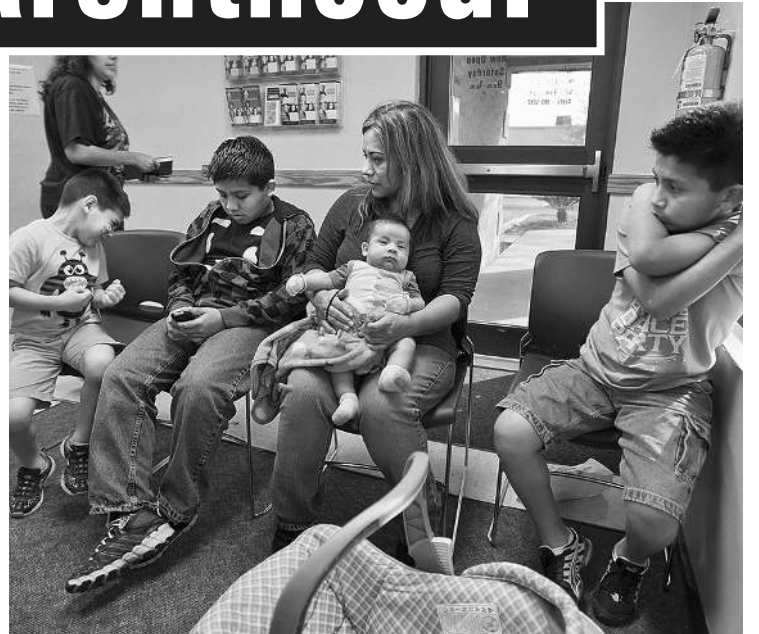


Defend Planned Parenthood!



Hogsten/Salt Lake Tribune



Seal/NY Times

For Free Abortion on Demand!

In the unending barrage of attacks on abortion rights, right-wing bigots are once again targeting Planned Parenthood, one of the leading providers of affordable contraception, abortion and women's health care in the U.S. David Daleiden, of the grotesquely misnamed Center for Medical Progress, set up a phony biomedical research company and then made undercover videos of meetings with Planned Parenthood employees about the entirely legal procurement of fetal tissue donated for research by patients. Edited to the point of misrepresentation, these "sting" videos were seized upon by largely Republican Congressmen to propose cutting all federal funds to Planned Parenthood—and

Left: Protesters in Salt Lake City denounce Utah governor's decision to block federal funding for Planned Parenthood, August 25. Right: Mother and children at Planned Parenthood clinic in Edinburg, Texas, 2012.

threatening to hold the federal budget hostage this fall if they don't get what they want. Planned Parenthood receives more than \$500 million—over 40 percent of its annual funding—from government sources, mostly Medicaid.

Not willing to wait, five states—Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Hampshire and Utah—have already moved to cut funds for Planned Parenthood. The response of feminists and liberals has been defensive, with Cecile Richards, president

of Planned Parenthood, apologizing for the "tone and statements" of the staff in one of the videos. On September 4, with the anti-abortion bigots emboldened by wide press coverage of the efforts to demonize the organization, an arson attack destroyed the Planned Parenthood clinic in Pullman, Washington.

The crusade against Planned Parenthood is an attack on the millions of women—many of them young, uninsured, poor and minority—who use its services. The Government Accountability Office reported in 2012 that 80 percent of Planned Parenthood patients had incomes at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level. A September 1 article in the *New York Times*

continued on page 4

Ten Years After Katrina

New Orleans: Still Racist Hell

The following article is based on reporting from New Orleans by Workers Vanguard contributor Ruth Ryan and a visiting WV team.

At events marking the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans was visited by U.S. presidents past and present. Clinton, Bush, Obama and other capitalist politicians showed up to try to lay to rest the still-vivid images from 2005: 1,800 dead, black residents stranded on rooftops and roadsides, tens of thousands

abandoned at the Superdome, hundreds jailed at Camp Greyhound, dozens shot at by cops in the streets, and the surviving population corralled at gunpoint in the Convention Center. After these televised images horrified the world, survivors were eventually bused and airlifted out so "order" could be established in the vacant city by an occupying army of cops and National Guardsmen. Katrina refugees were treated like criminals for one reason—they were black and poor.

If the powers that be were criminally slow to the rescue, they were lightning quick in throwing up barriers to keep poor black people from ever returning home. The moment the city was emptied, politicians from both capitalist parties set about to dismantle institutions that might aid and abet the return of the black popu-



AP

31 August 2005: Desperate families waded through floodwaters two days after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans.

lation, with Louisiana Democrats taking the lead. A stop was put to the cleanup at Charity Hospital, and it was permanently shuttered. Some 7,000 unionized teachers and public school employees were fired. All the big housing projects were fenced off and bulldozed. The city's wealthy Bourbons got what they wanted: a smaller, richer and whiter New Orleans. Around 100,000 black residents never returned.

Speeches at the commemorative events and dozens of articles in the bourgeois

press were full of praise for the "resilience" of New Orleans residents and the extent of the city's recovery since the storm. The official message was that things have been made right. According to Democratic mayor Mitch Landrieu, "Nobody can refute the fact that we have completely turned this story around," while *Forbes* magazine crowed: "The metro area has made an impressive comeback" (26 August).

The social disaster that unfolded in the *continued on page 5*



“Karl Marx” by V.I. Lenin

We print below the second installment of Lenin's “Karl Marx.” The first section, a sketch of Marx's life as a philosopher and revolutionary, was published in WV No. 1073 (4 September). This second part is an introduction to Marxist ideology including historical materialism and dialectics. Future installments will explain other basic Marxist concepts.

PART TWO

The Marxist Doctrine

Marxism is the system of Marx's views and teachings. Marx was the genius who continued and consummated the three main ideological currents of the 19th century, as represented by the three most advanced countries of mankind: classical German philosophy, classical English political economy, and French socialism combined with French revolutionary doctrines in general. Acknowledged even by his opponents, the remarkable consistency and integrity of Marx's views, whose totality constitutes modern materialism and modern scientific socialism, as the theory and programme of the working-class movement in all the civilised countries of the world, make it incumbent on us to present a brief outline of his world-conception in general, prior to giving an exposition of the principal content of Marxism, namely, Marx's economic doctrine.

Philosophical Materialism

Beginning with the years 1844-45, when his views took shape, Marx was a materialist and especially a follower of Ludwig Feuerbach, whose weak points he subsequently saw only in his materialism being insufficiently consistent and comprehensive. To Marx Feuerbach's historic and “epoch-making” significance lay in his having resolutely broken with [Georg] Hegel's idealism and in his proclamation of materialism, which already “in the eighteenth century, particularly French materialism, was not only a struggle against the existing political institutions and against...religion and theology, but also...against all metaphysics” (in the sense of “drunken speculation” as distinct from “sober philosophy”). (*The Holy Family*, in *Literarischer Nachlass*.) “To Hegel...” wrote Marx, “the process of thinking, which, under the name of ‘the Idea’, he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos (the creator, the maker) of the real world.... With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought.” (*Capital*, Vol. I, Afterword to the Second Edition). In full conformity with this materialist philosophy of Marx's, and expounding it, Frederick Engels wrote in *Anti-Dühring* (read by Marx in the man-



Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, the founders of scientific socialism, with Marx's daughters, early 1860s.

uscript): “The unity of the world does not consist in its being.... The real unity of the world consists in its materiality, and this is proved...by a long and wearisome development of philosophy and natural science....” “Motion is the mode of existence of matter. Never anywhere has there been matter without motion, or motion without matter, nor can there be.... But if the...question is raised: what thought and consciousness really are, and where they come from; it becomes apparent that they are products of the human brain and that man himself is a product of Nature, which has developed in and along with its environment; hence it is self-evident that the products of the human brain, being in the last analysis also products of Nature, do not contradict the rest of Nature's interconnections but are in correspondence with them....

“Hegel was an idealist, that is to say, the thoughts within his mind were to him not the more or less abstract images [*Abbilder*, reflections; Engels sometimes speaks of “imprints”—*Lenin*] of real things and processes, but, on the contrary, things and their development were to him only the images, made real, of the ‘Idea’ existing somewhere or other before the world existed.” In his *Ludwig Feuerbach*—which expounded his own and Marx's views on Feuerbach's philosophy, and was sent to the printers after he had read an old manuscript Marx and himself had written in 1844-45 on Hegel, Feuerbach and the materialist conception of history—Engels wrote: “The great basic question of all philosophy, especially of more recent philosophy, is the relation of thinking and being...spirit to Nature... which is primary, spirit or Nature.... The answers which the philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps. Those who asserted the primacy of spirit to Nature and, therefore, in the

last instance, assumed world creation in some form or other...comprised the camp of idealism. The others, who regarded Nature as primary, belonged to the various schools of materialism.” Any other use of the concepts of (philosophical) idealism and materialism leads only to confusion. Marx decidedly rejected, not only idealism, which is always linked in one way or another with religion, but also the views—especially widespread in our day—of [David] Hume and [Immanuel] Kant, agnosticism, criticism, and positivism in their various forms; he considered that philosophy a “reactionary” concession to idealism, and at best a “shame-faced way of surreptitiously accepting

materialism, while denying it before the world”. On this question, see, besides the works by Engels and Marx mentioned above, a letter Marx wrote to Engels on December 12, 1868, in which, referring to an utterance by the naturalist Thomas Huxley, which was “more materialistic” than usual, and to his recognition that “as long as we actually observe and think, we cannot possibly get away from materialism”, Marx reproached Huxley for leaving a “loop-hole” for agnosticism, for Humism. It is particularly important to note Marx's view on the relation between freedom and necessity: “Freedom is the appreciation of necessity. ‘Necessity is blind only insofar as it is not understood’” (Engels in *Anti-Dühring*). This means recognition of the rule of objective laws in Nature and of the dialectical transformation of necessity into freedom (in the same manner as the transformation of the uncognised but cognisable “thing-in-itself” into the “thing-for-us”, of the “essence of things” into “phenomena”). Marx and Engels considered that the “old” materialism, including that of Feuerbach (and still more the “vulgar” materialism of [Ludwig] Büchner, [Karl] Vogt and [Jacob] Moleschott), contained the following major shortcomings: (1) this materialism was “predominantly mechanical”, failing to take account of the latest developments in chemistry and biology (today it would be necessary to add: and in the electrical theory of matter); (2) the old materialism was non-historical and non-dialectical (metaphysical, in the meaning of anti-dialectical), and did not adhere consistently and comprehensively to the

continued on page 11



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No. 1074

18 September 2015

On Imperialism and Refugees

12 July 2015

Workers Vanguard,

In WV No. 1071 (10 July 2015), I noticed a small paragraph in an article (“Europe: Racist Clampdown on Immigration”) which stated, “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!”

What is meant by “Those who make it here should have the right to stay here”? What about those people who have not made it here yet, e.g. those who are stranded in the seas and are being blocked by the imperialists from “making it here”? As communists, shouldn’t we defend their right to get off the boats? Perhaps this is just a case of bad wording in an attempt by WV to separate its slogans from the call to “open the borders”, but these are important questions that I asked myself after I read that paragraph. The rest of the article is excellent!

Comradely,
Joseph C.

WV replies:

Joseph C.’s questions suggest he would prefer the wording: “Those who want to make it here should have the right to get and stay here,” at least in the case of the many thousands trapped at sea. But why stop with them? What about those braving treacherous overland routes (caught, say, in the Libyan desert)? Or the millions confined to squalid camps in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan? Or the countless people unable to even begin the escape from their war-ravaged, famine-stricken home countries, laid waste to by the U.S. imperialists and their allies?

The desperate efforts of so many people to get into Europe (and the U.S.) are a direct consequence of the imperialist subjugation of the neocolonial world. With their systematic looting of wide swaths of the planet and devastating wars, or proxy wars, from Afghanistan to the Near East to Africa, the advanced capitalist powers impose inhuman conditions on the vast majority of mankind. The UN estimates that there are now some 60 million people worldwide displaced by war and persecution, the highest number since World War

II. Many millions more migrate to escape the grinding poverty inflicted by capitalist imperialism. Demanding “the right to get off the boats” onto the shores of Europe is in effect a call to “open the borders.”

This demand imbibes the false belief that the very same imperialist rulers, having intercepted the boats to pack the refugees off to some terrible fate, can be made to act out of humanitarian concern, bringing them ashore to a life of supposed freedom and economic well-being. Alternately, the demand may aim for the abolition of border patrols, but no capitalist ruling class has or ever will voluntarily relinquish control over its own territory, as the article cited by Joseph C. notes.

The call to “open the borders” and its variants are hopelessly utopian. The modern nation-state arose as a vehicle for the development of capitalism and will remain the basis for the organization of the capitalist economy until the world capitalist order is shattered through a series of workers revolutions. Policing its borders is vital to the very *existence* of the capitalist state power. Moreover, “open the borders” can have a reactionary content, from advancing imperialist economic penetration of dependent countries to obliterating the right to national self-determination.

Despite pleas to (temporarily) open the borders in the face of the refugee crisis today rocking Europe, the bourgeoisies there have no intention of allowing unrestricted immigration. Whatever they do will not be out of any kind of altruism. To the extent that German chancellor Angela Merkel is now posturing as a great humanitarian and offering to open the door to 800,000 migrants, it is because Germany has a falling birth rate and is in need of manpower in certain sectors of its economy. Once these jobs are filled, the door will again be slammed shut. In fact, Germany quickly moved to close its border with Austria. Other European countries, which have different labor needs, are much less inclined to take in refugees, highlighting yet again the divisions within the European Union.

There can be no progressive immigration policy under capitalism, and it is not the business of communists to propose policy alternatives. Our aim is to organ-

ize the social power of the proletariat to smash this capitalist system and establish workers rule. To foster the unity, solidarity and fighting capacity of our class, we seek to mobilize the labor movement in defense of immigrants, including by championing *full citizenship rights* for all and opposing deportations, roundups and detention center hellholes. Against employer attempts to wield undocumented workers as a club against labor, they must be brought into the unions with full rights and protections. To stem the tide of growing fascist and right-wing anti-immigrant terror, workers defense guards are an urgent necessity.

In our article “The Leninist Policy Toward Immigration/Emigration” (WV

No. 36, 18 January 1974), we observed regarding the “open the borders” demand: “This is merely a variant of utopian egalitarianism—the belief that a just society can be established by sharing out the currently available wealth.” As Marxists, we recognize that it will take a series of workers revolutions across the globe and the establishment of an internationally planned economy to eliminate material scarcity through a vast increase in the productive forces of all countries. This alone can provide a decent life for those who now live in the teeming slums and rural villages of the Third World as well as the ghettos and barrios of this country. Only then can there be a world without borders. ■

Oliver Sacks: An Appreciation

1 September 2015

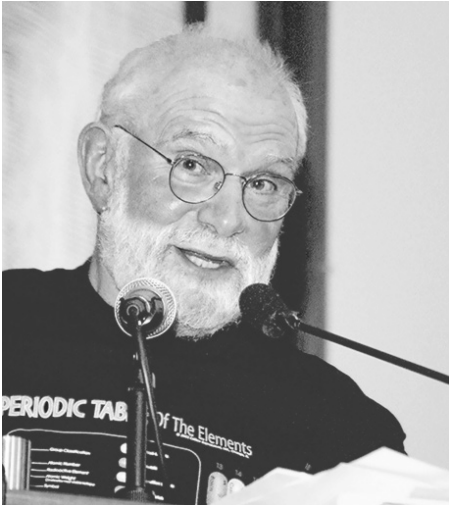
Dear Comrades,

I was saddened to see that Oliver Sacks died on 30 August of metastatic melanoma. Despite his admitted literary “too-muchness” (as he put it in his memoir *On the Move: A Life*), his books were welcome bright spots, committed to bourgeois science and a better understanding of the human mind in a reactionary imperialist age.

Oliver Sacks was born in England in 1933. Both his parents were physicians and Orthodox Jews. He was inquisitive and highly educated, and his homosexuality created personal contradictions for him in a time when being gay was largely a social and religious taboo. He became a neurologist, perhaps most well known for his 1973 book *Awakenings* about patients with “sleepy-sickness” who were brought back to life with the drug L-dopa (the book was made into a movie in 1990).

In November 2014, Sacks wrote a small piece for the *New Yorker* on the ginkgo tree (*Ginkgo biloba*), a kind of ancient gymnosperm (the first plants with seeds). Sacks’ small article explained something I didn’t know: a ginkgo drops its leaves all on the same day in the fall, unlike angiosperms (flowering plants) whose leaves fall off over time as they weaken and blow away. The reportedly oldest *Ginkgo biloba* in America is at Bartram’s Garden in Philadelphia (the first American botanical garden), and it must be something to watch Bartram’s enormous ginkgo drop all its leaves in the course of one day.

His books deal with fascinating elements of the human mind, like the man with agnosia “who mistook his wife for a hat.” I appreciated his stories about



Mackler/Globe

the neurological source of his own face blindness. I read with interest his book *Hallucinations*, as an elderly relative of mine had begun to “see” people who were “visiting” her; it helped me appreciate how people experience life as their minds degenerate. I also learned that while hallucinations may be visual, they may also be olfactory or auditory. It was oddly comforting to learn that, when one is tortured and isolated for prolonged periods—like the U.S. imperialists treat their “enemies,” at home and abroad—the mind will create its own hallucinatory world.

I empathize with Sacks’ hostility to the “complete subjugation of the human to medical arrogance and technology” in nursing homes, treatment that is commonplace in capitalist medicine.

His fascinating books provide insight into the breadth, complexity and fragility of the human mind.

Comradely,
S. Williams

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Abortion...

(continued from page 1)

described what Planned Parenthood did last year in Louisiana: “administer nearly 20,000 tests for sexually transmitted infections, as well as provide gynecological exams, contraceptive care, cancer screenings and other wellness services for nearly 10,000 mostly low-income patients.”

In the face of the decades-long anti-abortion onslaught, the feminists’ strategy of lobbying, voting Democrat and delivering legal briefs before the Supreme Court has consistently ceded more ground to the forces of reaction. In the 1990s, groups like the National Organization for Women (NOW) actively worked to demobilize clinic defense actions, preaching confidence in Bill Clinton. In office, Clinton viciously attacked black, poor and working-class women by slashing welfare and forcing recipients into low-wage, dead-end workfare jobs that did not pay enough to cover childcare.

The 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, which struck down state anti-abortion laws, was a product of broad social struggles in the U.S. at the time—from the civil rights movement to the demonstrations against the Vietnam War. But like all democratic rights under capitalism, the right to abortion is fettered by race and class. If you are poor, black, Latina or immigrant; if you can’t afford the cost of an abortion, or the time off work; if you don’t have medical insurance, or your insurance won’t cover abortion; or if you are underage, then your legal right is already attenuated almost to nonexistence. At the same time, simple lack of access to what remains of abortion rights afflicts women of all backgrounds except the very wealthiest: an estimated 89 percent of U.S. counties have no abortion facilities.

As we wrote last year:

“While abortion should be merely a question of basic health care, the anti-women bigots view it as a threat to the patriarchal family, the main source of women’s oppression and a key prop of capitalist class rule. Unrestricted access to abortion and contraception is essential for all women to exercise control over whether and when they will have children. There is an urgent need for mass struggle to defend abortion rights. As Marxists, we fight for *free abortion on demand* as part of a system of quality health care for all that is free at the point of delivery.”

—“For Free Abortion Available to All!” WV No. 1052, 19 September 2014

In recent years, the anti-abortion forces have been pushing state laws known as Targeted Regulation of Abortion Providers (TRAP) that aim to erect insurmountable barriers to keeping abortion clinics open. These medically useless regulations commonly require expensive building upgrades (such as widened hallways) and compel physicians to have admitting priv-



Left: President Bill Clinton signing 1996 bill to “end welfare as we know it.” Right: President Barack Obama signing 2010 Affordable Care Act that includes denial of federal funding for most abortions.

ileges at hospitals that often will not grant them. In Texas, such laws have resulted in the number of abortion clinics plummeting from 41 to 18. There is a relentless barrage of anti-abortion legal moves, from parental consent and “squeal rules” to waiting periods and even obscene prosecutions of individual women after miscarriages on grounds of alleged drug use or drinking alcohol—personal choices that should be no one else’s business.

Roe v. Wade, which was based narrowly on a woman’s right to privacy, struck down bans on abortion in the first trimester, but it did not prevent states from targeting women in later stages of pregnancy. And they have. Late-term abortions are illegal in 19 states; violent harassment and murder have reduced the number of physicians willing to perform late-term abortions to four in the entire country. “Fetal pain” bills ban abortions at 20 weeks, and “conscience” laws allow health care workers and institutions to deny service to desperate women.

In a sinister new move, a bill in Ohio would criminalize a woman’s decision to abort a fetus diagnosed with Down syndrome. A similar bill is already on the books in North Dakota. Continuing a campaign to foster the religious notion that a fetus is a “person” with its own rights, the self-proclaimed “pro-life” opponents of “big government” would surely oppose any government assistance in raising, educating or supporting the thousands of actual human beings who would be born with this disability.

Democrats: The Other Party of Anti-Woman Capitalism

While some Democratic politicians posture as champions of “choice,” recognizing the simple fact that most people in this country are in favor of some kind of abortion rights, they do not want to yield the terrain of religious moralism and

“family values” to their bourgeois competition. While professing support for women’s rights (though rarely even uttering the word “abortion”), they join in backing many of the key measures that restrict reproductive rights, from blocking young people’s access to contraception and abortion to banning late-term abortions.

Though the religious, Republican right grabs the anti-abortion spotlight, restricting women’s rights has always been very much a bipartisan affair. Just a few years after the *Roe* ruling, Illinois Republican Henry Hyde proposed ending Medicaid funding for all abortions. His goal was stamping out the right to abortion for all women, but he settled for the most vulnerable: at that time, Medicaid funded one-third of all abortions in the U.S. The avowedly evangelical Democratic president Jimmy Carter signed the Hyde Amendment into law, and it has been renewed by Congress every year since 1980. For 23 of the last 27 years, Congress has also forbidden the District of Columbia from using its own revenues to fund abortions for poor women, as the 50 states can; 93 percent of the women affected are non-white. Bill Clinton signed this ban six times during his presidency. How many women have been forced to bear children they did not want and could not afford is unknown.

Obama’s signature health care “reform” act explicitly denies any federal funding for abortions unless the pregnancy results from rape or incest or is a threat to the health of the mother. Under current regulations in the Affordable Care Act marketplace, individuals looking for private insurance that will cover abortion can be faced with a surcharge. And of course there are zero health dollars for undocumented immigrants. On contraception as well, the Obama administration has promoted anti-sex backwardness. In 2011, the administration overrode the FDA’s decision to allow over-the-counter access for teens to Plan B One-Step, the “morning after” pill. Only after a federal judge ruled that the decision was “politically motivated, scientifically unjustified, and contrary to agency precedent” did the Justice Department back down in 2013.

Since the origin of our species over 100,000 years ago, adolescents have been sexually active. Haranguing teenagers to “just say no” to sex is a losing battle if ever there was one. In a refreshing shift from all the ignorant, punitive “abstinence only” school programs, a privately funded 2009 program in Colorado offered teenagers and young women free intrauterine devices and contraceptive implants. In six years, birthrates dropped by 40 percent and abortions fell 42 percent among teenagers; there were equally impressive rates among women under 25. Some of the biggest drops came in the state’s poorest areas. But the private funding ran out, and state legislators earlier this year refused a request for \$5 million to keep the program alive.

For teenagers who do get pregnant, even having a sympathetic parent is not necessarily a safeguard from Orwellian government regulations. In 2014, a Pennsylvania woman, Jennifer Ann Whalen,

was jailed for buying misoprostol and mifepristone (formerly RU-486) online for her teenage daughter. A personal-care aide, Whalen did not have insurance covering her daughter and could not afford \$500 for an abortion. The pills cost \$45 and are safe and effective. This FDA-approved alternative to surgical abortion is now the treatment of choice for roughly a quarter of women seeking abortions. But



Pullman, Washington: Planned Parenthood clinic after arson attack, September 4.

because she did not have a prescription, and her daughter did not take the pills under a doctor’s supervision, Whalen was convicted of endangering the welfare of a child, dispensing drugs without a license and assault.

For Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

While the bourgeois feminists respond to attacks on abortion rights by pleading with the Democrats, the Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party’s (RCP) Stop Patriarchy campaign offers a more militant version of “fight the right” pressure politics. For the last couple of summers, Stop Patriarchy has organized Abortion Rights Freedom Rides into Bible Belt country, including protests in places like Jackson, Mississippi, and Wichita, Kansas. No doubt, activists boldly chanting “abortion on demand and without apology” are a welcome sight for beleaguered clinic staff. But by aiming its fire against the “fascist” Republican governors and bemoaning the Democrats’ “craven defensiveness” (revcom.us, 27 July), the RCP at bottom expresses the same aim as liberals: get the supposedly pro-choice Democrats to stand up for women. One need only recall its long-running campaign to “Drive Out the Bush Regime!” which finally achieved...the election of Barack Obama. The RCP’s message is clear: the Republicans are enemies of the people (true enough), so the Democrats, the lesser evil, are preferable.

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Public Office: Sat. 1-4 p.m., 1904 Franklin (Buzzer #407)

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA

Montréal.....CP 83 Succ. Place-d’Armes, Montréal, QC H2Y 3E9, (514) 728-7578
trotskyiste.montreal@gmail.com

Toronto.....Box 7198, Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X8, (416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

Vancouver.....Box 2717, Main P.O., Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2, (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

New Orleans...

(continued from page 1)

wake of Katrina was entirely man-made, exposing the raw reality of race and class in capitalist America. The same can be said of the recovery, which has overwhelmingly benefited the local business elite and government officials. Dollars have been spent, to be sure. An expanded levee protection system cost more than \$14 billion. A new \$25 million championship golf course is under construction in City Park. Tourism has rebounded, and the number of restaurants is up from 800 to 1,400. But the truth is, poor and working black people have been excluded from this nominal recovery in countless ways.

A case in point is the lack of access to health care. Since Katrina, there are fewer hospital beds and doctors in black areas of the city, where medical treatment was shoddy before the storm. The University Medical Center (UMC)—a state-of-the-art, 34-acre medical complex that opened in August—includes a Level 1 Trauma Center and 446 beds, but only 250 of them are available for use. In contrast, Charity had 700 beds and, true to its name, if you had no money, you didn’t have to pay. Work conditions are bad at the new “white elephant” hospital, as WV learned from a longshoreman whose wife works at UMC and used to work at Charity.

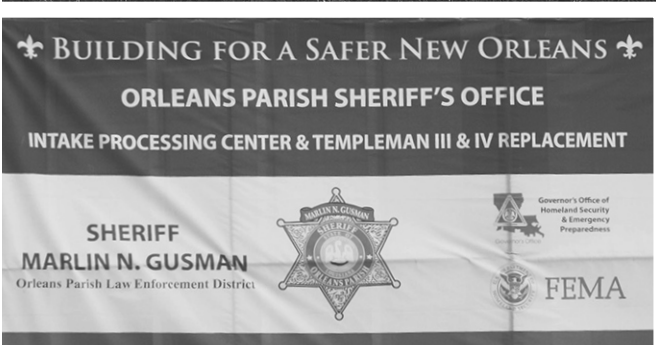
The city’s longstanding economic inequality has widened. The median household income of New Orleans blacks is less than half that of whites: \$25,000 versus \$60,000. The total number of jobs is down almost 10 percent since Katrina, and employment has shifted ever more into minimum-wage service and tourist industry jobs. Retail, fast food, hotel and restaurant work have supplanted ship-building. Today, the biggest employers are non-union hospitals, notorious for low wages and tyrannical management.

At every turn, black people face obstacles to making a living. Poverty-wage workers can rarely afford cars—they depend on public transport to get to work. Federal money has been funneled into expansion of streetcar lines in tourist areas, but ten years after the storm, bus service is only at 35 percent of its previous level.

Segregation and the concentration of poverty have been re-established far away from jobs, transportation, shopping and services. Before Katrina, public housing was centered around downtown, near job locations. Project residents may have held minimum-wage jobs, multiple part-time jobs and split-shift jobs, but at least they could get to work. Today, an expanded Section 8 voucher program has largely

It is not that the Democratic Party is a half-hearted friend of the workers and oppressed—on the contrary, it represents the interests of the capitalist ruling class that owns the means of production and lives off the labor of the working class. Likewise, feminism speaks for bourgeois and wealthy petty-bourgeois women whose quarrel with capitalist society is that it denies them full access to the boys’ club of ruling-class power. The RCP and Stop Patriarchy pander to bourgeois feminism, not least in their puritanical railing against everything from pornography to thongs to strip clubs—things the feminists falsely present as sources of women’s oppression. In fact, the RCP’s anti-sex moralism buys into the same “family values” pushed by the anti-abortionists (see “Church of Avakian Decrees: No Nudes Is Good Nudes,” WV No. 1020, 22 March 2013).

The war on abortion rights is part of the bipartisan assault on the rights and living conditions of working people—from union-busting, poverty wages and layoffs to skyrocketing medical costs and the shredding of what is left of the social safety net. The Spartacist League has always fought for free abortion on demand and free quality health care for all as part of a broader program of revolutionary working-class struggle. We



Ted Graham photos

Above: Newly constructed New Orleans Parish Prison. Below: St. Bernard public housing project demolished, March 2008.



replaced public housing, with residents displaced to remote apartment complexes like those near the swamplands of New Orleans East. Meanwhile, the old projects have been replaced with beautiful new “mixed income” units mostly renting at unaffordable market rates.

Before the storm, the now-empty Lower Ninth Ward had one of the highest home ownership rates in the city. The federal Road Home program was purportedly launched to help homeowners whose residences were destroyed, but it turned out to be a bureaucratic nightmare of racism, denial and piecemeal payouts. With \$119 million in funds still unreleased, the program is popularly derided as the

“Roadblock Home.” Except for a handful of “Brad Pitt” houses built by the actor’s foundation, the Lower 9 is a kingdom of snakes, rats and grass, a reminder of a black diaspora kept far away from home.

Katrina gave the U.S. capitalist rulers the chance to push through a pilot project for the dismantling of public education on a citywide scale. Charter schools rushed in after the public schools were shuttered and the teachers union busted. Experienced teachers were replaced with fresh college grads earning a miserly \$15 an hour. Now, over 90 percent of students in the city attend charters.

Their backers boast of results, but an op-ed published by the bourgeoisie’s newspaper of record, the *New York Times*, noted “growing evidence that the reforms have come at the expense of the city’s most disadvantaged children, who often disappear from school entirely” (22 August). No surprise—the charters cherry-pick students, maneuver artfully to exclude the disabled and expel black youth ten times more often than whites.

Special schools set up for those expelled amount to a pipeline for black youth into the juvenile prison system.

As always in New Orleans and across the country, the police, courts and prisons are terrorizing the black population. Despite a recent Department of Justice investigation and consent decree, children continue to be housed alongside adult prisoners in the scandal-ridden Orleans Parish Prison. Of New Orleans juveniles arrested so far in 2015, a full **99 percent** have been black, according to the Louisiana Center for Children’s Rights. The government’s response to this outrage has been more jails, with a new juvenile facility completed earlier this year. A massive new adult prison complex has been built for upwards of \$145 million. In this sick society, a conviction or even an arrest is often a bar to a decent job.

If Katrina’s aftermath proved anything, it is that the capitalist class views poor black people as a surplus population to be condemned and imprisoned, if not killed outright at the hands of one of their thugs in blue. Just one month ago, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a decision overturning the conviction of five New Orleans police officers in the infamous Danziger Bridge incident. Six days after Katrina, the depraved cops opened fire on unarmed people crossing the bridge in a desperate search for food and water, killing two and wounding four of them. All in a day’s work, says the appeals court.

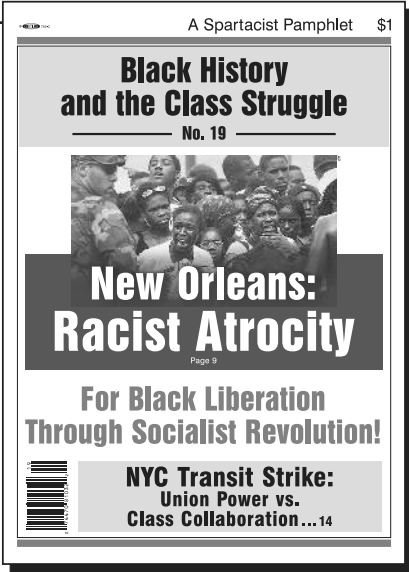
New Orleans is a particularly stark expression of the normal workings of racist American capitalism’s “justice” system. The U.S. imprisons more per capita than any other country in the world, and Louisiana ranks highest among the 50 states, with twice the national rate. And within Louisiana, New Orleans has the highest rate of any jurisdiction. The Urban League reports that almost 90 percent of the city’s prisoners are black.

But black people, whose racial oppression is woven into the very fabric of American capitalism, are hardly powerless. Despite the destruction of industrial jobs and erosion of union strength, black workers continue to be integrated into strategic sectors of the proletariat, including manufacturing, much of which is now located in the South, and longshore in New Orleans and elsewhere. Won to a revolutionary program, black workers will be the living link fusing the anger of the dispossessed masses with the social power of the multiracial proletariat under the leadership of a Leninist vanguard party. When the working class shatters the racist capitalist order through socialist revolution, the old Crescent City, one of the most cultured and complex cities on this continent, will begin to shine like a diamond on the banks of the Mississippi, unfettered by the profit system that today pulls it down in the mud. What we wrote in a Spartacist League statement (reprinted in WV No. 854, 16 September 2005) at the time of Hurricane Katrina is just as true today: “As New Orleans shows, the choice is clear: socialism or barbarism.” ■

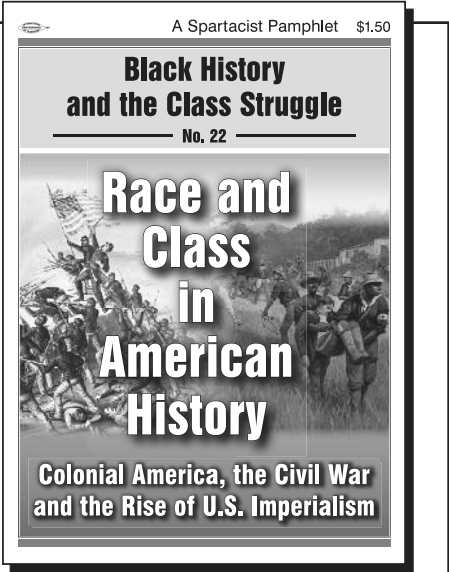
seek to build a party that will make the working class conscious of the need to fight for its own class interests as well as those of women and all the oppressed.

Working women come home to their “second job”—the tasks of maintaining the family and raising the next generation of workers. Abortion is an explosive social issue because it offers women some control over their own sexuality and reproduction, thus challenging women’s inequality. Any question that touches upon the equality of women runs straight up against religion and the institution of the family—vital props for the capitalist system of exploitation and its oppression of women and youth (see “The Marxist Approach to Women’s Liberation—Communism and the Family,” WV Nos. 1068 and 1069, 15 and 29 May).

Only a deep-going transformation of society can redress the oppression of women. Our program is the struggle for socialist revolutions internationally, sweeping away the capitalist system by destroying the power of the capitalist rulers and breaking down the racist and sexist divisions that have served as tools of their domination. The rule of the working class and the establishment of an internationally planned economy will open the road to socialism. ■



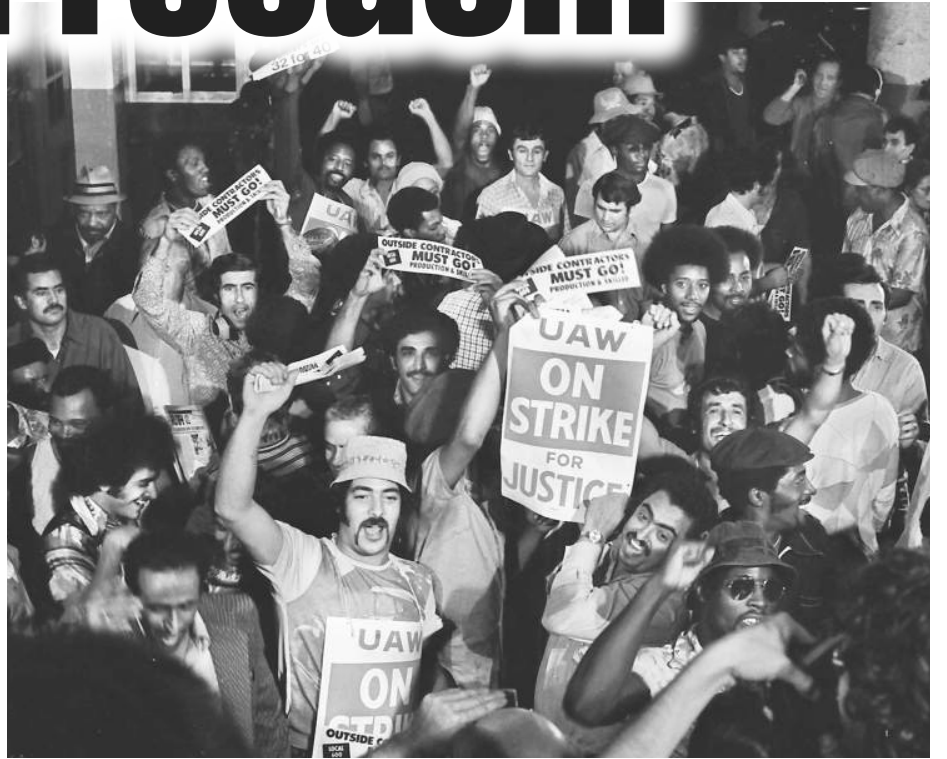
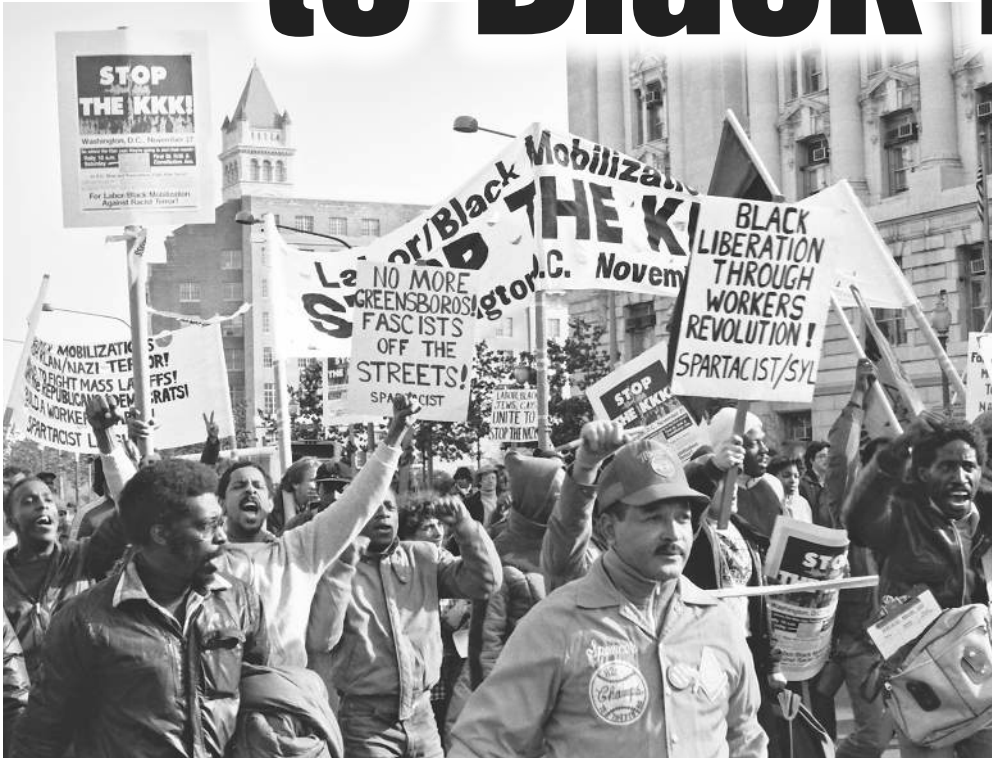
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Class-Struggle Road to Black Freedom



WV Photos

Left: 27 November 1982 labor/black mobilization in Washington, D.C., initiated by the Spartacist League, stopped the Ku Klux Klan. Right: Ford workers at River Rouge plant in Detroit join 1976 nationwide auto strike.

We print below the second part of a presentation, edited for publication, given to a Spartacist League meeting in New York City this summer by Workers Vanguard Editorial Board member Paul Cone. Part One appeared in WV No. 1073 (1 September).

PART TWO

Marxism vs. the Myth of “White Skin Privilege”

When the civil rights movement turned to the North, it rapidly found that no Civil Rights Act or Voting Rights Act could alter the hardened economic foundations of black oppression, manifested in rat-infested slums, mass unemployment, etc. Collision with the realities of racist American capitalism resulted in a fracturing of the civil rights movement and the emergence of its more militant wing. This polarization was powerfully reinforced by U.S. imperialism’s Democrat-led bloody counterrevolutionary war in Vietnam. In 1966, 24-year-old Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) leader Stokely Carmichael raised the call for “black power.” Yet, while they were critical of the pro-Democratic Party pressure politics of the liberal civil rights leaders, the young Black Power militants had no counterposed political strategy or program—they themselves called for more

black Democratic politicians, cops, judges and administrators.

To some extent, the Black Power demand reflected an attempt to grasp for solutions outside the framework of U.S. capitalist society. But, as we warned in “Black and Red—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom,” “The slogan ‘black power’ must be clearly defined in *class*, not racial terms, for otherwise the ‘black power’ movement may become the black wing of the Democratic Party in the South” (1966, reprinted in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 9). This is exactly what happened. A case in point is Georgia’s longtime Democratic Congressman John Lewis, who had been a radical SNCC leader in the 1960s.

With the union officialdom failing to mobilize labor’s social power in support of the civil rights movement, black militants who lacked a class perspective gave up on the idea of a racially egalitarian society and accepted segregation and racism as an unchangeable norm. Organizational separatism became a psychological compensation for the manifest impossibility of acquiring a separate black nation-state. SNCC purged its white members. Other nationalist groupings emerged, most prominent among them the Black Panther Party, which formed in Oakland in 1966.

The Panthers courageously stood up to the racist ruling class and its kill-crazy cops. Counterposed to the petty-bourgeois “pork chop” nationalism exemplified by Ron Maulana Karenga, who joined in the cop/FBI COINTELPRO vendetta that killed 38 of their members, the Panthers groped for a way out of the hell of black life in America through means that went

beyond what was acceptable to the capitalist rulers. That is, they were subjectively revolutionary. But the Panthers’ glorification of ghetto rage and their rejection of the working class as the agent of socialist revolution and black freedom left them more vulnerable to state repression. The Panthers ran up against a vicious government campaign of assassinations, provocations, frame-ups and imprisonment aimed at beheading black struggle. In the end, they could only alternate between adventurism, with its bitter consequences, and appeals to the liberal establishment. Many of the Panthers who were not killed or locked away eventually made their way to the Democratic Party.

Against this backdrop emerged the doctrine of “white skin privilege” as announced by Noel Ignatin (Ignatiev) in his 1967 document “White Blindspot.” This concept was soon adopted by a section of the New Left, which impressionistically wrote off the American working class in its entirety as a labor aristocracy.

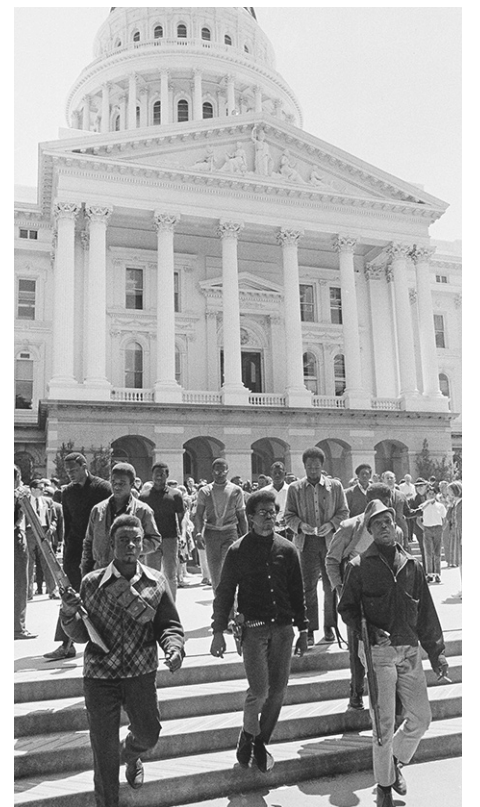
Underlying Ignatin’s “theory” is disdain for the need for a programmatically cohered revolutionary leadership. As we set forth in “Black and Red”: “Our immediate goal is to develop a black Trotskyist cadre. We aim not only to recruit Negro members—a shortcut to the working class in this period—but to develop these black workers into Trotskyist cadres who will carry a leadership role in organizing the black masses, within the League itself and elsewhere.” The period may have changed, but this goal, restated in the early 1980s as an aspiration for a 70 percent black party, has not changed in the nearly half-century of our existence.

Communists and Integrated Unions

Ignatin & Co. ignore the contradictions of capitalism that make proletarian revolution both necessary and possible. They also efface the history of integrated struggles and the betrayals of those struggles by both the union misleaders and the Stalinists, from whose milieu Ignatin came.

The Great Migration of black people out of the rural South, beginning around World War I, led to black workers increasingly becoming part of the industrial proletariat in the North. A similar process happened in the South as new industrial centers developed there over subsequent decades. Thus, rural sharecroppers were transformed into proletarians in large-scale factories. With white and black

industrial workers sharing a clear identity of class interests, there was a basis for integrated class struggle and the struggle for black freedom. The forging of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) through a series of militant strikes in the 1930s opened the door for the integration of black workers into powerful industrial unions.



AP

May 1967, Sacramento: Armed Black Panthers after demonstration against gun control bill in Capitol building.

The Communist Party (CP) was in the forefront of fighting for black workers and farmers and against racial oppression and lynch-law terror during the early 1930s. CP-initiated Unemployed Councils in major cities fought against evictions. In the famous Scottsboro case, Communists led the struggle to free nine black youths who were framed up in 1931 on charges of raping two white girls on a freight train and jailed in Scottsboro, Alabama (eight of them sentenced to death).

The CP built the Share Croppers’ Union (SCU), which represented thousands of evicted black farmers as well as cotton pickers, largely centered in Alabama. The struggle to organize the SCU was conducted in a state of perpetual



AP

October 1966: SNCC leader Stokely Carmichael, who popularized call for Black Power, denounces the draft during Vietnam War at UC Berkeley mass rally.

civil war with both legal and extralegal armed vigilante groups. By 1935, the SCU claimed some 12,000 members. The black-led SCU also sought, with great difficulty, to recruit rural whites to its ranks. In counties where the SCU was active, the CP routinely received hundreds of votes from an all-white electorate. Those impoverished whites who didn't dare join a black-led union demonstrated their solidarity by voting for CP candidates when and where they could.

Courageous as this work was, the Stalinist CP by this time was no longer a revolutionary organization. After Hitler's ascent to power in 1933, Stalin proclaimed the Popular Front—an alliance with a mythical “progressive bourgeoisie.” Its American incarnation was Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal alliance. In 1941, the CP hailed U.S. entry into WWII (which came six months after Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union) and worked overtime to enforce a “no strike” pledge issued by the trade-union bureaucracy. The Communists demanded that black people forsake their struggle for equality in the interest of the imperialist war effort. The betrayals of the CP during the war years helped wipe out gains for black people and served to discredit radical movements generally, although hundreds of black workers joined the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

While calling on class-conscious workers to militarily defend the Soviet Union, the SWP opposed the interimperialist slaughter. For this, 18 Trotskyists and Minneapolis Teamsters leaders were imprisoned under the anti-communist Smith Act by the FDR administration in 1941. The SWP maintained a revolutionary course through the difficult WWII years and the immediate postwar period. During the war, the SWP took up and publicized the defense cases of black soldiers victimized for opposing Jim Crow segregation. In the aftermath of anti-black riots in Detroit in 1943, the Trotskyists fought for flying squadrons of union militants to stand ready to defend black people menaced by racist mobs. As a result, the SWP made a major black recruitment breakthrough in that city. However, under the intense pressure of the Cold War, most of these recruits left the party over the next few years.

In the late 1940s, on the heels of a massive postwar strike wave and at the outset of the anti-Soviet Cold War, the Democratic Harry S. Truman administration launched a massive anti-Communist witchhunt to purge troublemakers from the industrial unions and smash their militancy. The Taft-Hartley Act barred Communists from holding union office and banned a whole host of militant strike tactics. The CIO bureaucracy opposed Taft-Hartley in words but adhered to it in practice. The International Longshore and Warehouse Union, the United Electrical union and nine other CP-led unions with a total of around one million members—almost 20 percent of the entire CIO membership—were expelled from that union federation. A key figure in leading these red purges was United Auto Workers (UAW) president and social democrat Walter Reuther, who later headed the CIO and collaborated with Martin Luther King.

The anti-red witchhunt took place alongside the obscenely named “Operation Dixie,” the official (and unsuccessful) CIO campaign to organize the South. That campaign's failure lay in the refusal of the union tops to take up the cause of black rights, a refusal bound up with their fealty to the Democratic Party, which then ruled in the South. Hard terrain the South was, but the region had already experienced significant union growth in industries such as coal, metal mining, oil refining, mass transit, pulp, wood and paper. In its November 1946 issue, *Fortune* magazine grudgingly described resistance to the unions as weak and predicted that complete organization of the South would be inevitable.

Rather than reviving the mass militant workers mobilizations that built the CIO in the 1930s-'40s, the union tops sought acceptance from the white Southern elite. To that end, the CIO mostly restricted

its organizing efforts to white workers. It targeted the largely white textile mills, shunting aside the more racially mixed tobacco, transportation and wood industries, which held more promise for success. By excluding left-wingers from Operation Dixie staff, the CIO sidelined those with proven experience in organizing the South. Declining to appeal to black workers, the all-white, conservative leadership lost union elections in textile plants with a large percentage of black workers.

The union bureaucrats not only failed to organize the South but also destroyed existing outposts of opposition to the Southern racist hegemony by raiding left-wing unions. Militantly anti-racist white unionists with large followings among black and white workers were driven out of the maritime, metal mining and tobacco unions. The sharp decline of union membership in recent decades can be traced to the failure to organize the South.

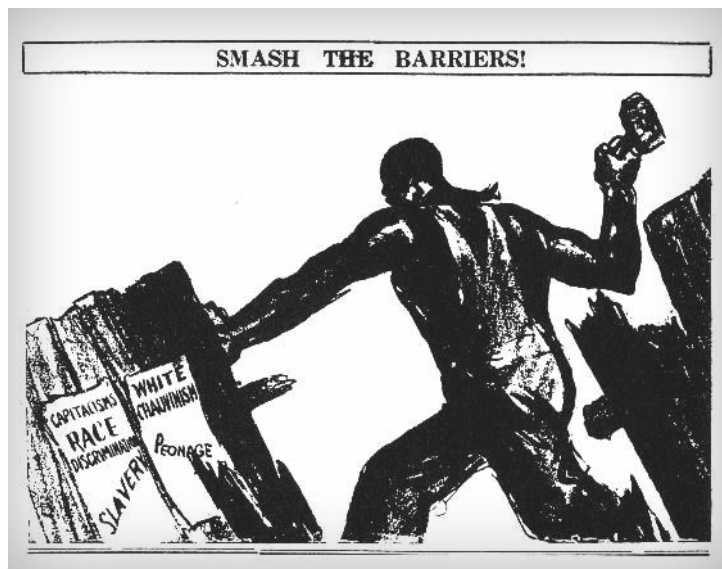


Illustration from the Young Communist League's *Young Worker* in 1930 reflects Communist Party's fight against black oppression.

What this meant was that when young liberal activists—black and white—entered the political scene during the civil rights struggles, they saw a labor movement that had no significant (or even insignificant) left wing sharing their own views toward racial oppression and Cold War militarism. All wings of the labor bureaucracy were rabidly anti-Communist and staunch anti-Soviet Cold Warriors. All wings defended the racist status quo in the North and only paid lip service to opposing legalized racial segregation in the South. Even racially integrated unions like the UAW were pervaded by racist practices. For example, the UAW skilled trades section in this period was almost exclusively white.

The History of “White Skin Privilege”

Ignatin's “White Blindspot” theory hinges on a W.E.B. DuBois quote from *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935): “It must be remembered that the white group of laborers, while they received a low wage, were compensated in part by a sort of public and psychological wage. They were given public deference and titles of courtesy because they were white.” Ignatin spins this thread to alibi the capitalist rulers by positing the poison of white chauvinism as “the ideological bulwark of the practice of white supremacy, the general oppression of blacks by whites.”

According to Ignatin:

“The U.S. ruling class has made a deal with the mis-leaders of American labor, and *through them with the masses of white workers....* You white workers help us conquer the world and enslave the non-white majority of the earth's laboring force, and we will repay you with a monopoly of the skilled jobs, we will cushion you against the most severe shocks of the economic cycle, provide you with health and education facilities superior to those of the non-white population...enable you on occasion to promote one of your number out of the ranks of the laboring class, and in general confer on you the material and spiritual privileges befitting your white skin.”

He goes on to disparage the prospect of integrated struggle, writing that white workers “have more to lose than their chains; they have also to lose their white-skin privileges, the perquisites that separate them from the rest of the working class.” In other words, no gains can be

attained until white workers reject their purported white supremacy.

For Ignatin, the role of white leftists was to uncritically support the “black liberation struggle,” while confining their own efforts to organizing only white activists and admonishing white workers to shed their privileges. Of course, he and his cothinkers offer no prescription for how to do so, other than telling white communists to go up to workers and “say frankly: you must renounce the privileges you now hold.” In practice, this instruction meant calling on white workers to give up their jobs, accept lower wages, renounce upgrades and reject job protections like seniority rights, which had been won through hard-fought union struggles to shield militant workers (black as well as white) from dismissal at the whim of the bosses. During the Boston busing battles in the 1970s, Ignatin opposed a proposal to link the defense of busing to the fight

oppression. While the Weathermen maintained their hostility to the proletariat, by the early 1970s, a time of heightened labor struggle in the U.S., the Maoists turned toward the working class.

In doing so, Avakian, Klonsky and Ignatin, now leading separate organizations, continued to identify the working class with its most backward members. By 1974, Avakian's Revolutionary Union (precursor to the Revolutionary Communist Party) decided to compete for leadership of the *anti-busing* forces on the streets of Boston. Denouncing the busing plan as a “capitalist hoax,” the front-page headline of the October 1974 issue of its paper, *Revolution*, demanded: “People Must Unite to Smash Boston Busing Plan.” We fought to defend the busing program that, however inadequate, was a step against racist segregation. We raised the call: “Implement the Busing Plan! Extend Busing into the Suburbs! Integrated Quality Education for All!” We also agitated for key integrated unions to organize labor/black defense of black schoolchildren terrorized by racist mobs in the streets.

Within a few years, the Avakianites adopted anew the “white skin privilege” mantle as they turned their back on the proletariat altogether and Klonsky's group disappeared into the Democratic Party. For its part, STO left the factories to concentrate on “anti-imperialist” support to guerrilla forces in the Third World. They subsequently threw themselves into the 1980s anti-nuke movement, which to them had the virtue of being their target audience: almost entirely white and petty-bourgeois.

In a 1975 article “A Golden Bridge,” Ignatin described blacks who scabbed on the Great Steel Strike of 1919 as “heroic.” He later published the journal *Race Traitor* and became a bit of a celebrity with his book *How the Irish Became White*. As an academic, Ignatin was provided a platform to rail against “white skin privilege” for over two decades, first from behind the ivy-covered walls of Harvard University and then the Massachusetts College of Art.

The Fight for Working-Class Unity

No less than black workers, many white workers also live one or two paychecks away from the street. They, too, have rent or mortgage payments, car notes and repairs to pay, child support, medical bills, tuition, etc. Admonishing white workers that they are complicit in black oppression and should shed their jobs and other means of survival is, to be kind, not a very realistic way to convey the unity of interests of black and white workers and the need for joint class—and ultimately revolutionary—struggle. Rather than uniting black and white workers, such appeals echo racist lies that white workers' interests are threatened by black equality, the stock in trade of racist demagogues like George Wallace, who had a good chance of winning the Democratic Party presidential nomination in 1972 before he was shot and paralyzed, and more mainstream politicians up to the present day. As long as workers are pitted against each other in competition for a limited pool of jobs, the

continued on page 8



Spartacist contingent at 1974 Boston demonstration calls for integrated workers mobilizations to stop racist attacks on busing for school integration.

Black Freedom...

(continued from page 7)

necessary consequence will be a divided and weakened labor movement.

Since I referred to the 1969 SDS convention, I thought I'd describe our intervention into it. The Revolutionary Marxist Caucus, which was formed by our supporters in SDS, issued a position paper stating:

"Given the insecurity of white workers, it is necessary to combine demands for equal opportunity for Blacks, with demands aimed at assuring white workers that the benefits accruing to Blacks will not come at their expense. Thus, in demanding that more Black workers be admitted into skilled jobs, we should also raise demands (such as a shorter workweek with no loss in pay) aimed at expanding total employment."

We also pointed out that while fighting against discrimination in hiring, we would oppose firing a white worker to hire a black worker (which would fuel racial antagonisms). At the same time, we pointed out that the upgrading of black workers would provide a higher floor for wages in general and strengthen the position of all workers.

We seek to unite employed and unemployed workers—black, white and immigrant—in common struggle around demands that benefit the class as a whole. We call for union hiring halls, with special union-run programs aimed at reaching out to and training minorities, linked to the fight for jobs for all. The available work should be divided among all those capable of working through a shorter workweek with no loss in weekly pay.

We also seek to mobilize the labor movement to defeat attacks on what social welfare programs remain. However, our program is not the defense of the miserable status quo. At best, welfare (to the extent it still exists) relegates the least skilled section of the unemployed to poverty and exclusion from social production. We oppose the vindictive treatment of ex-prisoners and support the restoration of their full civil rights. We call for low-rent, quality, integrated public housing and free, quality, integrated public education for all as an essential part of the fight for a workers America. Under revolutionary leadership, struggles for these and similar demands would serve not only to win immediate gains but also to weld the class together and advance its consciousness, pointing toward the need to overthrow the capitalist system.

The Sectoralist Revival and Reparations

At the same time that Ignatin and his cothinkers were writing off the working class, considerable labor discontent and unrest was breaking out on the shopfloor. In 1968, there was a postwar high in wildcat strikes (work stoppages not authorized by the union leadership), especially in the Midwest auto plants.

But rank-and-file hostility to the Reuther regime in the UAW, and to kindred union bureaucracies in other industries, polarized along racial lines. In Detroit, black militants involved in the wildcats formed the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW). The LRBW called for a separate union for black auto workers and combined legitimate demands against the bosses' racist practices (e.g., for more black apprentices in the skilled trades) with demands for more black foremen and other supervisors. Unlike the Panthers and other black nationalists, these militant black workers recognized that black people had social power as part of the industrial proletariat. However, the LRBW union groupings actively discouraged militant white workers from following their leadership and denied membership to whites, who were deemed "the historic enemy, betrayer and exploiter of black people."

Ultimately, the majority of the LRBW abandoned its connection to labor's social power, leaving the plants in a turn to community work. The LRBW played a big part

in penning a "Black Manifesto" presented to the 1969 National Black Economic Development Conference. It demanded reparations of \$500 million from white churches and synagogues and called "upon delegates to find within the white community those forces which will work under the leadership of blacks to implement these demands by whatever means necessary. By taking such actions, white Americans will demonstrate concretely that they are willing to fight the 'white skin privilege' and the white supremacy and racism which has forced us as black people to make these demands."

The late 1960s was the heyday of sectoralism: blacks should organize blacks, Latinos organize Latinos, women organize women, gays organize gays. It didn't last long. Some components of the New Left went directly into the Democratic Party, while others were recruited to Marxist organizations. With the now decades-long dearth of any significant social and class struggle, and especially following the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, there has been a recrudescence of all sorts of backward ideology, "white skin privilege" and sectoralist identity politics among them. The only difference is that with today's "privilege checking" there is no pretense to revolutionary politics.

Which brings me back to reparations. We do not advocate reparations, which are a completely ridiculous proposition in a society where so many black people can't



WV Photo

Sidewalk chalking at "Millions March NYC" demonstration against racist police killings, December 2014.

by Hitler, whose first victims included Communists and socialists.

A postulate of the whiteness studies and "privilege checking" crowd is that being white is a choice that one can reject. Coates adopts this outlook in his new book, *Between the World and Me*. He repeatedly refers to white people as "people who believe they are white" and who seek a piece of the "American Dream" at the expense of black people. Meanwhile, in the real world, Rachel Dolezal, then a leader of the NAACP in Spokane, Washington, who identified as black despite having been born white, received a torrent of abuse when exposed for trying to choose not to be white.



Marovich/Bloomberg

July 17: Rural residents line up to receive free medical care at Wise County Fairgrounds, Virginia.

find jobs, much less get welfare. What is really posed is the need to take the whole pie, that is, expropriate the bourgeoisie. And why stop at black people? From Native Americans to Koreans, there is a very long list of victims of the U.S. capitalist ruling class. The many crimes of the U.S. imperialists stretch from the slaughter in the Philippines at the turn of the last century to the WWII atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the ongoing devastation in the Near East. The only just deserts for the imperialists will be socialist revolution, putting the resources of U.S. society in the hands of the working class and in the service of the oppressed.

The proponents of reparations have an entirely different framework. As seen in the LRBW statement, the demand for reparations has ridden in tandem with the idea of "white skin privilege." Both serve the purpose of laying the responsibility for black oppression not on the capitalist rulers but rather on the white population as a whole, whether desperately poor or in penthouse offices at JPMorgan Chase.

The reparations fad has come, gone and seemingly come again with an article by Ta-Nehisi Coates in the *Atlantic* last year. In making his case, Coates declares: "What I'm talking about is a national reckoning that would lead to a spiritual renewal." He cites as precedent the reparations paid to the Zionist state of Israel by the West German government in the 1950s, adopting the view that all Germans were guilty of the Holocaust. We reject the concept of collective guilt. It was not the German working class that was responsible for Hitler's ascent and the Holocaust but the capitalist rulers served

What rejecting one's whiteness is all about is captured in "The White Anti-Racist is an Oxymoron," a June 2003 contribution to Ignatin's journal *Race Traitor*. Why an oxymoron? According to the author, to be white means to accept domination over non-whites; but even if you oppose this domination, you can't *not* be white because you are white! So what can one do? The author has an answer: sympathetic whites "must be willing to do what the people most affected and marginalized by a situation tell them to do." The writer added, "Don't call us, we'll call you. If we need your resources, we will contact you." In the same vein, a leaflet passed out earlier this year at a Baltimore rally protesting the killing of Freddie Gray was titled "How to be a White Person in Solidarity With the Baltimore Uprising." It asserted, "We are all upset about the injustice our fellow Baltimoreans face, and it is important to speak out against that injustice. But when you are supporting a movement led by oppressed peoples it is vital that you follow their leadership."

For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

This worldview, which rejects the multiracial working class as the agent of revolutionary change, necessarily leads to seeking redress through bourgeois electoral politics as well as placing oneself in bed with the agencies of the capitalist state. This is precisely where the black nationalist and New Leftist predecessors (and in some cases, braintrusts) of today's activists ended up. For example, in a June 19 *New York Times* interview, Black Panther Party cofounder Bobby

Seale offered: "On the Black Lives Matter, I'm pushing for the youth in these groups to get more political and more electoral; you've got to take over some of these seats. And you've got to get more [Baltimore state's attorney Marilyn] Mosbys elected to some of these political offices. And you got to put some measures on the ballot."

While the spawn of Ignatin & Co. were busy checking their privilege, the Spartacist League, together with our trade-union supporters and associated organizations, the Partisan Defense Committee and Labor Black Leagues for Social Defense, have engaged in work to impact the real world. Our comrades and allies organized workers defense guards in Chicago for a black worker beset by racist mobs when he desegregated a white neighborhood, mobilized auto workers to drive Nazi foremen out of a Detroit plant and initiated numerous labor-centered mobilizations against the KKK and Nazis. We revived a program, dating back to the early American Communist movement, of support to class-war prisoners—many of them former Panthers. We also launched an international campaign to stop the execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a onetime Panther spokesman who spent 30 years on death row for a crime he didn't commit before a federal court overturned his sentence, only to condemn him to what appears to be a rapidly approaching death behind bars.

We're old school; we continue to look to the social power of the multiracial working class. The workplace remains the most integrated part of American society. Black workers are the most militant, experienced and advanced sector of the proletariat. They have the potential, *when armed with a revolutionary program*, to lead the working class to smash this capitalist system that is a hell for just about everyone. As we concluded in "Black and Red":

"The victory of the socialist revolution in this country will be achieved through the united struggle of black and white workers under the leadership of the revolutionary vanguard party. In the course of this struggle unbreakable bonds will be forged between the two sections of the working class. The success of the struggle will place the Negro people in a position to insure at last the end of slavery, racism and super-exploitation." ■

Marxist Bulletin 9

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Greece...

(continued from page 12)

principle any support to Popular Unity (LAE), the split from Syriza. LAE is a bourgeois-populist “front” trying to salvage the muddled anti-austerity banner that Syriza trampled within months of their election.

LAE leader Lafazanis and Co. do not offer any kind of working-class alternative to the bourgeois Syriza. They stayed in the Syriza government until Tsipras resigned, demonstrating that they are devoted to maintaining capitalist stability and that their vote against the memorandum was just for show. LAE promises to exit the euro (but not the EU) only *if* it becomes necessary! Yet the events of recent months have made crystal clear that there is absolutely no way forward for the workers and the oppressed of Greece within the straitjacket of the imperialist EU and its instrument, the euro. ***Down with the euro and EU! Rip up the Third Memorandum! Repudiate the debt!***

In order to punish the Greek working people for daring to vote no in the July 5 referendum, the Troika pushed an even more savage program of starvation, misery and humiliation. Syriza accepted this imperialist blackmail. Enough! This crisis cannot be resolved at the ballot box. The only road forward is hard struggle by the working class, at the head of all the oppressed, to repudiate Syriza’s sell-out. On 17 July the TGG issued a call upon the broadest layers of the workers



Reuters

Golden Dawn fascists rally in Athens, January 31.

movement and its allies to form workers committees of action:

“The EU and euro must be repudiated. Committees composed of workers from different tendencies and their allies—youth, unemployed, immigrants, pensioners—must be set up throughout the country to struggle for this and toward a government which will act in the interests of the working people and be subordinated to them. This battle cannot be won within a parliamentary framework.... Break with the Capitalists and their Banks!”

We also call upon like-minded and class-conscious working people throughout the European Union to support these aims and for common class struggle of Greek, German and other European workers against Schäuble, Merkel, Hollande and all the EU criminals!

The International Communist League, of which the TGG is a section, has opposed the EU on principle from its inception. The EU is an unstable consortium—dominated by German imperialism—aimed at driving down the living standards of working people throughout Europe, including in imperialist countries like Germany. The euro is an instrument for economic domination of the major powers over the poorer states. The only way out of the nightmare of recurrent capitalist crises is to unite the workers throughout Europe in struggle to sweep away the imperialist EU through the fight for socialist revolutions here and internationally. ***For a Socialist United States of Europe!***

In both 2012 and the January election

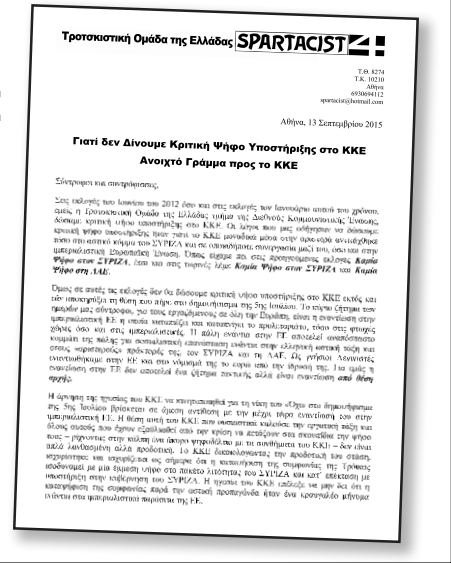
Open Letter to the Greek Communist Party

Why We Are Not Giving Critical Support to the KKE

In the July 5 referendum on European Union-dictated austerity measures, the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) refused to call for a no vote, instead telling voters to spoil their ballots. Our comrades in the Trotskyist Group of Greece issued an open letter on September 13, explaining that they will not give critical support to the KKE in the September 20 elections unless it repudiates this betrayal. The letter can be read at icl-fi.org.

this year, the TGG called for a vote to the reformist KKE [Greek Communist Party] because it had consistently opposed both Syriza and the imperialist EU. But in the July 5 referendum the KKE leadership called on working people to throw away their vote by casting spoiled ballots with the KKE’s own slogans. This betrayal stood in direct counterposition to the KKE’s stated opposition to the EU. We call on the KKE to repudiate its position on the July 5 referendum. If the KKE does so, we will extend critical electoral support to it in this election.

The KKE’s response to the July 5 refer-



electoral circus and the strategy of trying to pressure parliament for a return to the pre-Memorandum days. It must point instead toward the need for a revolutionary, proletarian solution to the crisis.

The TGG opposes any support to the electoral bloc of Antarsya and the Workers Revolutionary Party (EEK). These reformists were first a tail on the bourgeois Syriza and are now a tail on the bourgeois-populist LAE. While claiming to oppose Syriza in the January elections, these groups showed their true colors in February when they flocked to pro-government demonstrations in favor of national unity. These demonstrations were aimed at strengthening Tsipras’ position in the “negotiations” for the sell-out to the Troika. Now Antarsya/EEK whine in their 3 September “Declaration of ANTARSYA/Elections 20 September” that LAE “seems not to have drawn conclusions from the path taken by Syriza.” Clearly the reformists of Antarsya and the EEK are also incapable of drawing the appropriate “conclusions.” Their election statement calls for a vote against Syriza, New Democracy, PASOK, Potami and Golden Dawn but *not* against LAE. It is clear that Antarsya/EEK want to pressure LAE to become the “new” (i.e., old) Syriza.

Such parliamentary pressure politics pushed by the reformist left throughout the crisis are a dead end. Our call for workers action committees is a call on forces much larger and wider than our own to take up the struggle against the EU and the euro based on the mobilization of the independent power of the working class. It is not a call to pressure forces like LAE to move to the left, nor to elect a more left-wing capitalist government. The demands suggested in our call address the immediate, urgent needs of working people: For jobs for all through a shorter workweek with no loss in pay! For decent pensions for *all* retirees pegged to the cost of living! Quality health care and housing for all! For workers control of food distribution and prices! Abolish the VAT! The capitalists, including their “left” agents like Syriza, have demonstrated that their

system is incapable of providing the basic necessities of life for the masses. It is high time that the working class fought to take control of society: Expropriate the banks, utilities, transportation, ports and shipping industry!

If the ruined petty bourgeoisie and masses of unemployed do not see the working class leading such a fight, they will be increasingly attracted to the “radical” solutions offered by the fascists. The fascist Golden Dawn came third in last January’s election and now seeks to take advantage of Syriza’s sellout to posture as the populist “saviors” of the nation. Golden Dawn is currently feeding off the government’s chauvinist abuse of the thousands of desperate immigrants arriving every week, who’ve risked their lives to make it inside the borders of racist fortress Europe through Greece. In opposition to the racist scapegoating of immigrants by the state and by the fascists, the working class must fight for ***full citizenship rights for all immigrants!*** Workers committees of action would fight for jobs for thousands of unemployed construction workers building free, quality housing for all those immigrants who’ve made it here, as well as for the increasing number of homeless Greeks.

The fascists seek to deflect the anger of the dispossessed not only toward immigrants but also leftists, gay people and trade unionists. Their ultimate goal is the physical destruction of the unions and the left, which is why the capitalists keep the fascists in reserve. This makes it urgently necessary to mobilize the social power of the unions and workers more broadly in massive, united-front mobilizations to stop the fascists. ***For workers defense guards to smash the fascist threat! Defend immigrants against racist attacks!***

The KKE, despite its social weight in the trade unions, has no perspective of taking the lead in mobilizing contingents of workers, based on the unions, to defend immigrants, leftists and gay people by sweeping the fascists off the streets. Instead it calls to “isolate” the fascists, as if fascism were merely a question of bad ideas. The KKE’s nationalist populist program, which is expressed in its calls for “people’s power” and for defense of Greece’s borders, is an obstacle to combating the populist demagoguery of the fascists. It is also a political obstacle to the struggle for the revolutionary seizure of power by the working class, because it chains the working class to its capitalist exploiters.

If many workers today lack revolutionary consciousness, it is not merely because of “objective” conditions, but because of the opportunist character of the existing leadership of the workers movement, and in particular the KKE. What is needed is a revolutionary party like Lenin’s and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks. Such a party will be forged through the struggle against capitalist ruin and fascist reaction. Such a party cannot be a “national” party, but must form part of one international revolutionary party, with sections in each country. It is the perspective of the TGG to fight for such a party as part of a reformed Fourth International. ■

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Down With the Imperialist EU!
Syriza: Class Enemy of Workers, Oppressed

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Australia...

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makes the wheels of production turn. By withdrawing its labour the proletariat can choke off the bosses’ profits. The proletariat’s place in production uniquely endows it with the potential power and interest to put an end to the system of exploitation by shattering the capitalist order and rebuilding society on an egalitarian socialist basis. Supporters of the Spartacist League/Australia who visited the pickets have found some workers open to our arguments against reliance on the courts and for independent class struggle. But the workers’ desire to fight is being kept in check by a union leadership committed to class collaboration.

The leadership’s strategy is a losing game. In fact, the MUA leaders’ approach in the HPA dispute is a carbon copy of what they did during the 1998 struggle against anti-union attacks by Patrick Stevedores. Then, the result was almost half the Patrick workforce losing their jobs and a growth in casualisation, rolling back employment conditions to what they were in the decades before militant union struggles had won some measure of job security. Particularly over the last three decades, beginning with the Hawke/Keating Australian Labor Party (ALP) governments (1983-1996), the ALP-loyal union misleaders have acceded to the slashing of wages, conditions and jobs. After each round of givebacks, the capitalist rulers invariably come back for more.

The ALP is the key political obstacle to advancing the ability of the proletariat to fight against capitalist rule. Based on the unions, but with a thoroughly pro-capitalist leadership and program, the ALP serves to tie the proletariat to the interests of the bourgeoisie and its state. At the same time, they make a pretence of representing the interests of workers, as did ALP leader Bill Shorten when he turned up for a photo-op at the picket outside Hutchison Ports in Sydney. Historically, a key Laborite means of selling out workers’ struggles has been to preach faith in Australia’s Arbitration system, which mandates settlement of industrial disputes in supposedly neutral courts. The fact that the MUA and HPA have now deferred the federal court hearing and agreed to a six-week period of conciliation in the Fair Work Commission is cold comfort to the sacked workers.

For Union Control of Hiring—Equal Pay for Equal Work!

The dispute at Hutchison highlights the need for union control of hiring such as exists (albeit increasingly subverted) for longshoremen organised by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) on the West Coast of the U.S. Through a series of hard class battles, beginning in 1934, against the shippers and their corrupt gang bosses, the ILWU and union allies won union control of hiring (see the Spartacist League/U.S. pamphlet *Then and Now*). The hiring hall



San Francisco, 1934: Strike by longshoremen and seamen, which sparked citywide general strike and led to establishment of ILWU hiring hall.

and ILWU-run job dispatch were set up to equalise work opportunities amongst all longshoremen and to maximise pay and benefits at the highest rates. Over the past 60 years, the ILWU bureaucrats have acceded to the division of the workforce into categories (e.g., “steady men,” “A men,” “B men” and casuals), undermining the equal distribution of work. The hiring hall system, when linked to the struggle for equal pay for equal work and equal manning levels at all ports, cuts directly against the shipping and stevedoring companies’ attempts to divide workers, and against layoffs like that at Hutchison.

In Australia, there was a measure of union control over hiring on the docks from the 1940s through to the 1980s. However, beginning in 1989 under the Hawke Labor government’s Waterfront Industry Reform Authority, a deal between the government, unions and stevedoring employers resulted in the loss of thousands of jobs and the weakening of union influence over hiring. This shift to company-based employment was a major loss for wharves [longshoremen]. It served to undercut industry-wide union solidarity, while enhancing the ability of the employers to hire and fire. Currently, on the Australian wharves, the stevedoring companies hold most of the aces. Union control of hiring is a necessary goal, but winning it will take a major class battle.

The current misleaders’ strategy of suiting up in the bourgeois courts and playing by the bosses’ rules can only pave the way for more defeats and a further weakening of the union movement. To take on and beat union-busting attacks, like those levelled by HPA, requires a seriously organised class-struggle fight. At Hutchison this means stopping work with the backup of mass pickets and bans on all ships rerouted from Hutchison Ports to other stevedoring companies until all sacked workers are reinstated at full union wages and conditions. In the face of the company’s automation drive, it is necessary to fight for a shorter work week with no loss in pay. Such a fight points to the need for a political struggle to replace the current Laborite misleaders with a class-struggle leadership of the unions that would reject the servile legalism of the union tops and declare no reliance on the bosses’ courts. The capitalist state—its courts, cops and military—are not some independent arbiter but the repressive apparatus of the capitalist rulers. The job of this state is to enforce, including by violence, exploitative capitalist class rule over the workers and the oppressed.

For Proletarian Internationalism

Waterfront workers internationally have been following the MUA struggle against HPA’s attack on the union. They know that this attack is part of a broader offensive by maritime bosses the world over to smash unions in order to cut labour costs and increase profits. In 2013, the MUA sent a delegation to Hong Kong in solidarity with Hutchison dockworkers who were on strike against their pitiful wages

and inhuman working conditions. After a 40-day struggle, the strikers won a 9.8 percent pay increase. This year, the Hong Kong dockworkers gained a further 5.5 percent pay increase as Hutchison sought to avert further strike action. Reporting on the 2013 stoppage, the MUA revealed that during 12-hour shifts, crane operators were not allowed to leave their cabins, even to use the bathroom. They were given buckets instead! The company had also installed surveillance cameras in the cabins, as well as alarms to harass workers if they slowed down. As one crane operator said, “When you get into that metal cage, there’s no difference between you and a dog.”

These are the conditions that the union-busting stevedoring and shipping con-



March 1971: Australian maritime workers march against the Vietnam War.

glomerates would like on all the seas and ports across the globe. In this, they are ably assisted by reactionary governments such as the Liberal/National Coalition government of Tony Abbott in Australia. Escalating its attacks against the MUA, the Abbott government has prepared legislation to deregulate coastal shipping. If successful, this would mean the loss of hundreds of unionised seamen jobs and the proliferation of so-called “flag of convenience” shipping manned by unorganised and heavily exploited seafarers on starvation wages with little or no rights. Against a “race to the bottom,” it is vitally necessary that maritime unions such as the ILWU and MUA take concrete actions to assist union organising amongst seamen and dockworkers around the world. It is a good thing, for example, that longshoremen at Panama Ports—a subsidiary of Hutchison—recently affiliated to the ILWU, leading to an immediate improvement in their pay and conditions.

The history of the Australian waterfront includes numerous examples of powerful international solidarity actions. Following WWII, as Dutch and Allied imperialists sought to move troops and supplies into Indonesia to shore up Dutch colonial rule, Australian and New Zealand waterfront workers, alongside Chinese, Indian and Indonesian unionists, placed bans on Dutch shipping. Known

as the Black Armada, this boycott was a powerful impetus to the renewed Indonesian independence struggle. Several times, the maritime unions in Australia slapped bans on the transport of war matériel to Vietnam during the U.S./Australian imperialists’ dirty losing war against the Vietnamese workers and peasants. In contrast, the ILWU moved American military cargo throughout the Vietnam War, despite the union’s paper opposition to it.

The consistent and determined proletarian internationalism required to improve the livelihoods of workers in ports across the globe is constantly undermined by the union tops’ protectionist poison. Dripping with Australian nationalism, the MUA’s current campaign—“Our Coast. Our Fuel. Our Security.”—dovetails with their longstanding calls for governments to act against the use of “foreign” products on major projects and against the hiring of overseas workers “at the expense of Australian workers.” Such campaigns by the union misleaders are the road to ruin for the MUA. By promoting the lie that workers in Australia have a common interest with Australian-based corporations and the bourgeois state that defends the Australian capitalist rulers’ interests, the union tops undermine class struggle, including prospects of international labour solidarity, and disarm the union in the face of inevitable future attacks by the capitalist rulers.

In opposition to the anti-China vitriol that frequently accompanies the union tops’ poisonous chauvinism, we Marxists stand for proletarian defence of the 1949 Chinese Revolution, a historic victory against the Chinese capitalists and their imperialist overlords. Despite the revolution being deformed from its inception by the rule of a parasitic, nationalist bureaucratic caste, it resulted in a collectivised economy, which delivered great social

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Karl Marx...

(continued from page 2)

standpoint of development; (3) it regarded the “human essence” in the abstract, not as the “complex of all” (concretely and historically determined) “social relations”, and therefore merely “interpreted” the world, whereas it was a question of “changing” it, i.e., it did not understand the importance of “revolutionary practical activity”.

Dialectics

As the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development, and the richest in content, Hegelian dialectics was considered by Marx and Engels the greatest achievement of classical German philosophy. They thought that any other formulation of the principle of development, of evolution, was one-sided and poor in content, and could only distort and mutilate the actual course of development (which often proceeds by leaps, and *via* catastrophes and revolutions) in Nature and in society. “Marx and I were pretty well the only people to rescue conscious dialectics [from the destruction of idealism, including Hegelianism] and apply it in the materialist conception of Nature.... Nature is the proof of dialectics, and it must be said for modern natural science that it has furnished extremely rich [this was written before the discovery of radium, electrons, the transmutation of elements, etc.!] and daily increasing materials for this test, and has thus proved that in the last analysis Nature’s process is dialectical and not metaphysical.

“The great basic thought,” Engels writes, “that the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready-made things, but as a complex of processes, in which the things apparently stable no less than their mind images in our heads, the concepts, go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away...this great fundamental thought has, especially since the time of Hegel, so thoroughly permeated ordinary consciousness that in this generality it is now scarcely ever contradicted. But to acknowledge this fundamental thought in words and to apply it in reality in detail to each domain of investigation are two different things.... For dialectical philosophy nothing is final, absolute, sacred. It reveals the transitory character of everything and in everything; nothing can endure before it except the uninterrupted process of becoming and of passing away, of endless ascendancy from the lower to the higher. And dialectical philosophy itself is nothing more than the mere reflection of this process in the thinking brain.” Thus, according to Marx, dialectics is “the science of the general laws of motion, both of the external world and of human thought”.

This revolutionary aspect of Hegel’s philosophy was adopted and developed by Marx. Dialectical materialism “does not need any philosophy standing above the other sciences”. From previous philosophy there remains “the science of thought and its laws—formal logic and dialectics”. Dialectics, as understood by Marx, and also in conformity with Hegel, includes what is now called the theory of knowledge, or epistemology, which, too, must regard its subject matter historically,

studying and generalising the origin and development of knowledge, the transition from *non*-knowledge to knowledge.

In our times the idea of development, of evolution, has almost completely penetrated social consciousness, only in other ways, and not through Hegelian philosophy. Still, this idea, as formulated by Marx and Engels on the basis of Hegel’s philosophy, is far more comprehensive and far richer in content than the current idea of evolution is. A development that repeats, as it were, stages that have already been passed, but repeats them in a different way, on a higher basis (“the negation of negation”), a development, so to speak, that proceeds in spirals, not in a straight line; a development by leaps, catastrophes, and revolutions; “breaks in continuity”; the transformation of quantity into quality; inner impulses towards



Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee, 2013. Marx pointed to the development of the productive forces as marking human progress.

development, imparted by the contradiction and conflict of the various forces and tendencies acting on a given body, or within a given phenomenon, or within a given society; the interdependence and the closest and indissoluble connection between *all* aspects of any phenomenon (history constantly revealing ever new aspects), a connection that provides a uniform, and universal process of motion, one that follows definite laws—these are some of the features of dialectics as a doctrine of development that is richer than the conventional one. (Cf. Marx’s letter to Engels of January 8, 1868, in which he ridicules Stein’s “wooden trichotomies”, which it would be absurd to confuse with materialist dialectics.)

The Materialist Conception of History

A realisation of the inconsistency, incompleteness, and one-sidedness of the old materialism convinced Marx of the necessity of “bringing the science of society...into harmony with the materialist foundation, and of reconstructing it thereupon”. Since materialism in general explains consciousness as the outcome of being, and not conversely, then materialism as applied to the social life of mankind has to explain *social* consciousness as the outcome of *social* being. “Technology,” Marx writes (*Capital*, Vol. I), “discloses man’s mode of dealing with Nature,

the immediate process of production by which he sustains his life, and thereby also lays bare the mode of formation of his social relations, and of the mental conceptions that flow from them.” In the preface to his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx gives an integral formulation of the fundamental principles of materialism as applied to human society and its history, in the following words: “In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces.

“The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond

definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become con-

scious of this conflict and fight it out. “Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so we cannot judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social productive forces and the relations of production.... In broad outlines Asiatic, ancient, feudal, and modern bourgeois modes of production can be designated as progressive epochs in the economic formation of society” (cf. Marx’s brief formulation in a letter to Engels dated July 7, 1866: “Our theory that the organisation of labour is determined by the means of production”).

The discovery of the materialist conception of history, or more correctly, the consistent continuation and extension of materialism into the domain of social phenomena, removed the two chief shortcomings in earlier historical theories. In the first place, the latter at best examined only the ideological motives in the historical activities of human beings, without investigating the origins of those motives, or ascertaining the objective laws governing the development of the system of social relations, or seeing the roots of these relations in the degree of development reached by material production; in the second place, the earlier theories did not embrace the activities of the *masses* of the population, whereas historical materialism made it possible for the first time to study with scientific accuracy the social conditions of the life of the masses, and the changes in those conditions. *At best*, pre-Marxist “sociology” and historiography brought forth an accumulation of raw facts, collected at random, and a description of individual aspects of the historical process. By examining the *totality* of opposing tendencies, by reducing them to precisely definable conditions of life and production of the various *classes* of society, by discarding subjectivism and arbitrariness in the choice of a particular “dominant” idea or in its interpretation, and by revealing that, without exception, all ideas and all the various tendencies *stem* from the condition of the material forces of production, Marxism indicated the way to an all-embracing and comprehensive study of the process of the rise, development, and decline of socio-economic systems. People make their own history, but what determines the motives of people, of the mass of people, i.e., what gives rise to the clash of conflicting ideas and strivings? What is the sum total of all these clashes in the mass of human societies? What are the objective conditions of production of material life that form the basis of all of man’s historical activity? What is the law of development of these conditions? To all these Marx drew attention and indicated the way to a scientific study of history as a single process which, with all its immense variety and contradictoriness, is governed by definite laws.

[COMING UP NEXT:
THE CLASS STRUGGLE]

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Meet the Marxists

UCLA, Bunche Hall, Room 2173
Information and readings:
(213) 380-8239 • slsycla@sbcglobal.net

TORONTO

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**The Fraud of Capitalist
Democracy: Elections 2015**

U of T, OISE, Room 4420
252 Bloor St. West
(at St. George subway)
Information and readings:
(416) 593-4138 • spartacan@on.aibn.com

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company would do well to remember the history of brutal profit-gouging by iconic “Australian” companies such as BHP [mining] or CSR [construction materials], or the union-busting conspiracy between the Australian government and the then Australian-owned Patrick Stevedores in 1998. Be they Australia-based or international conglomerates, corporations are in business only to make profit for their shareholders from the sweat and blood of those they employ. The true allies of workers are not the “local” bosses but workers across the country and throughout the world. Workers should be guided by the clarion call put forward by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels more than 160 years ago: *Workers of the world, unite!*

The multiracial working class in this

country and elsewhere need the leadership of proletarian internationalist parties, sections of a reformed Fourth International, to fight for socialist revolutions around the globe. Unlike under capitalism, where automation typically leads to job losses and speedup, under the rule of the working class new technologies will not only serve to increase productivity but allow workers more time to pursue science, the arts or whatever other pursuits take their interest. Free of the grinding exploitation and oppression that define the capitalist-imperialist system, such a society will guarantee that everyone will gain full access to quality training, employment, education, housing and healthcare as part of a truly egalitarian society where the needs of all are fulfilled. ■

Greek Elections: No Vote to Syriza or Popular Unity!

Why We Are Not Giving Critical Support to the Communist Party

The bourgeois Syriza party was swept to power in Greece in the January elections based on its anti-austerity rhetoric. Once in office, the government of Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras caved in again and again to the diktats of the German bankers and the other dominant powers of the European Union (EU). Still, the EU imperialists kept demanding more sacrifices from the Greek people. In a July 5 referendum, Greek voters decisively rejected the latest rapacious “bailout” conditions demanded by the so-called Troika (the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund).



AFP

September 5 protest in Thessaloniki against austerity measures imposed by European Union and accepted by capitalist Syriza government.

Yet one week later, the Syriza-led government thumbed its nose at the referendum results, agreeing to a “Third Memorandum” with the EU

that included measures even harsher than those rejected in the referendum. Although Tsipras received overwhelming parliamentary endorsement of his

rotten deal with Greece’s imperialist masters, dozens of Syriza members of parliament voted against the memorandum or abstained, destabilizing the government. Tsipras then announced his resignation as prime minister, triggering snap elections. We reprint below a September 7 election statement issued by our comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece.

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The Trotskyist Group of Greece stands opposed on principle to any vote for the capitalist Syriza party in the September 20 elections, just as we opposed it in the elections of 2012 and in January of this year. In power, Syriza proved to be exactly what we said before they were elected—committed to the imperialist EU and an enemy of the workers and the oppressed. We also oppose on

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For Workers Struggle Against the EU!

Australia: Longshore Union Under Attack

SYDNEY, September 7—On 6 August, Hutchison Ports Australia (HPA), the Australian branch of the stevedoring conglomerate of Hong Kong tycoon Li Ka-Shing, fired 97 of its 224 workers in Sydney and Brisbane. Under the code name “Phoenix Rising,” HPA had for some time been preparing the ground to renege on manning levels previously agreed with the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA). By not seeking new shipping contracts and by offloading current contracts to other stevedoring companies, HPA reduced the volume of work to create the “need” for redundancies.

In a blatant anti-union attack, the company then targeted MUA militants and safety committee representatives for the sack [firings], according to maritime workers. Reportedly, the company is now aiming to introduce automation with minimal unionisation. If successful, this would lead to speedup and the slashing of safety and other conditions. Indicative of HPA’s fear and contempt for the unionised workforce, the company stationed security guards at its gates to prevent any sacked worker access, even just to clean out their locker.

Picket lines went up the morning after the firings, as maritime workers, other unionists and supporters rallied outside Hutchison Ports terminals. Angry maritime workers in Brisbane briefly occupied the lunch room. In the days that followed, the pickets were visited by many other unionists, leftists, youth and Aboriginal and gay rights activists. In Sydney, the first cargo ship to arrive was sent back out to sea and trucks were turned away by pickets at both Sydney and Brisbane. Hav-



Australasian Spartacist

Port Botany, Sydney, August 9: Picket line of maritime workers and supporters, three days after firings of 97 longshoremen.

ing earlier received solidarity statements from ports around the world, Hutchison workers defied orders by the government’s union-busting Fair Work Commission to return to work.

While the MUA leadership supported the pickets, at the same time they undermined the elementary defensive actions of

port workers. Committed to obeying the letter of every anti-union law rather than to waging class struggle, they handed the fate of the fired workers over to the bosses’ courts by seeking a federal court injunction to stop the sackings. The union tops directed unionists at DP World and Patrick Stevedores to unload ships diverted

from Hutchison. Sowing defeatism among the ranks, they did not demand the reinstatement of all workers but merely condemned the company for not negotiating with the MUA about the firings! On 11 August, MUA national secretary Paddy Crumlin, mired in legalism, denied any MUA involvement in establishing pickets, referring to them as a “response from the community.”

Two days later, when the federal court granted a temporary injunction against the firings, the MUA tops hailed the ruling as “basic justice.” As a “gesture of good faith,” the MUA leadership directed HPA workers back to work without any guarantee that the sacked workers would be reinstated. Hutchison’s cranes are now operating while the sacked workers, temporarily paid at the base rate, are not allowed through the gates. After sending workers back, the union tops then set up a meeting with Hutchison’s management to “find a long-term solution which benefits both the company and its workers.”

Pushing such fantasies is standard fare for the class-collaborationist union tops, who energetically promote the *lie* that there can be a successful partnership between labour and capital to the benefit of both. Capitalist society is riven between two main contending classes. The interests of workers, who are forced to sell their labour power to survive, and those of the bosses, who grow fat profiting from that labour power, are irreconcilably opposed. The strength of the working class lies in its numbers and organisation and above all in the fact that its labour

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