “It was necessary that as powerful a police force as possible be brought in to check them.” King’s utility to the Feds was immeasurable as an authoritative black leader whose message was to disarm, go slow, and love and trust the forces of capitalist state repression. (For more

on King, see “*Selma: The Movie and the Real Story*,” WV No. 1060, 23 January.)

It is necessary to junk the myth pushed by liberals in the current anti-police brutality protests that there was a golden age of good neighborhood policing, which could be restored today through civilian review boards and federal oversight. Those good old days existed precisely *never*. In an article titled “Stop Kidding Yourself: The Police Were Created to Control Working Class and Poor People” (lawcha.org, 29 December 2014), Sam Mitrani, author of the book *The Rise of the Chicago Police Department*, describes how “the police were not created to protect and serve the population. They were not created to stop crime, at least not as most people understand it. And they were certainly not created to promote justice.” Emerging out of the bloody battles between cops and strikers in the mid-to-late 19th century, police forces were created to protect capitalism “from the threat posed by that system’s offspring, the working class.” In the antebellum South, the predecessors of modern police forces were the slave patrols.

Nonetheless, Mitrani retails the liberal absurdity that “a democratic police system is imaginable—one in which police are elected by and accountable to the people they patrol.” The fact is that the cops’ job is to defend the capitalist order through the violent repression of those capitalism exploits and oppresses. In the U.S., where capitalism had its roots in the system of chattel slavery, this violence is especially directed at black people. The cops cannot be reformed or gotten rid of short of a socialist revolution that shatters the system of wage slavery that police forces were created to defend.

The International Socialist Organization and other reformist groups were movers and shakers behind “The Gathering,” an anti-police brutality conference in New York City on January 30, where the issue of police accountability got a lot of play. A Spartacist supporter argued from the floor at the conference plenary: “All this talk about community control or having negotiations with the cops or dialogue is defeatist and won’t go anywhere. The point is that there is a social force in society that can actually bring change, and that is the working class.” The union movement in this country was built through hard-fought strikes in which workers had to fend off cop attacks. The potential power is there. And black workers, with their ties to the ghetto masses, will form an important link between the struggle against wage slavery and the fight for black freedom.

Today, as black youth continue to fall victim to racist cop brutality across the country, the labor movement is on its knees, failing to defend the jobs and wages of its own members, much less champion the causes of the oppressed. Responsibility in no small part lies with the existing leadership of the unions, which has undermined labor’s struggles and sped its decline by pledging loyalty to the profit system and tying the unions to the capitalist Democratic Party. To turn this situation around requires a political struggle against all the forces that build illusions in the agencies of the capitalist government and bourgeois politicians. We seek to win militant youth and workers away from the dead end of pressure politics, to a revolutionary proletarian perspective. ■