

## Imperialist Atrocity in Kunduz

# U.S. Out of Afghanistan and the Near East!



Fourteen years of imperialist war in Afghanistan. Left: Red Cross warehouse in Kabul destroyed by U.S. bombing in October 2001. Right: Aftermath of U.S. airstrike against Doctors Without Borders hospital in Kunduz, October 3.

Over 100 patients and 80 medical staff were packed into the hospital in the Afghan city of Kunduz as the building was ripped apart by aerial bombardment in the dead of night on October 3. Wave after wave of deadly bombing continued, lasting at least an hour, despite frantic calls from the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF—Doctors Without Borders) staff to U.S., NATO and Afghan military headquarters. By the time it was over, 12 staff and ten patients, including three children, were dead and the intensive care, emergency room and physiotherapy units razed to the ground. Six patients burned to death in their beds in the intensive care unit, another lay dead on the operating table; a surgeon died on an office table. Over 30 people are missing. A fitting marker for the 14th anniversary of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Afghanistan.

As survivors mourned colleagues and loved ones, the Pentagon scrambled for cover, issuing a steady stream of contradictory lies, replete with trite references to “collateral damage” and Taliban “human shields.” That might have been the end of it, had the dead simply been indigent, illiterate Afghan villagers. But MSF is internationally respected and well-connected, and its spokesmen swatted down the Pentagon lies like flies, demanding an independent investigation into this war crime. So after nearly a week of prevarication, President Obama was finally compelled to issue a grudging apology, even as he insisted on keeping the “investigation” in-house.

Afghanistan was the “good war” Obama pledged to win when he won the presidency in 2008, as opposed to George W. Bush’s “bad war” and occupation in Iraq,

which the Democrats vowed to end in short order. Seven years later, American forces remain in Iraq. In Afghanistan, notwithstanding that the U.S. combat role was officially brought to an end last year, Obama has increased the use of drone warfare, while almost 10,000 U.S. troops remain in the country on a training and advisory mission. The “advisers” are clearly still bombing away.

The Kunduz bombing was no accident. The hospital offered medical care to victims from all sides of the conflict; that’s why it was raided by Afghan government troops in July, and that’s why it was bombed. The Taliban religious reactionaries are die-hard opponents of social liberation; nonetheless, U.S. imperialism is the main enemy of the world’s working people and oppressed masses, who have

a military side with even these Islamic fundamentalists against the imperialists. All U.S. and other imperialist forces out of Afghanistan and the Near East now!

### U.S.-Led Anti-Soviet “Holy War” in Afghanistan

The history of U.S. imperialism in Afghanistan has been one long atrocity from the time it got involved there more than 35 years ago. In the late 1970s, the CIA began funding and training Islamic fundamentalists who rose up against a pro-Soviet left-nationalist regime that had come to power in Kabul and implemented a handful of reforms particularly benefiting women. The Islamist cutthroats specialized in targeting schoolgirls and unveiled women, among other “heathens.” Thus began the biggest covert operation

in CIA history, and a decade-long proxy war against Soviet military forces. The Taliban, Al Qaeda and Islamic State (ISIS) are all first- or second-generation offspring of that U.S.-sponsored “holy war” against the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union was based on a historically progressive collectivized and planned economy—product of the Bolshevik-led workers revolution of October 1917—albeit, beginning in 1923-24, under the rule of a nationalist and anti-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy. The Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979, launched to defend the USSR’s southern flank against the CIA-sponsored insurgency, also objectively opened up the possibility of modernizing Afghan society and freeing Afghan women from centuries of degradation. The Soviet presence encouraged them to shed their *burqas* and study science, medicine and engineering; the victory of the *mujahedin* meant a return to slavery. As Trotskyists who stood for unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state and championed the cause of women’s emancipation, we defended the Soviet intervention and proclaimed: Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend social gains of October Revolution to the Afghan peoples!

Washington seized on the Red Army intervention to launch a renewed anti-Soviet campaign of military provocation and economic strangulation. Instead of fighting to finish off the *mujahedin*, a prospect that was within reach by the mid 1980s, the Kremlin bureaucrats temporized, hoping to appease the U.S. By the end of the 1980s, the bureaucracy had withdrawn the Soviet Army, leaving Afghanistan to revert to the benighted and tribal-riven slaughterhouse it is to this day and helping to pave the way to the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state itself.

*continued on page 8*



Imperialist devastation of Afghanistan and Near East has displaced millions of people. Migrants at Serbian-Croatian border wait to be allowed to travel further into the European Union, September 24.



# “Karl Marx” by V.I. Lenin

We print below the fourth installment of “Karl Marx” by Lenin. The earlier parts, which gave a sketch of Marx’s life and an overview of his philosophical and economic doctrines, were published in WV Nos. 1073-1075 (4 and 18 September and 2 October). This selection continues the explanation of Marxist economics, including its critique of private ownership of land.

## PART FOUR

Volume Three of *Capital* solves the problem of how the *average rate of profit* is formed on the basis of the law of value. The immense stride forward made by economic science in the person of Marx consists in his having conducted an analysis, from the standpoint of mass economic phenomena, of the social economy as a whole, not from the standpoint of individual cases or of the external and superficial aspects of competition, to which vulgar political economy and the modern “theory of marginal utility” frequently restrict themselves. Marx first analyses the origin of surplus value, and then goes on to consider its division into profit, interest, and ground rent. Profit is the ratio between surplus value and the total capital invested in an undertaking. Capital with a “high organic composition” (i.e., with a preponderance of constant capital over variable capital in excess of the social average) yields a rate of profit below the average; capital with a “low organic composition” yields a rate of profit above the average. Competition among capitalists, and their freedom to transfer their capital from one branch to another, will in both cases reduce the rate of profit to the average. The sum total of the values of all the commodities in a given society coincides with the sum total of the prices of the commodities, but, in individual undertakings and branches of production, as a result of competition, commodities are sold, not at their values but at the *prices of production* (or production prices), which are equal to the capital expended plus the average profit.

In this way, the well-known and indisputable fact of the divergence between prices and values and of the equalisation of profits is fully explained by Marx on the basis of the law of value, since the sum total of values of all commodities coincides with the sum total of prices. However, the equating of (social) value to (individual) prices does not take place simply and directly, but in a very complex way. It is quite natural that in a society of separate producers of commodities, who are united only by the market, a conformity to law can be only an aver-

age, social, mass manifestation, with individual deviations in either direction mutually compensating one another.

A rise in the productivity of labour implies a more rapid growth of constant capital as compared with variable capital. Inasmuch as surplus value is a function of

worthy) the error of Ricardo, who considered that differential rent is derived only when there is a successive transition from better land to worse. On the contrary, there may be inverse transitions, land may pass from one category into others (owing to advances in agricultural techniques,

from one branch to another. However, the private ownership of land creates monopoly, which hinders that free flow. Because of that monopoly, the products of agriculture, where a lower organic composition of capital obtains, and consequently an individually higher rate of profit, do not enter into the quite free process of the equalisation of the rate of profit. As a monopolist, the landowner can keep the price above the average, and this monopoly price gives rise to *absolute* rent. Differential rent cannot be done away with under capitalism, but absolute rent *can*—for instance, by the nationalisation of the land, by making it state property. That would undermine the monopoly of private landowners, and would mean the more consistent and full operation of freedom of competition in agriculture. That is why, as Marx points out, bourgeois radicals have again and again in the course of history advanced this progressive bourgeois demand for nationalisation of the land, a demand which, however, frightens most of the bourgeoisie, because it would too closely affect another monopoly, one that is particularly important and “sensitive” today—the monopoly of the means of production in general. (A remarkably popular, concise, and clear exposition of his theory of the average rate of profit on capital and of absolute ground rent is given by Marx himself in a letter to Engels, dated August 2, 1862. See *Briefwechsel*, Vol. 3, pp. 77-81; also the letter of August 9, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 86-87.)

With reference to the history of ground rent it is also important to note Marx’s analysis showing how labour rent (the peasant creates surplus product by working on the lord’s land) is transformed into rent paid in produce or in kind (the peasant creates surplus product on his own

*continued on page 8*



Landlords evict Irish tenant farmers during Great Famine, 1848. Thatched roofs were often removed to make houses uninhabitable.

variable capital alone, it is obvious that the rate of profit (the ratio of surplus value to the whole capital, not to its variable part alone) tends to fall. Marx makes a detailed analysis of this tendency and of a number of circumstances that conceal or counteract it. Without pausing to deal with the extremely interesting sections of Volume Three of *Capital* devoted to usurer’s capital, commercial capital and money capital, we must pass on to the most important section—the theory of *ground rent*. Since the area of land is limited and, in capitalist countries, the land is all held by individual private owners, the price of production of agricultural products is determined by the cost of production, not on soil of average quality but on the worst soil; not under average conditions but under the worst conditions of delivery of produce to the market. The difference between this price and the price of production on better soil (or in better conditions) constitutes *differential* rent. Analysing this in detail, and showing how it arises out of the difference in fertility of different plots of land, and out of the difference in the amount of capital invested in land, Marx fully reveals (see also *Theories of Surplus Value*, in which the criticism of Rodbertus is most note-

the growth of towns, and so on), and the notorious “law of diminishing returns,” which charges Nature with the defects, limitations and contradictions of capitalism, is profoundly erroneous. Further, the equalisation of profit in all branches of industry and the national economy in general presupposes complete freedom of competition and the free flow of capital

## Workers Vanguard Subscription Drive

### August 20 to October 14

Local	Quota (in points)	Week 7 (Oct. 1-7)	%
Bay Area	350	450	129%
Chicago	200	287	144%
Los Angeles	250	285	114%
New York	750	808	108%
<b>National Total</b>	<b>1,550</b>	<b>1,830</b>	<b>118%</b>

### WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢  
No. 1075  
October 2015

**Blood, Sweat and Tiers**  
**Auto Workers Oppose Sellout Contract**

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

See also: September 11: Thousands of public school teachers across the United States are striking for better wages and working conditions.

## Subscribe Now!

- ☐ \$10/22 issues of *Workers Vanguard* ☐ New ☐ Renewal  
(includes English-language *Spartacist* and *Black History and the Class Struggle*)  
International rates: \$25/22 issues—Airmail \$10/22 issues—Seamail
- ☐ \$2/6 introductory issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist*)
- ☐ \$2/4 issues of *Espartaco* (en español) (includes Spanish-language *Spartacist*)
- ☐ I would like to contribute \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the production of *Workers Vanguard*.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Apt. # \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

1076

Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

## WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Liz Gordon

EDITOR: Michael Davisson

EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Conor Kristofersen

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

EDITORIAL BOARD: Elizabeth Johnson (managing editor), François Donau (production manager), Blandine Hauser (letters editor), Bruce André, Ray Bishop, John Blake, Bonnie Brodie, Jon Brule, Ed Clarkson, Paul Cone, George Foster, Walter Jennings, Michael Joyce, Jane Kerrigan, James Robertson, Joseph Seymour, Alan Wilde, Laura Zamora

The Spartacist League is the U.S. section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

*Workers Vanguard* (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and skipping the last issue in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116. E-mail address: [vanguard@tiac.net](mailto:vanguard@tiac.net). Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/22 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

The closing date for news in this issue is October 13.

No. 1076

16 October 2015

# The Communist Fight Against Black Oppression

## Leninism vs. Debs's Socialist Party

Eugene V. Debs, leader of the Socialist Party (SP) in the early 20th century, has been getting a lot of attention from the reformist social-democratic left these days. The reason is that Bernie Sanders, the Democratic presidential candidate, sees himself as standing in the tradition of Debs. In particular, with Black Lives Matter activists and others criticizing Sanders for having nothing to say to black people, what Debs had to say about racial oppression is being discussed.

Likening Sanders to Debs is grotesque. Debs, whatever his shortcomings, was a socialist who opposed all capitalist politicians and dedicated his life to the struggle to get rid of capitalism. Sanders, in contrast, is a bourgeois politician, a representative of the class enemy. He is seeking to be nominated for imperialist commander-in-chief by the capitalist Democratic Party.

In August, the social-democratic journal *Jacobin* published an online article “Something to Offer” ([jacobinmag.com](http://jacobinmag.com), August 11), which was an edited version of an article originally published in 2008 in the academic journal *International Labor and Working-Class History*. The author, University of Wisconsin historian William P. Jones, defends Debs against accusations of indifference to racism. *Jacobin*’s blurb says: “Unlike many in his party, Eugene V. Debs believed the struggle for black equality was critical to realizing the promise of socialism.”

Jones argues against using Debs “to epitomize white radicals’ alleged indifference to racism and its significance to the history of the working class in the United States.” He blames this view of Debs on the influence of mid 20th century labor historian Philip S. Foner, a supporter of the Communist Party. Jones’s attack on Foner appears in the broader context of attempts to refurbish the Socialist Party at the expense of the Bolshevik Revolution and the early Communist movement. A whole array of authors around the *Historical Materialism* journal, its conferences and book series willfully obscure the vast gulf that separates the Second (Socialist) and Third (Communist) Internationals (see “The Neo-Kautskyites,” *Spartacist* No. 63, Winter 2012-13).

It is worth reading Jones’s piece alongside the two Debs articles he discusses: “The Negro in the Class Struggle,” (*International Socialist Review*, November 1903) and “The Negro and His Nemesis,” (*International Socialist Review*, January 1904), both of which are included in the book *Eugene V. Debs Speaks* (1972). Jones attempts to defend Debs’s social-democratic attitude toward black oppression, especially from Communist critics. But, unintentionally, he underlines both Debs’s weaknesses and also the importance of the Leninist analysis of black oppression and its effect on the working class and the labor movement.

The racial oppression of black people is fundamental to American capitalism, which was founded on chattel slavery, and cannot be eliminated short of socialist revolution. The capitalist ruling class foments racial animosities to divide and weaken the working class and defend its own rule. The fight against black oppression is crucial to the fight to overthrow U.S. capitalism; black workers must play a leading role in this struggle.

Jones goes to great lengths to show that Debs was not a racist and that he denounced racism. This is true. The two articles by Debs, written as polemics against racists within the SP, are eloquent in defending black people against racism,



Left: Soviet poster from 1926 declares “Down With Anti-Semitism!” Right: Socialist Party leader Eugene Debs addresses Milwaukee Socialist meeting; SP Congressman Victor Berger, an open racist, is seated at far right.



Underwood & Underwood

in calling for working-class unity across racial lines and in emphasizing that the Socialist Party should open its ranks to black people. In “The Negro in the Class Struggle,” Debs stressed, “The history of the Negro in the United States is a history of crime without a parallel.” Debs stands out favorably against most of his contemporaries in the labor movement—including within the SP.

Debs’s writing remains a powerful denunciation of white workers’ racism. Debs recognized that black oppression, rather than making white workers privileged, degrades them, thus providing a

refers to three interrelated flaws: Debs’s lack of understanding of the central role that black oppression plays in maintaining capitalism in the United States, of the vital (and numerically disproportionate) role that black workers will play in an American socialist revolution, and of the need for a revolutionary workers party that places the fight against black oppression at its center.

### For a Leninist Vanguard Party

At bottom, Debs’s problems on the black question are related to his fundamental political problem: the party ques-

Wisconsin SP Congressman. Such a conception of the party prioritizes unity with non-revolutionary and anti-revolutionary elements over building a programmatically unified party of revolutionaries that would be capable of leading a socialist revolution. Thus, a social-democratic party’s right wing ends up determining the party’s program and practice.

Debs was not ignorant of racism within the SP: “Indeed, so thoroughly is the South permeated with the malignant spirit of race hatred that even Socialists are to be found, and by no means rarely, who either share directly in the race hostility against the Negro, or avoid the issue, or apologize for the social obliteration of the color line in the class struggle.” While opposing this racism, Debs allowed himself to be used as left cover for the right wing in his own party. This is similar to how Debs’s principled opposition to the interimperialist First World War (for which he paid with imprisonment—which likely hastened his death—and loss of his U.S. citizenship) in effect covered the opportunism of the right-wing Socialists.

The blurb to the *Jacobin* article notwithstanding, Debs did not see the fight against black oppression as *central* to fighting against capitalism in the United States. To his credit, Debs believed that white and black workers should (to borrow a later phrase) “unite and fight” for their common class interests—but he failed to see black oppression as strategic. Debs wrote that black people should join the SP, but that is essentially all:

“In capitalism the Negro question is a grave one and will grow more threatening as the contradictions and complications of capitalist society multiply, but this need not worry us. Let them [the capitalists] settle the Negro question in their own way, if they can. We have nothing to do with it, for that is their fight. We have simply to open the eyes of as many Negroes as we can and bring them into the socialist movement to do battle for emancipation from wage slavery, and when the working class have triumphed in the class struggle and stand forth economic as well as political free men, the race problem will forever disappear.”

—“The Negro in the Class Struggle”

Several paragraphs later, he offers the famous conclusion:

“We have nothing special to offer the Negro, and we cannot make separate appeals to all the races.

“The Socialist Party is the party of the

*continued on page 5*



Tulsa World

National Guardsmen detain wounded black people during race riot in Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1921. Wave of anti-black pogroms swept American cities after the end of World War I.

refutation of the later concept of “white skin privilege.” In “The Negro and His Nemesis,” Debs wrote:

“Foolish and vain indeed is the [white] workingman who makes the color of his skin the steppingstone to his imaginary superiority. The trouble is with his head, and if he can get that right he will find that what ails him is not superiority but inferiority, and that he, as well as the Negro he despises, is the victim of wage slavery, which robs him of what he produces and keeps both him and the Negro tied down to the dead level of ignorance and degradation.”

Proving that Debs was not a racist is a bit of a straw-man argument. The characterization of Debs as “color blind” does not signify that he was racist, or even indifferent to black oppression. Rather, it

tion. As V.I. Lenin argued, in *What Is to Be Done?* (1902), the party should, as “the tribune of the people,” defend all the oppressed. In order for Lenin’s Bolshevik Party to be the instrument of proletarian revolution, it needed to be comprised of the most advanced elements of the working class and to champion the fight against all forms of special oppression—national, ethnic, religious, women’s oppression, etc.

Debs’s conception of the party was the opposite of Lenin’s. Debs embraced the social-democratic view that the workers party should be a party of the whole class, a big tent that embraced working-class tendencies of all types, including outright racists like Victor Berger, the

## British Columbia, Canada

# Labor Must Combat Anti-Asian Racism

The following article is reprinted from Spartacist Canada No. 185 (Summer 2015), newspaper of our comrades of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste.

**SPARTACIST** CANADA

Anti-Chinese racism is always bubbling near the surface in British Columbia. The targets vary—immigration, language, “foreign ownership,” “monster houses”—but the toxic racism is a constant. Thus a long-running campaign against Chinese-language signs in the Vancouver suburb of Richmond saw the city council vote on May 25 to direct staff to come up with a bylaw against “visual clutter.” This marked a retreat from its earlier determination to ban Chinese-only signs outright, but there was no mistaking that Chinese people were the target. Even so, this measure did not satisfy the reactionaries who sought a ban. Among them was Harold Steves, a longtime city councillor and well-known NDPer [supporter of the social-democratic New Democratic Party], who declared that “the signs should all be in English.”

With nearly 100,000 ethnic Chinese (half the population), Richmond has the highest proportion of first-generation immigrants of any Canadian municipality. Despite this, according to the municipal government’s own survey, just over three percent of all Richmond shops display Chinese-only signs. Yet this vicious campaign has been on the boil for years. In 2013, a petition seeking to make it an offence to have commercial signs that are not at least 70 percent English (or, hypocritically, French) got 1,000 signatories. Sounding like a modern-day white Rhodesian, one of them declaimed: “We, the new visible minorities, are experiencing exclusion.... Why do I have to be an outsider?” (*Toronto Star*, 23 March 2013).

Last November, as the issue resurfaced during the municipal elections, the virulently racist “Immigration Watch Canada” unfurled a large banner atop a busy Richmond highway with the message: “Fight Gridlock: Cut Immigration.” This outfit, which is promoted by open fascists and has links to similar anti-immigration groups in the U.S., Britain and Australia, rails against “the indignity that Richmond citizens and all other Canadians will continue to endure.” These sick bigots fulminate about communities being “overwhelmed by immigrants” and predict there “might well be civil war over control of many Canadian cities”! Showing their contempt for all minorities, they also attempted to foment a racist backlash against the largely Punjabi port truckers during the latter’s strike last year, blaming them for “displacing” white Canadian workers.

Many of these same reactionary “English only” forces also oppose funding English as a Second Language classes and other services which are essential for immigrants to be able to work and more generally navigate society. Meanwhile, capitalist governments at every level are slashing ESL programs to the bone. Against such anti-immigrant bigotry, we Marxists oppose all “official language” edicts and are against privileges for any language. We demand *equal language rights for all*. We support bilingual (or multilingual) education where necessary, and the provision of services in any language—French, English, Cree,

Inuktitut, Chinese, Punjabi—where circumstances warrant.

Over 40 percent of Metro Vancouver residents have mother tongues other than English, with languages from China, India and the Philippines topping the list. Immigrants make up a strategic component of the working class in B.C. and they bring many valuable political experiences from their homelands. In its own defense, the workers movement must reject anti-

a typical comment, a *Vancouver Sun* columnist wrote in 1914: “We want our population to remain a white people; we want no interference with our laboring classes by a cheap yellow, brown or black exodus from any part of Asia; we want our agricultural, our mining, our fishing, our lumbering and all our other industries to be in the hands of white people” (quoted in Patricia E. Roy, *A White Man’s Province: British Columbia Politicians and*



Spartacist Canada

**British Columbia, February 2002: Hospital workers contingent in mass labor protest.**

immigrant reaction and the kind of racist filth pushed by outfits like Immigration Watch, which can only poison the struggles of labour against capital and bring defeat.

### A History of Anti-Chinese Racism

Always an integral part of British Columbia’s history, Chinese people contributed their sweat and blood to build a modern industrial province. Settling in B.C. at least as long ago as the white colonists, many came from California and China to join the gold rush of 1858, when the British officially founded the mainland territory. Others already lived in Victoria, in the then-separate colony of Vancouver Island. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they consistently represented 5-10 percent of the B.C. population. In the early 1880s, the rail magnates used the skills of Chinese workers (many of whom had worked on the U.S. trans-continental railroad) to build the B.C. leg of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Paid less than their white co-workers and given the most dangerous jobs, at least 600 Chinese workers died on the project.

After the final spike was driven in 1885, Chinese labour was deemed no longer necessary. The Canadian government first curtailed and then outright banned Chinese immigration, slapping on the hated “head tax” and fomenting a backlash against the Chinese. In the House of Commons, the corrupt and racist prime minister John A. Macdonald railed against “the Chinaman” that “he has no British instincts or British feelings or aspirations, and therefore ought not to have a vote.” Chinese Canadians did not obtain the right to vote until 1949.

The capitalists’ anti-Chinese racism was particularly open and raw in B.C. In

*Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914*, 1989). This “yellow peril” racism also saw Japanese Canadians, once a large component of the West Coast fishing industry, essentially wiped out as a thriving community in B.C. Targeted as “enemy aliens,” they were dispossessed and thrown into concentration camps during World War II (see “The Infamy of Canada’s Concentration Camps,” *Spartacist Canada* No. 64, September 1985).

And throughout, Native people were relegated to third-class status.

The magnates of B.C.’s coal mines, fisheries and lumber industry were past masters at using racial divisions to crush workers struggles. Chinese were often recruited as strikebreakers during miners strikes and, despite some exceptional instances of joint class struggles against the bosses, the fishing industry was wracked with divisions between Native, white and Japanese fishermen. Buying into these divide-and-rule schemes, many union officials also whipped up anti-Chinese racism, excluding Asians from union membership. The 1907 Vancouver riot which almost destroyed Chinatown was led by the “Asiatic Exclusion League,” a group formed by the Vancouver Trades and Labor Council.

In stark contrast to the racism peddled by much of the trade-union leadership, William “Big Bill” Haywood, then a leader of the Western Federation of Miners and later a fervent supporter of the 1917 Russian Revolution, telegraphed during the 1903 Vancouver Island miners strike at Ladysmith: “We approve of calling out any or all men necessary to win at Ladysmith. Organize Japanese and Chinese if possible.”

### Down With Racist Scapegoating!

Anti-Asian reaction is by no means simply history. B.C.’s ethnic minorities, Chinese people in particular, remain the target of racist slurs and verbal abuse in the workplace and in public. The Canadian-nationalist union tops, too, have inflamed such divisions. Only three years ago, union misleaders in B.C. spearheaded a vicious campaign over the hiring of 200 Chinese temporary foreign workers at a coal mine in northern B.C. As we said at the time: “Such campaigns are *poison*. They serve only to pit Canadian working people against their class brothers and sisters abroad and, increasingly, against foreign-born workers at home” (“Union Tops’ Ugly Campaign Against Foreign Workers in B.C.,” *Spartacist Canada* No. 175, Winter 2012/2013). Against this, a class-struggle leadership would fight to unionize such foreign-born workers, demanding equal pay for equal work. It would combat all forms of anti-immigrant bigotry, demanding full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

In the last couple of decades, anti-Chinese bigotry in B.C. has also been inflamed by the supposed role of Asian investors in driving up house prices. According to one recent study, Vancouver now has the second most unaffordable housing market in the world after Hong Kong—worse than London and New

## 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 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 28, 7 p.m.**  
**Capitalism to Communism: A Marxist Understanding of the State**  
UCLA, Bunche Hall, Room 2173  
Information and readings:  
(213) 380-8239 • slsycla@sbcglobal.net

### TORONTO

**Thursday, October 29, 6:30 p.m.**  
**Imperialism and the Racist Clampdown on Immigration**  
University of Toronto  
OISE, Room 4420  
252 Bloor St. West  
(at St. George subway)  
Information and readings:  
(416) 593-4138 • spartacan@on.aibn.com

### VANCOUVER

**Tuesday, November 3, 6:30 p.m.**  
**B.C. Labour Must Combat Anti-Asian Racism**  
Britannia Community Centre  
Learning Resource Centre Room  
1661 Napier Street  
(off Commercial Drive)  
Information and readings:  
(604) 687-0353  
trotskyist\_vancouver@shawcable.com

For more information  
visit the ICL website:  
**www.icl-fi.org**

## Debs...

(continued from page 3)

working class, regardless of color—the whole working class of the whole world.”

When this was written, the Great Migration of millions of black people to the North and West was still in the future. While black people were not yet integrated into the industrial working class, the black question was already important to the labor movement, if not in the same way as it would be two decades later. This was less than a decade after the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision that legalized segregation; there had been, on average, a lynching every four days in 1903; practically all American Federation of Labor unions excluded black people, and black strikebreakers were used in various strikes.

Debs fought for an inclusive labor movement. As a leader in the American Railway Union (ARU) in the 1890s, he fought unsuccessfully against the color bar and to admit black workers. He later argued that the failure to organize black workers contributed to the defeat of the 1894 Pullman railroad strike.

Despite the growing importance of black oppression, the Socialist Party of Debs's time had nothing special to say to black workers and in fact generally oscillated between indifference and racist hostility. It is no wonder that Hubert



**Cover of *Labor Defender*, journal of the Communist Party-led International Labor Defense. ILD campaign was key in saving the Scottsboro Boys from legal lynching.**

Harrison, perhaps the most important black Socialist of the early 1900s and one of the leading intellectuals of Harlem in that period, left the SP in disgust. Nor is it any wonder that, after the Bolshevik Revolution, black Socialists in Harlem were drawn to the Communist International (Comintern), which emphasized the fight against racial oppression.

James P. Cannon—a former SP mem-

ber and founder of the Communist Party (CP) as well as later the central leader of early American Trotskyism—put it well in “The Russian Revolution and the American Negro Movement” (1959):

“The best of the earlier socialists were represented by Debs, who was friendly to all races and purely free from prejudice. But the limitedness of the great agitator’s view on this far from simple problem was expressed in his statement [quoted above].... That was considered a very advanced position at the time, but it made no provision for active support of the Negro’s special claim for a little equality here and now, or in the foreseeable future, on the road to socialism....

"In the meantime, nothing could be done about the Negro question as such, and the less said about it the better. Sweep it under the rug."

The SP's left wing sympathized with the Bolshevik Revolution and in 1919 the party split. Left-wing Socialists were among the founders of what became the Communist Party, though Debs never made the leap. The Communist International intervened into the fledgling CP to get the party to make the fight for black liberation central to its work. As Marxist historian Jacob Zumoff underscored in an interview published on the *Jacobin* website on August 18: "The long struggle against national, ethnic, and religious oppression in tsarist Russia—what Lenin had called the 'prison house of nations'—made the Bolsheviks aware of connections between non-class oppression and the fight for working-class

power. This was central to the Comintern's broader vision."

In his recent book, *The Communist International and U.S. Communism* (2014), Zumoff details the Communist International's interventions to force the early Communist Party to see the connection between the struggle for black liberation and socialist revolution. The Comintern's proddings laid the basis for the CP's work among black people in the 1930s, even after its Stalinist degeneration, such as around the Angelo Herndon and Scottsboro Boys cases. During the 1930s, and especially in WWII, the Stalinist Communist Party increasingly sold out the fight against black oppression as part of supporting the Democratic Party of Franklin Roosevelt.

Jones (and *Jacobin*) are motivated by anti-Communism, which is why so much of Jones's article consists of a polemic against Philip Foner. Although he was a Stalinist, Foner recognized that—unlike the SP—the Communist Party militantly opposed black oppression. Foner's labeling of Debs as "color blind" was merely a restatement of the Comintern's view. The Spartacist League stands on the interventions of Lenin and the Comintern around this issue in the early 1920s as part of our fight against black oppression and for black liberation through socialist revolution. ■

York! Vancouver is a rapidly growing city with limited land space. Its housing stock is largely made up of single-family homes which use a huge amount of scarce land. Meanwhile, low interest rates have driven up demand as desperate young families scrape together a down payment. As for the large and growing number of poor and unemployed, they can scarcely find a roach-infested room to flop in. Homelessness, addiction, street prostitution and general human decrepitude are stark and highly visible.

It is the profit-driven capitalist system which creates grinding poverty, rampant unemployment and precarious conditions of life for working people. Under capitalism, housing is always the source of vast profits for developers, real estate magnates and slumlords. But the furor being whipped up over absentee investors from China who have parked their money in downtown condos and multimillion-dollar West Side houses serves only to further fuel a racist backlash.

As for the hundreds of thousands of Chinese people in Canada, they do not form a homogeneous group and are, like all communities, divided along class and other lines. A handful are quite rich capitalists, but the vast majority are workers, students or petty-bourgeois shopkeepers and professionals. There are also divisions between the earlier generations of immigrants and those who have come more recently. Many of the former are Cantonese speakers originally from the former British colony of Hong Kong, while the more recent immigrants are largely Mandarin speakers from mainland China who often have less command of English. Some among the Hong Kong-derived layers have come out publicly against Chinese-only signs in Richmond, in part to try to quell the racist backlash of which they are also victims.

## Defend the Gains of the Chinese Revolution!

The differing origins and makeup of B.C.'s Chinese population reflect developments in contemporary China itself. The 1949 Chinese Revolution swept away the rule of the warlords and their European imperialist masters. Despite profound deformations from the outset under the rule of a nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy, the workers state that emerged represents a tremendous gain for workers and the oppressed the world over. Hong Kong, in contrast, remained a capitalist enclave under British rule until it was repatriated to China in 1997.

Thanks to its collectivized economy,



Library and Archives Canada

**Grocery store after 1907 anti-Asian riots swept Vancouver's Chinese and Japanese neighborhoods.**

China has brought hundreds of millions of people out of dire poverty into social production and massively advanced living standards. The state-owned enterprises that remain at the heart of the economy are not operated for the profit of a tiny handful of ultra-rich capitalists, unlike private companies under capitalism. For this reason, the imperialist powers will not rest until they have regained China for untrammelled exploitation. It is in the interests of workers everywhere to stand unconditionally in defense of China against imperialism and capitalist restoration.

China's collectivized economy has somewhat shielded it from the depredations of the world capitalist market, but the rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy under Mao and his successors has blocked the road to the achievement of genuine socialism. To fully realize the potential of the collectivized economy, the bureaucracy must be swept away through a workers political revolution and replaced with a government based on workers democracy. Instead of the Stalinists' pipedream of "peaceful coexistence" with the capitalist-imperialist world, a revolutionary government of the workers and peasants would fight for a perspective of international socialist revolution.

In introducing “market reforms” beginning in the 1980s, the Chinese Stalinists have helped create a new class of capitalist entrepreneurs on the mainland, and

since 1997 have maintained a capitalist economy in Hong Kong. Many of these capitalistic elements, whether in Hong Kong or on the mainland, fear a return to a more “command” type of economy with potential risks of expropriation of their wealth, and look to places like Australia and Canada as “stable” bourgeois democracies where their investments will be safe. A China ruled by workers and peasants councils would expropriate the growing class of private Chinese capitalists as well as the Hong Kong tycoons. China’s all-round development toward socialism is crucially dependent on working-class revolution in the advanced capitalist countries, which would open the road to a global planned economy based on the highest level of technology and industry.

## Unchain B.C. Labour!

These days, the bourgeois media portray Vancouver as a temperate “Sea-to-Sky” playground for the rich. But the city also has the poorest urban area in the country—indeed, a strip of East Hastings on the Downtown Eastside resembles a Third World shantytown where the destitute and homeless are dumped. As the capitalists attack unions, jobs and living conditions, they are eager to manipulate national and ethnic divisions within the working class so as to keep workers divided and paralyze their struggles. For the exploiting class, racist campaigns

over language, “foreign” (B.C. code for Chinese) investors or foreign-born workers are made to order. This also fosters nationalism and with it the illusion that the workers have a common interest with their Canadian capitalist exploiters.

The multiracial working class in B.C., with its strategic contingents of long-shoremen, port truckers, construction forestry and other workers, has immense potential social power. But this power is shackled by a nationalist, pro-capitalist union bureaucracy together with its political allies in the NDP. Against divisive scapegoating and chauvinism, the proletariat needs to mount a class-struggle fight against the capitalist order—and that can only be based on the understanding that labour and capital have no common interests.

A successful fight for jobs, decent housing and health care for all hinges on the struggle to forge a multiracial revolutionary workers party. Such a party would champion the cause of all the oppressed, fighting for a socialist revolution to sweep away the entire capitalist system. A workers government would rip the means of production from the hands of the exploiters, and seize the ritzy office towers, mansions and empty condos in order to transform them into housing and other socially useful facilities. It would create a socialist planned economy in the interests of the whole of the working people. *Native, Asian, black or white—workers of the world unite!* ■

[illegible]

# China Is Not Capitalist

# China and the World Economy:

# Fact vs. Fiction

We print below an edited presentation by Bruce André of the WV Editorial Board to a Spartacist League meeting in New York City last month. Comrade André’s talk debunks some of the more pervasive myths being circulated in the press about the Chinese economy and explains some recent economic developments.

Key to understanding China’s economy is that, contrary to the claims of most bourgeois pundits and self-described socialists, it is *not* a capitalist country. The 1949 Revolution overthrew the rule of the Chinese bourgeoisie and landlords and liberated the country from imperialist bondage. The subsequent creation of a collectivized, planned economy laid the basis for a surge in industrial development and enormous gains for the miserably poor worker and peasant masses. The revolution, which was carried out by Mao Zedong’s peasant-based People’s Liberation Army, created a workers state, but one that was deformed from its inception by the rule of the parasitic Chinese Communist Party (CCP) bureaucracy. Despite major capitalist inroads, China remains a workers state with the core of its economy collectivized, including nationalized banks and major industries. Although a small capitalist class has emerged on the mainland, it does not hold state power.

The imperialists who “lost China” in 1949 are committed to getting it back in order to once again exploit its masses at will. This can be seen in the U.S.’s increasing military aggression against China, currently focused on the South China Sea. In its latest provocation, the U.S. has scheduled naval maneuvers in the next two weeks “inside the 12-nautical mile zones that China claims as territory around some of the islands it has constructed in the Spratly chain” (*Financial Times*, 8 October). This belligerence goes hand in hand with economic pressure. The proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which the Obama administration is spearheading, is an anti-China bloc dominated by U.S. and Japanese imperialism and including nine other capitalist states as well as Vietnam, a deformed workers state.

The International Communist League opposes the TPP as well as the U.S. military maneuvers as part of our unconditional military defense of China against the imperialists and other capitalist states and against internal counterrevolution. At the same time, we give no political support to the CCP regime, which must be swept away by the Chinese proletariat through a political revolution that creates a regime of workers democracy committed to a program of world socialist revolution.

From Mao’s time to today, CCP policies have expressed the nationalist Stalinist dogma that socialism—a society of material abundance marked by the disappearance of classes—can be built in a single country, even one as historically backward as China. This program is utterly counterposed to the Marxist program of world proletarian revolution—the prerequisite to creating an internationally planned economy that would eliminate scarcity by harnessing the most sophisticated technology, which today is concentrated in the advanced capitalist countries. Under Mao, the planned economy was immensely distorted by the rule of the bureaucracy, which made a virtue of economic autarky. To correct the imbalances this bureaucratic mismanagement created and to spur modernization and growth, beginning some 35 years ago subsequent regimes introduced market

reforms, loosening state control over production and trade. Capitalist investment was also invited into certain areas.

This experience is far from unique to China. In the July 1988 Spartacist pamphlet “*Market Socialism*” in *Eastern Europe*, we addressed the effects of such measures in several East European deformed workers states, before their destruction through capitalist counter-

the bourgeois press of seeking to explain the problems of the world economy as resulting from a supposedly mounting crisis in China.

On August 24, following a series of sharp declines on the New York Stock Exchange, the Dow Jones Industrial Average plummeted almost 600 points. As it happened, this came after a series of major sell-offs on the Shanghai stock

prices of minerals and other raw materials to stock and bond prices in Third World countries—are now losing steam. The fact that the pinprick that let some air out of the stock market bubble in the U.S. came from a fall in the Shanghai stock market was purely accidental, with no underlying economic significance. The pinprick could just as easily have come from rumors about Fed policy, or almost anything else.

Secondly, the state of the Shanghai stock market says nothing about the state of the Chinese economy as a whole. Unlike stock markets in the U.S. and other capitalist powers, movements on the Chinese stock market have almost no impact on investment decisions in that country. Only about 5 percent of private-sector funding in China is generated on the stock market—to say nothing of the dominant state-owned sector! If the NY Stock Exchange lost some 40 percent of its value in two months, as the Chinese stock market did this summer, we would be looking at a global depression.

The collapse of the Shanghai exchange surely represented a political black eye for the Beijing regime, which for the past couple of years has been encouraging the country’s middle class to boost their income by investing in stocks while preaching that the stock market was going to play a “decisive role” in allocating resources. That political commitment by the Beijing bureaucrats no doubt explains why they have spent an incredible \$236 billion of the country’s valuable reserves trying to shore up stock prices since the rout began in June.

Thirdly, even if the Shanghai stock market collapse reflected a growing economic crisis in China, which it did not, that would hardly portend an economic crisis in the U.S. The U.S. has a huge domestic market that accounts for some 70 percent of its Gross Domestic Product. The Chinese market for U.S. exports accounts for only 1 percent of this country’s GDP.

### The Yuan and You

Meanwhile, in mid August Beijing devalued the yuan, allowing the value of its currency to fall 4.4 percent in one week. This was viewed in the U.S. financial press as another sign that the Chinese economy is supposedly entering into a deep crisis. The devaluation was presented as a panicked reaction by Beijing, seeking to head off an economic downturn by boosting exports. (A lower exchange rate for the yuan makes Chinese exports cheaper on international markets.) In a *Monthly Review* (27 August) article titled “The Devaluation of the Yuan,” Indian economist Prabhat Patnaik proclaimed: “China’s devaluation of the currency portends a serious accentuation of the world capitalist crisis.” Patnaik foresees a coming currency war in which China desperately tries to stay afloat by increasing its exports at the expense of its competitors internationally.

Let’s put this currency devaluation in context. Back in 2005, under strong pressure from Washington, China basically tied its exchange rate to the dollar. That resulted in an upward revaluation of the yuan that continued over the next ten years, which was almost certainly not exactly what Chinese officials had anticipated. As the U.S. Federal Reserve, following the financial crisis, began printing money like there was no tomorrow, that logically should have led to a weakened dollar. But the economic stagnation in Japan and Europe, to say nothing of



September 29: Brokerage house stock ticker screen in Fuyang, city in eastern China, shows stock price fall.

revolution. We observed that within the framework of Stalinism, there is “an inherent tendency to replace centralized planning and management with market mechanisms. Since managers and workers cannot be subject to the discipline of soviet democracy (workers councils), increasingly the bureaucracy sees subjecting the economic actors to the discipline

exchange. The financial press in this country started screaming about a supposed “meltdown” in China. The Taaffeites of the Committee for a Workers’ International, who claim that capitalism has been restored in China, fretted about “a China-led global recession” (“China crisis triggers panic on global markets,” socialistworld.net, 25 August).



High-speed train factory in Changsha, Hunan province, March 2015. Massive state investment in transportation, housing and other fixed assets kept Chinese economy booming while 2007-08 global financial crisis drove capitalist economies into recession.

of market competition as the only answer to economic inefficiency.” We also refer readers to our series “China’s ‘Market Reforms’: A Trotskyist Analysis” (WV Nos. 874 and 875, 4 August and 1 September 2006).

\* \* \*

This has been a volatile summer for financial markets, resulting in some sharp losses, especially for banks, hedge funds and other big capitalist investors. That, in turn, has generated a renewed round in

Now, first of all, the sell-off on Wall Street had, at bottom, nothing to do with China. It was a classic example of a financial bubble deflating (somewhat). Starting in 2009 and running until a year ago, the Federal Reserve printed money to the tune of some \$3.5 trillion and gave it out free of charge to the banks and other financial institutions. They, in turn, invested in stocks and other risky assets in the U.S. and around the world, artificially stimulating the global economy. A lot of those financial bubbles—from the



# Afghanistan...

(continued from page 1)

The final overturn of the Russian Revolution was a shattering defeat for working people in the former Soviet Union and everywhere else, including in the U.S. The U.S. ruling class proclaimed itself the sole “superpower,” swaggering and slaughtering its way around the globe, while bleeding dry the working class at home and grinding the black and Latino poor into the dirt.

## Washington’s Near East Quagmire

Since then the U.S. has extended its tentacles ever farther across the Near East. In 1991, Bush the Elder launched a punitive war against the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq. A hallmark of that war was the dropping of two 2,000-pound “bunker buster” precision “smart bombs” on a civilian air raid shelter in Baghdad. Our headline read, “Hundreds Killed as U.S. Deliberately Bombs Civilian Shelter: George Bush—Baby Killer” (WV No. 521, 1 March 1991).

A decade later, with the Soviet Union gone, Bush’s son invaded Afghanistan in the wake of the criminal World Trade Center attack, ostensibly to get the Taliban regime that was harboring Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. Scion of a wealthy Saudi family and veteran of the CIA anti-Soviet operation in Afghanistan, bin Laden had by then turned his attention to other “infidels,” including his former imperialist benefactors. The U.S.-led 2003 invasion of Iraq, which had nothing to do with bin Laden or the twin towers attack, followed in short order.

The bloody toppling by the U.S. of Saddam Hussein, whose bonapartist regime was based on the Sunni minority, had a huge impact not only on Iraq but on the region as a whole. The destruction of the social fabric of Iraq has threatened to upset the intricate and fragile structure erected by the British and French imperialists when they took over the Near East from the defunct Ottoman Empire following World War I. This imperialist carve-up amalgamated different pre-national peoples in artificial colonial or semicolonial states under the precept of divide and rule. Short of workers revolutions that could have channeled widespread anti-imperialist sentiment into the struggle for a socialist federation of the Near East, this ramshackle system could only be maintained through brutal imperial or bonapartist rule. Today, the prospect of a new carve-up of the region is increasingly posed.

Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, etc. were not nation-states but patchwork entities created by the imperialists (as is the case in

much of sub-Saharan Africa as well). The rulers of the arrogant American Empire seem to “learn nothing and forget nothing.” They decapitated the Iraqi state, unleashing a chaotic and bloody free-for-all among the Sunni, Shi’ite and Kurdish populations. In so doing, they ended up benefiting Iran, which for decades the Western imperialists have sought to weaken and isolate. Iran now influences the rump Iraqi regime that is dominated by the Shi’ite majority, incurring the wrath of embittered Iraqi Sunnis and in turn fueling the growth of ISIS and other Sunni forces which target not only Shi’ites

no side in the ethnic/sectarian civil war in Syria. Of course the working class of the entire world does have a side against the U.S. imperialists and their allies in the Near East.

After ISIS seized huge chunks of Iraq and Syria last year, the U.S. intervened militarily in the Syrian civil war, bombing ISIS forces in coordination with its spotters and foot soldiers on the ground, particularly the Kurdish nationalists. At that point we declared: “revolutionary Marxists have a military side with ISIS when it targets the imperialists and their proxies, including the Syrian Kurdish nationalists,



AFP

Students in downtown Kabul, 1981. Soviet intervention provided huge gains for Afghan women and offered prospect of modernizing Afghanistan.

but also the U.S. and the West in general.

Even as he was trying to extricate the U.S. from the Iraqi quagmire, Obama embarked on the NATO bombing of Libya in 2011 that overthrew the regime of strongman Muammar el-Qaddafi and set the stage for the current bloody chaos in that country. Moreover, the hell unleashed by the U.S. imperialists and their allies across the entire region has forced millions of people to flee from their homes, to neighboring countries and to Europe.

In Syria, Obama sought to undermine the regime of Bashar al-Assad, throwing Washington’s weight behind an insurgent opposition to the Assad regime, a key ally of Iran and a client of Russia going back to the Soviet era. Based on the relatively small Alawite sect, the Assad regime could only stay in power by wielding an iron fist against all opponents. Meanwhile, the “moderate” opposition bankrolled by the U.S. was nothing but a conduit for U.S. money and arms to various Sunni fundamentalist militias, including the Syrian branch of Al Qaeda and its later offshoot, ISIS. Marxists have

the [Iraqi Kurdish] *pesh merga*, the Baghdad government and its Shi’ite militias” (“Down With U.S. War Against ISIS!”, WV No. 1055, 31 October 2014).

The U.S.-led “coalition” against ISIS includes Saudi Arabia, a hideously reactionary theocracy rooted in Wahhabi Sunni fundamentalism. The Saudi regime is waging a vicious and bloody war against Houthi-led forces in Yemen, continues to fund all manner of anti-Western Islamist groups in Syria (and elsewhere) and has much in common with the social strictures of ISIS. The Kingdom is notorious for the barbaric practice of public beheadings—over 100 people were executed in the first half of this year. Another U.S. coalition partner is Turkey, whose main target is not ISIS but the Kurdish nationalists. The Erdogan regime in Turkey has re-launched and escalated a murderous reign of terror against the Kurds.

Our central opposition is to the U.S., its imperialist allies and regional coalition partners. The recent military intervention by Vladimir Putin’s capitalist Russia, which has been met with hostility by

# Karl Marx...

(continued from page 2)

land and hands it over to the landlord because of “non-economic constraint”), then into money-rent (rent in kind, which is converted into money—the *obrok* [quit rent] of old Russia—as a result of the development of commodity production), and finally into capitalist rent, when the peasant is replaced by the agricultural *entrepreneur*, who cultivates the soil with the help of hired labour. In connection with this analysis of the “genesis of capitalistic ground rent,” note should be taken of a number of profound ideas (of particular importance to backward countries like Russia) expressed by Marx regarding the evolution of capitalism in agriculture. “The transformation of rent in kind into money-rent is furthermore not only inevitably accompanied, but even anticipated, by the formation of a class of property-less day-labourers, who hire themselves out for money. During their genesis, when this new class appears but sporadically, the custom necessarily develops among the more prosperous peasants, subject to rent payments, of exploiting agricultural wage-labourers for their own account,



Dorothea Lange

Left: Destitute migrant farm worker family in California, 1936. Right: Collective farm, Soviet Ukraine, 1930s.

much as in feudal times, when the more well-to-do peasant serfs themselves also held serfs. In this way, they gradually acquire the possibility of accumulating a certain amount of wealth and themselves becoming transformed into future capitalists. The old self-employed possessors of land themselves thus give rise to a nursery school for capitalist tenants, whose development is conditioned by the general development of capitalist pro-

duction beyond the bounds of the countryside” (*Capital*, Vol. III, p. 332). “The expropriation and eviction of a part of the agricultural population not only set free for industrial capital, the labourers, their means of subsistence, and material for labour; it also created the home market” (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 778). In their turn, the impoverishment and ruin of the rural population play a part in the creation, for capital, of a reserve army of labour. In



Universal History Archive

the U.S. and its allies, does not change our position. Russia’s main concern lies in propping up its Syrian client regime and in maintaining its only foothold in the Near East, especially its sole naval facility on the Mediterranean. Capitalist Russia has a huge nuclear arsenal, inherited from the Soviet Union, and a large military, but it is not imperialist and it is not a contender for global domination; it is, for now, simply another player in the squalid civil war in Syria in which the international working class has no side. While our main opposition is to the imperialists, we also oppose all the other capitalist powers involved (including Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Turkey) and call for them to leave.

## Socialism or Barbarism

Ghoulish atrocities such as the Kunduz hospital bombing are intrinsic to imperialist wars and occupations, which seek to instill terror in the civilian population. During World War II, the U.S. and its British imperialist ally were no more hesitant than their Nazi counterparts to carry out mass murder, albeit under a “democratic” facade. Intense Allied bombing of the industrial city of Dresden in Germany and of Tokyo and Osaka in Japan resulted in upwards of 300,000 deaths, as civilian (and particularly working-class) areas were turned into infernos (see “The Hidden History of U.S. Terror Bombing,” WV No. 521, 1 March 1991). This was capped by the nuclear incineration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The imperialists employ a particularly vengeful brutality against those who challenge their rule. In its counterrevolutionary wars against the forces of the North Korean deformed workers state in the early 1950s and the Stalinist-led workers and peasants of Vietnam in the 1960s and early ’70s, the U.S. and its allies were responsible for the deaths of some six million people in total. We hailed the victory of the Vietnamese revolutionary fighters in 1975 over the U.S. and its local puppet forces.

In the intervening decades, U.S. imperialism has grown only more barbaric and irrational, having lost its economic hegemony while still dominating the world militarily. It must be brought down by a re-awakened proletariat, the multiracial U.S. working class that is its Achilles’ heel. Socialism or barbarism—those are the alternatives that have confronted humanity since the emergence of the imperialist system over a century ago. Either the conquest of power by the international proletariat and the creation of a global egalitarian order or the downfall of civilization. The task of building revolutionary Marxist parties molded in the image of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky and subject to the discipline of a reformed democratic-centralist Fourth International remains as urgent as ever. ■

# UAW...

(continued from page 12)

has as much reality as the promised but never delivered cap on the number of second-tier workers from contract talks four years ago. But in the unlikely event that the company adheres entirely to this prolonged wage progression, those hired since 2007 would remain second-class union members, saddled with an inferior health plan and a 401(k) in place of a defined-benefit pension. Tellingly, even if all UAW members tomorrow earned the current top-tier wage of \$28 an hour, FCA's costs per worker would be comparable to those at Toyota's non-union U.S. operations.

The very purpose of the tier system imposed in the 2007 contract was to gouge UAW workers in order to make the domestic automakers more competitive against their foreign rivals that have set up non-union shops in this country, primarily in the South. For Fiat (now FCA) CEO Sergio Marchionne, who introduced himself to the UAW during the 2009 Chrysler bankruptcy proceedings by insisting the union accept a "culture of poverty," the gutting of the union is on track. At every step, the pro-capitalist union misleaders have accommodated the bosses, including by helping slash wages. In 2007, then UAW president Ron Gettelfinger boasted that "the gap in labor costs" between the Detroit Three and the "foreign transplant operations will be largely or completely eliminated by the end of the contracts." Today, Williams, who embraces the notorious union-buster Marchionne literally as well as figuratively, continues to facilitate the plan the FCA chief outlined to investors last year: "We need to freeze the tier ones and make them a dying class."

The new deal, like the first, also falls far short in many other respects. Left intact is the Alternative Work Schedule, which rotates workers between day, afternoon and night shifts over short periods of time, jeopardizing health and safety. As one worker told WV, "I trade my body for a paycheck." Enhanced profit sharing and productivity bonuses, intended to blur the class line and grease the skids for speedup, put conditions on money that should just get added to base wages. Retirees, all but told to shut up and die at the time of the bankruptcy, are tossed a lousy \$1,000 car voucher for their many years of sweat and toil. And while the union bureaucrats have—for the moment—put on hold their push for a health care co-op (at least at FCA), they still insist on finding "smart solutions" to help the company avoid rising health care costs. One such "solution" is tucked away in the proposed contract: top-tier workers will be forced to pay deductibles for the first time if



Bettmann

Striking auto workers picket Detroit GM plant, September 1970.

the "Cadillac tax" mandated by Obama's Affordable Care Act kicks in.

Enough already! Williams tried to downplay the resounding opposition to his co-op project, claiming it was due to a botched communication effort. No, a stinker is a stinker. The matter is simple: the automakers should foot the bill for any and all expenses (including the Cadillac tax) associated with providing top-level health care to all workers (and their families), who risk life and limb to churn out cars for the bosses' profit. The health care cost studies proposed by the UAW tops are more smoke and mirrors from a union leadership that goes out of its way to be company-friendly, that is to say, loyal lapdogs of the greedy employers who amass fortunes by exploiting labor.



WV Photo

September 28: Workers from Fiat Chrysler Belvidere Assembly Plant, Illinois, denounce initial sellout contract that was overwhelmingly rejected.

private ownership of the land he tills is the foundation of small-scale production and the condition for its prospering and achieving the classical form. But such small-scale production is compatible only with a narrow and primitive framework of production and society. Under capitalism the "exploitation of the peasants differs only in form from the exploitation of the industrial proletariat. The exploiter is the same: capital. The individual capitalists exploit the individual peasants through mortgages and usury; the capitalist class exploits the peasant class through the state taxes" (*The Class Struggles in France*). "The small holding of the peasant is now only the pretext that allows the capitalist to draw profits, interest and rent from the soil, while leaving it to the tiller of the soil himself to see how he can extract his wages" (*The Eighteenth Brumaire*). As a rule the peasant cedes to capitalist society, i.e., to the capitalist class, even a part of the wages, sinking "to the level of the Irish tenant farmer—all under the pretence of being a private proprietor" (*The Class Struggles in France*). What is "one of the reasons why grain prices are lower in countries with predominant small-peasant land proprietorship than in countries with a capitalist mode of produc-

tion"? (*Capital*, Vol. III, p. 340.) It is that the peasant hands over gratis to society (i.e., the capitalist class) a part of his surplus product. "This lower price [of grain and other agricultural produce—*Lenin*] is consequently a result of the producers' poverty and by no means of their labour productivity" (*Capital*, Vol. III, p. 340). Under capitalism the small-holding system, which is the normal form of small-scale production, degenerates, collapses, and perishes. "Proprietorship of land parcels, by its very nature, excludes the development of social productive forces of labour, social forms of labour, social concentration of capital, large-scale cattle raising, and the progressive application of science. Usury and a taxation system must impoverish it everywhere. The expenditure of capital in the price of the land withdraws this capital from cultivation. An infinite fragmentation of means of production, and isolation of the producers themselves." (Co-operative societies, i.e., associations of small peasants, while playing an extremely progressive bourgeois role, only weaken this tendency, without eliminating it; nor must it be forgotten that these co-operative societies do much for the well-to-do peasants, and very little—next to nothing—for the

Accepting the terms set by the capitalists is the road to ruin for the union and its membership. Take the false choice that the UAW bureaucrats present as "the give and take between job security, and good pay and benefits." Over the years, this "give and take" has brought everything from the spinning off of parts workers and growth in temps to the institution of tiers—everything, that is, except job security and good pay and benefits. Despite modest membership gains since 2012, the UAW represents 42 percent fewer Detroit Three workers than it did in 2005. Meanwhile, the top-tier UAW wage for assembly workers has remained frozen since 2003 (with a marginal increase included in the FCA agreement).

Today, union officials claim to be "pro-active" in response to job losses, boasting of measures in the deal like "sourcing conferences" and "strategic partnership initiatives" with the company purchasing department. Such efforts to encourage so-called insourcing are supposed to convince the automaker to bring contracted-out jobs back under the FCA umbrella by offering to have union members do them for subpar wages. Yet more tiers to save the bosses money! In the 1970s, Detroit Three new hires started at over 90 percent full pay and reached top rate after three months. Almost all production workers across a company made the same wage, with some loose change for different classifications and shift premiums.

Far from undertaking an industry-wide strike to restore wage parity, or a militant fight to organize the unorganized at the suppliers, much less auto plants in the South, the UAW tops instead act despicably like labor brokers, reinforcing divisions among the workers and fueling a race to the bottom. The same goes for all the finger-wagging at Mexico, where

mass of poor peasants; then the associations themselves become exploiters of hired labour.) "Monstrous waste of human energy. Progressive deterioration of conditions of production and increased prices of means of production—an inevitable law of proprietorship of parcels." In agriculture, as in industry, capitalism transforms the process of production only at the price of the "martyrdom of the producer." "The dispersion of the rural labourers over larger areas breaks their power of resistance, while concentration increases that of the town operatives. In modern agriculture, as in the urban industries, the increased productiveness and quantity of the labour set in motion are bought at the cost of laying waste and consuming by disease labour power itself. Moreover, all progress in capitalist agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the labourer, but of robbing the soil.... Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole, only by sapping the original sources of all wealth—the soil and the labourer" (*Capital*, Vol. I, end of Chapter 13).

[COMING UP NEXT: SOCIALISM]

some FCA auto production is scheduled to move. The framework of U.S. auto worker versus Mexican auto worker is a recipe for driving down wages and working conditions on both sides of the border. Marchionne certainly is no stranger to divide-and-conquer; in recent years, he foisted major concessions on union auto workers in Italy by threatening to move production out of that country (with the U.S. as one possible destination). The way forward is to proceed from the unity of interests of auto workers in the U.S., Mexico and elsewhere against the common class enemy—the Detroit Three auto bosses who bleed workers dry regardless of locale—which would open the prospect of joint struggle.

UAW members have every reason to distrust Williams and his gang. The labor traitors are, for the second time in as many weeks, attempting to sell a bill of goods. Auto workers must not give in to resignation over the possibility of doing any better. Neither should they let their just anger at the union bureaucrats take the form of refusing to pay union dues—a danger opened up by recent "right to work" laws in Michigan and Indiana. Such a step would simply weaken the union in its coming battles. Instead, all members should insist that their hard-earned dues money go into the union strike fund or toward organizing drives—and above all not get wasted on the electoral campaigns of Democratic Party politicians, who no less than Republicans are the political representatives of the bosses. Michigan went "right to work" a couple of years ago after the UAW tops and the rest of labor officialdom channeled protest against the anti-union forces into the dead end of reliance on Democrats and the ballot box.

The Detroit auto giants are today solidly in the black thanks to the massive concessions shoved down the throats of the workers with the active assistance of the UAW bureaucracy. This time around, the automakers are willing to pay out a little to buy labor peace; but for workers to truly get theirs, it is going to take a fight. Given their abiding respect for the bosses' rules and bottom line, the sellouts atop the union are utterly incapable of directing any serious battle. It is well past time that they be shown the door.

The forging of a class-struggle leadership would go a long way toward transforming the unions into battalions of organized labor, capable of fighting for quality health care that is free for everyone at the point of delivery and jobs for all through a shorter workweek with no loss in pay, among other causes of the entire working people. Armed with a program based on the understanding that the working class shares no interest with the bosses, a union with the power of the UAW could head up a broader fight against capitalism's ravages, enlisting support from the rest of the proletariat as well as the unemployed and black and immigrant communities in the crosshairs of the capitalist rulers. This perspective demands the building of a multiracial revolutionary workers party dedicated to the overthrow of capitalist production for profit once and for all. ■

A Spartacist Pamphlet

1934 Strikes

Class-Struggle Leadership Made a Key Difference

Then and Now

MINNEAPOLIS, MAY 1934: At the Battle of Dupont Hill, thousands of strikers and supporters routed cops and overwhelming special deputies.

AUSTRALIA...\_A11 BRITAIN...\_710 CANADA...\_C001 EUROPE...\_E1 SOUTH AFRICA...\_R2 USA...\_U001

\$1 (24 pages)

Order from: Spartacist Pub. Co.  
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Panthers...

(continued from page 12)

anti-Communist AFL-CIO misleaders over the integrated labor movement, in defeating the black Uncle Toms in the inner cities and their capitalist patrons in the Democratic Party.

But the BPP turned its back on the mul-tiracial working class. Instead, the Pan-thers substituted their own militants for the organized power of the working class. However heroic, they were no match for the armed might of the capitalist state.

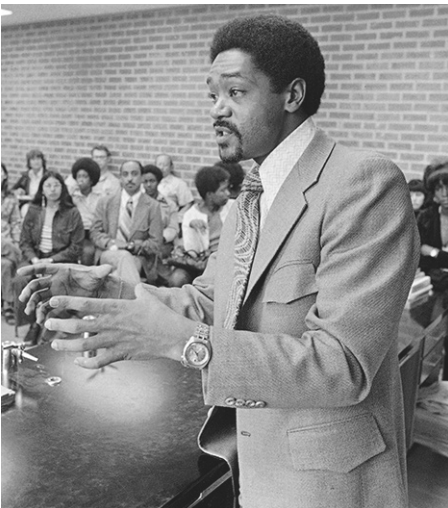
The Panthers Pick Up the Gun and Are Defeated

Taking advantage of California’s then-permissive gun laws, the Panthers applied their “pick up the gun” theory. At first this tactic seemed successful as Newton’s armed patrols in Oakland went unmolested. The Panthers also held a rally protesting the police murder of a young black man, Denzil Dowell, in Richmond, California, which the cops ran like a Southern town. Again, they succeeded in facing down the cops. The documentary shows footage of the most spectacular action of the BPP, the one that put them on the map nationwide. That was the armed Panther march, led by Bobby Seale, into the state Capitol in Sacra-mento, to protest the Mulford Bill. This

are also a powerful indictment of gun control laws, at the time pushed by right-wing Republicans and today by liberals. What is abundantly clear is that the pur-pose of such laws is to disarm black and working people, ensuring that the cops maintain their monopoly on the means of violence together with their fascist and criminal counterparts.

Taken aback by the Panthers’ flamboy-ance and uncertain how much support they had in the ghettos, the state’s authorities at first proceeded with some caution. But beginning with the wounding and jailing of Huey Newton on frame-up charges of killing a cop in October 1967, and gaining steam with the Oakland police killing of 17-year-old Bobby Hutton and the arrest of Panther leader Eldridge Cleaver in April 1968, a coordinated national campaign to wipe out the Panthers was launched by the FBI under the Democratic president Lyndon Johnson and carried out by local police forces. In many cases they had the active collaboration of cultural nationalist groups like Ron Karenga’s United Slaves organization, whose members killed L.A. Panther leaders Bunchy Carter and John Huggins on the UCLA campus in 1969.

While Nelson’s documentary doesn’t mention the role of these black cultural nationalists, who glorified the heritage of African kings and queens, it very pow-erfully depicts the murderous vendetta



Bobby Seale campaigning for Oak-land mayor as a Democrat, May 1973.

country, Hoover declared: “The purpose of this new counter-intelligence endeavor is to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of black nationalists.” What Hoover meant by “neutralize” was spelled out in 1968, “the Negro youth and moderate[s] must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teachings, they will be dead revolutionaries.”

COINTELPRO unleashed the most sav-age and systematic campaign of racist mur-der in modern American history. Much of



bill (named after a white politician from a wealthy Oakland enclave) was drafted specifically to disarm the Panthers. The scenes from Sacramento in the documentary, with then California gov-ernor Ronald Reagan and state legislators cowering, capture the spirit that inspired the rapid growth of the Panthers. They

launched by J. Edgar Hoover’s FBI. Rav-ing that the Panthers were the “greatest threat to the internal security of the coun-try,” Hoover revived COINTELPRO, the counterintelligence program that had origi-nally been set up in 1956 with its main target being the Communist Party. In a memo distributed to all FBI offices in the



LAPD siege of Los Angeles Black Panther headquarters, 8 December 1969, targeted Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), later framed up and imprisoned for 27 years.

this is vividly portrayed in archival foot-age in the documentary: from images of Panthers in Philadelphia stripped to their underwear and lined up against the wall outside their headquarters, to Oakland Panthers piling up sand bags in antici-pation of a police assault on their office. There are depictions of Bobby Seale being bound and gagged like a latter-day slave on orders from the judge in the Chicago Seven trial. Footage of a rally outside the courthouse shows the powerful eloquence of the 20-year-old Fred Hampton, the dep-uty chairman of the BPP’s Illinois branch.

There is also footage of the bloody after-math of the 4 December 1969 pre-dawn raid by the Chicago police on Hampton’s apartment. Orchestrated by the FBI, the cops unleashed an onslaught of bullets killing Hampton and 17-year-old Mark Clark in their beds as they slept. Among those interviewed in the movie is William O’Neill, the police informant who was Hampton’s bodyguard and provided the floor plans to the apartment.

Four days after the assassination of Hampton and Clark, an L.A. SWAT team laid siege to the Panther office in L.A., firing thousands of rounds of ammuni-tion. Although unmentioned in the docu-mentary, a particular target of the LAPD was L.A. BPP leader Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), a Vietnam War vet whose mili-tary knowledge was crucial to saving his life and those of his comrades. Geron-imo was subsequently framed up for a 1968 murder and spent 27 years in prison (eight of them in solitary) before his con-viction was overturned and he was freed in 1997; he died in 2011.

Virtually the entire leadership of the New York Black Panthers was arrested on trumped-up and completely ludicrous “conspiracy” charges, including that they

were plotting to blow up the Bronx botan-ical gardens and other targets. Known as the Panther 21, they were held in jail for nearly two years. After a 13-month trial, the longest criminal proceeding in New York state history at the time, it took the jury only three hours to find all of the Panther 21 not guilty on all charges.

Thirty-eight Panthers were murdered under the FBI’s COINTELPRO campaign. Hundreds of others were rounded up and thrown in jail. Today, 20 former Panthers, including America’s foremost class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal who had been sentenced to death on frame-up charges of killing a Philadelphia cop, continue to languish in America’s prison dungeons. While the number of former BPP members in jail is mentioned in the movie, nothing is said of their cases or the cause of fighting for their freedom. Among the former Black Panther supporters still incarcerated are Ed Poindexter, Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa and Albert Woodfox, all of whom, like Mumia, receive monthly stipends from the Partisan Defense Committee. The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.

The Panthers Defend Themselves and Move Right

From May 1967 to December 1969 alone, the BPP was hit with 768 arrests and almost \$5 million in bail bonds. Isolated, with state repression relentlessly bearing down on them, the Panthers shifted their focus to legal defense work. The Panthers’ alliance with various white radical and liberal groups, like the Peace and Freedom Party, was not motivated by any realiza-tion that American society could only be revolutionized by an integrated working-class movement. Rather they were driven by the need to gain the broadest material and other support for their legal defense.

The documentary shows footage of Panthers at Jane Fonda’s apartment, with former BPP members recalling the titil-ation of the white glitterati at the sight of them lining the walls in their black leather jackets and berets posturing as if they were about to shoot someone. The cultural wing of the liberal bourgeoi-sie paid handsomely for the experience of exposing their bourgeois sensibilities to the “black revolution” in safety, an expensive delight somewhat recalling the Roman arena.

What is left unsaid is the role played by the reformists of the Communist Party (CP), although one is left to wonder where all the white lawyers who defended the Panthers came from. Guided by the legal apparatus of the CP, the Panther leader-ship was influenced to launch a “united front against fascism” in 1969. Its purpose was to forge a political alliance with the liberal Democratic Party establishment

Marxist Bulletin No. 5 (Revised)

RISE AND FALL OF THE PANTHERS

End of the Black Power Era

The opportunist and violent split in the Black Panther Party can be viewed as the symbolic end to the Black Power Era. The Party's destruction is a result of the internal contradictions of the Black Power movement, which was based on the idea of Black Nationalism and the Black Power Party. The Party's destruction is a result of the internal contradictions of the Black Power movement, which was based on the idea of Black Nationalism and the Black Power Party.

Marxist Bulletin 5

REVISED

WHAT STRATEGY FOR BLACK LIBERATION?

Trotskyism vs. Black Nationalism

Key documents and articles 1955-1978

\$1.50 (72 pages)

Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Pub. Co., Box 1377 GPO New York, NY 10116

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

1. Publication title: *Workers Vanguard*.

2. Publication no.: 09-8770.

3. Filing date: 24 September 2015.

4. Issue frequency: Bi-weekly, except skipping 3 alternate issues in June, July, August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and skipping the last issue in December.

5. No. of issues published annually: 22.

6. Annual subscription price: \$10.00.

7. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007-4104.

8. Complete mailing address of headquarters or general business office of publisher: Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007-4104.

9. Full names and complete mailing addresses of publisher, editor, and managing editor: Publisher—Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007-4104; Editor—Michael Davisson, 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007-4104; Managing Editor—Elizabeth Johnson, 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007-4104.

10. Owner: Spartacist Publishing Co. (Unincorporated Association), 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007-4104.

11. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities: None.

12. Tax status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates): Not applicable.

13. Publication title: *Workers Vanguard*.

14. Issue date for circulation data below: 18 September 2015.

15. Extent and nature of circulation: Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: a. Total number of copies (Net press run): 8,228; b. Paid circulation (by mail and outside the mail): (1) Mailed outside-county paid subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541: 1,224; (2) Mailed in-county paid subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541: 0; (3) Paid distribution outside the mails including sales through dealers and carriers,

street vendors, counter sales, and other outside USPS: 4,767; (4) Paid distribution by other classes of mail through the USPS: 218; c. Total paid distribution [Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3) and (4)]: 6,209; d. Free or nominal rate distribution: (1) Outside-county copies included on PS Form 3541: 113; (2) In-county copies included on PS Form 3541: 0; (3) Copies mailed at other classes through the USPS: 115; (4) Distribution outside the mail: 0; e. Total free or nominal rate distribution [Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3) and (4)]: 228; f. Total distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e): 6,437; g. Copies not distributed: 1,791; h. Total (Sum of 15f and 15g): 8,228; i. Percent paid (15c divided by 15f times 100): 96.46%.

No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: a. Total number of copies (Net press run): 9,000; b. Paid circulation (by mail and outside the mail): (1) Mailed outside-county paid subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541: 1,012; (2) Mailed in-county paid subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541: 0; (3) Paid distribution outside the mails including sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other outside USPS: 5,748; (4) Paid distribution by other classes of mail through the USPS: 215; c. Total paid distribution [Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3) and (4)]: 6,975; d. Free or nominal rate distribution: (1) Outside-county copies included on PS Form 3541: 119; (2) In-county copies included on PS Form 3541: 0; (3) Copies mailed at other classes through the USPS: 113; (4) Distribution outside the mail: 0; e. Total free or nominal rate distribution [Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3) and (4)]: 232; f. Total distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e): 7,207; g. Copies not distributed: 1,793; h. Total (Sum of 15f and 15g): 9,000; i. Percent paid (15c divided by 15f times 100): 96.78%.

16. Total circulation includes electronic copies. Report circulation on PS Form 3526-X worksheet: 0.

17. This statement of ownership will be printed in the 16 October 2015 issue of this publication.

18. Signature and title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner: (Signed) Michael Davisson (Editor), 24 September 2015. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

against the Republican right on an essentially civil libertarian basis. The central demand of this abortive “united front” was community control of the cops. This demand combined liberal illusions about the nature of the capitalist state with black nationalist illusions that the oppression of black people could be ended through their control of ghetto institutions. Today, the call for community control of the police is again prominent in the Black Lives Matter protests against racist cop terror. Behind it is the deadly reformist illusion that the capitalist rulers can be pressured into dismantling their repressive state apparatus.

Along with their turn toward the liberals, the Panthers launched a series of ghetto social work programs, exemplified by their “breakfast for children” program. As the documentary portrays, these new activities were designed to gain support from black people in the inner cities who had not rallied behind the BPP’s adventurist confrontations with the cops because they recognized that the balance of forces was decidedly not in their favor. In addition, the aim was to give the Panthers a more humanitarian image when facing middle-class white juries. To this day, the image of the Panthers feeding hungry black children is the one preferred by the reformist left and black petty-bourgeois radicals.

With the rulers of this country now snatching school lunches even out of the mouths of white kids, the idea of providing breakfast to hungry children must look pretty good to black youth and others. But the Panthers' "serve the people" programs were no competition for the money the U.S. government was throwing at poverty programs in the 1960s. This was hardly out of the "goodness of their hearts." Rather the aim was to pacify the inner cities following the ghetto uprisings. The bourgeoisie needed black youth as cannon fodder for their dirty war against the Vietnamese workers and peasants and didn't want to fight a war on two fronts, at home and abroad.

But the problem with the Panthers' food, health and other programs was not that they didn't work but that they strengthened the BPP's paternalistic self-image: the Panthers as avenging angels of the black masses who in turn were seen as grateful clients, not as potential conscious revolutionists in their own right. Meanwhile, the main beneficiaries of the government's "war on poverty" were a thin layer of the black population, many of whom went on to be overseers of the ghettos as big city mayors, police chiefs and in other government offices.

By every index of misery the conditions of life for the black working class and poor are as bad as they were in the 1960s. The reality today is that much of the black population is written off as little more than a "surplus population" by the racist rulers, not worth even providing

with subsistence-level welfare and other programs. And of course there are the huge numbers locked up in prisons. This serves to underline, again, that the only road to black freedom lies through shattering the entire system of racist American capitalism. What is necessary is a struggle for *power*, a socialist revolution, by the integrated working class—the wage slaves without whose labor the capitalist owners cannot reap their golden riches—that will overthrow the U.S. imperialist order.

# The Fall of the Black Panther Party

Facing a dead end politically, their early victories against cop brutality long behind them, the popular-front alliance with the reformists and liberals going nowhere, the Panthers were broken by bloody state repression and COINTELPRO provocations. These in turn fed into murderous internal factionalism. In 1971 there was a violent and spectacular split centered on the personalities of BPP leaders Eldridge Cleaver and Huey Newton. As seen in the documentary, Cleaver and much of his group were in exile in Algeria where he fled following his 1968 arrest. This wing continued to talk of “urban guerilla warfare,” although given the massive state repression against the Panthers this was little more than posturing. The Newton



**Mumia Abu-Jamal in 1969 when Minister of Information of Philadelphia Black Panther chapter.**

ary vanguard” based on the glorification of impoverished black youth in the ghettos, seeing the “most oppressed” as the “most revolutionary.” Although often courageous, these adventurous youth were not recruited on the basis of a revolutionary political program. As a reflection, discipline in the Panthers was imposed by street-gang methods. In the absence of a membership politically armed through

Democratic Party. At the same time, we fought to defend Panther militants against state repression, and we continue to do so.

## For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

In the end, the Panthers were not defeated politically through the intervention of a Leninist vanguard party, but rather physically and organizationally destroyed by the capitalist state. Thus, many of the lessons of the demise of an organization that represented the high-water mark of black radicalism in the last 50 years of American history have been lost. Our purpose is to arm a new generation of young militants and workers with these lessons, to win them to the program of revolutionary integrationism. That is the understanding that the only road to black freedom lies in the struggle to smash racist, imperialist America through a proletarian socialist revolution, in which black workers, the most combative element in the working class, will play a leading role.

As we concluded our article “End of the Black Power Era,” which was written after the Cleaver-Newton split:

"The Panthers could not defeat the cops because the cops are an essential part of the capitalist state and the Panthers could not defeat that state. Given that fact, the Panthers could only alternate between the bitter consequences of heroic adventurism or appealing to the liberal establishment. "The oppression of the black people cannot be ended by black activists alone, but only by the working class as a whole. The breakup of the Panthers' organization and authority creates greater opportunity—but only opportunity—for the struggle for an integrated proletarian socialist vanguard party. The process is in no sense inevitable; there will always be plenty of hustlers and romantic rebels to attempt endless repetition of the old mistakes and betrayals. But the intervention of Leninists among radical blacks can stimulate the understanding that the liberation of black people will be both a great driving force of the American proletarian revolution, and a great achievement of the revolution in power. That revolution will be made, not in the name of black power, but of working-class power—communism."



**Spartacist banner at “Millions March NYC” demonstration against racist police killings, December 2014.**

wing moved to Democratic Party liberalism as seen in the footage in *The Black Panthers* of Bobby Seale and Elaine Brown campaigning as Democrats in the 1973 Oakland municipal elections.

Despite the idealism and heroism of the early Panthers, the split reflected the problems of trying to build a “revolution-

education, discussion, debate and commitment, leadership in the Panthers became a form of “hero worship.” The disastrous effect can be seen in the documentary with Huey Newton bathing in adulation following his release from jail. The inherent corruption of the “warrior-hero” leader is captured in scenes of Newton’s lavish penthouse apartment, paid for out of party funds raised for Panther defense cases.

The Panthers' glorification of lumpenism was also seen in their treatment of women members, who by the 1970s made up over half the party's membership. While many of these women were leaders of Panthers' political education classes and some were party leaders, phrases like "pussy power" were thrown around, reflecting the sexual degradation of women in the BPP. This was not simply vulgar talk but came out of the Panthers' lumpenproletarian base and macho quasi-militarism, which made for a brutal internal life, particularly for women.

Nonetheless, from the late 1960s through to the Cleaver-Newton split, the Panthers were so sacrosanct in radical circles and nearly all self-proclaimed Marxist organizations that any criticism of them was met with shrill accusations of racism. In the face of the widespread hero worship of Newton, Cleaver and other Panther leaders, the Spartacist League polemicized against the BPP's notion of lumpen vanguardism and argued that black nationalism, even in its most radical form, was a utopian dead end. We also denounced their physical assaults against other leftists and challenged their rightward plunge into the

---

**SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S.**

---

**Local Directory and Public Offices**

---

**Website:** [www.icl-fi.org](http://www.icl-fi.org) • **E-mail address:** [vanguard@tiac.net](mailto:vanguard@tiac.net)

**National Office:** Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, (212) 732-7860

**Chicago** ..... Box 6441, Main PO, Chicago, IL 60680, (312) 563-0441  
[chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net](mailto:chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net)  
**Public Office:** 1st Sat. of every month, 2-5 p.m., and by appointment, 222 S. Morgan (Buzzer 23)

**Los Angeles** ..... Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta., Los Angeles, CA 90029, (213) 380-8239  
[slsycla@sbcglobal.net](mailto:slsycla@sbcglobal.net)  
**Public Office:** Sat. 2-5 p.m., 3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215

**New York** ..... Box 3381, Church St. Sta., New York, NY 10008, (212) 267-1025  
[nysl@tiac.net](mailto:nysl@tiac.net)  
**Public Office:** 1st Sat. of every month, 1-4 p.m., and by appointment, 299 Broadway, Suite 318, Manhattan

**Oakland** ..... Box 29497, Oakland, CA 94604, (510) 839-0851  
[slbayarea@fastmail.net](mailto:slbayarea@fastmail.net)  
**Public Office:** Sat. 1-4 p.m., 1904 Franklin (Buzzer #407)

---


**TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA**

---

**Montréal** ..... CP 83 Succ. Place-d'Armes, Montréal, QC H2Y 3E9, (514) 728-7578  
[trotskyste.montreal@gmail.com](mailto:trotskyste.montreal@gmail.com)

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

**Vancouver** ..... Box 2717, Main P.O., Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2, (604) 687-0353  
[trotskyst\\_vancouver@shawcable.com](mailto:trotskyst_vancouver@shawcable.com)




# Partisan Defense Committee

**CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES**

Number 38    60c
Winter 2013-2014

## Free the Class-War Prisoners!



Top, from left: **Muhammad Ali**, **Ed Espinoza**, **Wopmayhah Mucchi**, **Enzo Langa**, **Thomas Manning** and **Lynne Stewart**; Bottom: **Leonard Peltier**, **John Torker**, **Hugo Pinell**, **Osvaldo Ariza** and **Joan Leaman**.

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

# WORKERS VANGUARD

## For a Class-Struggle Leadership!

# UAW Tops Push Repackaged Sellout

What part of “no more tiers” does United Auto Workers (UAW) head Dennis Williams not understand? Union members, by a two-to-one margin, rejected the first rotten deal that his team negotiated with Fiat Chrysler (FCA)—the first time UAW workers have voted down a national contract since 1982. Deliberations had been kept hidden from workers, who were rightly furious at the extension of the two-tier wage system even as Williams hailed the proposed contract for its supposed “tremendous gains.” Returning to the table for Round

Two, the UAW bureaucracy this time set a deadline for a strike and very belatedly began preparations, only to announce an eleventh-hour agreement. In the end, more of the same was served up—the tiers that are so corrosive to the unity and integrity of the union are preserved over the life of the deal. This repackaged sellout deserves to share the fate of the first.

Of course, simply sending the same birds back for a third go-round is highly unlikely to yield anything better. To wrest real gains from FCA, as well as General Motors and Ford, the union will

have to draw a line with strike action when the bosses don’t budge. Indeed, the mere threat of a strike convinced management to seemingly discover a little extra money it could afford to fork over. But for Williams & Co., who are devoted to maintaining the profitability of the automakers, that threat was intended as theater, not a serious declaration of class battle. Auto workers need a new union leadership, one that will confront the employers from the standpoint of class versus class, not passive acceptance of capitalist exploitation and oppression.

The existing union officialdom’s connivance with the employers was evident in how they addressed the genuine concerns of their members. Equal pay (and benefits) for equal work means all workers should receive the highest rate, immediately. Instead, the union bureaucrats have hatched an eight-year phase-in scheme to close the enormous wage gap. Conveniently for FCA, much of this wage hike is to take place, if at all, *after* the 2019 expiration of the proposed contract. In other words, it  
*continued on page 9*

# The Black Panthers

## Movie Review

With its powerful archival footage and interviews with former Black Panther Party members, Stanley Nelson’s documentary *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution* reopens a chapter of black history that has long been distorted, hated and feared by the racist rulers of America. While the capitalist ruling class has embraced Martin Luther King as the prophet of “nonviolence” and “patient moderation,” the Panthers have long been demonized as little more than

**By M.J. Clancy**

thugs. Even amidst the outpouring of protests against racist cop terror, there has been little reference to the Panthers who courageously championed the defense of the ghetto masses against police brutality. Instead, the call has been to “reclaim MLK” as some kind of radical opponent of American capitalism.

To some extent, such mythology is also shared by Nelson. His documentary gives the impression that the Panthers were a kind of Northern offshoot of the civil rights movement and that it was only following King’s assassination in 1968 that they came to despair of his “turn the other cheek” liberal pacifism. On the contrary, the Black Panther Party was founded as a direct response to the *failure* of the civil rights movement, embodied in MLK’s Southern Christian Leadership Conference, to make any serious dent into the bedrock of black oppression when it moved North in the mid 1960s.

Here, the political premises of the King leadership—which looked to the federal government and the Democratic Party for legislative redress—collided with economic and social reality. Black people in the Northern ghettos had lived with “equality under the law” for years while being segregated in the rotting tenements of the inner cities, relegated to the worst, lowest-paying jobs and daily humiliated and brutalized by the police. It became abundantly clear that King had no program to fight the causes of racial oppression, which is rooted in the economic and social structure of capitalist America.

A movement that had raised great hopes and activated tens of thousands in often-



Stephen Shames

**Black Panthers at rally to free Huey Newton in West Oakland, July 1968.**

heroic battles collapsed amidst the ghetto uprisings that began in Harlem in 1964 and continued with undiminished intensity through Watts in 1965 and Newark, Cleveland and Detroit in 1967. In the middle of these upheavals, the Black Panther Party was founded in Oakland in 1966 by Bobby Seale and Huey Newton. They sought to strip away the deeply felt sense of powerlessness of the black inner city residents, particularly in relation to racist cops gunning down blacks on the streets.

Images of Malcolm X and his call for the right of self-defense “by any means necessary,” fill the screen at the beginning of the documentary. But it gives little idea of the impact of his uncompromising opposition to the capitalist rulers of America, Democrats as well as Republicans. Malcolm sparked hatred and fear in those rulers and inspired black militants. The Panthers were established just two years after *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* was first published. In his book *This Side of Glory* (1993), former Panther leader David Hilliard recalled a conversation in which Newton announced that

he was about to found a new organization that will be “the personification of Malcolm X’s dreams.”

*The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution* shows footage of BPP patrols in Oakland, armed with guns and law books, surrounding a gang of white cops terrorizing a black “suspect.” For boldly asserting their constitutional right to bear arms and challenging racist cop terror, the Panthers gained the respect of the ghetto masses and began drawing many black youth into their ranks, first in Oakland and then nationwide. At its height, the BPP had 4,000 members and 35 chapters. As one former Panther says in the documentary: “We were not after the church folks; we were not after the Muslim folks. We wanted the brother on the corner, the brother who is getting his head banged in every weekend by the police.”

Other former Panthers recall the problems of trying to assemble a “vanguard of the revolution” from unemployed black youth. The BPP made its stand on purging the ghetto of police brutality. This was equivalent to calling to overthrow

the armed might of the capitalist state, a perspective that could and can only be realized by the mobilization of the multi-racial working class under the leadership of a genuine vanguard party. Despite the radicalism and personal courage of its militants, the BPP shared the predominantly white, student-centered New Left’s rejection of the centrality and strategic social power of the working class in the struggle against racial oppression and class exploitation.

As we wrote in 1972:

“To avoid the Marxist contention that the organized working class is the key revolutionary element, the Panthers came up with the theory that black lumpens are the revolutionary vanguard, and that all employed workers, black and white, have been bought off by the ruling class. The Panthers’ ‘theory’ of lumpenism is a mixture of self-aggrandizement and impressionism....

“A political movement which isolates itself in a social milieu hostile to normal work-a-day society must become irresponsible, individualistic and ultimately cynical and contemptuous of the mass of working people. It is precisely that task of revolutionaries to penetrate the mainstream of social and economic life and explode ‘normal work-a-day’ society on the basis of its terrible oppressiveness—the very oppressiveness which drove individuals to become revolutionaries in the first place.”

—“End of the Black Power Era,” reprinted in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 (Revised), “What Strategy for Black Liberation? Trotskyism vs. Black Nationalism” (September 1978)

The Panthers had members working in factories near Oakland and even put out a few issues of a plant newspaper at the Fremont GM plant. Unionized white workers on strike at an oil refinery in Richmond, California, took up the BPP’s cry of “pig” against strikebreaking cops who were attacking their picket lines. Thus, the idea of linking the anger of the ghetto masses to the power of labor was not some kind of utopian pipedream. The Spartacist League sought to win young black militants around the Panthers to a Marxist perspective and to the struggle to forge a multiracial revolutionary workers party. Fighting in the unions as well as among radicalizing youth, such militants could have been instrumental in breaking the brittle stranglehold of the racist,  
*continued on page 10*