

Blood, Sweat and Tiers

Auto Workers Oppose Sellout Contract

SEPTEMBER 28—As we go to press, members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) are voting in large numbers against the rotten contract that union officials worked out with Fiat Chrysler. Workers are rightly furious at the union tops for their broken promises, chiefly

to get rid of the hated two-tier wage system, a blatant affront to the basic union principle of equal pay for equal work. UAW head Dennis Williams and his negotiating team not only failed to (in his words) “bridge the gap,” but bent over backward to accommodate man-

agement, abandoning the expected 25 percent cap on second-tier workers and introducing third and fourth tiers for Mopar parts workers and axle operators. As one worker at Detroit’s Mack Avenue Engine Complex said to the *Detroit Free Press*, “They promised to get rid of

the two tier system and they did just the opposite and created a bunch of tiers.”

Defiant UAW members should throw the contract back in the faces of the union bureaucrats and prepare for a fight for higher wages, good benefits and an end to tiers. Many workers, wanting to get something back for the sacrifices foisted on them in recent years, especially as part of the 2009 bailout of the auto bosses, have shown a willingness to bring their social power to bear by shutting down production. As the clock ticked down to the expiration of the contract at midnight on September 14, many workers were itching to walk out; when the clock struck twelve, UAW members at one parts plant in California reportedly downed tools, only to be told the contract had been extended. In the lead-up to the contract vote at the Fiat

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U.S. Colonialism Chokes Puerto Rico Cancel the Debt!



WV Photo

San Juan, September 11: Thousands of public-sector workers demonstrate against further austerity intended to make working people pay for colony's debt crisis.

After declaring Puerto Rico to be in a “death spiral” of unpayable debt totaling \$72 billion, Governor Alejandro García Padilla on September 9 unveiled a five-year economic plan that amounts to more misery and crippling austerity for the Puerto Rican masses. Already this year, Puerto Ricans have been hit with a sales tax increase (from 7 to 11.5 percent), strict water rationing, school closures and rising costs for gas and utilities, while the profit-hungry U.S. creditors and bankers demanded interest payments on their loans in full. Like a nail in the coffin, Padilla’s “Fiscal and Economic Growth Plan” is an all-sided assault on health care, education, union

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rights and the overall standard of living.

Puerto Rico’s current debt crisis is a direct consequence of U.S. colonial domination. For the last 117 years, the U.S. rulers have pillaged and exploited the island’s land and labor—from the early sugar barons who did away with the coffee, tobacco and fruit harvests in order to use the colony as an oversized plantation, to the post-World War II capitalists who transformed it into a cheap-labor manufacturing base for American corporations. For the last several decades, U.S.

businesses have benefited from a litany of tax breaks, while Puerto Rico was forced to borrow from speculators to build local infrastructure and cover the costs of pensions and social services. By the time of the global financial crisis that began in 2007-08, Puerto Rico was already in a deep recession, and the government was unable to repay the bonds it had issued. Wall Street predators and hedge fund vultures soon swooped in to buy up the devalued bonds on the cheap and cash in on Puerto Rican debt.

With an economy tied to the U.S. dollar and the island governed by laws dictated by the U.S. Congress, Puerto Rico has virtually no room to maneuver around the junta of bankers and colonialists who call the shots. The American overlords control the territory’s currency, foreign relations, banks, communications, trade relations and shipping. There have been a number of protests against the threatened austerity measures, including on September 11 when WV and *Espartaco* salesmen attended a rally in San Juan of thousands of public-sector workers and others against Padilla’s plan. Workers in the U.S., squeezed and exploited by the same capitalist ruling class that is choking the Puerto Rican masses, have a clear interest as well in opposing the debt peonage of America’s largest colony. What is needed is joint class struggle by workers on the mainland and the island to halt the

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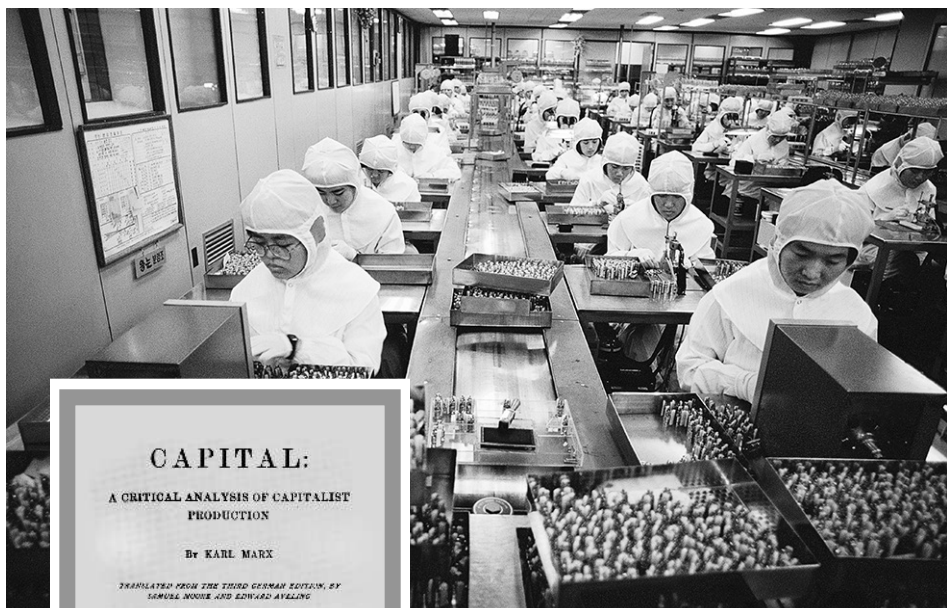
“Karl Marx” by V.I. Lenin

We print below the third installment of “Karl Marx” by Lenin. The first two parts, which gave a sketch of Marx’s life and an overview of historical materialism, were published in WV Nos. 1073 and 1074 (4 September and 18 September). This selection addresses the motor force of history—the struggle between the classes—and also introduces Marx’s economic doctrine. Future installments will take up what socialism is as well as tactics to prepare the proletariat for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

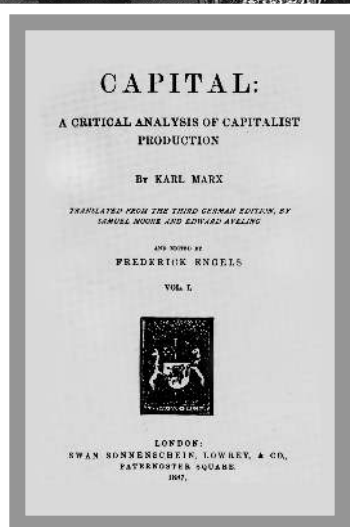
PART THREE

The Class Struggle

It is common knowledge that, in any given society, the strivings of some of its members conflict with the strivings of others, that social life is full of contradictions, and that history reveals a struggle between nations and societies, as well as within nations and societies, and, besides, an alternation of periods of revolution and reaction, peace and war, stagnation and rapid progress or decline. Marxism has provided the guidance, i.e., the theory of the class struggle, for the discovery of the laws governing this seeming maze and chaos. It is only a study of the sum of the strivings of all the members of a given society or group of societies that can lead to a scientific definition of the result of those strivings. Now the conflicting strivings stem from the difference in the position and mode of life of the *classes* into which each society is divided. “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles,” Marx wrote in the *Communist Manifesto* (with the exception of the history of the primitive community, Engels added subsequently). “Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.... The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.” Ever since the Great French Revolution, European history has, in a number of countries,



Corbis



Electronics assembly plant, South Korea. As Marx explained in *Capital*, the aim of capitalist production is “to exploit labour power to the greatest possible extent. As the number of the co-operating labourers increases, so too does their resistance to the domination of capital.”

tellingly revealed what actually lies at the bottom of events—the struggle of classes. The Restoration period in France already produced a number of historians ([Augustin] Thierry, [François] Guizot, [François] Mignet, and [Adolphe] Thiers) who, in summing up what was taking place, were obliged to admit that the class struggle was the key to all French history. The modern period—that of the complete victory of the bourgeoisie, representative institutions, extensive (if not universal) suffrage, a cheap daily press, that is widely circulated among the masses, etc., a period of powerful and ever-expanding unions of workers and unions of employers, etc.—has shown even more strikingly (though sometimes in a very one-sided, “peaceful,” and “constitutional” form) the class struggle as the mainspring of events. The following passage from Marx’s *Communist Manifesto* will show us what Marx demanded of social science as regards an objective analysis of the position of each class in modern society, with reference to an analysis of each class’s conditions of development: “Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product. The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save

from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat; they thus defend not their present, but their future interests; they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat.” In a number of historical works (see *Bibliography*), Marx gave brilliant and profound examples of materialist historiography, of an analysis of the position of *each* individual class, and sometimes of various groups or strata within a class, showing plainly why and how “every class struggle is a political struggle.” The above-quoted passage is an illustration of what a complex network of social relations and *transitional* stages from one class to another, from the past to the future, was analysed by Marx so as to determine the

resultant of historical development.

Marx’s economic doctrine is the most profound, comprehensive and detailed confirmation and application of his theory.

Marx’s Economic Doctrine

“It is the ultimate aim of this work to lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society,” i.e., capitalist, bourgeois society, says Marx in the preface to *Capital*. An investigation into the relations of production in a given, historically defined society, in their inception, development, and decline—such is the content of Marx’s economic doctrine. In capitalist society the production of *commodities* is predominant, and Marx’s analysis therefore begins with an analysis of commodity.

Value

A commodity is, in the first place, a thing that satisfies a human want; in the second place, it is a thing that can be exchanged for another thing. The utility of a thing makes it a *use-value*. Exchange-value (or simply, value) is first of all the ratio, the proportion, in which a certain number of use-values of one kind can be exchanged for a certain number of use-values of another kind. Daily experience shows us that millions upon millions of such exchanges are constantly equating with one another every kind of use-value, even the most diverse and incomparable. Now, what is there in common between these various things, things constantly equated with one another in a definite system of social relations? Their common feature is that they are *products of labour*. In exchanging products, people equate the most diverse kinds of labour. The production of commodities is a system of social relations in which individual producers create diverse products (the social division of labour), and in which all these products are equated to one another in the process of exchange. Consequently, what is common to all commodities is not the concrete labour of a definite branch of production, not labour of one particular kind, but *abstract* human labour—human labour in general. All the labour power of

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Enough Papal Bull

As a counter to the media circus around the purported people’s pope, we provide a quote by Leon Trotsky:

“But best of all is the papal blessing broadcast to Lourdes by—radio. The paltry miracles of the Gospels side by side with the radiotelephone! And what could be more absurd and disgusting than the union of proud technology with the sorcery of the Roman chief druid? Indeed, the thinking of mankind is bogged down in its own excrement.”

—*Diary in Exile* (1935)

(This box is based on one that appeared in WV No. 241 [12 October 1979] during the visit of a previous pontiff.)



WV Photo

Popezilla stalks NYC.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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Mumia's Life in Danger

Court Blocks Medical Treatment— Free Him Now!

On September 18, federal magistrate judge Karoline Mehalchick issued a recommendation that the district court deny the urgent medical treatment requested by Mumia Abu-Jamal, America's foremost class-war prisoner. Mumia has been gravely ill since March, when he was rushed to the hospital on the verge of a diabetic coma. For months prior, he suffered debilitating skin rashes over 70 percent of his body. Ever since, prison officials have resisted Mumia's efforts to obtain adequate medical treatment—including testing for obvious underlying conditions. Mumia had tested positive for the hepatitis C antibody over three years ago, but nothing was done to determine whether the infection was active. When blood tests were finally performed in July, they revealed a diagnosis of active hepatitis C, a condition that can be fatal if not treated, but prison officials continue to deny him the necessary care.

The capitalist state has targeted Mumia since his teenage years in the 1960s, when he was a spokesman for the Black Panther Party. In the 1970s, Mumia worked as a journalist in Philadelphia, where he was known as the “voice of the voiceless” and exposed the racist Philly police vendetta against MOVE, the largely black back-to-nature group he came to support. Mumia was framed up for the 1981 killing of a Philadelphia police officer, Daniel Faulkner. Police and prosecutors manufactured evidence to convict him, including by terrorizing witnesses and concocting a fake confession two months after his arrest. Following a 1982 trial, Mumia was sentenced to death explicitly for his political views. The courts have time and again refused to consider evidence proving Mumia's innocence, including the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed Faulkner. In 2011, the Philadelphia district attorney's office dropped its longstanding effort to legally lynch Mumia, instead condemning him to the “slow death row” of life without parole.

In the recommendation, Mehalchick declared with stunning cruelty that Mumia will not be “irreparably harmed” by withholding treatment. She further stated



freemumia.com

Mumia and wife Wadiya in April.

that the interests of the Department of Corrections would be damaged because ordering the treatment Mumia has requested would deny his jailers “an opportunity to treat Abu-Jamal's hepatitis C in accordance with their own established protocols.” But as prison staff told Mumia in July, *they have no protocol for treating hepatitis C!*

According to the judge, immediate treatment is not

warranted, “especially given the fact that it often takes significant time for hepatitis C to progress.” In Mumia's case, the disease has already progressed: tests performed over the last several months have revealed “significant fibrosis” (scarring) and deteriorated function of the liver. Other long-term effects of the disease, some of which Abu-Jamal has already experienced, include skin sores, inflammation of the kidneys and type 2 diabetes. He has also reportedly lost 25 pounds in recent months and is confined to the SCI Mahanoy prison infirmary. The state seems intent to allow the disease to “progress” until Mumia is dead.

Medical neglect of those incarcerated in America's dungeons is widespread. One in six prison inmates is infected with hepatitis C. Although a drug regimen approved by the Food and Drug Administration has a success rate of 95 percent, prison officials are reluctant to shell out for the costly drugs. This grotesque treatment of prisoners is exacerbated many times over for those, like Mumia, locked away for fighting against this racist capitalist order.

The Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, has long fought for his freedom. Key to Mumia's defense is the support of organized labor. Unions including the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10, the Oakland Education Association, the New York Metro Area Postal Union and the National Writers Union have recently issued statements demanding that Mumia be given the medical treatment he desperately needs.

In a September 16 letter to the Pennsylvania Secretary of Corrections, the PDC declared: “As this is a matter of life and death, we demand that Mumia Abu-Jamal be released immediately so that he can secure appropriate treatment.” We urge union militants, fighters for black freedom and student activists to demand freedom now for Mumia Abu-Jamal. Send letters of protest to Secretary John Wetzel, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, 1920 Technology Parkway, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050. ■

Letter

On China, Vietnam and Nationalism

Brooklyn, NY
20 June 2015

Dear WV:

While I agree with most of the “facts” you present in your June 12 article (“Defend China Against U.S. Military Provocations!” [WV No. 1070]), I find it a bit short-sighted historically. Quite aside from whether or not China and Vietnam are “workers’ states”, history has shown (and you will agree) since 1945 that “workers’ states” are generally quite incapable of transcending their interests as nation-states. This was clear in the lack of cooperation among the Comecon states before 1989, and it is clear today in what you call the “treacherous alliances” China and Vietnam have made over the years with the U.S. imperialists. Vietnam's hostility to China did not begin in the 20th century, but is based on 1000 years of dealing with different phases of Chinese aggression and occupation under various modes of production. You recall Ho Chi Minh's remark in 1945 (I quote from memory), when he agreed to British and French troops (but not the armies of the Kuomintang) occupying Vietnam and returning Indochina to French colonialism: (and this while he was overseeing the massacre of the Trotskyists who opposed this policy): “The British and

French will return, and then they will leave. Otherwise we will have our faces in Chinese shit for much longer.” What the Vietnamese call the “American war” (1954-1975) is largely forgotten there, but the much older historical enmity towards China is not. As a forgotten “statesman” once said, “countries have no friends, only interests.”

Loren Goldner

WV replies:

The social overturns that took place in East and Central Europe, China, North Korea and later Vietnam, Cuba and Laos swept away capitalist rule, creating workers states that Trotskyists have always defended unconditionally against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. But to Loren Goldner, the class character of such countries is irrelevant, based on his claim that since 1945 “history has shown” that they are “incapable of transcending their interests as nation-states.” His arguments partake of standard bourgeois ideology in this era of the so-called “death of communism,” projecting that any fight for social revolution is futile.

Goldner presents national antagonisms as eternal and immutable. History shows the contrary. In the 1917 October Revolution, the Bolshevik Party under V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky led the proletariat to



Foreign Languages Press

Beijing: Chinese People's Liberation Army soldiers at mass rally to oppose the U.S. war against Vietnam.

power in Russia, building a workers state comprising myriad nations and ethnic minorities that had been brutally oppressed in the tsarist “prison house of peoples.” The Bolsheviks went on to found the Communist International in 1919 in order to forge revolutionary parties to lead the fight for a world socialist order. Unlike early Soviet Russia, the workers states established after 1945 were deformed from the outset, ruled by nationalist bureaucracies patterned after the Stalinist regime that usurped political power in the USSR beginning in 1923-24. Yet despite bureaucratic rule and unable to overcome material scarcity, these revolutions were historic gains for workers and the oppressed. In Tito's Yugoslavia, for example, Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Bos-

nians and others lived peacefully until a wave of counterrevolution in East Europe touched off nationalist conflicts in Yugoslavia and destroyed that workers state. Our defense of the deformed workers states includes a perspective of proletarian political revolutions to oust the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies and install regimes of workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism. The construction of a global communist society, which crucially requires socialist revolution in the most advanced industrial countries, will lead to the disappearance of borders and national distinctions.

Renouncing this perspective, the Chinese, Vietnamese and other Stalinist

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The mass of the Greek population is being ground under the heel of the imperialist-dominated European Union (EU). Over the last five years, harsh austerity measures dictated by the EU masters and enforced by their lackeys in the Greek capitalist government, currently represented by the misnamed Coalition of the Radical Left (Syriza), have slashed wages to the bone, destroyed jobs (leaving over half of all youth unemployed), starved pensioners and devastated the economy. With the “Troika”—the European Commission, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund—demanding even more savage cuts, over 60 percent of the Greek population voted “no” to accepting the imperialists’ diktats in a July 5 referendum.

Opposition to the EU and the euro is fundamental to the defense of the working class and oppressed. The EU is a consortium of capitalist powers whose purpose is the increasing subjugation of the working class throughout Europe and the domination of the weaker EU countries by the imperialist overlords, for which the euro is an instrument. As our comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece argued in a statement titled “In the Referendum We Say: Vote NO! Down With the EU! No Support to the Syriza Government!”:

“A ‘yes’ vote would be a victory for the imperialist rulers and the Greek bourgeoisie and a terrible defeat for the working people of Greece and throughout Europe. It would be used by the EU to further devastate conditions of life for millions. A ‘no’ vote would help rally the working people in Greece and throughout Europe against the EU capitalists and their blood-sucking banks.”

We of the International Communist League seek to foster common class struggle of workers internationally, in this case especially in the imperialist centers of Germany, France and Britain, against the capitalist exploiters.

In contrast, the Internationalist Group (IG) argued that there was no choice for Greek workers in this referendum. While allowing that a “yes” vote “would mean abject surrender to the Brussels bureaucrats, Frankfurt bankers and vicious Berlin politicians,” the IG argued that a “no” vote was nothing but “a vote to politically support the Syriza government” headed by Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras (“Defeat the Bankers’ Diktat, Occupy the Banks and Ports!” internationalist.org, July 2015). But the question posed in the referendum was not “for or against” the bourgeois-populist Syriza government; it was “for or against” the Troika’s vicious austerity program. To have opposed taking a side on this straightforward question was nothing less than a betrayal, a capitulation to the EU imperialists, centrally the Fourth Reich of German imperialism, which holds the whip hand in Europe.

For all its hot air urging the Greek workers to occupy the banks and the ports, the IG’s neutrality in the referendum ran counter to the class interests of the Greek proletariat, the mass of whom voted “no” as a statement of defiance of the EU. Congratulating itself for resisting “the pressure of mass sentiment,” the IG proclaimed that the Syriza government’s surrender to the EU demands in the after-

IG on Greece: Bridge to Fourth Reich

math of the referendum “validates our refusal to call for a ‘no’ vote” (“The Naked Rule of Finance Capital,” internationalist.org, July 2015).

On the contrary, had the “yes” vote won, the EU and Syriza would have been delivered a *mandate* to impose even greater devastation on the working class. Instead, the resounding “no” vote and Syriza’s capitulation to the Troika served to expose Tsipras & Co. as the craven bootlickers of the EU imperialists that they are. The IG can’t even get its story straight. Despite arguing that to vote “no” was to “politically support the Syriza government,” they wrote following the refer-

ence has been the position of our international organization, the International Communist League (and its predecessor the international Spartacist tendency) from the beginning. Not so the IG, which from the beginning of Greece’s debt bondage to the EU has argued against its breaking from the EU and euro. As the IG wrote in a December 2010 article titled “Greece on the Razor’s Edge”: “To call for Greece [sic] to exit the EU and drop the euro in favor of the drachma” is “a *bourgeois nationalist* demand, with negative consequences for Greek workers.”

There are some bourgeois spokesmen and economists who promote “Grexit” as



Bösebrücke bridge, Berlin: German chancellor Angela Merkel at November 2009 celebration of capitalist counterrevolution in East Germany. Internationalist Group’s call for abstention on Merkel’s austerity diktats was capitulation to imperialist EU.

endum that the overwhelming victory of the “no” vote was a “humiliating defeat” for Syriza. Although Syriza was re-elected last month, the voter turnout was the lowest in decades, speaking to widespread disaffection following the sellout by that bourgeois party, which has falsely been seen by many workers as resisting the ravages of the EU.

The IG on the EU: No Exit

The IG argues, “Unlike Euroleftists like SYRIZA, authentic Trotskyists have opposed the imperialist European Union from the beginning.” Leaving aside that Syriza is a bourgeois party, it is indeed true that authentic Trotskyists have always, and on principle, opposed the EU. That

the best way to preserve capitalist profits. Our purpose in calling for Greece out of the EU and euro proceeds from an entirely different standpoint: what is in the best interests of our class, the proletariat. As we argued in “Greece: For Workers Struggle Against EU Starvation Diktat” (WV No. 1072, 7 August):

“Repudiating the debt and leaving the EU would of course not end the exploitation of the working class by the Greek capitalists, nor would it free this dependent country from the ravages of the global imperialist system. However, it would create more favorable conditions for the working class to struggle in its own interests. Moreover, Greek exit from the EU would undermine that entire imperialist-dominated bloc. What is needed is a Socialist United States of Europe!”

IG Smear Job

The Internationalist Group (IG) recently issued a new, lengthy work of fiction titled “Document of the First National Conference of the Internationalist Group” (*The Internationalist*, June 2015), tellingly held two decades (!) after the IG’s founding by former Spartacists who defected from Trotskyism. Buried in the bombast is the smear that the Spartacist League showed “sneering racism” against immigrant members of the IG. No evidence for this complete fabrication could possibly be offered, and none is. It is pure provocation to be peddled among Third World

nationalists, reformist leftists and who knows what other opponents of revolutionary Marxism. In short, the big lie provides a cynical justification for our political exclusion and a set-up for violence against us.

It’s not the first time the IG demagogues have attempted this kind of provocation. For example, at immigrant rights demonstrations in New York City in 2002, their members screamed that our comrades were “anti-Latino chauvinists.” The purported “proof” of this slander was our article “South Chicago: Snapshots of Latino and Black Life”

(WV No. 786, 6 September 2002)—an article devoted to combating anti-black racism among Latino immigrants and anti-immigrant bigotry among black workers. According to the IG, it was “chauvinism” to acknowledge the existence of anti-black racism among Latinos. Now, in the same document that smears us as racist, they brag about their members “working to defuse tensions between Latino and African American workers.” So much for the IG’s empty charges!

It is an illustration of the IG’s political bankruptcy that they resort to demagoguery and outright falsification. And their transparent lie about us poses the question: why should their own members, much less anyone else, believe them about anything?

Amplifying its earlier theme of Grexit’s “negative consequences,” the IG echoed the EU imperialists’ scaremongering campaign in the lead-up to the Greek referendum. Presenting its own “apocalypse now” scenario, the IG argued that leaving the EU would mean “austerity with a vengeance” and conditions even worse than the devastation that has been wrought by the EU and the Greek bourgeoisie. They argue that there is no way out of debt peonage for the Greek working class and oppressed short of a Europe-wide workers revolution.

At a recent IG forum in Mexico, given by its *líder máximo* Jan Norden, a comrade from our Mexican section, the Grupo Espartaquista de México, exposed the IG’s counterposition of socialist revolution to a Grexit as empty radical bombast covering for a position that is at best defeatist if not outright reactionary. Noting that Greece has even less national sovereignty today than neocolonial Mexico, he asked if the IG was opposed to Mexico breaking from the 1994 NAFTA treaty that ushered in that country’s wholesale “free trade rape” by U.S. imperialism. Our comrade added: Did Norden counsel that short of working-class revolution the Mexican workers and peasants must endure NAFTA’s devastation?

In the past, the IG has attempted to square the circle by describing Greece as part of the imperialist club, writing: “Along with the Greek tanker and freighter fleet, Greece’s banks are key to its status as a second-rate imperialist power, financially dominating the southern Balkans and with strong positions in the Near East” (internationalist.org, July 2011). Recent events have made a mockery of such ludicrous alibis for the actual imperialists who have trampled on Greece’s sovereignty. Far from being financial heavyweights, the Greek banks were forced to close for three weeks in July while the Troika haggled over loans and debt payments.

In stoking fear over Greece leaving the euro, the IG howls against our pointing to Argentina, whose economy recovered from bankruptcy in 2001 by decoupling its currency from the U.S. dollar. Are we to presume that they consider being tied to the Yankee dollar a better alternative? A country’s control over its currency is an elementary prerequisite for national sovereignty. Yet the IG argues that our use of the example of Argentina puts us “in the business of offering advice on how to handle the capitalist crisis within the framework of capitalism.”

To the contrary. The Greek bourgeoisie has lined its own pockets as the loyal servants of the EU. Grexit would set the stage for further exposing these predators for what they are: like the imperialists, the class enemy of the Greek workers. It would help break workers from Greek nationalism, the lie that the workers and their “own” exploiters have a common interest. This same lie is pushed by the fascist Golden Dawn and other reactionary forces, which currently posture as defenders of the Greek “nation” against the imperialist EU. For purported proletarian revolutionaries in the imperialist centers to argue that it would be a catastrophe if Greece were to break from its subjugation to the EU is nothing short of chauvinism and an acceptance of Greece’s debt bondage to the EU.

For Workers Action Committees!

The resounding “no” vote in the July 5 Greek referendum destabilized the parliamentary order in that country, providing an opening for the working class to come forward in struggle. On the other side stand the Golden Dawn fascists who, especially in the absence of such struggle, seek to take advantage of Syriza’s sellout to its EU masters through appeals to the ruined petty bourgeoisie and masses of unemployed youth. Ominously, Golden Dawn placed third in the September 20 elections with nearly half a million votes.

Seeking to strike a flint to ignite proletarian struggle, our comrades of the TGG issued a call for workers action committees “composed of workers from different tendencies and their allies—youth,

unemployed, immigrants, pensioners” to fight to repudiate the EU and euro and to struggle “toward a government which will act in the interests of the working people and be subordinated to them.” Our call sought to mobilize workers around such demands as cancel the debt; for workers defense guards against the fascist threat; and for workers control of food distribution and prices (see “Enough!” WV No. 1072, 7 August). Sneering that the TGG’s call did not include demands for a revolutionary party or a revolutionary workers government, the IG derided it as a “parody” of Trotsky’s Transitional Program (“The ICL on Greece,” internationalist.org, August 2015).

In fact, our call drew on Trotsky’s appeal for committees of action in France in 1935, while recognizing the differences between the periods. Trotsky’s call was issued amid an acute social crisis, a year after fascist gangs had attacked the parliament. Massive strike waves and protests demonstrated the proletariat’s readiness to fight. But it was being held in check by the reformist social democrats and class-collaborationist “People’s Front” policies of the Stalinists. Calling for building committees of action, Trotsky argued:

“Committees of action at their present stage have as their task to unite the toiling masses of France in a defensive struggle and thus imbue these masses with the consciousness of their own power for the coming offensive.... Such tasks as the creation of a *workers’ militia*, the *arming of the workers*, the preparation of a *general strike*, will remain on paper if the struggling masses themselves through their authoritative organs do not occupy themselves with these tasks.... Only committees of action embracing the most important centers of the country will be able to choose the moment for the transition to more decisive methods of struggle, the leadership of which will be rightly theirs.”

—“For Committees of Action,
Not the People’s Front!”
26 November 1935

The very notion of defensive struggle as outlined by Trotsky is anathema to the “revolutionary offensive” blowhards in the IG. They deride our call for work-



Athens, July 3: Massive demonstration opposing EU austerity. For IG, “no” vote in referendum was simply “vote of confidence” for Syriza government.

ers committees of action as “*a classic ‘minimum program’*” like those raised by the Stalinists and social democrats for struggle *within the bounds of capitalism*, aiming to attract reformists with demands they can all agree on.” The idea that the demands raised by the TGG—which also included calls to expropriate the banks, utilities, transportation, ports and shipping industry and for jobs for all through a shorter workweek at no loss in pay—are realizable “within the bounds of capitalism” would seem to say more about the IG’s own illusions in capitalist class rule.

Cut of the same cloth is the IG’s appraisal of our call for workers action committees to mobilize the proletariat and its allies in the struggle “toward a government which will act in the interests of the working people and be subordinated to them.” The IG finds this to be “an elastic call for what could amount to ‘left-wing’ *bourgeois* governments.” In fact, as our call stressed, “This battle cannot be won within a parliamentary framework.” The idea that a bourgeois government of any stripe could be subordinated to the interests of the working class reveals rather more about the IG’s “elastic” understanding of which class rules.

Like Trotsky’s call for “committees of action,” the TGG’s call for workers action committees was an application of the tactic of the united front. Appealing for workers from different tendencies to join such committees was an attempt to use our small forces as a lever for broader, and yes at this stage, defensive struggle by the proletariat and its allies. Taking part in such struggle is not conditional on agreeing with the need for a revolutionary workers party or the dictatorship of the proletariat. If formed, such committees would be arenas for vital debates on the way forward involving the different parties that claim to represent the workers’ interests and for the fight for revolutionary leadership, that is, a proletarian internationalist perspective and party.

In contrast, the IG presents the fight for proletarian power—presumably with Norden as “commander-in-chief” or, perhaps, the ghost of the late Michel Pablo—as immediately on the agenda, not only in Greece but throughout Europe. Sounds really r.r.revolutionary, but it isn’t. In fact, the IG seems to be trying to make time with the Stalinists of the Greek Communist Party (KKE), whom they congrat-

ulate for also opposing a “no” vote in the July 5 referendum. Not so long ago, they opposed the KKE’s calls to repudiate the debt and leave the eurozone as an example of its “left nationalism.” Now, the IG opportunistically salutes the virtues of the reformist, populist KKE for dropping its opposition to the EU and the euro in the referendum.

For our part, the TGG gave critical support to the KKE in the 2012 and January 2015 elections *because* it stood in opposition to the EU and to all of the parties, including Syriza, which defended the continuing EU subjugation of Greece. At the same time, we denounced the KKE’s pandering to Greek nationalism as a central obstacle to building a proletarian, revolutionary, internationalist party in Greece and its refusal to mobilize its considerable forces in the working class against the Golden Dawn fascists. In the most recent Greek elections, our comrades argued that until and unless the KKE repudiated its opposition to voting “no” in the July referendum, the TGG would not call for a vote to it.

From the confines of their New York City apartments, the IG demands that a working class devastated by the relentless blows of the EU and the Greek bourgeoisie immediately take up the fight for its own class power. In contrast, our purpose is not phony agitation but the struggle to arm the workers with the consciousness, confidence and fighting spirit to wage real combat against the capitalist class enemy. The forces of our Greek section are small, but they have nonetheless fought to address the burning needs of the workers and oppressed and provide them with a revolutionary direction in opposition to their current misleaders.

The IG sneers that the TGG’s call for workers action committees is “A Bridge to Nowhere.” The truth is that a self-proclaimed revolutionary Trotskyist organization that can’t even call for a vote against the diktats of the EU is on a bridge to the Fourth Reich of German imperialism. ■

Letter...

(continued from page 3)

regimes preach the nationalist lie that socialism—a classless society based on material abundance—can be built in a single country. Introduced by Stalin in late 1924, this profoundly anti-Marxist dogma expressed the narrow interests of the privileged caste he represented. The natural corollary of this revisionism is seeking “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism—a program that has led to the betrayal of numerous opportunities for proletarian revolution around the world, undermining the workers states themselves.

However, there is a contradiction between the nationalism inherent in Stalinist ideology and the proletarian nature of the states ruled by such bureaucracies. Deriving their privileges from collectivized property, the Stalinist ruling castes are at times forced to defend those property forms against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution, including by giving economic and military aid to other workers states. The example of COMECON (the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance), a trade bloc of the USSR and several deformed workers states primarily in East and Central Europe, refutes Loren’s argument. COMECON’s most important component was the exchange of Soviet oil and natural resources—at less than world market prices—for manufactured goods. Moscow was willing to pay economically to support other COMECON states as buffers against imperialism, in the process helping to spur industrialization and higher living standards in those countries, some of which were better off than the Soviet Union.

The economic relations between the COMECON countries were a far cry from an international planned economy. In “Economic Nationalism Fractures COMECON” (WV No. 495, 9 February 1990), we noted that the bloc’s policies were severely dis-

torted by Stalinist nationalism. Nevertheless, COMECON’s experience stands in stark contrast with that of capitalist trade blocs like the European Union and NAFTA, which serve to enrich the stronger, imperialist powers (e.g., Germany and the U.S.) at the expense of weaker, dependent countries (e.g., Greece and Mexico).

To try to bolster his case, Goldner recalls a quote, which may well be apocryphal, ascribed to Ho Chi Minh. His intent is to show the Vietnamese Stalinists’ supposedly everlasting antagonism toward China. In fact, his citing this anecdote underscores that he sees no difference between a bourgeois state and a workers state. The quote refers to the *bourgeois* Guomindang regime, whose murderous rule over China would soon collapse as Chiang Kai-shek and his cohorts fled to Taiwan before the advancing People’s Liberation Army. Far from there being a timeless national antagonism, after taking power in 1949 Mao Zedong’s Chinese Communist Party (CCP) initially provided a great deal of military assistance to the Vietnamese Stalinists.

This did not mean that Mao’s regime had broken from Stalinist treachery. In 1954, Ho’s Viet Minh expelled the French colonialists and overthrew bourgeois rule, creating a deformed workers state in North Vietnam. That same year, the Chinese (and Soviet) Stalinists pressured Ho to agree to the division of Vietnam, thus maintaining capitalism in the South. Later, the Maoist regime turned its back on North Vietnam, mainly due to the bitter split between the Moscow and Beijing bureaucracies. This came to a head at the height of the Vietnam War, as China forged an anti-Soviet alliance with U.S. imperialism. Warning of just such a development, in 1969 we raised the call for Communist unity against imperialism, declaring that this urgent need demanded a fight for political revolution from Moscow and Beijing to Hanoi. The U.S.-China pact was sealed by Mao’s welcoming Richard Nixon to Bei-

jing in 1972 as American bombs rained down on Vietnam.

The ludicrous assertion that the war is “largely forgotten” in Vietnam amounts to a breathtakingly false whitewash of the crimes of U.S. imperialism. By some estimates, over 3 million Vietnamese were killed in the “American War.” This April 30, the Vietnamese celebrated the 40th anniversary of the workers’ and peasants’ heroic victory over the U.S., through which South and North Vietnam were reunited as a workers state. The war is commemorated in monuments and museums throughout the country, such as the War Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh City. The fact that some 15 percent of Vietnam is still littered by unexploded ordnance (largely from U.S. cluster bombs) makes the war impossible to forget. We condemn the Vietnamese rulers’ attempts in recent years to align with U.S. imperialism against China over disputes in the South China Sea. As we warned in

the article Loren cites, this rapprochement is a deadly danger to both the Chinese and Vietnamese workers states.

The unrelenting military and economic pressure exerted by the imperialists, compounded by decades of Stalinist misrule, ultimately spelled the end of the Soviet Union as well as the DDR (East Germany) and the other deformed workers states in Europe. Defense of the remaining workers states is a central task for revolutionary Marxists fighting to eradicate capitalist exploitation and oppression from the planet. This is the perspective of the International Communist League as we fight to reforge the Fourth International, founded by Leon Trotsky and his followers in 1938 to carry on the program of the October Revolution. In this effort, we find some inspiration in the young Ho Chi Minh, who took up the banner of the October Revolution while in Paris and then helped plant it in China in the early 1920s as a Comintern militant. ■

Reply to the Guardian

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Puerto Rico...

(continued from page 1)

rulers’ vicious attacks, beginning with the demand: *Cancel the debt!*

With talk of a looming default, bourgeois politicians have been debating what legal framework to set up in order to renegotiate the debt while forcing austerity down the throats of the Puerto Rican masses. When the Puerto Rican government attempted to enact a bankruptcy law for the island, U.S. federal courts declared the proposal unconstitutional. New York governor Andrew Cuomo and others have called to extend Chapter 9 bankruptcy law to Puerto Rico’s municipalities. To see what that would mean, just look at bankrupted Detroit. Under that city’s financial restructuring plan, backed by the Obama administration, municipal workers’ pensions were looted and social services slashed. Meanwhile, under Governor Padilla’s September 9 plan, a financial control board would oversee the implementation of draconian measures resembling those in the infamous Krueger report issued in June by former International Monetary Fund officials.

Padilla’s plan includes restricting minimum-wage increases for workers under 25, tightening welfare eligibility, gutting job protections like seniority, cutting paid vacation days for public-sector workers and issuing a freeze on new hiring and collective bargaining. Subsidies for the University of Puerto Rico are being slashed while the collapsing health care system is facing more cuts. Public transportation is slated to be privatized and the island’s electrical utility, PREPA, could be deregulated.

Puerto Ricans already suffer from impoverishment: at least 45 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, and the per capita income is around \$15,000, less than half that of the poorest state, Mississippi. At the same time, workers and the unemployed are saddled with high costs for consumer goods, in no small part due to a shakedown provision of the Jones Act. Enacted almost a century ago, this protectionist legislation mandates that every product that enters or leaves Puerto Rico must be carried on a U.S. ship, or face high tariffs and fees that are then passed on to the Puerto Rican population. The tiny Caribbean island—which relies heavily on imports, including 85 percent of its food—is a dumping ground for U.S. products.

Enduring the weight of national oppression and colonial repression, Puerto Ricans have formal citizenship but are treated by the U.S. rulers with racist contempt as second-class citizens. Residents of the island are used as cannon fodder in U.S.



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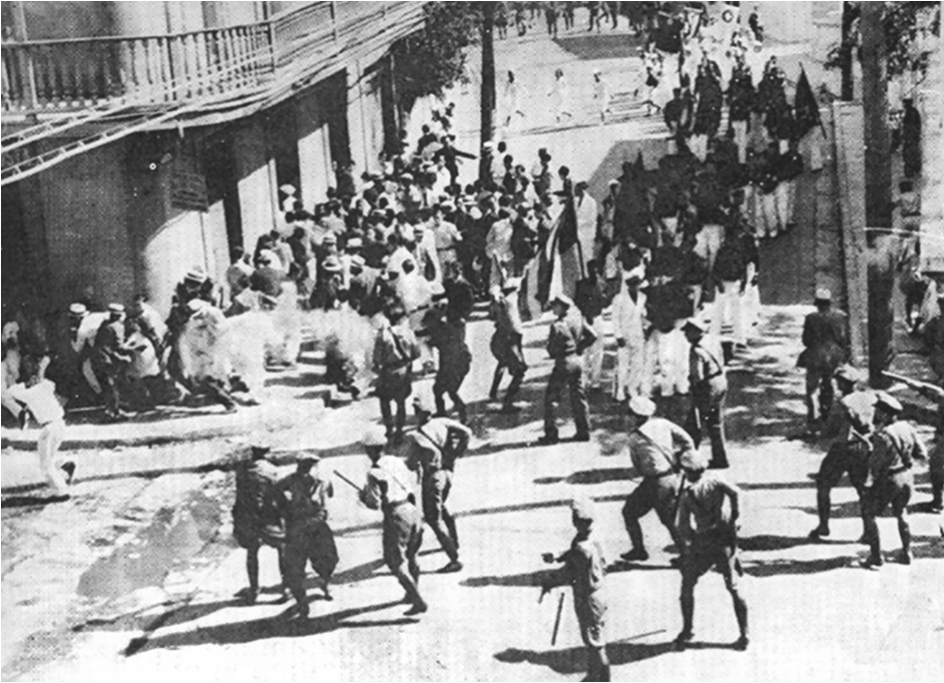
Homeless man in front of shuttered business on outskirts of San Juan. Colony’s impoverishment is consequence of U.S. imperialist plunder.

imperialist wars, though they cannot vote in federal elections and have no voting representation in Congress. With few natural resources and now skeletal industry in the colony, the main employer is the government. As jobs and opportunities dry up, a growing emigration from the island threatens to leave an aging and vulnerable population behind. As many as half a million Puerto Ricans have left in the last decade. Today, the total number of Puerto Ricans living in the U.S. far exceeds the island’s 3.5 million inhabitants.

While there is deep resentment over Puerto Rico’s status as a U.S. commonwealth, this anger is contradictory and does not translate into broad support for independence. The majority of Puerto Ricans fear that independence would come at a painful cost—specifically, that they would relinquish the benefits of U.S. citizenship, such as the right to live and work on the mainland. Under capitalist rule, an independent Puerto Rico would continue to be dominated economically by U.S. imperialism, while being forced to compete on the world capitalist market with other small, resource-poor Caribbean islands. Meanwhile, statehood, or direct annexation to the U.S., would aggravate racist nativist hostility toward Puerto Ricans. It would also accelerate the tendency of English to replace Spanish on the island, ultimately threatening the national identity of the Puerto Rican people.

As forthright opponents of U.S. imperialism, we would favor the independence of Puerto Rico in order to take a stand against American colonial domination and fight against chauvinism in the U.S. Likewise, we seek to undercut the nationalist leaders of the Puerto Rican working class, who preach class collaboration with the island’s capitalists in the name of national unity. Ending Puerto Rico’s formal subjugation would help move beyond the

question of the island’s status vis-à-vis the American behemoth and could clear the road for revolutionary internationalist class struggle. However, the wishes of the population are an important factor for Marxists in determining how to get the national question off the agenda, and we



El Imparcial

1937 Ponce Massacre exemplifies U.S. colonial repression against pro-independence resistance. Around 20 were killed and up to 200 wounded when police fired into crowd protesting jailing of Nationalist Party leaders.

are against forcing annexation or independence upon the island’s population. Therefore, we champion the *right of independence for Puerto Rico*.

National Oppression and Colonial Subjugation

Since the 1823 Monroe Doctrine, the U.S. rulers have claimed the Americas and the Caribbean as their own fiefdom. With the advent of the imperialist epoch, the American bourgeoisie grabbed Puerto Rico—along with other Spanish colonies Cuba, Guam and the Philippines—during the 1898 Spanish-American War. During the Cold War, Puerto Rico was a staging ground for U.S. aggression in the Caribbean—from the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961 to the Dominican Republic in 1965 and Grenada in 1983. While the two largest military bases, Vieques and Roosevelt Roads, have closed, the Coast Guard, National Guard and other U.S. troops still remain on the island.

For decades, U.S. forces carried out brutal state repression and crackdowns against Puerto Rican trade unionists, nationalists and others deemed dissidents. The island’s 1948 Gag Law, widely used against the independence movement, was modeled on the federal Smith Act of 1940 that made it a criminal offense to advocate the revolutionary overthrow of the government. Using the island as a testing ground for carrying out infiltration, disruption and provocation, federal agents have viciously targeted Puerto Rican *independentistas* for imprisonment and political assassination. We demand freedom for Puerto Rican independence activists like Oscar López Rivera who are imprisoned in the U.S. *All U.S. troops and federal agents out of Puerto Rico now!*

Starting in the late 1940s, Puerto Rico’s

status became a thorn in the side of the U.S. ruling class. In colonies across the globe, independence struggles were being waged to shake off their respective yokes. The subjugation of Puerto Rico was, along with Jim Crow segregation in the South, a source of embarrassment to the American rulers, who postured as defenders of “democracy” against their Cold War rival, the Soviet Union. To provide the illusion of Puerto Rican self-government, Washington in 1952 labeled the island a “commonwealth”—also termed a Free Associated State (Estado Libre Asociado), as local elections and a constitution were introduced. Puerto Rico, it was claimed, was no longer a colony, even as the U.S. Congress continued to exercise complete authority over the territory.

Under this new form of U.S. colonial rule, a fresh layer of local henchmen and middlemen loyal to U.S. capital came to the fore, including Puerto Rico’s first elected governor, Luis Muñoz Marín. His Popular Democratic Party (PPD), today led by Governor Padilla, continues to support commonwealth status. Muñoz Marín promoted the federal government’s Operation Bootstrap, a postwar industri-

alization plan to entice U.S. businesses through tax exemptions and cheap labor (including for a period by waiving federal minimum-wage requirements).

With the 1959 Cuban Revolution, U.S. imperialism tried to prop up Puerto Rico as a free-market miracle and bulwark against Communism in the Caribbean. The Cuban Revolution led to the expropriation of the U.S. and Cuban capitalists and the creation of a deformed workers state. Despite the rule of a bureaucratic caste led by Fidel Castro, the Cuban Revolution, with crucial Soviet military and economic aid, resulted in enormous gains for the country’s working masses, including guaranteed housing, free health care and education. Following the revolution,



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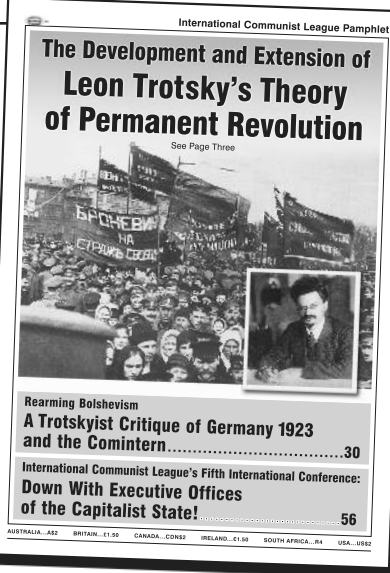
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By the early 1990s, with the counter-revolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, the American ruling class no longer saw an interest in providing indirect subsidies to the businesses used to showcase Puerto Rico's economic development—mainly in electronics and pharmaceuticals. In the course of phasing out Section 936 tax incentives, there was an exodus of U.S. operations, with the number of manufacturing jobs falling by almost half since 1996. The outflow of capital worsened conditions of poverty and unemployment, making Puerto Ricans even more dependent on federal programs and benefits.

Increased commercial and financial ties to U.S. corporations pose the very real danger of strengthening the internal forces for capitalist counterrevolution within Cuba. Nonetheless, from our standpoint as revolutionary Marxists, Cuba has the right to enter into diplomatic and economic relations with any capitalist country it chooses, not least to try to overcome its very real economic isolation. We demand an end to the U.S. economic embargo that aims to starve the small island, and we call for U.S. out of Guantánamo.

A Revolutionary, Working-Class Perspective

The struggle for the liberation of Puerto Rico must be waged along the axis of proletarian internationalism. In the U.S., we fight to mobilize the multiracial work-



Banner calls for freedom for imprisoned Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López Rivera during this year's Puerto Rican day parade, New York City.

In Puerto Rico, the working class has shown the will and interest to fight back against the recent onslaught of attacks including through work stoppages and strikes by teachers and transit workers. Back in 2010, a two-month student strike at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) against budget cuts and tuition hikes was supported by key sectors of the working class. That strike, along with subsequent struggles at the UPR, electrified the island and demonstrated the link between the right to education and the fight against job layoffs.

Puerto Rican workers must reject the perspective offered up by the trade-union bureaucracy, which counsels workers to make sacrifices in the so-called national interest. Addressing the debt crisis, an August 22 assembly of leaders and delegates from various trade unions representing teachers, public-sector workers and others adopted a resolution demanding “unity of all sectors of society” to renegotiate the debt. Outlining an entirely legalistic strategy, the resolution declared a commitment “to contribute to solving the problems of Puerto Rico” and recommended measures such as reorganizing the Treasury Department and amending the tax code.

In Puerto Rico, the union leadership's main mechanism for class collaboration is through nationalist ideology, which means chaining the exploited and oppressed to the local capitalist rulers, largely through the bourgeois PPD. Many workers view this party, which is connected to the Democratic Party in the U.S., as the "lesser evil" to the right-wing, pro-statehood New Progressive Party (PNP). In 2012,



**Spartacist sign
opposing colonial
domination of
Puerto Rico
at anti-Klan
mobilization in
NYC, 1999.**

PPD governor Padilla was elected on just such a basis after the prior PNP government headed by Luis Fortuño became widely despised for its corrupt mismanagement and massive austerity, including the firing of tens of thousands of public employees, union-busting attacks and a drive to privatize public services. Right after coming into office, Padilla proved

Puerto Rico is a vivid confirmation of the need for a program that centers on proletarian class independence from *all* wings of the capitalists. This requires a political break from nationalist bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces. In the economically backward countries, the bourgeoisies are too weak, corrupt and dependent on the imperialists to resolve essential tasks such as breaking the stranglehold of imperialism. Only through the proletarian seizure of power can there be liberation from imperialist domination and the basis laid to eradicate poverty.

A victorious workers revolution in the U.S., in which class-conscious Puerto Rican workers can play a vanguard role, would immediately grant Puerto Rico independence and massive amounts of economic aid, establishing relations on the basis of its freedom to exercise national self-determination. But the spark of revolution could also come from the colonial or neocolonial countries. Workers struggle in Puerto Rico against U.S. colonial domination could inspire the multiracial working class on the mainland in the revolutionary overthrow of U.S. imperialism.

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[illegible]

Karl Marx...

(continued from page 2)

a given society, as represented in the sum total of the values of all commodities, is one and the same human labour power. Thousands upon thousands of millions of acts of exchange prove this. Consequently, each particular commodity represents only a certain share of the *socially necessary* labour time. The magnitude of value is determined by the amount of socially necessary labour, or by the labour time that is socially necessary for the production of a given commodity, of a given use-value. “Whenever, by an exchange, we equate as values our different products, by that very act, we also equate, as human labour, the different kinds of labour expended upon them. We are not aware of this, nevertheless we do it.” As one of the earlier economists said, value is a relation between two persons; only he should have added: a relation concealed beneath a material wrapping. We can understand what value is only when we consider it from the standpoint of the system of social relations of production in a particular historical type of society, moreover, of relations that manifest themselves in the mass phenomenon of exchange, a phenomenon which repeats itself thousands upon thousands of times. “As values, all commodities are only definite masses of congealed labour time.” After making a detailed analysis of the twofold character of the labour incorporated in commodities, Marx goes on to analyse the *form of value* and *money*. Here, Marx’s main task is to study the *origin* of the money form of value, to study the *historical process* of the development of exchange, beginning with individual and incidental acts of exchange (the “elementary or accidental form of value,” in which a given quantity of one commodity is exchanged for a given quantity of another), passing on to the universal form of value, in which a number



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Adam Smith

of different commodities are exchanged for one and the same particular commodity, and ending with the money form of value, when gold becomes that particular commodity, the universal equivalent. As the highest product of the development of exchange and commodity production, money masks, conceals, the social character of all individual labour, the social link between individual producers united by the market. Marx analyses the various functions of money in very great detail; it is important to note here in particular (as in the opening chapters of *Capital* in general) that what seems to be an abstract and at times purely deductive mode of exposition deals in reality with a gigantic collection of factual material on the history of the development of exchange and commodity production. “If we consider money, its existence implies a definite stage in the exchange of commodities. The particular functions of money which it performs, either as the mere equivalent of commodities, or as means of circulation, or means of payment, as hoard or as universal money, point, according to the extent and relative preponderance of the



Bettmann

The capitalist wheels of industry and the alienation of the worker in Charlie Chaplin’s *Modern Times* (1936).

one function or the other, to very different stages in the process of social production” (*Capital*, Vol. I).

Surplus Value

At a certain stage in the development of commodity production money becomes transformed into capital. The formula of commodity circulation was C–M–C (commodity–money–commodity), i.e., the sale of one commodity for the purpose of buying another. The general formula of capital, on the contrary, is M–C–M, i.e., purchase for the purpose of selling (at a profit). The increase over the original value of the money that is put into circulation is called by Marx surplus value. The fact of this “growth” of money in capitalist circulation is common knowledge. Indeed, it is this “growth” which transforms money into *capital*, as a special and historically determined social relation of production. Surplus value cannot arise out of commodity circulation, for the latter knows only the exchange of equivalents; neither can it arise out of price increases, for the mutual losses and gains of buyers and sellers would equalise one another, whereas what we have here is not an individual phenomenon but a mass, average and social phenomenon. To obtain surplus value, the owner of money “must...find...in the market a commodity, whose use-value possesses the peculiar property of being a source of value”—a commodity whose process of consumption is at the same time a process of the creation of value. Such a commodity exists—human labour power. Its consumption is labour, and labour creates value. The owner of money buys labour power at its value, which, like the value of every other commodity, is determined by the socially necessary labour time requisite for its production (i.e., the cost of maintaining the worker and his family). Having bought labour power, the owner of money is entitled to use it, that is, to set it to work for a whole day—twelve hours, let us say. Yet, in the course of six hours (“necessary” labour time) the worker creates product sufficient to cover the cost of his own maintenance; in the course of the next six hours (“surplus” labour time), he creates “surplus” product, or surplus value, for which the capitalist does not pay. Therefore, from the standpoint of the process of production, two parts must be distinguished in capital: constant capital, which is expended on means of production (machinery, tools, raw materials, etc.), whose value, without any change, is transferred (immediately or part by part) to the finished product; secondly, variable capital, which is expended on labour power. The value of this latter capital is not invariable, but grows in the labour process, creating surplus value. Therefore, to express the degree of capital’s exploitation of labour power, surplus value must be compared, not with the entire capital but only with the variable capital. Thus, in the example just given, the rate of surplus value, as Marx calls this ratio, will be 6:6, i.e., 100 per cent.

There were two historical prerequisites for capital to arise: first, the accumulation of certain sums of money in the hands of individuals under conditions of a relatively high level of development of commodity production in general; secondly, the existence of a worker who is “free” in a double sense: free of all constraint or restriction on the sale of his labour power, and freed from the land and all means of production in general, a free and unattached labourer, a “proletarian,” who cannot subsist except by selling his labour power.

There are two main ways of increasing surplus value: lengthening the working day (“absolute surplus value”), and reducing the necessary working day (“relative surplus value”). In analysing the former, Marx gives a most impressive picture of the struggle of the working class for a shorter working day and of interference by the state authority to lengthen the working day (from the 14th century to the 17th) and to reduce it (factory legislation in the 19th century). Since the appearance of *Capital*, the history of the working-class movement in all civilised countries of the world has provided a wealth of new facts amplifying this picture.

Analysing the production of relative surplus value, Marx investigates the three fundamental historical stages in capitalism’s increase of the productivity of labour: (1) simple co-operation; (2) the division of labour, and manufacture; (3) machinery and large-scale industry. How profoundly Marx has here revealed the basic and typical features of capitalist development is shown incidentally by the fact that investigations into the handicraft industries of Russia furnish abundant material illustrating the first two of the mentioned stages. The revolutionising effect of large-scale machine industry, as described by Marx in 1867, has revealed itself in a number of “new” countries (Russia, Japan, etc.), in the course of the half-century that has since elapsed.

To continue. New and important in the highest degree is Marx’s analysis of the *accumulation of capital*, i.e., the transformation of a part of surplus value into capital, and its use, not for satisfying the personal needs or whims of the capitalist, but for new production. Marx revealed the error made by all earlier classical political economists (beginning with Adam Smith), who assumed that the entire surplus value which is transformed into capital goes to form variable capital. In actual fact, it is divided into *means of production* and variable capital. Of tremendous importance to the process of development of capitalism and its transformation into socialism is the more rapid growth of the constant capital share (of the total capital) as compared with the variable capital share.

By speeding up the supplanting of workers by machinery and by creating wealth at one extreme and poverty at the other, the accumulation of capital also gives rise to what is called the “reserve army of labour,” to the “relative surplus” of workers, or

“capitalist overpopulation,” which assumes the most diverse forms and enables capital to expand production extremely rapidly. In conjunction with credit facilities and the accumulation of capital in the form of means of production, this incidentally is the key to an understanding of the *crises* of overproduction which occur periodically in capitalist countries—at first at an average of every ten years, and later at more lengthy and less definite intervals. From the accumulation of capital under capitalism we should distinguish what is known as primitive accumulation: the forcible divorcement of the worker from the means of production, the driving of the peasants off the land, the stealing of communal lands, the system of colonies and national debts, protective tariffs, and the like. “Primitive accumulation” creates the “free” proletarian at one extreme, and the owner of money, the capitalist, at the other.

The “*historical tendency of capitalist accumulation*” is described by Marx in the following celebrated words: “The expropriation of the immediate producers is accomplished with merciless vandalism, and under the stimulus of passions the most infamous, the most sordid, the pettiest, the most meanly odious. Self-earned private property [of the peasant and handicraftsman—*Lenin*], that is based, so to say, on the fusing together of the isolated, independent labouring-individual with the conditions of his labour, is supplanted by capitalistic private property, which rests on exploitation of the nominally free labour of others.... That which is now to be expropriated is no longer the labourer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many labourers. This expropriation is accomplished by the action of the immanent laws of capitalistic production itself, by the centralisation of capital. One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralisation, or this expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop, on an ever extending scale, the co-operative form of the labour process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labour into instruments of labour only usable in common, the economising of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialised labour, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world market, and with this, the international character of the capitalistic regime. Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under, it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated” (*Capital*, Vol. I).

Also new and important in the highest degree is the analysis Marx gives, in Volume Two of *Capital*, of the reproduction of aggregate social capital. Here, too, Marx deals, not with an individual phenomenon but with a mass phenomenon; not with a fractional part of the economy of society, but with that economy as a whole. Correcting the aforementioned error of the classical economists, Marx divides the whole of social production into two big sections: (I) production of the means of production, and (II) production of articles of consumption, and examines in detail, with numerical examples, the circulation of the aggregate social capital—both when reproduced in its former dimensions and in the case of accumulation.

[COMING UP NEXT:
SURPLUS VALUE CONTINUED]

WORKERS VANGUARD

Toronto...

(continued from page 12)

any real justice for the oppressed. For decades, the Toronto cops have been gunning down blacks, other minorities and the mentally ill. Inquiries, more black cops, civilian oversight boards: all these things have been demanded time and again. Take the recent call for body cameras, for instance. Across North America, the cops are more and more often caught on film executing someone. It doesn't even slow them down. Earlier this year, Toronto saw the appointment of its first black police chief. "A Black face doesn't make it less racist" read a protester's sign in front of Toronto police headquarters; "Carding in Blackface" headlined one article. This is the beginning of wisdom. But activists must come to understand that police violence and racism are intrinsic to class-divided capitalist society and cannot be ended without sweeping away this system. Absent that, the present Black Lives Matter activists will go down the same blind alley as an earlier generation of activists who promoted various schemes to "control" the police.

The Capitalist State and Racial Oppression

This country's rulers, a minuscule, ruthless class, are well aware that there is seething discontent in society that could be ignited by the spark of social protest. They own the banks and major industries, producing nothing themselves but reaping massive profits by further grinding down those still lucky enough to have a job. In order to keep in check the workers they exploit and black people and other minorities they oppress, the capitalist class unleashes its repressive state apparatus—cops, courts and prisons—whose powers it is augmenting. At the same time, the ruling class seeks to disguise what is the dictatorship of capital with the trappings of democracy and the illusion that the capitalist state is some kind of neutral body that represents everyone. It is impossible to enforce the property rights of the capitalists without simultaneously enforcing dispossession of the workers and the unemployed, among whom blacks and other racial minorities are always overrepresented. The cops that terrorize them are not committing "excesses" or using "disproportionate force." They are merely "doing their jobs" as the guard dogs of racist capitalism. Communist revolutionary V.I. Lenin described the cops as follows: "Separated as it is from the people, forming a professional caste of men trained in the practice of violence upon the poor, men who receive somewhat higher pay and the privileges that go with authority (to say nothing of 'gratuities'), the police

everywhere, in every republic, however democratic, where the bourgeoisie is in power, always remains the unfailing weapon, the chief support and protection of the bourgeoisie." —"They Have Forgotten the Main Thing" (1917)

For a Working-Class Fight Against Racist Cop Terror

"The very notion of a black Torontonian conflates hundreds of different languages, histories, traditions and stories," notes Desmond Cole. "In the National Household Survey, the term 'black' is the only classification that identifies a skin colour

Whereas slavery existed in Canada, it never became decisive to the economy. That was not due to any moral superiority on the part of the rulers north of the border. In fact during the American Civil War, future Canadian prime minister John A. Macdonald backed the southern Confederacy in its campaign for the expansion of slavery. Despite their differing histories, the African and Caribbean immigrant diasporas in Canada share with blacks in the U.S. a common experience of pervasive discrimination and police violence on account of their skin colour. Though dein-

ists is simultaneously a fight against all forms of non-class or "special" oppression, including that of immigrants, Native people, women, gays and the Québécois. The main obstacle to working-class struggle against the capitalist system and its manifold forms of oppression is the existing leadership of the labour movement, centred on the nationalist, pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy. The leaders of the Ontario Federation of Labour, which represents one million workers, spoke out against the 2013 police killing of 18-year-old Sammy Yatim. Later, however, they called the murder charges against the killer cop a "first step to justice," feeding already rampant illusions that the capitalist state can be reformed to serve the interests of the oppressed. The ruling class will only resort to jailing one of its own police guard dogs *in extremis*. In the unlikely event that a cop is actually convicted, this too will be done in order to refurbish the image of the state as some kind of impartial arbiter. Grotesquely, many of the union misleaders support "unions" of cops and prison guards, deadly enemies of workers and minorities. This poison leads workers to wrongly identify the police—the sworn enemies of labour—as "fellow workers." Notoriously, in 2005 the leaders of the 8,000-strong Amalgamated Transit Union Local 113 backed a campaign by the cops for a better contract amid widespread hysteria against "black crime." These retrograde views are also upheld by hardcore reformist groups such as Fightback and Socialist Alternative, both of which claim that the cops are a legitimate part of the labour movement. Across the board, the union tops show themselves to be more interested in electing the NDP or the Liberals than in fighting on behalf of the unions themselves. The struggles of the working class for wages, benefits and job security are integral to the fight against racist capitalism. To unite itself in struggle and to pry itself free from its pro-capitalist misleadership, the working class needs a revolutionary party that will be a genuine tribune of the people, drawing in blacks and other specially oppressed layers of society. The working class must be imbued with consciousness of its social power and historic interest in the fight for socialist revolution, which will do away with the racist capitalist system once and for all. Black activists who are coming into social consciousness through their struggle against cop terror can play a role in forging such a party, which must by definition be multiracial. This requires a Marxist perspective based not on "the community" of one or another ethnicity but on the working class in all its diversity. That is the purpose to which the Trotskyist League is dedicated. ■



Transit workers in suburban Toronto during three-month strike in 2011-12. Power of multiracial working class must be mobilized to protest racist cop terror.

rather than a nation or region." While some black people in Canada, especially those in Nova Scotia, have roots in this country that go back more than two centuries, an increasingly large number are first- and second-generation immigrants from the Caribbean and various regions of Africa. Jamaicans and Somalis, among the largest black communities in Toronto, live in separate neighbourhoods and share no common language, culture or religion from their countries of origin. Many black people immigrate here to leave behind the oppression and poverty of their neocolonial countries of origin. Yet once in this country, they find themselves kept down in the lower echelons of the working class—or unemployed. Targeted for police harassment and violence, they make up 9 percent of Canadian prisoners but only 3 percent of the population as a whole. Their harsh living conditions expose the lie of "kinder, gentler" Canada. Blacks in the U.S. constitute a race-colour caste, forcibly segregated at the bottom of society. That is the legacy of slavery, the bedrock of U.S. capitalism.

dustrialization has led to a brutal increase in long-term unemployment, black people in Canada still make up a small but important component of the working class, especially in Toronto. As workers, their common interests lie with their class brothers and sisters of all races. At some of the recent Toronto protests against police violence, organizers called on white protesters to go to the back and to be silent. Such practices echo the false doctrine of "white skin privilege," which portrays white workers as benefactors of the racism pushed by the capitalist ruling class. The fact is that racial oppression and division intensify competition among the working people, driving down the wages and living conditions of *all* workers. Toronto's working class—hundreds of thousands strong and infused with nationalities and ethnicities that span the globe—has the social power to shut down the entire city in response to murderous cop racism. But the rulers of this country have done much to divide them along lines of race, ethnicity, religion and more. The fight to unite the working class and advance its interests against the capital-

Spartacus Youth Club Events

BAY AREA

Thursday, October 22, 7 p.m.
For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!
San Francisco State University
(Meet outside of the Ethnic Studies Building)
Information and readings:
(510) 839-0851 • sycbayarea@fastmail.net

NEW YORK CITY

Tuesday, October 20, 7 p.m.
Women's Oppression and the Struggle for Revolution
CCNY, NAC Rm. 1/209
138th St. and Amsterdam Avenue
(Take #1 train to 137th St.-City College)
Information and readings:
(212) 267-1025 • nysl@tiac.net

LOS ANGELES

Wednesday, October 7, 7 p.m.
Meet the Marxists
UCLA, Bunche Hall, Room 2173
Information and readings:
(213) 380-8239 • slsycla@sbcglobal.net

TORONTO

Thursday, October 8, 6:30 p.m.
The Fraud of Capitalist Democracy: Elections 2015
University of Toronto
OISE, Room 4420
252 Bloor St. West
(at St. George subway)
Information and readings:
(416) 593-4138 • spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Tuesday, October 13, 6:30 p.m.
The Fraud of Bourgeois Democracy: Elections 2015
Britannia Community Centre
Learning Resource Centre Room
1661 Napier Street
(Off Commercial Drive)
Information and readings:
(604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

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Corbyn...

(continued from page 12)

disregard for property rights,” they rant in a 15 September editorial, “violates basic tenets of natural justice.”

Corbyn’s opponents in the Blair-Brown wing of the party—the majority of MPs [Members of Parliament], and party leaders past and present—have likewise been screaming their heads off about a Corbyn-led Labour Party becoming “unelectable.” Doubtless the coming period will see multiple bitter clashes between these two camps. The schism within the Labour Party mirrors the two opposing classes in bourgeois society. Corbyn has consistently emphasised his commitment to party unity, but those MPs who are deeply hostile to Corbyn’s politics would be only too willing to see him ousted. While the major trade unions all backed Corbyn, some elements of the union bureaucracy are leery of his left-wing politics and could easily join with those who would depose him.

The vast majority of Labour MPs in July refused to vote against the Tories’ latest welfare-cutting bill, which increases the immiseration of the poor. Tom Watson, the newly elected deputy party leader, like the majority of Labour MPs, supported the invasion of Iraq, wholeheartedly supports NATO and opposes Corbyn’s stance of scrapping the Trident nuclear missile system. Within one day of Corbyn’s victory announcement eight shadow cabinet ministers had resigned their posts, one tweeting his resignation as Corbyn concluded his acceptance speech.

Chuka Umunna, a key Blairite, resigned from the shadow cabinet the next day, citing Corbyn’s hesitation over whether Labour should campaign for Britain to stay in the European Union (EU). Corbyn has since made it clear that he is not likely to support a British exit and promotes the illusion of the EU creating a “social Europe” in which workers rights are protected. The EU is an inherently unstable bloc aimed at improving the competitive edge of its dominant members, chiefly Germany, vis-à-vis their imperialist rivals, centrally Japan and the U.S. The EU has always been a mechanism for the capitalist rulers to maximise the rate of exploitation of the working class. We oppose the EU on principle from an internationalist perspective, as opposed to the nationalist, chauvinist opposition of UKIP [UK Independence Party]. We call for working-class struggle in every European country against the bosses. In the planned referendum asking if Britain should stay in the EU or exit, we would vote for Britain to exit.

The Spartacist League welcomed the Corbyn campaign, distributing a 12 August leaflet to campaign rallies around the country [see “Jeremy Corbyn: Tony Blair’s Nightmare!” WV No. 1073, 4 September]. The leaflet noted that Corbyn addresses issues that are in the interests of working people. At the same time we said that although the campaign’s chief demands are supportable, the fundamental issues facing the exploited and oppressed cannot be solved within the framework of Corbyn’s old Labour parliamentary reformism, which has always upheld the capitalist system.

The State—Organ of Class Rule

Corbyn opposed the U.S./British invasion of Iraq—for which Blair remains widely despised—as well as the occupation of Afghanistan. But what really makes him unfit to lead Her Majesty’s Opposition, never mind to become prime minister, in the eyes of the British (and U.S.) capitalist rulers is Corbyn’s history of opposing the U.S.-led NATO military alliance. Corbyn is chairman of the Stop the War Coalition, a campaign initiated by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), which seeks to persuade British imperialism not to automatically support the U.S. in its wars and occupations. This was summed up during the Iraq war in the caricature of Blair as “Bush’s poodle.”

Britain’s staunch military support to



Reuters

February 2007: Under Tony Blair’s “New Labour” regime, British soldiers occupy Iraq (left); London antiwar protest organized by reformist-led Stop the War coalition (right).



Corbis

U.S. imperialism is a product of British imperialism’s long decline to the level of a decrepit third-rate power which has little choice but to act as a junior partner to the U.S. The City of London, a world centre of finance capital, is a haven for U.S. (as well as German and Swiss) investment banks and plays second fiddle to Wall Street. Imperialist militarism and the dominance of finance capital will not be held to account by legislation in Parliament. It will take socialist revolution to rip the wealth out of the hands of the capitalists and bankers and overturn their system based on production for private profit.

infrastructure wholesale, rebuilding its rusting manufacturing base and putting the population back into productive work. But finance capitalists will not opt to forgo the cool billions made through banking deals in favour of unknown returns on investment in reindustrialising the north of England. The bottom line for the capitalists is to invest where they can get the highest rate of return, and this cannot be changed through enacting legislation in Parliament.

The Westminster Parliament embodies the privileged status of finance capital afforded London and the southeast of

socialism, and the means to achieve it.

The fundamental question posed in Britain today is: what kind of party is needed to represent the interests of the working class and oppressed, independently of and in opposition to the capitalists? The Labour Party was founded at the beginning of the 20th century by the trade-union bureaucracy in order to gain a voice in Parliament. Born out of the class division in society, the party’s formation was an expression, at the organisational level, of working-class independence from the bourgeois Liberals. Yet despite its base consisting of the organised working class, the programme of the Labour Party was pro-capitalist. As such, the Labour Party exemplified what Russian Revolution leader V.I. Lenin termed a bourgeois workers party, having a working-class base saddled with a pro-capitalist leadership and programme. Lenin stressed that the Labour Party was not the political arm of the trade-union movement, but the party of the pro-imperialist trade-union bureaucracy. In a 1920 debate in the Communist International, Lenin said:

“Regarded from this point of view, the only correct one, the Labour Party is a thoroughly bourgeois party, because, although made up of workers, it is led by reactionaries, and the worst kind of reactionaries at that, who act quite in the spirit of the bourgeoisie.”

This was an apt description of then-Labour leaders such as Arthur Henderson, who had helped line up the working class in support of British imperialism during World War I.

The Labour Party’s claim to be “socialist” was belatedly introduced in 1918, with the adoption of Clause IV. This was an attempt to deflect the radicalising effect of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, consolidating the workers with the illusion that the British road to “socialism” was through standing for elections to Parliament. The parliamentary road assumed collaboration—open or covert—with the capitalist ruling class on matters of “national interest.” Loyalty to the monarch was taken for granted—witness the hysteria over



August 8: Spartacists at protest outside immigrant detention center in Bedfordshire, England.

Behind the governmental apparatus in all capitalist countries is the machinery of the state—cops, courts and military. Its function can be seen in the police brutality meted out to racial minorities, the deaths in state custody, disproportionately suffered by black, Asian and immigrant detainees. The capitalist state wages the “war on terror” which targets Muslims and serves as a pretext to enhance its repressive powers. Governments come and go, implementing policies dictated by the capitalists’ political and economic demands, but the machinery of the state remains. Its purpose is to preserve, ultimately through organised violence, capitalist class exploitation of the working people. All past experience of class struggle shows that fundamental change in the interests of the working class cannot be achieved by pressuring the “Mother of Parliaments” while leaving the capitalist state intact.

As Marxist historian Ralph Miliband, whom Corbyn hails, wrote in *Parliamentary Socialism* (1961), “Of political parties claiming socialism to be their aim, the Labour Party has always been one of the most dogmatic—not about socialism, but about the parliamentary system.” The idea that socialism can be achieved through Parliament rests on the illusion that exploiter and exploited, rich and poor, oppressor and oppressed, all have an equal vote in how society is run. But it is not the working people and minorities who control the mass media, the economy, or for that matter the cops, courts and military.

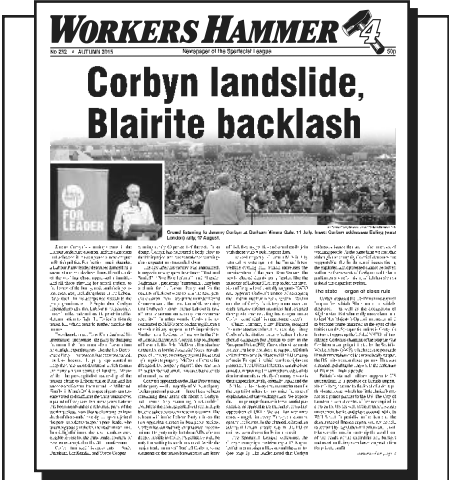
For example, Corbyn argues for reindustrialisation of the country, which indeed is necessary, as is regenerating Britain’s

England by the capitalist rulers who are contemptuous of the de-industrialised areas of northern England as well as of Scotland and Wales. As Marxists we oppose the so-called United Kingdom which incorporates the Orange statelet in Northern Ireland. Down with the monarchy, the House of Lords and the established churches! We support the right of self-determination for Scotland and Wales. Our programme is for a voluntary federation of workers republics in the British Isles within a Socialist United States of Europe.

What Kind of Party Does the Working Class Need?

Thousands of youth throughout the country, previously alienated by the cesspit of mainstream politics, were drawn to Corbyn’s campaign. As a young supporter quoted by Seumas Milne in the *Guardian* (5 August) explained: “People say he is an old leftwinger or an old Marxist but to my generation his ideas seem quite new.”

Corbyn is not and does not claim to be a revolutionary Marxist. His victory represents a welcome upheaval in British political life, opening up a political debate into which Marxist revolutionaries can intervene. Yet in a “Letter to a Jeremy Corbyn supporter,” the SWP’s Charlie Kimber commented that: “The real danger is that Corbyn supporters are plunged into internal party struggles rather than struggles at work and in working class areas,” adding that “the crucial question is to march, protest, occupy and strike together against the Tories” (*Socialist Worker*, 12 September). Contrary to Kimber’s “fight the right” philistinism, we Marxists see a longed-for opportunity for political struggle and debate—about



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whether Corbyn will kneel before the Queen so that he can join her secretive Privy Council, and sing “God Save the Queen” on state occasions.

In the period following World War II, when the Labour leadership again supported British imperialism, Labour’s formal commitment to “common ownership of the means of production” came to be associated with the nationalisation of industry under capitalism and the introduction of welfare measures such as the National Health Service. Far from an attempt to introduce “socialism,” the nationalisations of coal, steel and other basic industries by the Clement Attlee Labour government were in reality giant capitalist bailouts designed to help British capitalism compete in the world market. In that sense they were no more “socialist” than the bailout of the banks carried out under Labour prime minister Gordon Brown following the 2008 banking crisis.

The traditional Labour Party that Corbyn seeks to reconstitute prided itself on being a “broad church,” meaning that it had room for a wide spectrum of political currents and opinions. In practice this meant that the right wing predominated, while the left bowed to it for the sake of unity. In today’s terms, reconstituting the “broad church” means Corbyn’s supporters will co-exist side by side with the Blairites including Tony Blair himself, who many regard as a war criminal over Iraq. Within the Corbyn camp, the “broad church” means that while Corbyn himself is a defender of the rights

of immigrants, his deputy Tom Watson wants the party to pander to ex-Labour voters who turned to UKIP. This can only mean making concessions to UKIP’s vile anti-immigrant racism. In the old Labour Party, bloc affiliation by the trade unions meant that the most advanced layers of the class were submerged into the most backward ones. Mass reformist parties are inevitably tinged with chauvinism, based on the dominant ethnic grouping and tied to the defence of the interests of its own ruling class.

A Leninist party, by contrast, consists only of the most politically advanced, class-conscious elements of the working class and oppressed which can translate the historic interests of the proletariat into the fight for socialist revolution. Such a party would champion the cause of the multiethnic working class and fight against all manifestations of oppression—racism, discrimination against women and all forms of chauvinism.

The Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, which led the Russian proletariat to power in the October 1917 Revolution was a party of a new type, sharply breaking from the European social-democratic parties of the time. Cohering the advanced elements of the proletariat together with declassed intellectuals, the Bolshevik party acted as a “tribune of the people” taking up the struggles of all: workers and the unemployed, women, the poor peasantry, the millions composing the downtrodden national minorities. The Bolsheviks’ purpose was to render the working class conscious of its historic task—the



Hulton-Deutsch

Clement Attlee, British Labour prime minister, announces nationalization of failing coal industry, 1947.

seizure of power through proletarian revolution and the establishment of a workers state. They saw their fight as part of the necessary worldwide revolution, to bring about the international socialist order that Marx and Engels envisioned.

Jeremy Corbyn believes that the poverty, injustice and degradation inflicted on whole swathes of the population are not necessary, and he is right. But to eliminate those ills requires not a government based on the bosses’ parliament, but a government based on workers councils, which expropriates the bourgeoisie as a

class. A revolutionary workers party must be rooted in the understanding that only through mass mobilisation in struggle can the workers fight for their own interests and act in defence of all the oppressed. Socialist revolutions especially in the advanced capitalist countries including Britain will establish rationally planned economies based on an international division of labour. The development of the productive forces, ripped out of the clutches of the capitalist bloodsuckers, will open the road to the creation of a classless, egalitarian socialist society. ■

UAW...

(continued from page 1)

Chrysler plant in Belvidere, Illinois, one worker, expressing widespread sentiment, told WV: “If you don’t stand up, you will continue to be pushed down.”

The unions are supposed to be instruments of struggle for the everyday needs of workers; wages, benefits and working conditions are ultimately decided by the relationship of class forces whose interests are irreconcilable. For the workers to prevail, they must make use of the class-struggle weapons that built the UAW and other industrial unions in the first place. A hard-fought battle would deliver a much-needed blow against the attacks on working people across the country.

But Williams and the rest of the union misleaders push the lie that there can be some sort of partnership between the workers and the class enemy. The union bureaucracy subordinates the interests of workers to the profitability of the companies, as Williams made clear last December when he outlined his aims in the contract negotiations: “It is about how we keep the companies competitive.” The UAW bureaucracy also reveals its allegiance to the bosses by its longstanding support to the Democratic Party, one of the dual parties of capitalist rule in this country.

The disastrous results for the union came to a head in the 2009 bailout engineered by the administration of Democratic president Barack Obama with the full cooperation of the union misleaders (who poured some \$5 million into Obama’s election campaign). Massive concessions were imposed on auto workers, including a no-strike clause that only expired this year. By destroying the livelihoods of working people and eliminating tens of thousands of jobs, the auto industry was reshaped to make it once again a source of tremendous profits for Wall Street.

The UAW bureaucracy’s perspective of class collaboration has today resulted in a contract that contains multiple tiers and two other giant steps backward for the union: the expansion of profit sharing and the shifting of health care costs from the company to some sort of co-op overseen by the union. Profit sharing gives up wage hikes today for possible (and overall lower) payouts in the future. The worst part is that such schemes, which aim to get workers to “willingly” go along with speedup, obscure the fundamental truth



Reuters

UAW president Dennis Williams (left) hugs Fiat Chrysler CEO Sergio Marchionne following announcement of tentative contract, September 15.

that the capitalists generate profits by exploiting the workers.

Details on the health care co-op ploy are sketchy and workers are correctly worried. The bottom line is that it will let the company off the hook for providing health care and place all liability on the union. The UAW tops are holding up as a model the Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association (VEBA) trust fund covering retiree health care. Under such trust funds, benefits are entirely at the mercy of the stock and bond markets; it’s like having a 401(k) instead of a defined-benefit pension plan. In the contract summary, the UAW bureaucrats state that a central aim is to “reduce costs in an innovative and sustainable way,” that is, to help the company shaft the workers. One of the big costs the union tops are trying to help the company avoid is the so-called Cadillac tax that Obama’s Affordable Care Act will impose on employer-paid health plans.

The UAW bureaucrats have made a living helping the auto bosses cut labor costs. In the 2007 contract, these labor lieutenants of capital agreed to the slashing of wages to boost the profits of the greedy capitalists who had driven the auto companies to the brink of bankruptcy. It was this contract that codified the two-tier wage structure at the Big Three assembly plants (tiers had previously existed in parts plants). Workers hired after 2007 earn wages of between \$15.78 and \$19.28

an hour while working alongside top-tier workers paid \$28 an hour. While the new contract proposes larger raises for the lower-tier workers, the gap between the top tier and new hires will still be more than \$10 an hour. The auto bosses expect all the top-tier workers to retire or die off in a few years, reducing the top level of pay to that of the second tier.

For years, the UAW bureaucracy has justified its sellouts by stoking fears of jobs moving overseas while invoking “America First” protectionism. At the start of contract negotiations in July, shortly after going to the White House to complain to Obama that free-trade agreements are hurting U.S. manufacturing, Williams declared: “Mexico continues to be an issue for us.” The U.S. automakers, like their German and Japanese competitors, always seek to maximize productivity and minimize costs, whether that means making cars in Detroit or Mexico or the U.S. South.

While the protectionist union bureaucracy portrays foreign workers as competitors, if not outright enemies, the way to advance workers’ interests is for the unions to struggle jointly with their foreign counterparts in concrete acts of international labor solidarity. From the standpoint of working-class internationalism, the growth of the proletariat in the Third World means the growth of international *allies* of the U.S. working class.

The burgeoning auto plants of Mexico are integral to auto production in North America, posing the possibility of and necessity for joint labor action between U.S. and Mexican auto workers.

Joint action by workers across national borders, especially when they work for the same company, would clearly be to the benefit of all the workers. A recent series of strikes in Brazil by thousands of auto workers against GM, Ford, Volkswagen and Mercedes provided one such opportunity. The automakers were beaten back in their efforts to force through mass layoffs; if the UAW had mobilized in solidarity, it would have strengthened the union’s hand in negotiations with the Big Three here.

Similarly, a winning fight to improve the lot of workers at the Big Three could boost stalled UAW and other union organizing efforts elsewhere, including in the open shop South, where the low wages for auto workers are an ongoing threat to UAW members. There is an urgent need for a mass, militant struggle to organize the South. This task requires tackling head-on the anti-black racism that has long served the capitalists in dividing workers and weakening their struggles.

The policies of the pro-capitalist UAW bureaucrats undercut the very notion of a union as a vehicle for the defense of the common interests of the workers against the capitalists. What is needed is a new, class-struggle union leadership to mobilize the social power of the working class independently of the bosses and their political representatives, including the Democrats. Such a leadership, forged in the course of strikes and other class battles, would have the union take up vitally necessary struggles, including for permanent jobs for all workers in the plants, equal pay for equal work and a shorter workweek with no loss in weekly pay to create more jobs.

The working class needs its own party—a revolutionary workers party—to fight for its class interests. Such a party would struggle not only for the immediate economic needs of the working class, but also seek to lead broader struggles against the depredations of capitalism, from racial oppression and anti-immigrant bigotry to imperialist war. Through these struggles, a workers party would imbue the class with revolutionary consciousness of its real power and interest in sweeping away capitalism and establishing a workers government. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

British Labour Party Elections

Corbyn Landslide, Blairite Backlash

The following article has been reprinted from Workers Hammer No. 232 (Autumn 2015), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain.

WORKERS HAMMER

Jeremy Corbyn's stunning victory in the Labour leadership election, and the campaign that achieved it, have opened a new chapter in British politics. For the first time in decades, a Labour Party leader describes himself as a socialist and has declared himself on the side of the working class, oppressed minorities and all those striving for social justice, to the horror of the bourgeoisie and their political creatures, including those in the Labour Party itself. In his acceptance speech

to the party grandees on 12 September, Corbyn repeated proudly that Labour is "organically linked" to the trade unions. He proclaimed his determination to fight the Tories' anti-trade union bill which aims to further shackle the unions.

Two decades ago, Tony Blair declared his intention to "modernise" the party by dumping the union link, thus to transform Labour into an outright capitalist party like the U.S. Democratic Party. This process has been protracted, not least because the party tops wanted to keep the trade-union donations which remain the party's main source of funding. Meanwhile, the pro-capitalist leadership of the unions clung to Labour under Blair and his successors Gordon Brown and Ed Miliband. Finally, in March 2014, a special party conference voted to disaf-

filiate the trade unions over a period of five years. For some years, Labour has been moribund as a reformist party of the working class. Now that is changing, as hundreds of thousands have signed up or rejoined the party in order to support a party leader who unambiguously upholds the trade-union link. In a delightful irony, the new members were eligible to vote for the party leader courtesy of new rules adopted at the 2014 conference.

Corbyn trounced his opponents—Andy Burnham, Liz Kendall and Yvette Cooper—winning nearly 60 per cent of the vote. In so doing, Corbyn has delivered a body blow to the Blair project and has reawakened working-class expectations towards Labour.

The day after his victory was announced, bourgeois newspapers headlined "Red and

Buried," "Bye Bye Labour," and "Leader Nightmare," predicting "extremism," mayhem and ruin for the Labour Party, and for the country if Labour were to win the next general election. From Tory [Conservative Party] prime minister David Cameron came the none too subtle warning that Corbyn's victory means Labour is now a "threat to our national security, our economic security." In other words, Corbyn is not committed to NATO or to continuing Britain's slavish military support to U.S. imperialism. Furthermore, he does not kowtow to the City of London financiers. Corbyn's appointment of Labour leftist John McDonnell as shadow chancellor is for the *Financial Times*, mouthpiece of the City, an outrage against the sacred right to private property: McDonnell's "cavalier
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Newly elected Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, September 15.

Cops Terrorize Black Toronto

The following article is reprinted from Spartacist Canada No. 186 (Fall 2015), newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

SPARTACIST CANADA

In the early hours of July 5 Toronto cops shot dead 45-year-old Andrew Loku, a South Sudanese immigrant, in the building where he lived. "Andrew survived war, and then had to be killed here," grieved his friend Kiden Jonathan at a press conference where she collapsed on the floor in anguish. A couple of weeks later the Special Investigations Unit announced that the cop who shot and killed Jermaine Carby, a 33-year-old black man, in the suburb of Brampton last fall would not face criminal charges.

"Black lives matter!" chanted hundreds of racially integrated youth at an angry July 27 protest. They marched from a parking lot next to the site of Loku's death and on to a nearby highway, Allen Road, where they stopped the Monday evening traffic for two hours. Supporters of the Trotskyist League participated in the demonstration, pointing to the need for the working class to take up the cause of black people against racist cop terror.

The fact is that black lives don't matter in the least to the racist ruling class and its cops. Since 1990, Toronto cops have shot and killed 51 people, with almost complete impunity. The largest proportion was black. That is what "justice" under the racist, capitalist system is all about.

Outrage over the cop killings has combined with a deep well of bitter anger over the years-long practice of "carding." In a



Renwick/Toronto Star; no credit (inset)
Black Lives Matter protest in Toronto, July 27. Inset: Andrew Loku, killed by cops three weeks earlier.

three-year period from 2008 to 2011, 1.25 million people were stopped by the cops in Toronto and their names compiled in a massive police database. "I've been interrogated by police more than 50 times—all because I'm black," charged Desmond Cole in the May issue of *Toronto Life*. Cole, whose parents immigrated to Canada from Sierra Leone, writes movingly about life in a city where statistics show he is 17 times more likely than a white person to be stopped by police and have his personal information recorded on a "contact card."

"Carding takes us back to Jim Crow in U.S. South" headlined *Share*, a newspaper serving Toronto's Caribbean community. "There's no doubt about it: carding belongs to the long history of travel passes,

slave-master permission slips, pass laws, and pass books," said black University of Toronto professor Rinaldo Walcott at a May press conference. Behind carding lies the all too real threat of police violence. Anyone—especially if you're black—who exercises the legal right not to comply risks beating, arrest and worse.

Toronto mayor John Tory oozed hypo-

critical dismay over Cole's experiences and vowed to ban the practice, only to reverse himself days later. Meanwhile, the provincial government has made it clear that carding is here to stay. Upcoming public "consultations" are intended to diffuse anger and clean up the image of the cops.

The Pipe Dream of Police Accountability

Black Lives Matter demonstrations spread from the U.S. to Toronto and elsewhere in Canada in the fall of 2014 after a grand jury refused to indict the Ferguson, Missouri, cop who killed black teenager Michael Brown. Black Lives Matter Toronto is demanding that the cops stop killing black people and that those who do be punished accordingly. During a protest held inside a July 16 meeting of the Toronto Police Services board, their supporters called for, among other things, body cameras for all police and an inquiry into whether "adequate disciplinary action" has been taken against cops who kill mentally ill black people. They also call to charge and jail cops who have killed people, including the cop who gunned down Andrew Loku.

"This is a call for accountability," declared Black Lives Matter in a letter to the mayor and police chief. The problem is that the police are not "accountable" to anyone other than the capitalist masters they serve. From the standpoint of the working class, the cops who shot Andrew Loku and countless others are criminals who deserve to rot in jail. However, to call on the capitalist powers-that-be to jail their killer cops can only reinforce already widespread illusions that the police can be subjected to fundamental reform. The promotion of such illusions postpones the prospect of
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