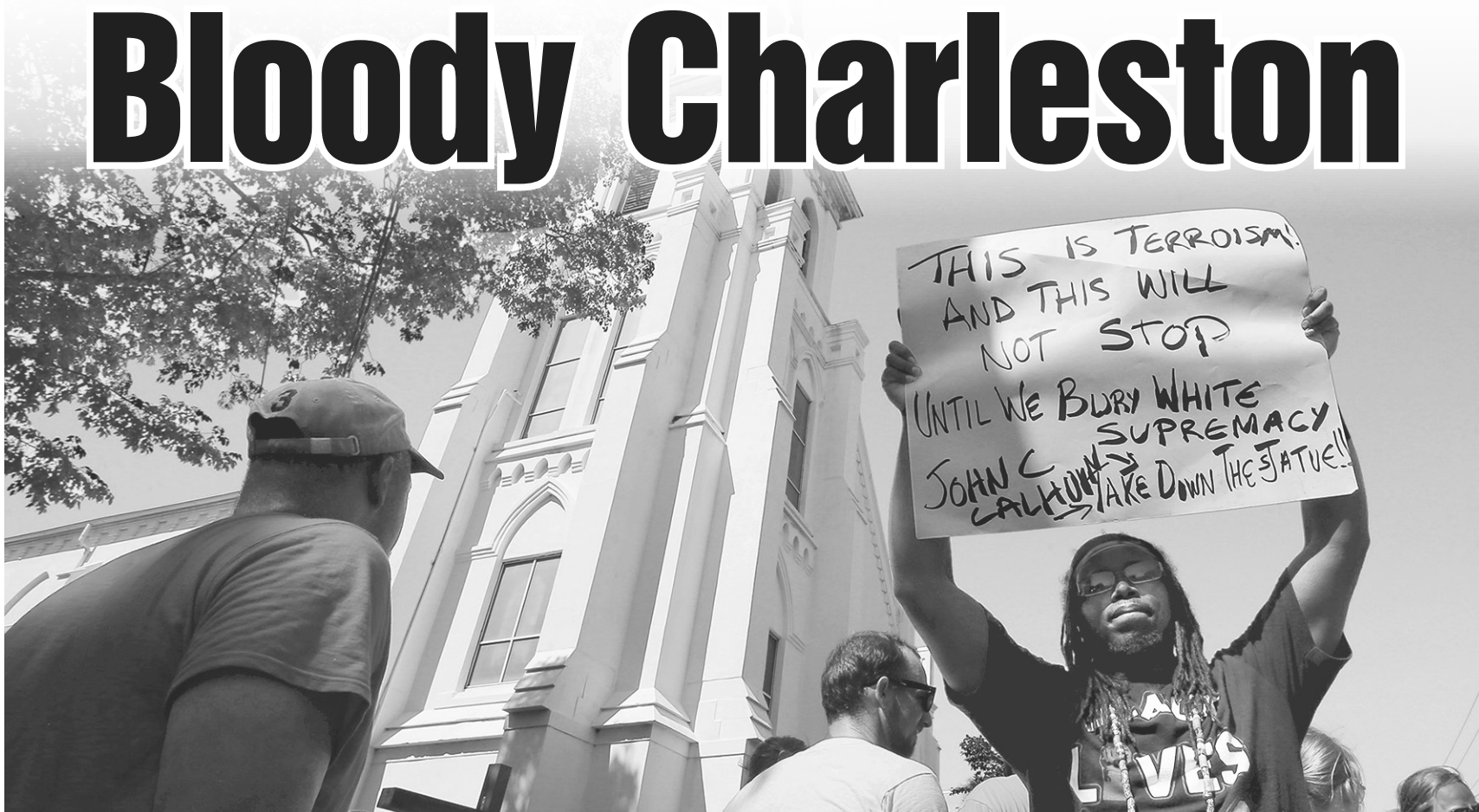


Racist Terror and the Legacy of Slavery

Bloody Charleston



Reuters

Protest sign outside Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, three days after horrific racist massacre. Sign demands removal of nearby statue of South Carolina politician John C. Calhoun, rabid supporter of slavery.

The coldblooded massacre of nine black people in Charleston's Emanuel AME Church by a 21-year-old white supremacist is a searing manifestation of the racist terror and reaction at the heart of American capitalism. As Mumia Abu-Jamal, a black radical and former Black Panther who was framed up and sentenced to death for his defiance of this racist order, declared in a radio commentary from prison: "White supremacy is the mother's milk of Charleston, of South Carolina, of the South, of America. For surely as slavery

funded and built America, the underlying principle was the devaluation, exploitation and oppression of Black life. It's the only thing that makes the church massacre in Charleston even remotely intelligible."

Bourgeois politicians from across the political spectrum, from America's first black president to the son of archsegregationist Strom Thurmond, have rushed to exploit the killings, cynically promoting "racial healing" and Christian charity and calling to "forgive your enemies." For them, the bloodbath in Charleston

was a chance to divert attention from the near-daily killings of unarmed black men at the hands of racist cops and to quell the protests against their gendarmes.

President Barack Obama promised that the FBI and the local police would "make sure that justice is served." It was local police who just three months ago killed 50-year-old Walter Scott in North Charleston, shooting him five times in the back. Likewise, in the 1968 Orangeburg Massacre, South Carolina highway patrolmen gunned down students protest-

ing segregation, killing three and injuring 27. Fascists like Dylann Roof and vigilantes like George Zimmerman, the killer of Trayvon Martin, are not exceptions to the rule of racist law and order but auxiliaries to the far more powerful murder apparatus of the capitalist state—the cops, the prisons and the military. These state forces are the main source of racist violence.

In the same statement, Obama seized on outrage over the massacre to push for more gun control, arguing: "Innocent people were killed in part because someone who wanted to inflict harm had no trouble getting their hands on a gun." No! Innocent people were killed because they were unarmed and defenseless in the face of a fascist murderer who was emboldened by the racism that pervades every aspect and institution of American society.

Gun control laws are a means to enforce a monopoly of violence in the hands of the capitalist state. Throughout U.S. history, they have been used to prevent black people from being able to defend themselves against race terrorists. In 1961, Robert F. Williams, the head of the NAACP in Monroe, North Carolina, was hounded out of the country for organizing a defense squad against racist attacks. The Klan

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On the Charleston Massacre: Who's Next?

Hate Your Enemy!

The following contribution was submitted to Workers Vanguard by Spartacist League Central Committee member Don Alexander.

The soil is extremely fertile for resurgent racist terror and fascist provocations. Too few victorious strikes; too few victories wrested through bitter struggles from the hands of the exploiters prepare greater defeats.

The Charleston massacre is one of the bloody signatures of the Obama years. The nine black people mowed down at the hands of a vicious racist killer is not just a "wake-up call" but, more importantly, the moment to raise in its full force the question: What road to black liberation, revolutionary integrationism or submission to the yoke? No amount of praying can cover up the truth that, 150 years after the end of the Civil War, black skin is still being hunted.

We view the burning questions of the day from a class standpoint: Whose interests are served, the oppressed or oppressor, the exploited or the exploiters? Depending upon the answer is the only way to judge one's friends or one's enemies. As long as our class remains tied to the parties and agencies of the class enemy, the exploiters win hands down. We need our own party—a revolutionary workers party that is a tribune of the people, that tears the masses away from capitalist ideology promulgated by the ruling class and their political agents within the labor movement.

The fight for black liberation through socialist revolution is the only way out. A class-struggle program for black liberation—a revolutionary integrationist fight against the special oppression of black people, not on the basis of inch at a time, go slow gradualism (i.e., liberal integrationism), but militant, racially integrated class struggle for black freedom. This fight is bound up with the liberation of the entire working class from the brutal capitalist system.

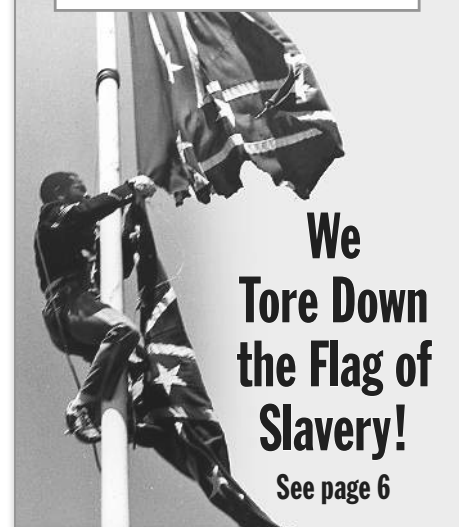
"Separate but equal" is effectively the

reality in this country. The brutal whips of the modern-day slaveholders emanate from the White House (with a smile), the halls of Congress, the Supreme Court, the "Justice" Department, no matter who are their occupants. As they shed crocodile tears for the dead, their entire system reeks of capitalist greed, venality, mass murder, brutal poverty, repression and hunger targeting workers, black people, Latinos and immigrants, women, gays and youth.

Don't forget that it was only recently that the Democrats—black and white—and their liberal allies were basking in the glory of bloody Selma to cover themselves with the mantle of civil rights martyrs, while pretending that this was "ancient history." At the same time, their lying capitalist propaganda machine endlessly repeats the big lie that "much progress has been made and there is still work to be done." In other words, we can be half-free and half-slave. NO! BLACK PEOPLE ARE OPPRESSED BY THIS DECREPIT, VIOLENTLY RACIST CAPITALIST SYSTEM.

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San Francisco 1984



Is Russia Imperialist?

25 March 2015

Workers Vanguard,

I do have one political question. WV did mention Russia was a regional power and not an imperialist power, as regards the Ukraine. True, Russia is an economic shell compared to what it was when it was the old Soviet Union but they still have an enormous amount of nuclear weapons and they do continue to occupy areas, such as Chechnya, leading to some question as to what it takes to qualify as a true imperialist state?

I have traveled extensively in the Ukraine and it is obvious, that much of Eastern Ukraine and certainly Crimea, are very, very Russian. Certainly, one must oppose NATO and hence, American aggression. Remembering the Russian Revolution however, at what point does the slogan become: “Turn the guns around—the main enemy is at home”?

Red Greetings,
Lawrence of Seattle

WV replies:

The criteria used by the reader to suggest that Russia may be imperialist are essentially military: the fact that it has

nuclear weapons, and it waged two savage wars against Chechnya. But military might and aggression do not in and of themselves define a country as imperialist. As Lenin summarized it, “Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun, in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed” (*Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* [1916]). This domination of the world by a few imperialist powers is the biggest barrier to the economic development and social progress of the less developed countries.

The constant struggle of the imperialist powers for access to markets, raw materials and cheap labor leads to the recurrence of imperialist wars to acquire and protect assets in foreign countries. Russia does not play a role in the carve-up of the world on a global scale. While Russia’s significant military might, especially its nuclear arsenal, makes it harder for

the imperialists to push it around, Russia does not invade and bomb countries across the globe as the U.S. does. Nor does it, like even second-rate imperialist powers such as Britain and France, send troops to faraway places to advance its national interests.

Russia is a regional power, albeit with imperial ambitions. Post-Soviet Russia has never intervened militarily outside the territory of the former Soviet Union except for a very limited intervention in the former Yugoslavia in the mid 1990s when the Russian forces acted as soft cops for NATO. Moscow has waged two brutal wars in Chechnya to prevent the oppressed Chechens from asserting their right to secede from Russia (a right that we support). But many countries that are not imperialist oppress minority peoples within their borders, for instance, the Tamils in Sri Lanka or the Rohingya in Myanmar (Burma). Russia also fought over pro-Russian South Ossetia with Georgia, which was backed by the U.S. In that 2008 war between two non-imperialist capitalist countries, we had a position of revolutionary defeatism: the class interests of the workers of Georgia and Russia lay in a struggle to overthrow their respective capitalist rulers through socialist revolution.

Arising out of capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92, post-Soviet Russia represents a historically unique and unprecedented phenomenon. Because Russia’s industrial development took place primarily through the collectivized economy of a workers state, Russia does not today neatly fit into the categories of long-established capitalist countries.

Russia’s economy, bolstered by high prices for its fossil fuels over much of the last decade, has recovered somewhat from the depths to which it fell after the capitalist “shock therapy” of the 1990s. But it does not have the economy of an

imperialist power. Russia’s new capitalist rulers got their hands on a large industrial base and extensive infrastructure in a country with enormous natural resources. However, its industry lags significantly behind other advanced capitalist countries in technique and product quality. No branch of Russian manufacturing is competitive on the international market except for the armaments industry (mainly inherited from the USSR).

In contrast to imperialist countries, which are characterized by the export of capital, Russia primarily exports natural resources, not capital. Russia’s economy is very dependent on its oil and gas sector, which in 2013 accounted for 16 percent of its GDP, 52 percent of federal government revenues and over 70 percent of exports. What passes for “investment” abroad mostly takes the form of capital flight to imperialist centers or to tax havens.

Sections of the German ruling class look to an alliance with Russia as a means to assert what they see as Germany’s “natural” role as ruler of Eurasia. Even “Atlanticists” like Chancellor Angela Merkel strike a much less belligerent posture toward Russia than Washington does. To date, however, the U.S. and German rulers have maintained their alliance in terms of containing and reducing Russia’s influence in the other countries of the former USSR. Thus, the German-dominated European Union has gone along with Washington in maintaining sanctions against Russia for its actions in Ukraine.

The existing imperialists, headed by the U.S., continue to work to keep Russia out of their club. The imperialist NATO alliance has expanded into East Europe (in the case of Estonia and Latvia, right up to Russia’s borders), the U.S. is increasing its deployment of tanks and other heavy equipment in the region and, for the first time since the end of the Cold

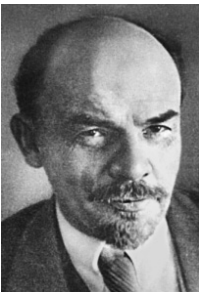
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TROTSKY

Fight Capitalist Misery!

In a June 1865 report to the General Council of the First International, Karl Marx laid out for the first time in public his theory of surplus value—the unpaid portion of workers’ labor that is the source of profit. In his conclusion, Marx emphasized that the working class must not only fight for higher wages and better conditions but also for the overthrow of the whole system of capitalist exploitation.



LENIN

The very development of modern industry must progressively turn the scale in favour of the capitalist against the working man, and that consequently the general tendency of capitalistic production is not to raise, but to sink the average standard of wages, or to push the *value of labour* more or less to its *minimum limit*. Such being the tendency of *things* in this system, is this saying that the working class ought to renounce their resistance against the encroachments of capital, and abandon their attempts at making the best of the occasional chances for their temporary improvement? If they did, they would be degraded to one level mass of broken wretches past salvation. I think I have shown that their struggles for the standard of wages are incidents inseparable from the whole wages system, that in 99 cases out of 100 their efforts at raising wages are only efforts at maintaining the given value of labour, and that the necessity of debating their price with the capitalist is inherent in their condition of having to sell themselves as commodities. By cowardly giving way in their everyday conflict with capital, they would certainly disqualify themselves for the initiating of any larger movement.

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

—Karl Marx, *Value, Price and Profit* (1865)

On Crime and Punishment

6 May 2015

In the WV article on Attica, it is mentioned that in a socialist society the question of crime and punishment will be dealt with. I was wondering what would be done in an egalitarian socialist society about this question. Would there be prisons? Or would the focus be on the rehabilitation of people who might stray out of the lines. Personally, I do not think that there would be much crime in this sort of society. Also, things like drugs would be decriminalized, as well as prostitution. Then there is the obsession with sex crimes and pornography. Out here they recently arrested a thirty year old woman for supposedly raping two sixteen year old males. The whole thing stinks to high heaven, and they are ruining this woman’s life. I agree with the SL position that it is all a question of consent. I do not think that these two youth were forced by the woman.

Comradely,
NB

WV replies:

In the conclusion of “Attica: The Nightmare That Never Ends” (WV No. 1065, 3 April), we wrote, “To lay the basis for abolishing the whole wretched system of crime and punishment requires a workers revolution to sweep away the bourgeois state and expropriate the class in whose interest the state is administered.” There can be no fair or humane system of justice

for the working class and oppressed under the class rule of the bourgeoisie. Much of the theft, fraud and violence in society is a result of the material scarcity inherent to capitalism and is bolstered by reactionary ideologies like racism and bigotry.

The criminal code is written to justify and enforce the capitalist system of exploitation based on the private ownership of the means of production. In reality, the capitalists are the biggest crooks. As the murderer Macheath in Bertolt Brecht’s *Threepenny Opera* remarked: “What is the robbing of a bank compared to the founding of a bank?” The capitalists require a huge apparatus of repression (the courts, cops and prisons as well as the military) in order to secure their rule over the exploited masses. The bosses’ hired thugs are most casual dispensers of violence against workers and the oppressed, dealing out death with impunity, especially to black people and Latinos.

The capitalist class’ whole system of punishment is based on religious precepts of retribution and penitence. Thus, they inflict vengeful suffering—from incarceration to solitary confinement to the death penalty—on transgressors of their code, to make them “pay for their sins.”

As we described in our last issue, the early Soviet workers state, issuing out of the victorious Russian October Revolution of 1917, pointed to what is possible when

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CORRECTION

In the article “The Police and the 1918-19 German Revolution” (WV No. 1060, 23 January), we said: “On 4 January 1919, the KPD’s *Die Rote Fahne* wrote: ‘The police force was trying to be a revolutionary police force, rather than actively or passively serving the counterrevolution,’ thus reinforcing in the working class the widespread misconception that Eichhorn and his cops could be the guarantors of the revolution.” In fact, the issue of *Die Rote Fahne* quoted was dated 5 January 1919.

WORKERS VANGUARD



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EDITOR: Michael Davisson

EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Conor Kristofersen

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The closing date for news in this issue is July 7.

No. 1071

10 July 2015

L.A. Union Tops Minimize Minimum Wage

How Low Can You Go

Following in the footsteps of Seattle, San Francisco and other cities, last month the Los Angeles City Council approved an ordinance to gradually raise the minimum wage from \$9 to \$15 by 2020, with an even longer phase-in for some workers. Days before that vote, however, a provision was put forward to exempt companies with a unionized workforce from honoring the new wage increase. One would expect such a proposal from the likes of the Chamber of Commerce, but the culprit here was Rusty Hicks, head of the AFL-CIO's Los Angeles County Federation of Labor!

What gives? Like many pondering what happened, especially with the unions campaigning for minimum-wage ordinances nationwide, one member of the SEIU service workers union Local 721 denounced the plan as a “real slap in the face.” Workers have every reason to be angry. But for the labor misleaders there is no contradiction. Whether lobbying legislators to create a new but still poverty-level minimum wage or moving to ensure union wages can drop below that official floor, they proceed from the standpoint of what is acceptable to the capitalists.

Hicks tried to sell the minimum-wage waiver on the grounds that it would allow greater freedom for “employers and their employees to come to a mutual agreement that works for them”—e.g., the “freedom” for workers to sacrifice wages purportedly in exchange for other benefits. Although

the union exemption in L.A. is on the back burner for now, in city after city the labor tops have succeeded in including such opt-outs in minimum-wage ordinances. As we observed in the article “Fight Poverty

compensation they have negotiated in subservience to employer demands.”

Mounting any such challenge requires a willingness to engage in class battle. But the labor bureaucracy long ago renounced

Instead it has pursued a partnership of labor and capital, which is a fraud, and committed itself to playing by the bosses’ rules. The minimum-wage waiver is the latest in a lengthy list of ploys concocted by the union tops to entice the bosses into recognizing unions through demonstrations of their reasonableness. Such displays of “good faith” have spelled disaster for the unions, whose overall membership rate has sunk to its lowest point in a century. Offering up your soul to the devil won’t get you a free pass to heaven.

At one time, strong unions set a pay standard that compelled non-union employers to also lift wages. But the decades-long onslaught of anti-union attacks by the capitalist exploiters and their political henchmen in both the Democratic and Republican parties has turned the clock back on wages and work conditions for all workers. The labor bureaucracy has helped propel this race to the bottom, peddling the lie that the working class must sacrifice to keep American business competitive.

More than a century ago, American socialist Daniel De Leon described such conservative trade-union leaders as the “labor lieutenants of capital.” He had in mind the likes of American Federation of Labor head Samuel Gompers, a leader of the racially exclusionary, hidebound craft unions who encouraged scabbing on other unions and was a sworn enemy of socialism.

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Reuters

Rally for higher wages for fast food workers in Los Angeles, 4 September 2014, part of nationwide series of protests.

Wages Through Class Struggle!” (WV No. 1052, 19 September 2014), these exemptions “are an affirmation by the union tops that they will not challenge the wretched

the very class-struggle methods to shut down services and production—mass pickets, secondary boycotts, sit-down strikes—that originally built the unions.

Albert Woodfox Must Be Freed!

On June 8, U.S. District Court judge James Brady ordered the immediate release of class-war prisoner Albert Woodfox, the longest-serving U.S. prisoner in solitary confinement—and barred the State of Louisiana from subjecting Woodfox to a retrial. But four days later, a federal appeals panel ruled that he be kept in jail pending a ruling by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals on whether Woodfox will face what would be his third trial for a crime he did not commit. Framed up for the 1972 fatal stabbing of a prison guard, Woodfox has been the victim of a racist vendetta based on his radical Black Panther Party activities within Louisiana’s infamous Angola prison. Woodfox’s conviction was overturned yet again in May 2012 and that ruling was upheld in November 2014, but he was indicted again in February at the urging of Louisiana attorney general James D. “Buddy” Caldwell. *Woodfox’s continued incarceration is an outrage! Free Albert Woodfox now!*

Albert Woodfox’s jailers have had it in for him since he started a Black Panther chapter in Angola prison shortly after his incarceration there in 1971. With fellow inmates Herman Wallace and Robert King, together later known as the Angola Three, Woodfox helped organize work stoppages and other protests against the horrific prison conditions. Woodfox and Wallace were falsely convicted of the 1972 killing of guard Brent Miller. Not a shred of physical evidence existed, and the key “eyewitness” was bribed for his



WBRZ-TV

Albert Woodfox, 68, walks into Louisiana courthouse, February 12.

trial testimony. King, who was framed for killing a fellow inmate in 1973, was released in 2001 and has been active in the fight to free Woodfox. Wallace was finally freed in October 2013 and died of liver cancer three days later. In truly vindictive fashion, Attorney General Caldwell had Wallace indicted again for Miller’s murder the day before his death!

The state is determined to see Woodfox die in prison, despite much public outrage and the fact that his convictions have been repeatedly overturned on the grounds of “unconstitutional” practices and racial bias. In a recent statement, the prison guard’s widow herself pleaded to set Woodfox free: “I wish the state of Louisiana would stop spending all this money paying lawyers to keep Albert in prison for even longer than the 43 years he has already been there.” She pointed to his innocence, noting that the bloody fingerprint at the scene of the murder did not belong to any of the Angola Three.

Woodfox has remained entombed in solitary confinement for all these years because of his prior political activities.

Angola prison warden Burl Cain insisted in 2008 that even if Woodfox were not guilty, he would be kept in “closed-cell restriction” (the prison’s euphemism for solitary) because of his “Black Pantherism.” As for “Buddy” Caldwell, he called Woodfox—who is 68 years old and suffers from hepatitis C, diabetes and a weak heart—“the most dangerous person on the planet.” Indeed, Woodfox’s persecution highlights the decades-long war by the capitalist state against Black Panther Party militants. In the 1960s, the Panthers were targeted for elimination by the FBI’s COINTELPRO operation. Thirty-eight Panthers were killed and hundreds more railroaded into prison hellholes for decades, where many died. Among the former Black Panther supporters still incarcerated are Mumia Abu-Jamal, Ed Poindexter and Wopashitwe Mondo Eyenwe Langa, all of whom, like Woodfox, receive monthly stipends from the Partisan Defense Committee. The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and

social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.

The state’s treatment of Woodfox is intended to be a chilling example for all those who speak out against the horrible conditions in prison hellholes. He has spent more than half of his life in a closet-size, windowless cell for 23 hours a day. Despite being under constant surveillance, he was subjected to visual body cavity searches up to six times a day. Kept in total isolation, eating alone and unable to attend religious or educational activities, Woodfox described in 2012 the emotional effect of years in solitary: “I ask that for a moment you imagine yourself standing at the edge of nothingness, looking at emptiness.”

Woodfox continues to languish in isolation behind a steel door at the West Feliciana Parish Detention Center. On August 31, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals will hear oral arguments on whether he will face a third trial. We demand that Albert Woodfox be freed immediately! ■

Bay Area • PDC Annual Fundraiser BBQ

**Come hear updates on class-war prisoners.
Mumia Abu-Jamal’s life in danger—Free him now!
Time for labor to take a stand against racist cop terror!**

Sunday, July 19, 1 to 4 p.m.

Crolls Garden Picnic Area, Crab Cove Regional Park
1252 McKay Ave., Alameda
(2nd BBQ area from Visitors Center)

Public transport: AC Transit 51A (from East Bay)
or O (from SF) bus lines to Webster and Santa Clara, walk to park.



The Partisan Defense Committee is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

(510) 839-0852 • pdcbayarea@fastmail.net • partisandefense.org

Support the work of the PDC! Bring your checkbook!

NOTICE
Workers Vanguard skips
alternate issues in
June, July and August.
Our next issue
will be dated August 7.

Tens of thousands of Quebec students staged another round of mass strikes and demonstrations this spring against attacks by the Liberal Party government of that province. The protests did not reach the level of the 2012 student strike, which saw marches of up to a quarter million people and drew in layers of the working class. But once again, students and their allies faced brutal repression at the hands of the police. On May Day, the cops violently attacked a demonstration called by the Convergence des Luttres Anticapitalistes (Anti-Capitalist Convergence) after only ten minutes, firing tear gas at protesters and bystanders alike and arresting nearly 100 people.

Late last year, some Quebec union leaders threatened to organize a mass “social strike” against austerity for May Day. But in the end, the bureaucrats who head the CSN and FTQ union federations did not even hold the traditional union May Day demo in Montreal. Instead, working-class anger against austerity was dissipated in a series of symbolic occupations and picket lines, while relatively small marches were held in cities and towns around Quebec.

We reprint below an adaptation of a leaflet issued in Montreal on April 25 by the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League, and distributed by our comrades at student, labor and other protests in the city, including on May Day. The leaflet was translated and adapted by *Spartacist Canada*, which published it in No. 185, Summer 2015.

Montreal May Day Leaflet:

Mobilize the Working Class Against Capitalist Austerity!



Spartacist Canada

Montreal, 29 November 2014: Thousands of workers protest against capitalist austerity.

SPARTACIST CANADA

The Liberal government of Philippe Couillard has unleashed its austerity campaign, attacking the workers’ gains in the name of “balancing the budget.” It is cutting salaries, pensions, social programs, health care, education, etc. While the 400,000 workers in the public-sector union Common Front get insulting offers from the government—a three percent raise over five years and a hike in the retirement age—the big corporations are raking in ever-growing profits and the latest government budget again offers them a plethora of gifts.

The union federations and other organizations have launched the Refusons l’Austérité [Refuse Austerity] collective. During March and April, tens of thousands of students went on strike to protest the austerity attacks. In response, the government has unleashed its guard dogs against student protesters. Police brutality and mass arrests are again common coin. Students at UQAM [Université du Québec à Montréal] face threats of expulsion for their political activities. On April 8 the administration brought the cops onto campus to prevent students from respecting strike votes. The cops then violently broke up the occupation of one of the campus buildings that evening. *We demand: Drop the charges! Down with the UQAM administration’s persecution of student militants! Cops and security guards off campus!*

The anger among the working class

and among students is palpable, as shown by the many demonstrations that have brought out thousands of people. But the demands of their leaders are based on the false premise that capitalism is capable of serving the interests of everyone. The Association pour une Solidarité Syndicale Étudiante [Association for Student Union Solidarity] (ASSÉ) calls on the government to “live up to its responsibilities and listen to the population” (ASSÉ, 12 November 2014). Meanwhile, the Refusons l’Austérité collective advises it to “spend more to boost the economy, and ensure the permanent continuation of public services and social programs” (“Solutions,” refusons.org, undated). In fact the Liberal government, like all capitalist governments, fulfills its responsibilities by serving the interests of the bourgeoisie. Public services will never meet the workers’ needs in an economic system characterized by periodic crises that block production, destroy wealth and inflict deep suffering on the working class and poor.

The capitalist class that owns the means of production—the factories, mines, transportation, etc.—has interests counterposed to those of the working class, which is forced to sell its labour power in order to survive. It is the workers who produce the goods and services that make society function, but a handful of capitalist parasites steals all the riches. To try

and shore up its rate of profit, the bourgeoisie has to constantly cut wages, lay off workers and reduce public services. Since austerity is intrinsic to capitalism, the fight against it must be linked to a fight against the capitalist system.

Myth of the “Welfare State”

Internationally, workers and the oppressed face all-out austerity attacks. Europe has been shaken in recent years by many general strikes and impressive demonstrations against austerity. The desperate situation of millions of workers and the poor has fuelled the growing popularity of parties that present themselves as anti-austerity, such as Podemos in Spain and Syriza in Greece. But these are bourgeois parties loyal to the capitalist system. The Syriza government, elected on January 25, has backtracked on most of its already limited promises, capitulating to the diktats of the imperialist European Union. Now Syriza has accepted the extension of the hated bailout plan, promising to impose even more austerity.

In Quebec, union leaders and the student left counterpose to austerity the myth of the “welfare state” or “social state” that supposedly existed in the 1960s and 1970s. This period, known as the Quiet Revolution, saw a massive erosion of the power of the church and some reforms necessary for the development of a modern capitalist society. Yet it also corresponded to the emergence of a Québécois bourgeoisie which sought to institute an autonomous political economy where it would be the centre and the main beneficiary. In criticizing the politics of austerity, various leftists are spreading an incredible number of illusions, suggesting that in the 1960s and ’70s the capitalist state cared about the situation of the working class and the oppressed.

According to the CSN bureaucrats, for example, the Liberal Party’s agenda is to dismantle “the social state in Quebec which was set up 50 years ago” (“Solutions,” refusons.org, undated). For ASSÉ, the role of the Quebec state at the time of the Quiet Revolution was to “guarantee citizens’ welfare and emancipation” (Summary of “Evolution of Public Services in Quebec: Challenges and Perspectives,” 1 October 2014). This jovial and idealized vision of the state denies the fact that capitalist society is divided into antagonistic classes. In

Quebec as on the federal level, the capitalist state is a tool of the bourgeoisie to maintain its domination. In the words of Lenin, leader of the Russian Revolution of October 1917 (the only victorious workers revolution in history), the state is “a machine for the domination of one class over another” (“The State,” 1919).

It is an illusion to think that a state which passes repressive laws like P-6 [used to ban leftist demonstrations], which breaks strikes with its police and “emergency laws,” which participates in imperialist wars in the Near East and constantly sends its armed forces to brutalize Native people can suddenly interest itself in the well-being of the working class and the fate of the oppressed. The true face and the heart of the bourgeois state is its apparatus of repression, composed of the police, standing army, prisons and courts. No matter which party runs it, the bourgeois state exists to defend the bosses’ interests.

Whatever gains Quebec’s workers and oppressed enjoy weren’t given to them in a spirit of kindness by the bourgeois state. They were *taken* from the ruling class in the course of hard struggles by the labour movement. For example, the greater access to education established during the Quiet Revolution had been one of the historic demands of the unions. Nurses, teachers and government employees had to wage hard battles against the “modernizing” governments of the 1960s to win the right to unionization, through which they won better working conditions. But in the framework of capitalism these gains, which must absolutely be defended, are always partial and constantly reversible. The only perspective for putting an end to wage slavery is to fight for socialist revolution, in the course of which the bourgeois state will be destroyed and replaced by a state based on workers councils—in other words, the replacement of the dictatorship of the *bourgeoisie* by the dictatorship of the *proletariat*.

The Social Power of the Working Class

Up to now it has mainly been students who have mobilized against austerity. Even if large and frequent student demonstrations can at times annoy the government or disturb some economic activity, they cannot attack the nerve centre of the capitalist



Bellerose/Huffington Post

Quebec City cop shoots anti-austerity protester in face with tear gas canister, March 26.

When Bree Newsome pulled down the Confederate flag—the banner of fascist Ku Klux Klan terror, akin to the Nazi swastika—from in front of the South Carolina statehouse in Columbia on June 27, she gave brief, heroic expression to an anger felt far beyond the Lowcountry over the bloody massacre in Charleston ten days earlier.

The young black activist’s exemplary act of protest recalled a series of events three decades ago, not in a bastion of the Old South ruled by Republican nut jobs, but 2,500 miles away in liberal San Francisco. *San Francisco Chronicle* journalist Peter Hartlaub recounted in a June 21 posting on his SFGate.com blog that the Confederate battle flag used to fly in the S.F. Civic Center Plaza. Hartlaub wrote that he’s not sure when the flag “came down for good.” The answer is 1984, when supporters of the Spartacist League, Spartacus Youth League and Labor Black League for Social Defense removed it in the face of strenuous efforts to keep it flying by the city’s then mayor Dianne Feinstein, now a longtime leader of the Democratic Party in the Senate known for pushing U.S. imperialist wars and NSA snooping.

On 15 April 1984, SL and LBL supporter Richard Bradley, clad in the Civil War uniform of a Union Army soldier, scaled a 50-foot flagpole at the S.F. Civic Center and ripped down the Confederate flag of slavery that had flown over the city for too many years. At ground level, what was left of the flag was burned by a member of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 6.

As the hated symbol of racism and Klan terror was set ablaze, a crowd of black people, trade unionists and socialists broke into jubilant cheers and a chorus of “John Brown’s Body” rang out. Black people in the Bay Area welcomed the victory as their own; press clippings make clear that people across the city were glad to be rid of the insult.

At the time, Feinstein, who was in the running for the Democratic vice presidential nomination, was seeking to curry favor with the Dixiecrats who would be arriving in town three months later for the Democratic National Convention. She had the flag put back up—a racist provocation that came one day after the outrageous acquittal of a KKK/Nazi death squad who had gunned down five leftists, civil rights activists and union organizers in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1979. Bradley and the SL responded by going right back and tearing the new flag to pieces, just hours after Feinstein had hoisted it.

Bradley, who knew well from his childhood in South Carolina what that flag



15 April 1984: Spartacist League supporter Richard Bradley climbing flagpole in front of San Francisco Civic Center to rip down Confederate battle flag. WV Photo

stood for, was arrested for the second time and would be put on trial for “vandalism.” In the eyes of Feinstein and the racist cops, he was a criminal for tearing down the slavocracy’s rag, but in the Bay Area, Ritchie was a local hero, unable to walk into a bar or restaurant without having a drink or meal bought for him. Telegrams and phone calls poured into the mayor’s office, including from local union leaders, forcing Feinstein to back down and promise that the hated flag would not fly again.

Bradley climbed the flagpole a third time, this time to put up a replica of the historic Union garrison flag that flew over Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor when Confederate forces fired the opening shots of the Civil War. Demonstrating again her scorn for those who fought to smash slavery, Feinstein vindictively had the *Union* flag removed and it was shredded.

The actions of Bradley and the SL garnered support and gratitude far and wide, including from the incomparable writer

Gore Vidal, who inscribed a copy of his new novel *Lincoln* with the words “Lincoln would also have wanted the flag’s symbolic removal.” On June 4, Bradley’s trial ended with a hung jury (eight for acquittal). One juror told Bradley, as he shook his hand, “I would have done it if I had the guts.” The juror donated \$20 to the defense and bought a subscription to *Workers Vanguard*. A week later, in an attempt to avoid further embarrassment for the city administration, Feinstein’s district attorney moved to dismiss all charges, over the strenuous objections of the defense with Bradley insisting on his day in court.

But the story didn’t end there. Feinstein just would not let it die. At the end of June, on the same flagpole that Bradley had twice scaled to remove the Confederate battle flag, the mayor raised the “Stars and Bars,” the first flag of the Confederacy. That flag was a call to arms for the slaveholders in 1861, just as the Confederate flag is today for the

paramilitary KKK and Nazi killers. It was moreover an affront to the history of California, which entered the Union as a free state in 1850 and supplied troops for the Union Army.

In the early morning hours of June 29, anti-racist militants not only took down the flag of slavery but also felled the pole. One of these union workers later wrote to *Workers Vanguard*, describing the carefully planned action. His report began: “Using an acetylene cutting torch we first cut out a wedge, or fish mouth, to determine the direction of the fall,” and it went on to detail the safety precautions taken to ensure no one was injured.

The Spartacist League saw to it that the Confederate flag, the banner of racist terror, didn’t fly at the S.F. Civic Center. We have a long and proud history of fighting for black freedom based on the understanding that it will be fully achieved through a third, socialist American revolution. Join us in this task. Finish the Civil War! ■

Who’s Next?...

(continued from page 1)

Black oppression—the legacy of slavery and segregation—has been and remains the foundation of “free world” racist American capitalism. Look around—the only institutions that black people have “taken over” are its jails and prisons. The men and women, young and old, gunned down in a black church form an unbreakable link with the thousands who perished before them through countless lynchings and police murders.

This could happen again. Multiracial labor’s power should be mobilized to strike a blow at the modern-day lynchers. It is at the point of production and distribution, where its strength lies, where it can throw a wrench into the exploiters’ machinery. This power is feared and hated by the bosses, their kept labor statesmen and capitalist politicians of all colors and sexes. The labor lieutenants of capital in Charleston and elsewhere view the world through the lens of what’s good for the exploiters’ profit system. In the course of class struggle, the Confederate flag must go the way of smallpox.

As the 2016 elections get underway, some of the capitalist politicians of both parties “see the light” and have started talking about removing this symbol of “hate.” (They are echoed by the Inter-



Spartacist contingent at 13 December 2014 “Millions March NYC” demonstration against racist police killings. WV Photo

national Socialist Organization, which claims that if the South Carolina politicians don’t remove it, then it means they don’t care about black lives.)

It is evident that having the flag of slavery so prominently displayed is bad for business. This is a state that is actively courting more corporations to invest so they can expand their open shop empire. So it doesn’t look good for doing business

if they send out on their letterheads logos of homage to slaveholders.

At any rate the Confederate flag is more than a “symbol of hate”; it is a call to arms for racist terror everywhere.

Now Obama and his administration can piously intone (croak) how the flag should be removed—backed up by his aspirant presidential successor, Hillary Clinton. In 2008, when Obama first ran for president,

he spoke in South Carolina to celebrate his victory in the state’s primary. The *New York Times* commented:

“The voting took place at the conclusion of a weeklong campaign, where issues were interwoven with discussions of race. A poignant reminder of South Carolina’s historic racial divide, the Confederate flag, swayed in the cool breeze on Saturday only a few yards from where supporters waved placards for Mr. Obama, who if elected would become the nation’s first black president.”

—“Obama Carries South Carolina by Wide Margin,” 27 January 2008

His speech is worth reading because at the time Obama bragged about how a former prominent supporter of arch-segregationist Strom Thurmond was then campaigning for him in South Carolina. That is why I began by saying the murder of the nine is one of the bloody signatures of the Obama years. Oppressed black people were further beaten down and chained under his presidency. Yes. Beaten down by a “brother.”

It took a bloody civil war in which over 200,000 black soldiers and sailors, arms in hand, played a critical role in smashing the slavocracy and black chattel slavery. They provided a powerful answer to today’s advocates of gun control for the oppressed.

P.S. WV 572 (26 March 1993) has a good article, “Down With the Confederate Flag and Monuments to Slavery!” ■

(continued from page 1)

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

The port of Charleston was the main entry point for black African slaves brought into the U.S. It was also in Charleston Harbor that the opening shots of the Civil War were fired against the Union garrison at Fort Sumter. Reverence for the heritage of slavery is still officially sanctioned in Charleston. A giant statue of John C. Calhoun, the infamous 19th-century apostle of slavery and white supremacy, looms less than a block from the Emanuel AME Church, which is located on the main thoroughfare—Calhoun Street. A June 23 article by Jon Schwarz on *The Intercept* website (“Five More Things South Carolina Can Do After Taking Down the Confederate Flag”) quoted the memoir of Charleston native and activist Mamie Garvin Fields: “Blacks took that statue personally. As you passed by, here was Calhoun looking you in the face and telling you, ‘N---r, you may not be a slave, but I am back to see you stay in your place.’”

The capitalist politicians might be whistling a different tune but it still is Dixie. Haley refused appeals from the family of the murdered Emanuel AME Church pastor, the Reverend Clementa Pinckney (who was a State Senator and a prominent opponent of the Confederate flag), to take down the banner while his body lay in state at the capitol. In a final racist humiliation, the horse-drawn carriage



North Charleston, April 4: Walter Scott (inset) moments before his cold-blooded execution by killer cop.

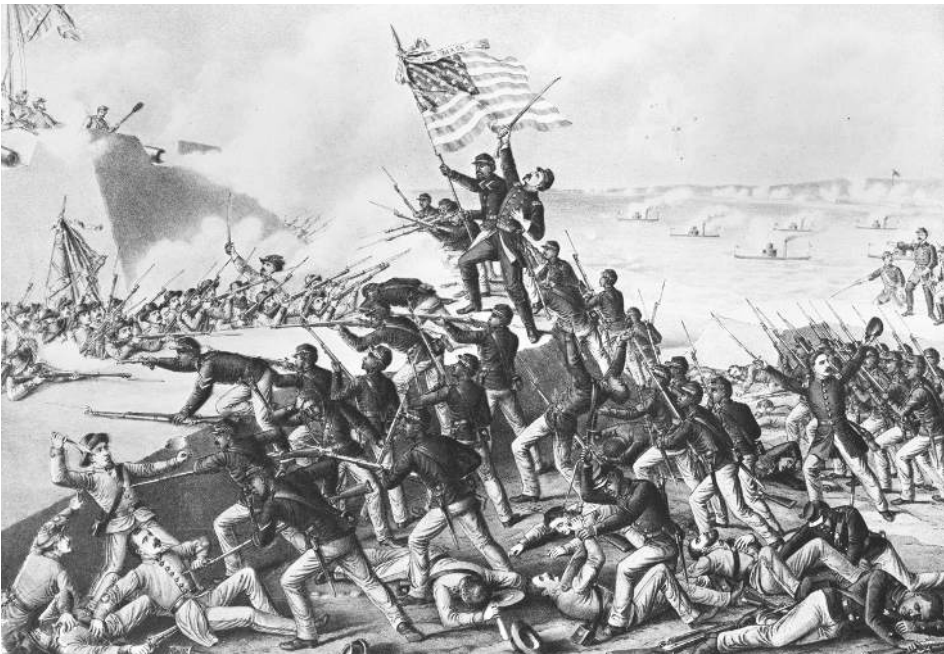
While Haley and the South Carolina legislature talk about removing the flag some day, Bree Newsome, a 30-year-old black activist decided action could not wait. She heroically scaled the 30-foot pole on June 27 and pulled the flag down. Newsome, along with James Ian Tyson, who assisted her, was arrested, and the pair now face up to three years in prison while the Confederate flag was immediately put back up. We demand that all charges against Newsome and Tyson be dropped. Down with the flag of slavery!

Organized labor, especially the powerful Charleston International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) Local 1422, a bastion of labor/black power in the open shop South, was prominent in January 2000 when tens of thousands of people rallied in Columbia to demand that the Confederate flag be removed from atop the capitol. The reality of the racist terror which that flag stands for is all too well known to members of Local 1422. Close relatives of Local 1422 members were among those slain in Emanuel AME Church; other longshoremen's relatives, including Walter Scott, Denzel Curnell and Asberry Wylder, have died at the hands of trigger-happy Charleston-area cops.

There have been some recent protests in Columbia against the flag, including one on July 4 of some 1,500 people. However, despite the living links between the labor movement and the black community, there has been no significant labor mobilization to protest the church massacre and no sign of labor's power being mobilized to stop the announced Klan rally. To date, the only statement by the South Carolina AFL-CIO encouraged "all AFL-CIO members to say a prayer." This appeal to kneel down in the face of racist terror is an expression of the prostration of trade-union misleaders in the face of

Honor Denmark Vesey!

The Emanuel AME Church was deliberately chosen as the site for Roof's murderous rampage. It is the oldest black congregation in the South, established in 1816. Among its founders was Denmark



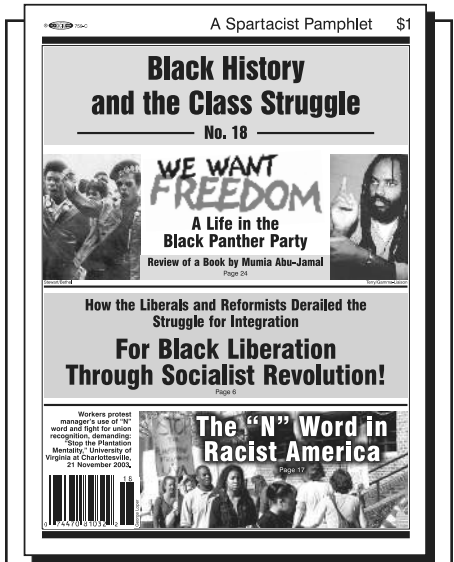
Library of Congress

Heroic Massachusetts 54th Regiment charging Fort Wagner at mouth of Charleston Harbor during Civil War, July 1863. Black troops were key to Union victory that smashed chattel slavery.

The heritage of militant black resistance expressed by the example of Denmark Vesey is the opposite of the black preachers and political leaders of today. Following the liberal-pacifist tradition of Martin Luther King Jr., what passes for black leadership today consists of keeping oppressed black people politically tied to the Democrats and docile before the forces of racist reaction. These leaders' role is to keep a lid on the righteous anger of black workers and youth who are fed up with daily racist cop terror, unemployment and misery.

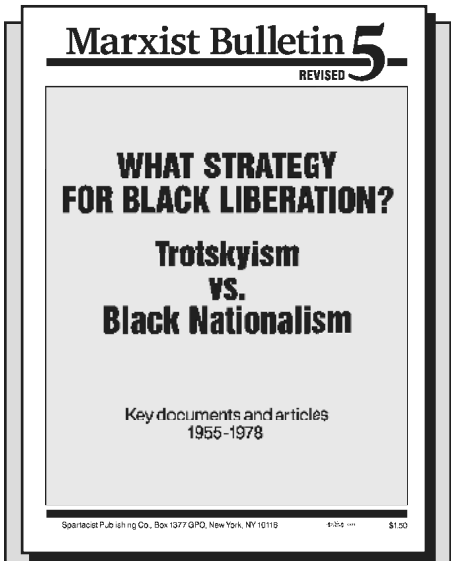
Black slavery was smashed through the Civil War; legal Jim Crow segregation was overturned through the civil rights struggles. Yet racial oppression remains a cen-

What jobs are available are more often than not temporary, part-time and pay only poverty wages. South Carolina's rock-bottom wages and lack of unions have spurred manufacturers like Boeing, BMW and Volvo to set up shop there (as others have across the South) in search of maximum profits. Union manufacturing jobs have been destroyed in the North as companies moved to the open shop South, and now the South's anti-union "right-to-work" model has spread north to former bastions of union power like Michigan and Wisconsin. Through all of this, workers' pay, benefits and conditions have been driven down while capitalists' profits have skyrocketed. Black workers, always the last hired and first



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Charleston...

(continued from page 7)

rocks of Cold War red purges, racism and the union bureaucrats’ ties to the Democratic Party, which rendered them incapable of waging a fight against the white, Dixiecrat power structure.

Over recent decades, the trade-union misleaders’ class-collaborationism, including reliance on the capitalist Democratic Party, has led to one defeat after another. It is necessary to forge a new, class-struggle leadership of the unions. Such a leadership would not only fight to organize the unorganized, including in the South, but also seek to mobilize the power of the working class in the fight against racial oppression. Building that new union leadership requires political independence from the Democrats and all other parties of the capitalist class enemy.

The only path to black liberation is through uprooting the basis of black oppression—the whole capitalist system of exploitation and racial oppression. To bring about genuine equality for black people requires the destruction of the existing class relations and the conquest of state power by the multiracial working class. It is the industrial proletariat, with its heavy



9 June 2001: Trade unionists from around the country rally in Columbia, South Carolina, to demand freedom for the Charleston Five, ILA Local 1422 longshoremen victimized for defending their jobs.

concentration of black workers providing a link to the anger of the ghettos, which has the social power to end the rule of racist capitalism through socialist revolution. The crucial task is to build the revolutionary workers party that can lead the

proletariat to victory. In recognition of the intimate links between racist oppression and all-sided reaction throughout this country’s history, that party will emblazon on its banners: *Finish the Civil War! For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!* ■

L.A....

(continued from page 3)

But even the reactionary Gompers said that workers should demand “more.”

The minimum-wage campaign is itself minimal. Refusing to take the fight to the employers in the workplace, the union officialdom is trying to pressure the Democratic Party to “Fight for 15” in the legislative arena. Maria Elena Durazo, Hicks’s predecessor as head of the county Federation of Labor, indicated as much. According to the *Los Angeles Times* (13 January 2014), she noted that “most owners have opposed union organizers so adamantly that the only way to make progress was through a broader ‘living wage’ law.” Opposition by the bosses to union organizing is always adamant. Any significant gains will be won not by relying on the Democrats, who no less than the Republicans represent the interests of the capitalist exploiters, but by hard-fought class struggle, particularly at unionized workplaces in industry and along the cargo chain supplying businesses.

The employers want the unions out, period. Thus, the *Los Angeles Times* and other bourgeois media have railed against the unions over the L.A. opt-out plan, echoing a 2014 U.S. Chamber of Commerce report that condemned such exemptions for encouraging “unionization by making a labor union the potential ‘low-cost’ alternative to new wage mandates.” But far from facilitating organizing the unorganized, the more the bureaucrats accommodate the profit-hungry bosses by selling substandard contracts, the less the appeal of the unions to many workers. Nonetheless, despite their present leaderships’ bowing down before the class enemy, the unions are still the only elementary

defense organizations of the working class against unbridled exploitation, offering protections that workers would not otherwise have. Notably, Fight for 15 protests have attracted combative workers who want both a wage hike *and* a union.

Pressure Politics vs. Class Struggle

We are for an increase in the minimum wage, as we are for any benefit that improves the conditions of the exploited and oppressed. But \$15 an hour is not the “living wage” its proponents make it out to be, especially in a city as expensive as Los Angeles. It will hardly end the misery that afflicts millions in the L.A. area, notorious for the vast gulf between rich and poor and its huge concentration of homeless people. Workers affected by the new minimum wage—83 percent of whom are black, Hispanic or Asian—currently earn a median annual income of \$16,000. Now they are slated to earn almost double that amount in five years, which will somewhat ease their extreme poverty. But by the admission of the labor tops, these workers will still require public assistance to barely make ends meet.

For much of the reformist left, a \$15 minimum has become a maximum program. Pursuing liberal community organizing and petition campaigns, groups like Socialist Alternative (SAlt), Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) and Workers World Party (WWP) tail the union bureaucracy’s strategy of pressuring the Democrats to toss a few extra crumbs to the workers and oppressed. Such activity is premised on the myth that capitalism can be reformed to serve the interests of working people. In fact, the only way to meet the felt needs of the working masses is to overturn capitalism through socialist revolution.

SAlt’s Kshama Sawant made \$15 an hour a centerpiece of her successful bid for Seattle City Council in 2013, but that didn’t stop her from engineering an alternate ballot initiative that included an opt-out clause exempting HERE hotel workers from a higher minimum wage. In the end, the Seattle \$15 ordinance, which contains a variety of loopholes, ended up passing without a union exemption. But now SAlt’s Philip Locker, political director of Sawant’s re-election campaign, tries to weasel around her scandalous support for the earlier measure by claiming that “15 Now” (SAlt’s version of Fight for 15) is “extremely skeptical of collective bargaining opt-outs.” He then adds that such opt-outs could be of benefit and that in the case of L.A., the issue “should be decided by the workers and union activists” (aljazeera.com, 29 May).

The PSL also waxes ecstatic about the L.A. City Council’s vote for a wage hike

while alibiing the AFL-CIO’s union exemption scheme. These opportunists sound every bit like garden-variety bureaucrats, upholding the framework of zero-sum contract haggling: “The AFL-CIO argues for this exemption because they know that workers in some circumstances could decide at a bargaining table to demand and get a benefit that meant more to the workers in exchange for having a wage slightly below the minimum” (*Liberation*, 5 June). PSL does comment, in staggering understatement: “The exemption in this case is not a powerful step to greater power”!

For its part, the WWP-supported Los Angeles Workers Assembly correctly points out that Hicks’s scheme would “discourage workers from wanting to join unions” and encourage “businesses to create company unions” to pay their workers a sub-minimum wage (workers.org, 1 June). But what WWP has to offer is more of the same: herding workers and the oppressed to the ballot box. The entire strategy of the Workers Assembly has consisted of putting forward a separate ballot initiative that would give both union and non-union workers a \$15 wage that would take effect immediately if approved by voters.

Let’s get real: Wages, benefits and working conditions are ultimately determined by class struggle. Based on their potential social power to bring the capitalist production system to a halt, workers can beat back the bourgeoisie’s unrelenting attacks of the last few decades, restore the ground they have lost and revive the unions. But as long as the labor movement remains saddled with misleaders who are bound hand and foot to the dictates of capitalist profitability—including by squandering union dues to elect Democratic politicians—the working class will continue to take it on the chin in this one-sided class war.

It is in the crucible of heightened class conflict that a new workers leadership in the unions can be forged. This is not simply a question of militancy in defense of the existing unions. If the workers are to consistently struggle not only in their own interests but in the interests of all the oppressed, there must be a hard political fight to break labor’s ties to the Democratic Party and oust the present sellouts atop the unions. A new, class-struggle union leadership will not only seek to win battles on the picket lines but also be uncompromisingly dedicated to the liberation of humanity from the exploitation, all-sided misery and war that are inherent to a system based on production for profit rather than human need. Striving to forge such a leadership is an integral part of the fight for a multiracial revolutionary workers party whose aim is no less than doing away with the entire system of capitalist wage slavery. ■

Immigration...

(continued from page 12)

The 2011 bombing of Libya by the U.S., Britain and France led to the toppling of the bonapartist Qaddafi government and a state of utter collapse and anarchy. With various military strongmen, imperialist puppets, Islamist reactionaries and tribal forces fighting each other, the unguarded Libyan coast became a destination for many of those from Asia, Africa and the Near East seeking to gain entry into Europe. While the “people smugglers” who extort thousands of pounds to place people on rickety boats are parasites, the big-time criminals are the imperialist rulers. Those people who do manage to make it into Europe are often thrown into brutal detention centres, like Britain’s Yarl’s Wood, whose inmates have protested against being treated “like animals or less than animals.” Such are the normal workings of the global capitalist system.

We say: Those who make it here should have the right to stay here—Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations! Shut down the detention camps! All imperialist military forces out of Africa and the Near East!

The Apostles of “Humanitarian” Imperialism

Various groups on the reformist left are promoting fatuous illusions that the rapacious imperialists who are responsible for what has been labelled a “humanitarian catastrophe” will “do something” to help their victims. ControCorrente, the Italian group affiliated to the Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI), represented in Britain by the Socialist Party [and in the U.S. by Socialist Alternative], demands that “an international maritime assistance plan must be re-established in international waters and, if necessary, in Libyan national waters. Assistance must be guaranteed to every human being” (socialistworld.net, 27 April).

The CWI holds up as a model of “success” the Italian government’s Mare Nostrum programme, describing it as a “military and humanitarian mission whose principal objective was maritime assistance and the rescue of migrants.” In fact, the declared objective of the now defunct Mare Nostrum search-and-rescue programme was to provide a “deterrent effect” against immigration. And the handfuls that “humanitarian” Italian imperialism does rescue are liable to be thrown into overcrowded camps—as were the 27 people who survived the mass drowning in April.

The British Workers Power group is a typical example of reformist cheerleading for “human rights” imperialism. Lecturing Cameron & Co. that the “highest priority should surely be placed on saving the lives of people driven to desperate measures by consequences beyond their control,” Workers Power demands: “We need to open the borders of the EU to all who seek asylum or work within it.” They continue: “We need to tear down the walls and transform Fortress Europe into Refugee Europe” (www.workerspower.co.uk, 22 April). Who is “we,” one asks—perhaps that Labour government that Workers Power urged people to elect in May, to no avail?

The Workers Power statement acknowledges that the exploitation and wars carried out by the imperialists “are the underlying causes of the humanitarian disaster.” What they do not acknowledge, not surprisingly, is their own role. Workers Power, among others on the left including the Socialist Workers Party, helped prepare the ideological ground for the imperialist bombing of Libya by hailing the anti-Qaddafi “revolutionaries” who would later act as spotters for the British and French bombers. Even after the country was overrun by reactionary tribal leaders and Islamic fundamentalists Workers Power continued to claim that these imperialist-backed “rebels” provided an opening for “a struggle for consistent democracy and internationalism” (fifthinternational.org, 22 August 2011).

The call to “open the borders” is both

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utopian and reactionary. To call on the capitalists to open their borders is to call on them to eliminate the capitalist system. The modern nation-state (or multinational state dominated by one nation) arose as a vehicle for the development of capitalism and will remain the foundation of capitalism until the whole system is overthrown through a series of workers revolutions. Every capitalist corporation, no matter how far flung its international operations, is ultimately reliant on the armed forces of its home country. No capitalist ruling class will voluntarily relinquish control over its territory.

For revolutionary Marxists, it is axiomatic that the capitalist nation-state, together with private ownership of the means of production, are fetters on the further development of the forces of production, which are social and international in character. Only with the advent of a global, classless communist society and the withering away of the state will there be no borders. To argue otherwise is to deny the iron necessity of socialist revolution for the further advance of humanity and serves only to fuel illusions in the reformability of a potentially “humane” capitalist system.

If promoted as a general principle, the demand for open borders under capitalism is reactionary. As the history of Zionist Israel amply demonstrates, unlimited mass immigration is a threat to the right of national self-determination. The major powers have the means to throttle the flow of refugees and immigrants into their countries when they need to; not so smaller and weaker peoples. While the imperialist states (at the behest of the Zionists) closed *their* borders to Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany and to the survivors of the death camps, they compelled hundreds of thousands of European Jews to go to Palestine, where they ended up displacing and expelling much of the Arab population.

As the entire history of the British empire shows, insofar as a great power can force a weaker, economically backward state to open its borders, this allows for increased penetration by imperialist capital, effectively eliminating any degree of national sovereignty of the weaker country. The EU capitalist club is committed to the free movement of capital. Immigrant workers from poorer EU states are used as a pool of low-wage labour, and the capitalists seek to manipulate immigration to suit the needs of the labour market in their own countries. In 2004, when the EU expanded into Eastern Europe, citizens of new member states were given the right to work in Britain to fill gaps in the labour market; today Cameron is intent on gutting the legal rights of those immigrants, causing friction with Germany and other EU countries, not least Poland. Meanwhile Italy, France and Britain are at each other’s throats, and are reinforcing their borders with each other, while deploying police to attack immigrants trying to cross the frontiers.

Originating as an economic adjunct to the U.S.-dominated anti-Soviet NATO alliance, the EU has always been a mechanism for the capitalist rulers to maximise the rate of exploitation of the working class of the region. The EU is an inherently unstable bloc aimed at improving the competitive edge of its dominant members, chiefly Germany, vis-à-vis their imperialist rivals, centrally Japan and the U.S. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the 1992 Maastricht Treaty set the framework for the EU of today. It laid down the conditions for joining the single currency. Member states signed up, agreeing to limits on their budget deficits in exchange for cheaper loans, larger inflows of capital and freer trade within Europe. The euro is an instrument for economic domination, chiefly by Germany, over the poorer EU states. Moreover, as the current EU crisis shows, a single currency shared by different countries is unviable in the long term.

At bottom, the call to “transform Fortress Europe into Refuge Europe” reveals Workers Power’s faith that this imperialist-

dominated conglomerate can be turned into a progressive “social Europe,” as propagated by social-democratic leftists and trade-union bureaucrats. In explaining why they refused to call for a no vote in the referendum on the Maastricht Treaty, these reformists argued that it could be “a basis for extending rights and gains from states where the working class never won these gains, or where it has lost them,” and that “to some extent European workers will be better armed to fight back on a continental scale after the implementation of the terms of Maastricht” (LRCI Resolution, *Workers Power* No. 156, June 1992).

The notion that the European capital-

over the export of goods. Imperialism is marked by huge financial monopolies extending their grip over the world economy and the subjugation of weaker peoples while the stronger powers fight each other for control of markets and resources. The system itself necessarily leads to wars of neocolonial aggrandisement and, ultimately, interimperialist wars. Imperialist domination prevents any substantial economic growth of the countries of belated capitalist development, miring most of them in destitution.

In the semicolonial countries, whose rulers are tied by a thousand threads to the dominant world powers, the only way

above. With the aid of the trade-union bureaucracy, the capitalists constantly seek to set the most backward layers of the indigenous working class against immigrants, threatening to replace native-born workers with lower-paid foreign workers. In this way, the bourgeoisie seeks to depress wage levels for the working class as a whole. As a central component of the proletariat of Europe, immigrant and minority workers are bound to play a key role in the fight for socialist revolution.

What is needed is joint struggle by all workers against the wage-slashing, union-bashing capitalists: to fight for the unionization of all immigrant workers, who are often compelled to work for non-union contractors, and for equal pay for equal work; to fight to divide all existing jobs amongst all the available workforce, with no reduction in pay but with a significant reduction in working hours. Against protectionist, anti-immigrant chauvinism, workers must be won to the understanding that they share a common class interest with the workers of all countries and all nationalities against the capitalist class enemy.

The international character of the working class gives it potentially enormous superiority over the bourgeoisie, whose system of production for profit works by anarchistic methods that fuel national conflicts and constantly create social inequality and economic crisis. To realise its revolutionary potential, the proletariat needs an international party to unite the class across national and other divisions and to co-ordinate the interdependent struggles of workers of every country. It is for this purpose that the ICL fights to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution.

Following the example of the Bolshevik party that led the Russian Revolution in 1917, we aim to act, in the words of Lenin, as a “*tribune of the people*,” who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression” and “to clarify for *all* and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat” (*What Is To Be Done?* [1902]).

Our programme is for proletarian revolutions to expropriate the capitalist exploiters and establish a Socialist United States of Europe. The economic unification of Europe under workers rule has been an urgent need for more than a century. Together with proletarian revolutions in the U.S. and Japan and in the more backward countries that today suffer imperialist subjugation, the creation of a socialist Europe would lead to a vast expansion of the productive forces in an international planned economy. Workers governments in the advanced countries would devote enormous resources to the development of Asia, Africa and Latin America, helping pave the way to an egalitarian world order in which people will choose to move around the world for pleasure and enlightenment, not out of fear of physical and economic insecurity. ■



Xinhua



WV Photo

Above: NATO bombing raid on 7 June 2011 against Libya’s capital, Tripoli. Left: Spartacist banner at 9 April 2011 antiwar demonstration in New York City. Imperialist devastation of Libya and throughout Near East swelled flow of refugees.

ists would help “arm” those whom they exploit to fight more effectively to ameliorate the terms of their exploitation truly requires a religious leap of faith! The International Communist League has opposed the EU since its inception, from the standpoint of proletarian internationalism. To see how our sharp opposition to the EU and the single currency has been vindicated, one need only look at the economic devastation visited upon Greece, or at the fate of the poorer countries of Eastern Europe, which have been turned into vast reservoirs of exploitation by (mainly) German and French capital.

With most of the liberal and reformist left peddling illusions in this reactionary imperialist alliance, the main beneficiaries of growing opposition to the EU have been ultrareactionary to outright fascist parties, from UKIP in Britain and Italy’s Northern League to the National Front in France and Greece’s Golden Dawn. These racist forces have aggressively tried to scapegoat immigrants for the recurrent economic crises that are endemic to the capitalist mode of production.

For International Socialist Revolutions!

If nothing else, the current crisis in the EU exposes the myth that Europe can be peacefully integrated under capitalism. In his 1916 pamphlet *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, leader of the Bolshevik Revolution V.I. Lenin ridiculed a version of the same argument then proffered by Karl Kautsky, describing it as Kautsky’s “silly little fable about ‘peaceful’ ultra-imperialism.” As Lenin explained, imperialism represents the final stage of capitalism, when the world has already been divided up by the major powers and the export of capital predominates

to overthrow the imperialist yoke is the seizure of power by the proletariat leading the oppressed masses. This task is inseparably linked to the need for proletarian revolution in the advanced capitalist countries, which will open the road to the development of socialism. In contrast to the liberal plea for “open borders,” which reduces workers in the semicolonial world to passive victims, we fight for the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution. Within this internationalist perspective, immigrant workers have a central role to play, by acting as a human bridge to link the European proletariat to their class brothers and sisters in Africa, Asia and the Near East.

Mass migration is an integral feature of imperialist capitalism. British capitalism has long exploited immigrant labour, from the time of the 19th-century Industrial Revolution when it drew in masses of Irish immigrants, to the post-World War II period when British employers actively recruited labour from the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent. As we wrote in the ICL Declaration of Principles (1998):

“Modern capitalism, i.e., imperialism, reaching into all areas of the planet, in the course of the class struggle and as economic need demands, brings into the proletariat at its bottom new sources of cheaper labor, principally immigrants from poorer and less-developed regions of the world—workers with few rights who are deemed more disposable in times of economic contraction.”

To be sure, the imperialists are not now actively encouraging a mass influx of downtrodden and impoverished masses of semicolonial people. Yet those who do manage to get into EU countries—often as asylum-seekers, as that is the common legal avenue of admission for many—serve precisely the purpose outlined



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Russia...

(continued from page 2)

War, NATO is discussing strengthening its nuclear deterrent. U.S. imperialism has also sponsored color “revolutions” to install pro-Washington regimes in several former republics of the USSR. The U.S.-backed coup in Ukraine last year, which installed a fascist-infested and virulently anti-Russian regime, is a case in point.

Our reader asks whether we should call for soldiers of all the belligerents in Ukraine today to “turn the guns around” against their own capitalist rulers; that is, should we have a position of revolutionary defeatism? Such was Lenin’s position in World War I, which was an interimperialist war fought over the redivision of the world among imperialist powers. In contrast, the current conflict in Ukraine, the direct result of U.S. imperialist machinations, is a civil war. Militants in the eastern part of the country, which is ethnically mixed but predominantly Russian-speaking, rose up because the ultranationalist Ukrainian regime was trampling on their national rights. The Kiev regime responded by mobilizing its army and neo-Nazi volunteer battalions—bombing cities, killing hundreds of civilians and destroying hospitals and industrial plants. It should be noted that while the insurgents in East Ukraine are backed by Russia, Moscow has shown no interest in annexing eastern Ukraine. Contrary to repeated claims by Kiev and its imperialist patrons that the Russian army is invading, Putin has clearly avoided outright war with the Kiev regime.

Revolutionary Marxists have a side in this conflict: the interest of the working

class—in Ukraine, Russia and internationally—lies in defense of the population of eastern Ukraine and its right to self-rule. The fact that we side militarily with the “pro-Russian” forces in eastern Ukraine by no means implies political support to the nationalist rebel leaders or to the Putin regime. Our defense of eastern Ukraine’s population is guided by the approach of Lenin, who underlined that 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 “own” capitalist ruling class, not each other.■

Crime...

(continued from page 2)

the working class establishes itself in power. We noted: “The determination not to base the penal code of a workers state on retribution found its fullest expression in the 1919 party program” of the Russian Communist Party (see “Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!” WV No. 1070, 12 June). That section of the program ended with the vision “that the penal system shall ultimately be transformed into a system of measures of an educative character.”

The goal of Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks was a communist world. They recognized that socialism, the lower stage of communism, was not possible without the productive forces being developed internationally, well beyond current levels of productivity, under the rule of the working class. An egalitarian communist society will provide what people need in exchange for whatever contribution they



Moran/Citizens' Voice

Teacher Lauren Harrington-Cooper, imprisoned for consensual sex with teenage students, in shackles after September 2014 sentencing.

are able to make. Under communism, classes and the state will have withered away. In *The State and Revolution*, written in the midst of the revolutionary events of 1917, Lenin explained:

“Freed from capitalist slavery, from the untold horrors, savagery, absurdities and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually *become accustomed* to observing the elementary rules of social intercourse that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all copy-book maxims. They will become accustomed to observing them without force, without coercion, without subordination, *without the special apparatus* for coercion called the state.”

Under workers rule and under communism there may still be a need to sepa-

rate out certain individuals if they are a danger to themselves or others, but this would be done without stigma or deprivation and with education, medical care, rehabilitation and the goal of reintegration as productive members of society.

As NB suggests, there will doubtless be a reduction in crime once the capitalist class is out of power. Many activities that the capitalists label as “crimes” in fact have no victims (e.g., drug use, gambling, consensual sexual activity including prostitution) and we call for them to be decriminalized.

The case NB refers to is that of Lauren Harrington-Cooper, a teacher in Pennsylvania. She was sentenced last September to up to 23 months in prison for having a brief sexual relationship with an 18-year-old male student, performing oral sex on a 17-year-old and two counts of “corrupting minors.” She was convicted under a Pennsylvania law barring any sexual contact between a teacher and a student regardless of age or consent. Rather than a case of rape, all reports indicate the sexual encounters were consensual. Nevertheless, Harrington-Cooper will be on the sex offender register for *25 years* and barred from teaching.

As NB notes, the SL believes that *effective consent* should determine sexual relations. We reject the right of the capitalist class to criminalize consensual sexual activity, dictating who can have sex, where, at what age, or with how many people. This means we oppose “age of consent” laws and special rules against teachers or professors having consensual relationships with their students. Lauren Harrington-Cooper committed no crime; she should be released from prison and have her teaching license reinstated.■

Montreal...

(continued from page 5)

opposed the Pegida demonstration, even though they pushed their racist “Charter of Values” when they were in power. As for Québec Solidaire [QS], its denunciations of Pegida contrast with its desire to *ban* women who wear the full-face veil from receiving public services. Muslims and other ethnic and religious minorities constitute a growing part of the working class in the Montreal region. It is in the interest of the workers movement to defend the most vulnerable against racist anti-immigrant attacks. But the union bureaucracy renounces this fundamental task. Apart from an empty declaration against Pegida’s provocation issued by the leadership of the CSN’s Metropolitan Montreal Central Council (published the same day!), nothing was done to defend the Muslim minority. Down with anti-Muslim racism! An injury to one is an injury to all!

Québec Solidaire and the Fake Marxists

Practically the whole Quebec left looks to QS as an alternative to the PQ. QS is a party with a petty-bourgeois base and no links to the workers movement which proposes only a capitalism “of solidarity, ecology and democracy.” QS even agrees with getting back to a balanced budget,

only a year later than what the Liberals propose. Since Couillard’s election it has multiplied its offers to collaborate with the Liberals to try and put a more “social” face on austerity. In fact QS is really no different than the PQ of the early 1970s. Just as nationalist, it is an obstacle to the perspective of workers revolution to overthrow capitalism.

Many self-described socialists have liquidated into QS including Alternative Socialiste (AS, associated with the Committee for a Workers International) and La Riposte [Fightback] (associated with the International Marxist Tendency). In addition to arguing that QS could be an anti-capitalist alternative, these two organizations betray the ABC of the Marxist conception of the state. AS claims that cops are “workers in uniform” (alternativesocialiste.org, 9 July 2014) and La Riposte says that including the police in the movement against Bill 3 “weakens the government’s capacity to use them to repress the coming movements of workers and youth” (marxiste.qc.ca, 29 August 2014). Thus these fake socialists want the workers to believe that the police force—a reservoir of racism, sexism and homophobia—could be on the side of the working class. Or that their “unions”—in reality, organizations of legal gangsters—are part of the labour movement. Nothing could be more dangerous for the working class, because the cops are the first line of defense of the bosses’ interests.

In addition to these reformists who nestle inside QS, we have the Maoist Parti Communiste Révolutionnaire (PCR) which counterposes itself to it. Don’t be taken in by their red flags! The PCR rejects the *proletarian* perspective which is essential to Marxism by upholding “protracted people’s war” as “the road to revolution in Canada.” As Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky always explained, the working class is central to a revolutionary struggle because it is the only class which has the social power to overthrow the bourgeois order. A perspective based on “people’s war” dissolves the workers into “the people” and necessarily leads to class collaboration.

The Revolutionary Student Movement (MER), created under the PCR’s auspices, denounces the unions as “a powerful factor in the allegiance of the workers to capitalism” (MER, 5 April). These Maoists wipe out any distinction between the working-class base of the unions and the union bureaucracy. The unions are organs of working-class defense against

the capitalist exploiter. They should encompass as many workers as possible to strengthen unity in the economic struggle. The authentic Marxist program is to defend the unions against the bosses and the bourgeois state while fighting to forge a revolutionary leadership.

The workers of Quebec and English Canada need their own party to defend their interests. Such a party will fight for the unity of the working class and act as a tribune of the people, defending immigrants, Native people, women and all the victims of capitalist oppression. This rotting economic system—which produces crises, perpetual wars and, as a byproduct, austerity—must urgently be replaced by a planned economy where production will be run rationally according to the needs of all and not of profit. The International Communist League, whose Canadian section is the Ligue trotskyste/Trotskyist League, is dedicated to reorganizing the Fourth International, the party that is needed for the overthrow of capitalism in North America and throughout the planet.■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

(continued from page 12)

Comrades of the TGG, along with comrades from other ICL sections, distributed thousands of leaflets—at rallies called by the KKE and by Syriza, in working-class neighborhoods and on campuses. Our leaflet was very well received by many.

Those KKE members who wish to oppose the EU and fight the Syriza government should consider the lessons of their leadership's attempted sabotage of the "no" vote. The Stalinist politics of the KKE leadership are inherently nationalist and can only lead to a dead end in a situation like the current sharp crisis in Greece, which calls out for an internationalist appeal to workers throughout Europe to unite in struggle against their capitalist rulers. For that reason, the KKE has not been able to offer any road forward for the Greek working class, including in this referendum. The TGG seeks to build a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party—at once revolutionary, proletarian and internationalist—as a section of the reformed Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution.

The Trotskyist Group of Greece calls for a NO vote in the July 5 referendum. A resounding “no” vote would be an important blow against the imperialist-dominated EU and its savage austerity programs. A “yes” vote would be a victory for the imperialist rulers and the Greek bourgeois-



July 1: Desperate pensioners scramble to enter a bank in Athens. After EU limited liquidity support to Greek banks, pensioners were only allowed one withdrawal, up to the equivalent of \$134 from their retirement checks.

The TGG opposed a vote to Syriza in the January election and stands in irreconcilable opposition to the capitalist Syriza government. The Syriza-led coalition has bent over backward to appease the Troika [the European Central Bank, the European Commission and the IMF], seeking merely to haggle over how much austerity should be implemented, while fostering illusions that the EU can be



Athens, July 2: Trotskyist Group of Greece supporter hands out Spartacist statement at Syntagma Metro station: "Vote NO! Down With the EU! No Support to the Syriza Government!"

The KKE leadership is asking working people to throw away their vote by casting an invalid ballot with the KKE's own slogans. The KKE's refusal to mobilize for a victory for the "no" vote is in complete

In practice, the KKE's call to cast invalid ballots will reduce the number of people voting "no" and could help the "yes" vote win. Anything but a clear "no" in this referendum is a betrayal of the interests of workers here and internationally. Our opposition to the EU is from the standpoint of revolutionary internationalism, not Greek nationalism. The KKE opposes the EU on a nationalist basis. This is demonstrated by the fact that the KKE leadership posits that socialism can be achieved within the borders of Greece alone, without an international extension of workers revolution.

The TGG stands counterposed to the perspective of the opportunist Greek left, who all dissolve the working class into the “people” and promote Greek nationalism (see our most recent article, “Syriza: Class Enemy of Workers and Oppressed,” 22 April 2015 [reprinted in WV No. 1068, 15 May]). A concrete example of our party’s internationalism is that our German section, the Spartakist-Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands, calls for the cancellation of Greece’s debt in opposition to its own bourgeoisie. Our goal is to build a revolutionary, internationalist workers party like the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky. Such a party can be built only as part of a reformed Fourth International, the necessary instrument to lead the working class to power internationally. *For new October Revolutions!* ■

[illegible]

Article Available in Greek and English

WORKERS VANGUARD

Down With the European Union! No Support to Syriza!

Greece Votes No to EU Austerity

JULY 6—Last night, millions of Greek working people celebrated a landslide victory in the country's referendum on a bailout deal with the imperialists of the European Union (EU) and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Asked whether they would accept yet more grinding austerity as the price for a new "rescue package" (in reality a bailout of Greek and international banks), more than 60 percent of voters responded with a decisive "NO!" With this result, the Greek population has justly delivered a slap in the face to the imperialist leaders of the EU. As our comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece wrote in their July 1 statement calling for a "no" vote in the referendum (reprinted below), the victory of a "no" vote would "help rally the working people in Greece and throughout Europe against the EU capitalists and their blood-sucking banks."

The referendum was called by the government coalition led by Syriza, following months of negotiations with its EU/IMF creditors. Syriza called for a "no" vote with the declared intention of using popular rejection of the EU/IMF extortion as a bargaining chip to secure a slightly less onerous austerity package.



June 29: Thousands demonstrate against EU-imposed austerity at Syntagma Square, Athens, in lead-up to referendum.

Syriza is a bourgeois party, supports the EU and is determined that Greece should remain within the euro currency zone. That is why the TGG said "no vote to Syriza!" in

the January general election. The Greek workers should use the powerful rejection of EU/IMF austerity in the referendum as a platform for a class-struggle fight against

the Syriza government with the aim of canceling the debt and smashing the capitalists' austerity programs.

The proponents of a "yes" vote, along with Germany's Merkel, France's Hollande, Britain's Cameron & Co., sought to panic the Greek population into capitulating to the EU/IMF diktat with the threat that, following a "no" vote, "Grexit" (Greek exit from the eurozone) and a return to its previous national currency, the drachma, would trigger rampant inflation, mass defaults and bankruptcies as well as further deprivation and political unrest. But for working-class Greeks the past several years of economic crisis have been an ongoing catastrophe that has left them with little more to lose. The threats of the Greek capitalists and their imperialist patrons rebounded against them as more people were driven to vote "no" out of fury at being blackmailed.

While the Greek working people have clearly rejected the EU's vicious austerity, polls have consistently shown that around three-quarters of the Greek population are in favor of remaining inside the eurozone and there are still widespread fears about what exit

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Europe: Racist Clampdown on Immigration

The following article originally appeared in Workers Hammer No. 231 (Summer 2015), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain.

When some 1,200 people drowned in the Mediterranean in a matter of days in April, the horrendous plight of those trying to secure a future for themselves and their children evoked widespread public sympathy across Europe. But for the scoundrels who head the capitalist gov-

WORKERS HAMMER

ernments of the European Union (EU), the mass drownings provided a "humanitarian" pretext for launching military action.

Screaming about "slave-traffickers," Europe's capitalist rulers are seeking to justify a military operation to search and destroy boats, fuel dumps and other facilities used by refugees and immigrants; Britain and France are drafting a resolution for UN backing. At the same time, the EU member states have given the green light to yet another round of tighter immigration controls. From the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla on the North African coast to the Greek-Turkish border, entry points into the EU are already closed off with walls and razor-wire fences. Now warships from Britain, Germany and other EU states are deployed in the Mediterranean. Any such intervention raises the prospect of renewed imperialist military intervention against Libya.



Desperate immigrants in Mediterranean, near Libyan coast, June 7. British warship looms on horizon.

Arguably the most piggish of the lot are the rulers of imperialist Britain. Last October the government announced it would cease paying contributions towards the rescue of immigrants at sea. With all the haughtiness due her rank, Baroness Anelay, the Tory Foreign Office minister, declaimed: "We do not support planned search and rescue operations in the Med-

iterranean. We believe that they create an unintended 'pull factor'" (theguardian.com, 28 October 2014). Now the Tory government has ruled out any idea of taking in a token quota of asylum-seekers. The EU imperialists' message to the desperate masses fleeing imperialist-induced war and starvation in Asia, Africa and the Near East is: Drop dead!

The thousands of immigrants who have died in the attempt to reach the gates of "Fortress Europe" were murdered by the imperialist governments that have militarily devastated their countries, ravaged their economies, robbed them of their livelihoods and then callously left them to die. The collapse of the Soviet degenerated workers state in the early 1990s removed a historic obstacle to imperialist free-booting. The first Iraq war of 1990-91 was quickly followed by U.S. military intervention in Somalia and a host of other imperialist military adventures. Over the past decade, the U.S. and Britain have been involved in wars and/or occupations from Afghanistan and Iraq to Syria and Libya, while France has repeatedly sent troops to protect its economic interests in Ivory Coast, Mali and the Central African Republic.

The existence of the Soviet Union had allowed manoeuvring room for "Third World" capitalist rulers, who garnered economic and military aid by offering themselves as clients to Moscow or Washington. Following capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR the various imperialist powers have increasingly fomented, stoked or manipulated inter-ethnic conflicts and civil wars in order to remove, install or buy off local tyrants and ensure access to valuable natural resources such as oil and diamonds. Meanwhile, countless people are slaughtered, displaced or left to die of man-made famines or scourges like AIDS, which were allowed to rage unchecked.

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