

## Statement by French Trotskyists

# On Criminal Attacks in Paris

*The following is a translation of a statement issued by our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France on November 14.*

We strongly condemn the criminal killing of some 120 people last night. Everything indicates that Islamic funda-

mentalists carried out the attacks in support of the Islamic State and particularly in response to French airstrikes, which have been extended in recent weeks to Syria. More than ever we demand the immediate withdrawal of French and U.S. troops from the entire Near East

in particular, as well as from Mali and elsewhere in the world.

The perpetrators of these acts, in indiscriminately targeting just anyone, fundamentally share the same mentality as the imperialists in identifying the working masses with their capitalist

exploiters and oppressors. Yet, regardless of the barbarism of the terrorists who coldbloodedly murdered dozens of innocent civilians in the streets of Paris and in a concert hall, the fact remains that the biggest terrorists in the world  
*continued on page 9*

## Down With Anti-Muslim Repression!

# U.S., France Out of the Near East!



AFP

**Above: U.S.-led airstrike in support of Washington's Kurdish proxies battling ISIS in Sinjar, northern Iraq, November 12. Right: Cops conduct raid in Toulouse, France, November 16.**



Maxppp

NOVEMBER 23—The attacks in Paris on November 13, responsibility for which was claimed by the Islamic State (ISIS), were a criminal act of indiscriminate mass terror, in which 130 innocent civilians were killed. The capitalist rulers use revulsion at such attacks to bolster national unity and jingoism, further binding the working masses to their exploiters and oppressors. Just as they did after the September 11 attacks, the imperialists have seized on this atrocity to beat the drums for war abroad and for more state repression at home.

The state repression is in the first instance targeting mainly Muslims, who are all deemed responsible for the crimes of reactionary fanatics. But the ultimate target of this repression will be the proletariat, the only class with both the social power and objective interest to do away with the barbaric capitalist system through socialist revolution. It is vital for working people throughout the world, not least in the U.S. and France, to oppose every

attempt by the ruling capitalist powers to use such atrocities as took place in Paris to augment the repressive power of the capitalist state at home and carry out more imperialist slaughter abroad. U.S. military aggression after 9/11 led to the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the devastation of the region and rise of murderous outfits like ISIS. Increasing airstrikes in the Near East will only add to the ever-mounting

death toll. Unlike those killed in the Paris attacks, the names, faces and stories of these victims of imperialist terror are almost never told.

The drive to expand the bombing war against ISIS has received virtually unanimous approval from both Republicans and Democrats. President Barack Obama has stepped up airstrikes, and Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton has urged

even more, calling for a no-fly zone over Syria and the deployment of more special forces to the region. Her main rival, Bernie Sanders, a darling of much of the reformist left, has echoed Clinton's call for a "broad coalition" centered on countries in the Near East as vital to "destroying ISIS." Both agree on "regime change" in Syria—the overthrow of Bashar al-Assad.

French Socialist Party president François Hollande declared that France is now "at war" with ISIS and intensified French airstrikes against the Syrian city of Raqqa, an ISIS stronghold. There, at least 200,000 civilians are caught between ISIS on the one hand and the far more powerful and deadly imperialist butchers on the other. According to the bourgeois media, the bombing of Raqqa is retaliation for the murder of innocent civilians in Paris. In reality, France has been bombing ISIS since late September.

The French imperialists are no strangers to the slaughter of Arab civilians. In October 1925, as part of crushing an anti-colonial rebellion in Syria, the French army unleashed a massive bombardment of Damascus, slaughtering nearly 1,500 people, including more than 330 women and children. Contrary to assertions that

*continued on page 9*



Reuters

**Aftermath of criminal massacre in Paris, November 13. Capitalist rulers use terrorist attacks to justify state repression and military slaughter abroad.**



# Polish Judge Denies Extradition to U.S.

# Defend Roman Polanski!

LONDON—On October 30, a judge in the Polish city of Krakow slapped down the latest attempt by American authorities to drag renowned film director Roman Polanski back to a California prison. In 1977, a Los Angeles court convicted Polanski on the charge of having sex with a minor and sent him down for six weeks of “psychiatric observation” in a California state prison. When the Los Angeles judge reneged on the original plea bargain deal and threatened to return him to prison, Polanski fled to Europe, where he has remained ever since. For four decades the American injustice system has pursued its vendetta, continuing to stretch its long arm toward Polanski’s throat.

Describing the extradition request as “obviously unlawful,” Judge Dariusz Mazur asserted, “I do not find any logical, rational explanation as to why the U.S. is pursuing the extradition” (*Warsaw Voice*, 2 November). Mazur also took aim at the original proceedings, stating: “The judge (in California) had no reason to move back from the [plea bargain] agreement.” Even Polanski’s supposed victim, Saman-

tha Geimer, praised the latest ruling: “I believe they did the right thing and made the right decision given all the facts,” she told NBC News (31 October).

Five years ago, a court in Switzerland likewise struck down a U.S. extradition request for Polanski, who has dual French and Polish citizenship. After his arrest in Zurich in late 2009, Polanski was held in prison for two months and subjected to further months of house arrest before a judge ruled against the deportation order. That arrest came on the heels of the 2008 documentary, *Roman Polanski: Wanted and Desired*, which exposed the original frame-up, including revealing evidence of collusion between the judge and the prosecution.

As Marxists, we oppose the bourgeois state enforcing “decency” through the criminal code. Reactionary “age of consent” and “statutory rape” laws conflate consensual sex with the violent crime of rape. In determining whether an act is rape or not, the guiding principle should be effective consent—nothing more than mutual agreement and understanding

as opposed to coercion. Laws criminalizing consensual relationships aim to strengthen the bourgeois state’s regimentation of the population and to impose abstinence and guilt on youth while locking up adults who “deviate” from the sexual “norms” that the ruling class hypocritically tries to foist on the masses. We say: *Government out of the bedroom!*

Any notion that Polanski plied an innocent teen with champagne and Quaaludes during a photo shoot and then raped her was destroyed in court. It was shown that the 13-year-old Geimer, who was sexually experienced and had been “experimenting” with Quaaludes since the age of 10 or 11, was eager to consort with the director at a Hollywood photo shoot. Geimer subsequently acknowledged that she did not object to Polanski’s behavior at the time. In 2013 she wrote: “I ran into the two-headed monster of the California criminal justice system and its corrupt players, whose lust for publicity overwhelmed their concern with justice.”

In our 1978 article “Stop the Puritan Witchhunt Against Roman Polanski” (WV No. 192, 10 February 1978) we wrote: “Sexual and social life in southern California, with its thriving drug culture and troupes of precocious and sexually active groupies hanging about the fringes of the entertainment industry, produces thousands of ‘aspiring actresses’...like the one Polanski had the misfortune to run into. Regardless of what one thinks of the scene as a whole, its all-too-obvious reality makes absurd [Judge] Rittenband’s attempts to force rigid morality of the Victorian era into L.A. freeways and bedrooms.”

Noting that “official repression and enforced standards of sexual activity have brought oppression and pain throughout history,” our article continued:

“All those laws which define ‘sex crimes’ in America today are fundamentally aimed at glorifying and propping up the obscene and repressive prison of the family, for centuries the main institution for the oppression of women and children....

“[Polanski’s] prosecution, like the furor over ‘kiddie porn,’ feeds into the sanctimonious ‘Save Our Children’ crusade epitomized by Anita Bryant’s anti-homosexual witchhunt—a reactionary offensive which hides behind the ‘innocence’ of children to enforce bourgeois morality through the vindictive persecution of ‘deviants’.”

What triggered the U.S. government’s latest attempt to have Polanski arrested was his appearance as an invited guest at the ceremonial opening in October 2014 of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw. As a young boy in the Jewish ghetto of Krakow, Polanski survived Hitler’s Holocaust. Currently he is filming in Poland an account of the Dreyfus affair, the frame-up of a Jewish officer in the French army in the 1890s, which served as a litmus test for the socialist movement internationally at the time.

The U.S. vendetta against Polanski is likely not over. Los Angeles district attorney Jackie Lacey immediately vowed to continue pursuing him. The Polish prosecutor’s office has the right to appeal Mazur’s ruling. If they do so, they would find conditions favorable to the witchhunt. Only days before the court ruling, the anti-immigrant Catholic-clericalist Law and Justice Party came to power in Polish elections. Its leader, Jaroslaw Kaczynski, an overt anti-Muslim and anti-Russian bigot, highlighted his support for Polanski’s extradition during the election campaign, while his new minister of justice, Zbigniew Ziobro, ranted, “paedophilia is an evil that must be pursued.” Such statements are no surprise from this party which includes open anti-Jewish racists like Minister of Defense Antoni Macierewicz.

Lamentably, retrograde views are not a



Demotix

**Polanski with attorney at Krakow press conference, October 30.**

monopoly of the reactionary right. Down the years, we Spartacists have been the target of many leftists because of our defense of Polanski. When Stalinists are so engaged, they are just being consistent in bigotry, having, for example, traditionally decried homosexuals as deviants from the family-values norm. While that attitude is not so fashionable today, there are still Maoist sects like the Revolutionary Communist Party in the U.S. that campaign against pornography, in the name of protecting women, of course. But the vendetta against Polanski has brought together many social-democratic leftists who piously decry totalitarian Stalinism while similarly echoing the twisted social values of oppressive capitalist society and promoting interference of the capitalist state in people’s lives.

One example in Britain is the “libertarian communist” group associated with the website libcom.org, which has made it a point to go after the Spartacist League for our consistent defense of Polanski. Falsely describing him as a “convicted child rapist,” they accuse us of “sexist, pro-child abuse, rape-denying views” (libcom.org, 11 February 2014). It likewise denounces our defense of the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) against puritanical persecution by the bourgeois state. In the eyes of the state and its amen corner in the left and gay rights milieus, NAMBLA’s crime is its advocacy of the sexual rights of youth, including in relationships with older men.

The fact that ostensibly anti-state “libertarian communists” champion the Victorian moral strictures of the church and sections of the capitalist ruling class speaks volumes. It is a measure of their proximity to bourgeois “family values” hypocrisy and their great distance from the class line, let alone from the remotest concept of real human freedom. Free love? Perhaps, but only if you’re over the age of 18 and it’s sanctioned by the state. In September a 14-year-old boy from the north of England was placed on a police “sex offenders” database, which is to haunt him for at least ten years, for sexting a nude photo of himself to a girl his age. Jeremy Forrest, a teacher, was recently released after serving two years in prison for having had a romantic relationship with a 15-year-old student (see “Britain: Teacher Jailed in Anti-Sex Witchhunt,” WV No. 1028, 9 August 2013). In a communist society, where the state and the family have withered away, young (and old) people will have the freedom to engage in whatever form of sexual relationship they want.

Our defense of Polanski is part of our struggle to forge a Leninist party that will act as a tribune of the people, able to react, as Lenin put it in *What Is to Be Done?*, “to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects.” If the capitalist state can get away with railroading Polanski, all the easier for it to go after the nameless, faceless thousands who end up imprisoned or placed on a “sex offenders” list because they came up against the wrong side of bourgeois morality. ■



TROTSKY

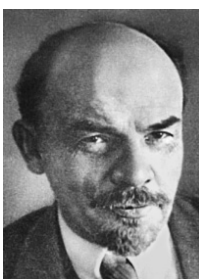
## Honor John Brown and Harpers Ferry Uprising

*On 2 December 1859, the revolutionary abolitionist John Brown was executed for having led the multiracial anti-slavery uprising in Harpers Ferry, Virginia, two months earlier. Brown’s raid prepared the road for the liberation of slaves through the Civil War, the Second American Revolution. But with the undoing of Radical Reconstruction, the promise of black equality was betrayed by the Northern bourgeoisie. Racial oppression*

*remains in the very marrow of American capitalism. Ending the oppression of black people that is inherent in American capitalism will require a workers socialist revolution. The following is an excerpt from an 1881 oration by leading black abolitionist and radical democrat Frederick Douglass honoring his friend and comrade given at the historically black Storer College in Harpers Ferry. The speech was published as a pamphlet to fund an endowment for a John Brown Professorship.*

But the question is, Did John Brown fail? He certainly did fail to get out of Harper’s Ferry before being beaten down by United States soldiers; he did fail to save his own life, and to lead a liberating army into the mountains of Virginia. But he did not go to Harper’s Ferry to save his life. The true question is, Did John Brown draw his sword against slavery and thereby lose his life in vain? and to this I answer ten thousand times, No! No man fails, or can fail who so grandly gives himself and all he has to a righteous cause.... If John Brown did not end the war that ended slavery, he did at least begin the war that ended slavery. If we look over the dates, places and men, for which this honor is claimed, we shall find that not Carolina, but Virginia—not Fort Sumpter, but Harper’s Ferry and the arsenal—not Col. Anderson, but John Brown, began the war that ended American slavery and made this a free Republic. Until this blow was struck, the prospect for freedom was dim, shadowy and uncertain. The irrepressible conflict was one of words, votes and compromises. When John Brown stretched forth his arm the sky was cleared. The time for compromises was gone—the armed host of freedom stood face to face over the chasm of a broken Union—and the clash of arms was at hand. The South staked all upon getting possession of the Federal Government, and failing to do that, drew the sword of rebellion and thus made her own, and not Brown’s, the lost cause of the century.

—Frederick Douglass, “John Brown: An Address at the Fourteenth Anniversary of Storer College” (May 1881)



LENIN

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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

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# Vindictive Retrial of Former Black Panther

## Albert Woodfox Is Innocent— Free Him Now!



Albert Woodfox walks into Louisiana courthouse, February 12. WBRZ-TV

On November 9, the federal Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the state of Louisiana could try class-war prisoner Albert Woodfox a *third time* for the 1972 murder of a Louisiana prison guard. The court also gave the state the green light to keep the 68-year-old Woodfox locked up while his judicial railroading drags on. Woodfox was falsely convicted as part of a racist vendetta against him due to his political activities within Angola prison and then spent 43 years in solitary confinement, the longest stint of any prisoner in the U.S. His conviction has been overturned twice because of prosecutorial misconduct and racist grand jury rigging. Today, even according to bourgeois legal standards, Woodfox stands innocent of murder. Yet the state continues to imprison Woodfox—who suffers from heart disease, renal failure and hepatitis C—aiming to ensure that he dies in prison.

In June, after Woodfox was indicted a third time on the same trumped-up murder charge, District Court judge James Brady barred the state from retrying him. Brady cited the fact that Woodfox could not possibly receive a fair trial and ordered his immediate and unconditional release. Louisiana attorney general James Caldwell appealed that decision and now, in a two-to-one decision, the appeals panel has overturned Brady's ruling and allowed for yet another bogus trial to go forward. The dissenting judge declared, "If ever a case justifiably could be considered to present 'exceptional circumstance' barring reprosecution, this is that case."

It was 1971 when Woodfox was first sent to Angola prison, which fittingly sits on the site of a former slave plantation. There, he and fellow inmates Herman Wallace

and Robert King started a Black Panther Party chapter and organized inmate work stoppages and protests. That put them in the crosshairs of their jailers. In 1972, Woodfox and Wallace were framed up for the fatal stabbing of prison guard Brent Miller. A year later, King was falsely convicted of killing a fellow inmate. The men, known as the Angola Three, fought their convictions for over four decades. Wallace was finally freed in 2013, only to die of liver cancer three days after his release. King, who was released in 2001, has since been prominent in the fight to free Woodfox. So transparent was the frame-up that Miller's widow, Leontine Rogers, believes Woodfox to be innocent and has joined the calls to release him.

There has never been one shred of physical evidence implicating Woodfox in Miller's killing. Only now will a bloody fingerprint found at the scene of the murder, which did not match any of the Angola Three, be tested against all of the inmates in Angola at that time—and only because Woodfox's attorneys successfully fought for it. Likewise, DNA testing will now for the first time be performed on the knife allegedly used in the killing.

For this third trial of Woodfox, the state

has already engaged in its usual frame-up machinations. Since all four supposed eyewitnesses to the murder have since died, a state judge ruled in September that their prior testimony will be read to the jury by stand-ins. Woodfox's lawyers will thus be unable to cross-examine witnesses to challenge their credibility—a denial of the basic right of the accused to confront his accusers. That goes particularly

for the government's key witness, the late Hezekiah Brown, without whose testimony the state has admitted it would not even have a case. After the first trial, it came out that Brown's testimony had been coerced by prison authorities, who threatened him with solitary confinement while dangling before him the promise of a pardon.

Woodfox should not spend another moment behind prison walls. In an August 25 letter to the Partisan Defense Committee, Woodfox evoked the 23-hour lockdowns that he was being forced to endure, declaring: "The persecution by the state of Louisiana goes on! But as ever, I remain strong and determined.... I will not break!"

We reiterate our call for Woodfox's immediate freedom and encourage our supporters to take up his cause and write to Albert Woodfox #72148, West Feliciana Parish Detention Center, PO Box 2727, St. Francisville, LA 70775. ■

## Workers Vanguard Welcomes New Readers

Our annual *Workers Vanguard* subscription campaign ended on October 14, with comrades obtaining 2,030 points. This includes 904 subscriptions to *WV*, 113 subs to *Espartaco* (the newspaper of the Mexican section of the International Communist League) and 68 to other ICL press. We congratulate comrade Vance who sold 83 points and won the national sub drive.

This subscription drive allowed us to visit places where we don't have locals and to meet new readers for our revolutionary Marxist biweekly newspaper. We had the opportunity to argue politics with youth, workers and others who are angry about the oppression and inequality in society, but who have illusions in reforming the capitalist system.

One of the highlights of our sub drive was a visit to the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico where people spoke bitterly of the debt crisis choking their economy. Capitalist austerity is particularly targeting the public university and the unions, while Wall Street bankers continue to amass wealth by squeezing profits out of the workers.

Students at some of the campuses we visited in the U.S. had illusions in Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders. In America's grim political landscape, Sanders's comments about the rich being too rich and the poor being too poor allow him to at times pretend to be some kind of "socialist" alternative. In fact, Sanders's role is to rope the disaffected back into the Democratic Party fold. We argued against support to Sanders or any other capitalist politician and explained the need for the working class to organize independently from the parties of the class enemy. For those most interested in

a real fight for socialism, a subscription to *WV* provided an opportunity to learn about the necessity of building a Leninist vanguard party capable of leading the working class to power.

We also had discussions with workers across the country, including at ports and auto plants. Many appreciated our article on the death of New Jersey longshore worker Judy Jones and the need for unions to fight for safety and better working conditions ("New Jersey Docks: Death Trap," *WV* No. 1073, 4 September). Our sub drive intersected the expiration of the United Auto Workers (UAW) contract with the Big Three and the initial rejection of the new contract by UAW workers at Fiat Chrysler. Our article "Blood, Sweat and Tiers: Auto Workers Oppose Sellout Contract" (*WV* No. 1075, 2 October) was warmly received by workers, particularly in the Midwest. Our new pamphlet *Then and Now* was popular among subscribers. That pamphlet, which describes three militant strikes in 1934 that were led by reds, explains key historical lessons for those looking for a revolutionary perspective.

All of our teams intersected anger over black oppression and racist cop terror—from the death of Sandra Bland to the barbarism of the prison system and the death penalty. Comrades sold a number of pamphlets from our *Black History and the Class Struggle* series as well as *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 (Revised), "Trotskyism vs. Black Nationalism," all of which lay out our program of black liberation through socialist revolution.

We welcome our new subscribers and encourage our readers to come to our public events and contact us with comments on our articles. ■

### 30th Annual PDC Holiday Appeal

## Free the Class-War Prisoners! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

### CHICAGO

Sunday, January 24  
3 to 7 p.m.

U.E. Hall  
37 S. Ashland (at Monroe)  
Information: (312) 563-0442

### NEW YORK CITY

Saturday, January 30  
3 to 6 p.m.

131 E. 10th St., Manhattan  
(St. Mark's Church in the Bowery,  
Parish Hall, entrance on 11th St.  
near 2nd Ave.)  
Information: (212) 406-4252

### OAKLAND

Sunday, January 31  
1 to 4 p.m.

Oakstop, 1721 Broadway  
West Wing Gallery Suite #203  
(at 19th St. BART stop)  
Information: (510) 839-0852

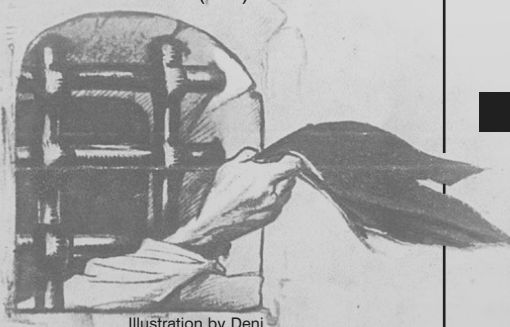
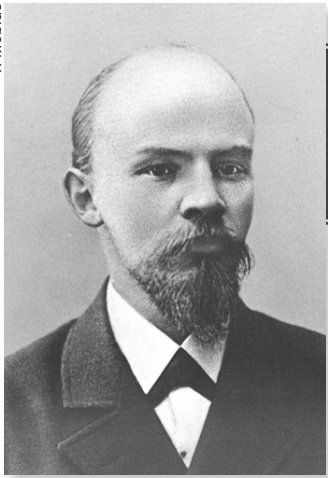


Illustration by Deni

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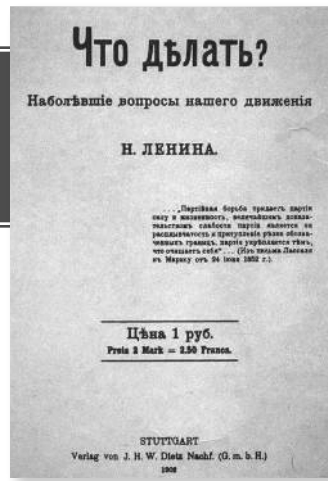




# What Is to Be Done?

## Origins of the

# Leninist Vanguard Party



The October Revolution in Russia in 1917 demonstrated that the leadership of a vanguard party is necessary for the proletariat to successfully sweep away the exploitative capitalist class together with its repressive state and establish workers rule. Lenin forged the Bolshevik Party into the instrument that was able to lead that revolution by waging years of sharp political struggle against Menshevik opportunism and Economism. The origin and development of the Leninist vanguard party were the focus of an educational presentation given by comrade Diana Coleman of the SL/U.S. at the Spartacist League/Britain National Conference in May. We present the talk below, edited for publication, which first appeared in *Workers Hammer* No. 232, Autumn 2015.

\* \* \*

Lenin's *What Is to Be Done?* (1902) is an essential work for communists, as is, I would add, our pamphlet *Lenin and the Vanguard Party*. But neither one is easy reading. Generations of would-be communists have struggled through *What Is to Be Done?* It was first recommended to me and my friends by the Weathermen, a left-wing terrorist group that came out of the American SDS, Students for a Democratic Society. It was to address what they saw as our "Economism." While I certainly didn't join them I did take them pretty seriously. You may ask how I missed the chapter entitled, "What is there in common between Economism and terrorism?", which stated that: "The terrorists bow to the spontaneity of the passionate indignation of intellectuals, who lack the ability or opportunity to connect the revolutionary struggle and the working-class movement into an integral whole." This so describes the people I met.

In any case, our group, which was a

### V.I. Lenin in 1900 and Russian-language edition of *What Is to Be Done?*

New Left working-class organising project, after reading *What Is to Be Done?* instructed a couple of our people who were working in a Kellogg's corn flake factory where the union contract had expired that any demand for higher wages or better working conditions was Economism. Therefore the only revolutionary demand was that the factory donate a hundred tons of corn flakes to the Black Panther Party "breakfast for children" programme. It says something about the tenor of the times that our people weren't laughed off the factory floor, but it did kind of beg the question as to whether the "breakfast for children" programme was itself a liberal social work programme. Anyhow, for those of you who, like me, puzzled over what was wrong with "lending the economic struggle itself a political character," hopefully this class will answer a few questions.

I will make the point that it is a common error to believe that *What Is to Be Done?* and the fight in 1903 that resulted in the division of the Russian Social Democrats (as all Marxists called themselves at the time) into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks were the final word on the party question. No, Lenin was not born a Leninist—his political views developed. Leninism, as a qualitative development of Marxism, arose in 1914-17 when Lenin responded in a revolutionary manner to the inter-imperialist World War I and the collapse of the Second International into hostile social-chauvinist parties. In August 1914, when the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) voted for war credits for the German imperialist government, it became clear that the Russian Bolsheviks weren't just a counterpart of the SPD, only with better leadership. The Bolshevik party was a whole different animal

than the SPD. It was only then that Lenin consciously generalised his views on the Leninist party, which were put into effect with the creation of the Third (Communist) International (or Comintern) in 1919.

So that's why I recommend both *What Is to Be Done?* and *Lenin and the Vanguard Party* to get an overall picture of the party question. Further, as others who know more than I do will speak to, we must understand the Leninist conception of the vanguard party in order to understand and evaluate revolutionary syndicalists like James Connolly, who was executed by the British state for his role in the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin. Whether he would have been won to Bolshevism we will never know, but he was certainly the type that the early Comintern sought to win over.

### The "Party of the Whole Class"

Organised Russian Marxism began in 1883 when Georgi Plekhanov broke from the dominant populist current to form the tiny Emancipation of Labour group in exile. During the late 1880s and early 1890s, the Marxist movement in Russia consisted of local propaganda circles that were educating a thin layer of advanced workers. But in the mid 1890s there was a major strike wave, and the propaganda circles turned to mass agitation. In part because of the imprisonment of more experienced Marxist leaders, the mass agitation quickly degenerated into reformism. This tendency was named Economism by Plekhanov, who was then hostile to it. Economism limited agitation to elementary trade-union demands, while passively supporting the bourgeois liberal efforts to reform tsarist absolutism.

In terms of international Social Democracy, the Economists were hostile to orthodox Marxism and were loosely associated with Bernsteinism in Germany. German Social Democrat Eduard Bernstein was the quintessential reformist who gave theoretical expression to the renunciation of revolutionary Marxism in favour of "evolutionary socialism," premised on gradual reform of bourgeois society. Bernstein pronounced that for him the "movement" was everything, and the final goal of socialism was nothing. Sounds like a lot of modern-day reformists.

Bernsteinism was a minority trend in the German party, but in Russia the reformist Economists were the dominant tendency. Lenin and others in around 1900 had the difficult task of fighting to bring the party back to the revolutionary traditions of the old Emancipation of Labour group. Lenin and Julius Martov, who were the second generation of Russian Marxists, along with some of the old guard like Plekhanov, worked together using the newspaper *Iskra* as their organising centre to combat the Economists. Actually this was the first time there was really an organising centre for a Russian social-democratic party. Lenin was the

organiser of the *Iskra* group and he ran the "Iskra agents" who went—clandestinely, because of the tsarist repression—into Russia. Using the arguments from the paper, the agents were supposed to win over the local committees and, if that didn't work, split them.

In polemicising against Lenin's successful splitting tactics, the Economists pointed out that the German centre did not seek to exclude the Bernsteinites—and that was certainly true enough. Before getting into the specifics of the arguments in *What Is to Be Done?*, let me say something about the question of the "party of the whole class." At this time Lenin accepted *in theory* leading SPDer Karl Kautsky's position of the party of the whole class. Now Kautsky and Rosa Luxemburg, who was a leader of the revolutionary wing of the SPD, didn't believe that everyone in the working class would or should join the party. What they did believe was that all working class tendencies should be in one social-democratic party.

As I said, Lenin did not make a theoretical argument against this conception, but rather justified his splitting tactics by a series of arguments based on the particularities of the Russian party situation. The arguments were different at different moments: the Bernsteinites would at least follow discipline, but the Economists were incapable of accepting party discipline so there had to be a split; or the Russian party, unlike the German, was embryonic and could easily fall prey to opportunism, so therefore there had to be a split. Later Lenin argued that the Mensheviks were a petty-bourgeois tendency, not a working-class one, so that's why they shouldn't be in one party. This illustrates that, as the Spartacist tendency has often noted, it was part of Lenin's strength as a revolutionary politician that his empirical political practice often preceded his full-blown theoretical understanding. Trotsky was different; he was not inclined to jump ahead of his theoretical understanding.

### "Freedom of Criticism"—Cover for Revisionism

So *What Is to Be Done?* was written in 1902 as part of this struggle and to codify and explain the arguments. It contains the initial, basic blueprint for the construction of a party and a cadre; against Economism and all reformism, for a party of professional revolutionaries, for the party to be a tribune of the people and able to master politics in many arenas—basically for a programmatically based revolutionary party with the newspaper as a collective organiser. Sounds good—and we're still struggling to accomplish what Lenin is talking about. I did wince slightly when I read in *What Is to Be Done?*: "The mere function of distributing a newspaper would help to establish *actual* contacts (if it is a newspaper worthy of the name, i.e., if it is issued regularly, not once a month like a magazine, but at least four times a month)." I thought about the struggle of



October 1917: Putilov factory workers and Pavlovsky Regiment with banner reading, "Long Live All-Russian Revolution as Prologue to Social Revolution in Europe. Under This Banner We Pledge to Achieve a Brotherhood of All Nations."

the American section to produce *Workers Vanguard* as a biweekly.

Chapter 1 takes up “freedom of criticism.” Who can be against anyone’s right to criticise? But, as Lenin makes clear, the point is that “freedom of criticism” became the watchword of those who wanted to get away from the so-called “dogmatic, old fashioned” ideas of Marxism. Lenin explains that “‘Freedom of criticism’ means freedom for an opportunist trend in Social-Democracy, freedom to convert Social-Democracy into a democratic party of reform, freedom to introduce bourgeois ideas and bourgeois elements into socialism.” Lenin tells the opportunists to “Go yourselves wherever you will, even into the marsh.... Only let go of our hands, don’t clutch at us and don’t besmirch the grand word freedom.”

Then Lenin takes up the worship of spontaneity. Lenin did not oppose spontaneous struggle. Workers strikes and student demonstrations—that’s all to the good. What Lenin denounces is that under the Economists, “Instead of sounding the call to go forward towards the consolidation of the revolutionary organisation and the expansion of political activity, the call was issued for a *retreat* to the purely trade-union struggle.” Further, he denounces the idea that the watchword for the Social Democratic movement must be the low-level slogan “struggle for economic conditions” or “the workers for the workers.” When he discusses formulations like, “The virility of the working-class movement is due to the fact that the workers themselves are at last taking their fate into their own hands, and out of the hands of the leaders,” he comments on how gross this is given that the leaders were



Lenin (seated at center), Julius Martov (seated at right) and other leaders of League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, St. Petersburg, 1897.

torn away from the workers by the cops and secret police and exiled or jailed. Another example of the Economists bowing to spontaneity is their claim that strike funds “are more valuable to the movement than a hundred other organizations.” My favourite is, as Lenin puts it, “That struggle is desirable which is possible, and the struggle which is possible is that which is going on at the given moment.” This actually is very similar to a phrase which is currently still used in the U.S., “the politics of the possible” or the “left-wing of the possible”—which, not real surprisingly, always turns out to mean that the American workers should support the capitalist Democratic Party, though critically, of course.

The real point of the whole discussion on spontaneity is that the working class *spontaneously* produces trade-union consciousness, which is a form of bourgeois ideology. As Lenin says: “There is much talk of spontaneity. But the *spontaneous* development of the working-class movement leads to its subordination to bourgeois ideology.” Communist consciousness is brought to the working class from the outside through the instrumentality of the revolutionary party. Reformists of



Left: Barricades in Moscow during 1905 Russian Revolution, when the proletariat emerged as a contender for power. Experience of 1905 was key to development of Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution, explained in 2008 ICL pamphlet (available for \$2 from address below).

all sorts have always disputed this, Tony Cliff being one of the many: it’s elitism, contempt for the working class...blah, blah, blah. We have made the point in various places that this is not a programmatic statement, but rather a *historical analysis* with implications for the organisational question.

The socialist movement and the trade-union movement came from different places. In general the socialist movement predated the development of mass industrial organisations of the working class and arose out of the bourgeois-democratic revolutionary currents. Comrade Joseph Seymour’s very excellent series “Marxism and the Jacobin Communist Tradition,” published in *Young Spartacus* (1976-79), takes up this history. We fight for a party that will be a fusion of declassed intellec-

ness when he wrote in *Value, Price and Profit* in 1865:

“The working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these everyday struggles.... They ought, therefore, not to be exclusively absorbed in these unavoidable guerilla [sic] fights incessantly springing up from the never-ceasing encroachments of capital or changes of the market. They ought to understand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the *material conditions* and the *social forms* necessary for an economical reconstruction of society. Instead of the *conservative* motto: ‘A fair day’s wages for a fair day’s work!’ they ought to inscribe on their banner the *revolutionary* watchword: ‘Abolition of the wages system!’”

So we can see where Lenin got his ideas from. This slogan is in the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) preamble too, just not all that “other stuff” about a vanguard party.

Now, in the chapter on trade-unionist politics and social-democratic politics, Lenin has one of the most eloquent statements on reformism. He says:

“Revolutionary Social-Democracy has always included the struggle for reforms as part of its activities. But it utilises ‘economic’ agitation for the purpose of presenting to the government, not only demands for all sorts of measures, but also (and primarily) the demand that it cease to be an autocratic government. Moreover, it considers it its duty to present this demand to the government on the basis, not of the economic struggle *alone*, but of all manifestations in general of public and political life. In a word, it subordinates the struggle for reforms, as the part to the whole, to the revolutionary struggle for freedom and for socialism.”

He also takes up the slogan which I had so much trouble with—“lending the economic struggle itself a political character”—which he says means nothing more than the struggle for economic reforms. What I didn’t understand when I first read this is that when you generalise trade unionism into the political sphere, what you have is more bourgeois politics. Lenin says that what the Economists have in mind “is something far more in the nature of a trade-union secretary than a socialist political leader. For the secretary of any, say English, trade union always helps the workers to carry on the economic struggle, he helps them to expose factory abuses, explains

the injustice of the laws and of measures that hamper the freedom to strike and to picket...explains the partiality of arbitration court judges who belong to the bourgeois classes, etc., etc. In a word, every trade-union secretary conducts and helps to conduct ‘the economic struggle against the employers and the government.’” Actually that sounds somewhat to the left of U.S. trade-union bureaucrats these days, but as times change so does the verbiage of these sell-outs.

Lenin goes on: “The Social-Democrat’s ideal should not be the trade-union secretary, but *the tribune of the people*, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth *before all* his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for *all* and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.”

In other words, he’s talking about the party as the tribune of the people that can lead the struggle for workers revolution and communism.

Now Lenin’s point on the need for the party to be the tribune of the people may seem obvious. After all, that is one of the things the International Communist League is well known for: in Mexico, our comrades defend gays; in Japan, our comrades defend the Burakumin (the caste of “untouchables”). But this is a lesson that took a lot of struggle to learn. You get a vivid picture of this in Jacob Zumoff’s new book, *The Communist International and U.S. Communism, 1919-1929*. Here you see the struggle that the Communist International had to wage to get the early American Communists to take up the question of black oppression. It was a real battle.

### A Party of Professional Revolutionaries

Lenin takes up the amateurishness of the Russian Social Democratic movement, comparing it to a bunch of peasants armed only with clubs going up against modern troops. This situation

*continued on page 6*

First published in 1978, this pamphlet provides a detailed historical and theoretical account of Lenin’s struggle for a vanguard party. Includes: “In Defense of Democratic Centralism”

This edition also includes: “The Fight for a Leninist Vanguard Party”

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# Vanguard Party...

(continued from page 5)

was probably inevitable at first, but his criticism is that the Economists make a virtue out of this and, consequently, fight against any attempt to correct it. An interesting book that gives you a vivid picture of this period is called *Twenty Years in Underground Russia: Memoirs of a Rank-and-File Bolshevik* (1934) by Cecilia Bobrovskaya. (It's also available on Marxists Internet Archive.) She gives a real picture of the amateurishness where she was active in Kharkov in about 1900:

“The workers’ movement was growing apace in Kharkov while we still groped for the organizational channels through which our work was to be carried on.... There were no definite forms of organization in Kharkov or anywhere in Russia, for that matter.... More often than not these committees were formed by some active revolutionary (or group of revolutionaries) in the city, who would establish strong contacts with the masses. He (or the group) would select a few capable comrades and these would declare themselves a committee.... After the committee (the directing body) came the periphery (the executive body) which consisted of several score of comrades. There was no proper division of functions either in the committee or the periphery. Thus, for example, the committee had no secretary. There were no distinct departments for organizational, propaganda or agitation work. Nobody was even appointed to look after the literary functions.... But each one of us had to be a propagandist, organizer, printer and distributor at the same time.”

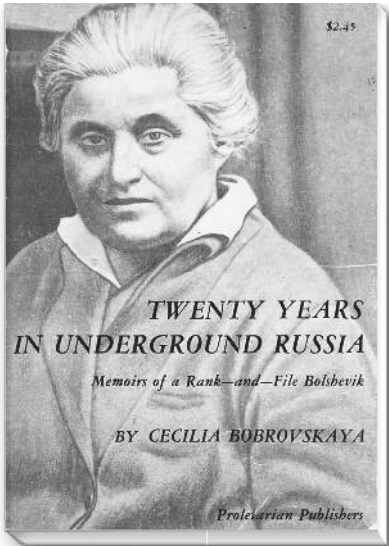
Later you get a sense of how pleased she was to see some proper organisation brought to the political work:

“At the time of which I write (1902) the *Iskra* group not only had the paper *Iskra* which was regularly published abroad and widely distributed in Russia, but also a strong organizational apparatus. In accordance with Lenin’s plan there were, first of all, cadres of well-trained, responsible comrades, the so-called *Iskra* agents, who were sent by the Editorial Board of *Iskra* to work in the locals, in Russia, or were sent from place to place as necessity required. By means of systematic correspondence in secret code and personal visits they kept the center abroad constantly informed about their own work and the general state of the work in Russia.

“Besides these highly qualified agents who were successfully carrying out the principles and tactics of *Iskra*, there were professional revolutionaries, who were occupied only with such technical duties as transporting literature and conveying comrades across the frontier, procuring passports and other tasks of a similar character.”

This whole conception of a party of professional revolutionaries is counterposed to what you would see, for example, in the British Socialist Labour Party in the early 20th century (see “British Communism Aborted,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 36-37, Winter 1985-86).

Lenin also takes up the need for a nationwide newspaper as a collective organiser that provides the political line for the comrades as well as for the sub-



**Memoirs of Cecilia Bobrovskaya, published in 1934, provide vivid picture of Kharkov workers movement around 1900.**

scribers and readers. That was important then, when communication was not real easy, but it is still absolutely necessary even now. The newspaper provides the scaffolding for the party. Lenin emphasises that the revolutionary newspaper’s job is to explain the inseparable connection between unemployment and the whole capitalist system, to expose the police, warn that famine is imminent, etc., etc. Lenin makes fun of the Economists who argued that these articles provided not a single concrete demand promising palpable results. How many times have we all heard this: what are you doing in the here-and-now? Some arguments never change.

The Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDRP) in 1903 was supposed to be the culmination of the Iskraist project to create a centralised party based on a comprehensive programme. Well, it didn’t quite work out that way. The Iskraists had a two-thirds majority and the Economists and the Jewish Bund were in the minority. But beneath the seemingly solid front of the *Iskra* group were very considerable tensions. There were the “hards” and the “softs,” initially represented by Lenin and Martov. As you well know, this tension exploded over the first paragraph of the rules which defined membership. Martov’s draft defined a party member as one who “renders it regular personal assistance under the direction of one of its organizations.” Lenin’s more stringent membership criterion was “by personal participation in one of the Party organizations.” Lenin’s narrower definition of membership was motivated by a desire both to exclude opportunists (who were less likely to accept the rigours and dangers of full organisational participation) and to weed out dilettantes who had been attracted to the Russian Social Democracy precisely because of its loose circle nature.

Lenin refused to see this as some incidental organisational dispute, but insisted that it be made the basis for majority (Bolshevik) and minority (Menshevik) representation on leading bodies. Again, I would say that this was an example of

Lenin’s consistently revolutionary thrust leading him to break with opportunism well before he had generalised such a break theoretically. The logic of the factional struggle drove the Mensheviks to the right; gradually they replicated the politics of the defeated Economists and eventually fused with them. So there were essentially two organisations, one Bolshevik and the other Menshevik.

Lurking underneath all this was really the question of the character of the Russian Revolution. When reading *What Is to Be Done?*, it may not be immediately obvious that Russia then was ruled by an absolutist monarchy, based on a landowning aristocracy, and all Marxists agreed that the immediate tasks were essentially democratic—the overthrow of tsarism, land to the peasantry, etc. However, there was an assumption on the part of the Mensheviks that, given Russia’s social and economic backwardness, this democratic revolution would be led by the liberal bourgeoisie and would necessarily lead to an extended period of capitalist rule. Basically, this rejected a revolutionary proletarian perspective in favour of a parliamentary opposition under a capitalist government!

Lenin agreed that overthrowing tsarism was the immediate task, but he vehemently disagreed with the perspective that the Marxists should form a bloc with the liberal bourgeoisie. What he posited was an alliance between the revolutionary proletariat and the poor peasantry. As opposed to the Mensheviks, he was trying to draw a line between the proletariat, and the toiling masses in general, and the capitalist class. However, Lenin’s theory at this time, “the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry,” was flawed in that it posited a dictatorship, a state power, of two distinct classes, one of which—the peasantry—is a property-owning class.

Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution—which he first developed on the eve of the 1905 Revolution, when he was still organisationally aligned with the Mensheviks—dealt exactly with this impossible contradiction. As he said, it was only the proletariat organised in the factories that could satisfy the demands of the peasants and oppressed masses through doing away with capitalist property relations and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. In carrying out the democratic tasks of the revolution, the proletarian state, supported by the mass of poor peasants, must inevitably make “despotic inroads into the rights of bourgeois property” and thus the revolution would directly pass over to the implementation of socialist tasks. Obviously there is a whole other aspect to permanent revolution, which is the necessity for international extension of the revolution, but that part was not as controversial at the time, 20 years before Stalin began pushing the anti-Marxist idea of building “socialism in one country”—in backward Russia, no less. (For further on the above, see the ICL pamphlet *The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky’s Theory of Permanent Revolution*, April 2008.)

The point here, however, is that Lenin’s algebraic formula (which he corrected in April 1917) did serve his main purpose of drawing a line against the Mensheviks and their tailing of the bourgeoisie.

### Democratic Centralism vs. “Freedom of Criticism”

Until 1912, the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks were sometimes forced to exist as factions in the same party. Particularly after the 1905 Revolution, there was mass sentiment, especially among newly recruited workers, for reunification; there was also a need for political struggle and a sorting out process. In the rush of events, opportunists had joined the Bolsheviks and revolutionary elements had mistakenly joined the Mensheviks. For Lenin, the reunification represented both a continuing adherence to the Kautskyan “party of the whole class” and a tactical manoeuvre to win over the mass of raw, young workers who had joined the Social-

Democratic movement during 1905. We cannot know how much weight Lenin gave these very different considerations. He probably didn’t look forward to or project a definitive split and the creation of a Bolshevik party, but by 1912 after many struggles, that you can read about in *Lenin and the Vanguard Party*, that was the result. He still at this point emphasised the Mensheviks’ petty-bourgeois character. By the way, Trotsky’s rotten role in the 1912 “August bloc”—through which he tried to bring together all the disparate anti-Bolshevik tendencies in the name of “party unity”—demonstrated his Menshevik sensibilities on the party question, something which he only really came to understand in 1917.

Now let me say a word about democratic centralism, the Leninist organisational principle, uniquely upheld today by the ICL, that enshrines the right of an oppositional minority to fight for contending political positions *inside* the party—including the right to form a faction to replace the existing majority—so long as *all* members defend the majority line in public. Obviously when you’re stuck in a joint organisation with a Menshevik majority or doing an entry into a social-democratic party, you’re for as much “freedom of criticism”—meaning the right of a party minority to *publicly* criticise the majority position—as you can get. As James P. Cannon, the historic leader of American Trotskyism, makes clear in his book, *Speeches to the Party*:

“Democratic-centralism has no special virtue per se. It is the specific principle of a combat party, united by a single program, which aims to lead a revolution. Social Democrats have no need of such a system of organization for the simple reason that they have no intention of organizing a revolution. Their democracy and centralism are not united by a hyphen but kept in separate compartments for separate purposes. The democracy is for the social patriots and the centralism is for the revolutionists.”

—“Leninist Organization Principles,” April 1953

Let me give another quote from *Twenty Years in Underground Russia* describing



Marxists Internet Archive  
**Georgi Plekhanov (1856-1918), the father of Russian Marxism.**

the trials of dealing with Mensheviks during a strike in Baku in 1904. Speaking of an agitator who employed Menshevik phraseology, Bobrovskaya says:

“Ilya’s fiery speeches before and during the strike breathed hatred of the Bolsheviks in general and of the Baku Committee in particular. He and his friends tried to keep the strike within the limits of a purely economic struggle and tried to keep out everything that was political. Our political struggle was the principal object of Ilya’s ridicule at the mass meetings. On such occasions his harangues would be punctuated with sneering Menshevik phrases such as ‘Bolshevik generals,’ ‘Bonapartism,’ and so forth....

“The demagogue Ilya was never tired at mass meetings of discussing minor questions like the provision of aprons, mitts, etc., by the employers, without touching upon the real significance of the strike. As a result, the more backward workers left these mass meetings without being enlightened as to the true nature of the struggle and went away determined to fight only for mitts and aprons. They would leave the meeting with a hatred

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towards the Bolsheviks for whom mitts and aprons were a minor problem and not the vital question.”

The strike was quite successful. Bobrovskaya says: “During the strike the Baku Committee tried to show the masses of workers the necessity of extended political demands both by oral agitation and by the distribution of leaflets which had been printed in our excellently equipped secret printshop. This agitation proved successful. The Baku workers became more class conscious during the strike.” After mentioning that many of the wives were fairly conservative and unhappy about the strike, Bobrovskaya goes on: “Even the women ceased to nag their husbands. They realized that the struggle had been worth while. The struggle had been a hard one, but the workers secured a shortened working day and an increase in wages. But most important of all, the workers began to be recognized as a power with which it was necessary to reckon.”

One more quote. Speaking about 1905 and the difficulties of getting trained agitators, Bobrovskaya adds: “These difficulties were eased somewhat in the days that followed, when, besides the official agitators, speakers appeared from among the masses themselves.... I remember a worker from the Rontaller factory who once came over to me and said timidly that he would like to speak. He wound up his long and fairly able speech with the following words: ‘We button makers are a big power. If we choose we can leave all Moscow without a button.’” Well, Moscow’s a lot colder than Los Angeles, so I guess that was a serious threat.

### The Material Basis for Opportunism

The event which transformed Lenin from a Russian revolutionary social democrat into the founding leader of the world communist movement can be precisely dated: 4 August 1914. With the start of World War I the parliamentary fraction of the German SPD voted unanimously for war credits for the German government. There’s been a lot of water under the bridge since then, but at the time seeing major European socialist parties go over to this orgy of social chauvinism and supporting their own bourgeoisies was very shocking. As is well known, Lenin at first couldn’t believe it and thought the report of the SPD vote was just German war propaganda. The point is this: after the SPD’s great betrayal, revolutionary Marxists could no longer regard opportunism in the workers movement as a marginal or episodic phenomenon or as a product of particular historical political backwardness. At this point, Lenin began to realise in hindsight the implications and effects of his earlier actions and positions.

Lenin’s basic policy towards the war and the international socialist movement was developed within a few weeks. This policy had three main elements: 1) Socialists must stand for the defeat, above all, of their “own” bourgeois state. 2) The war demonstrated that capitalism in the imperialist epoch threatened to destroy civilisation. Socialists must therefore work to transform the imperialist war into civil war, into proletarian revolution. And 3) the Second International had been destroyed by social chauvinism. A new, revolutionary international must be built through a complete split with the opportunists in the social-democratic movement.

This last point was the most controversial one. Various types, from revolutionary social democrats Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht to revolutionary syndicalists, could agree with the first two points; it was the point about splitting the international workers movement into two antagonistic parties, one revolutionary and the other reformist, that created uproar even among those who opposed the war. So Lenin was forced to confront and explicitly reject the orthodox, Kautskyan “party of the whole class” position. He realised that the Bolshevik organisation had not, in fact, been built according to the Kautskyan formula. It

had completely organisationally separated from the Mensheviks, in a formal way two and a half years before the outbreak of war and in practice long before 1912. The selection, training and tempering of the cadre in Lenin’s party was fundamentally different than in Kautsky’s. So he took the Bolshevik Party as the model for the Third International, the Comintern.

Another point: Lenin and Gregory Zinoviev, with whom he worked closely during the war years, had to deal with the fact that identifying opportunism as a petty-bourgeois tendency didn’t deal with the world-historic betrayal they had just seen from the German SPD. The SPD had deep trade-union roots, led massive unions, its leaders—Ebert, Scheidemann and Noske—had all been workers. Lenin’s analysis of the social basis for opportunism in the Second International can be



**Demonstrators at Spartacist League-initiated labor/black mobilization that stopped KKK in Washington, D.C., November 1982. Leninists seek to mobilize the power of labor in defense of the oppressed.**

seen in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, written in 1916:

“The receipt of high monopoly profits by the capitalists in one of the numerous branches of industry, in one of the numerous countries, etc., makes it economically possible for them to bribe certain sections of the workers, and for a time a fairly considerable minority of them, and win them to the side of the bourgeoisie of a given industry or given nation against all the others. The intensification of antagonisms between imperialist nations for the division of the world increases this urge. And so there is created that bond between imperialism and opportunism.... The most dangerous of all in this respect are those [like the Menshevik, Martov] who do not wish to understand that the fight against imperialism is a sham and humbug unless it is inseparably bound up with the fight against opportunism.”

So Lenin came to understand that reformism was not a petty-bourgeois tendency coming from outside the workers movement, but a part of the workers movement that had to be continuously fought. The labour bureaucracy with its pro-capitalist politics plays the role of a transmission belt for bourgeois politics into the labour movement. The fight to transform the working class from a class *in* itself—the object of capitalist exploitation—to a class *for* itself—conscious of its revolutionary goals, requires battling the false consciousness that ties the proletariat to its “own” bourgeoisie. Within the workers movement it is not only the trade-union bureaucracy which serves to reinforce the rule of capital but also the reformist pretenders to Marxism. I’m sure you have all had plenty of experience with these types.

But as *Lenin and the Vanguard Party* makes clear, the Leninist attitude towards the labour aristocracy is significantly different than towards the trade-union bureaucracy. In the imperialist epoch successful reformism is impossible. Thus whatever their background and original motivation, unless the leaders of the labour movement explicitly adopt a revolutionary course, they are forced by their

social role to subordinate the workers’ interests to those of the bourgeoisie, i.e. they are the “labour lieutenants of capital.” In contrast, skilled, well-paid workers, the aristocracy of labour, while more susceptible to conservative bourgeois ideology, and often wretched chauvinist dogs, are not “agents of the bourgeoisie in the workers movement.” Like the rest of the proletariat, they must be won away from their treacherous misleaders.

Even more off base is the position adopted by many American New Leftists that all workers in advanced industrial countries are an aristocracy of labour and hence impossible to win to revolution. This was the position of the Weathermen, which I mentioned before. In the interests of comic relief, let me talk about my meeting with Bernardine Dohrn, a leader of the Weathermen who was then on the

they now hang out in liberal circles and know such unsavoury people as Barack Obama.

### Organizational Principles and the Revolutionary Program

You see codified in the first four Congresses of the Third International Lenin’s generalisation of the Bolshevik experience: that the kind of hardened, programmatically based, democratic-centralist party was what the workers of all lands needed. That’s what the “21 Conditions” (adopted at the 1920 Second Congress) for joining the Communist International were about: programmatic agreement, keeping the opportunists out. That is what we are about: trying to build an international Leninist vanguard party on a hard programmatic basis through a series of splits and fusions. Of course, given the distance between us and our opponents there hasn’t been much there to even contemplate fusing with these days, but that will change.

In conclusion, I want to just refer you to Prometheus Research Series (PRS) bulletin No. 1, *Guidelines on the Organizational Structure of Communist Parties, on the Methods and Content of Their Work*. This is the first PRS bulletin we ever put out. In the introduction we say that it “appears to be the only complete and accurate English translation” of what we refer to as “one of the great documents of the international communist movement, standing as the codification of communist organizational practice as it was forged by the Bolsheviks and tested in the light of the world’s first successful proletarian revolution.” The Guidelines start off by making clear the revolutionary goals of the communist party. Then in the section called “On communists’ obligation to do work,” we very clearly hear the echoes of the Bolshevik/Menshevik fight over the definition of membership. It talks about the need for “day-to-day collective work in the party organizations.” It goes on: “Thus, in its effort to have only really active members, a communist party must demand of *every* member in its ranks that he devote his time and energy, insofar as they are at his own disposal under the given conditions, to his party and that he always give his best in its service.” Further: “In order to carry out daily party work, every party member should as a rule always be part of a *smaller working group*—a group, a committee, a commission, a board or a collegium, a fraction or cell.”

So we see Lenin’s more stringent membership criterion, “personal participation in one of the Party organizations,” not Martov’s looser criterion. This is an example of lessons learned and put into effect in the Comintern. And, I would add, the fact that we put out the only complete English translation of this document is one more testament to our commitment to Bolshevism and to providing revolutionary continuity.

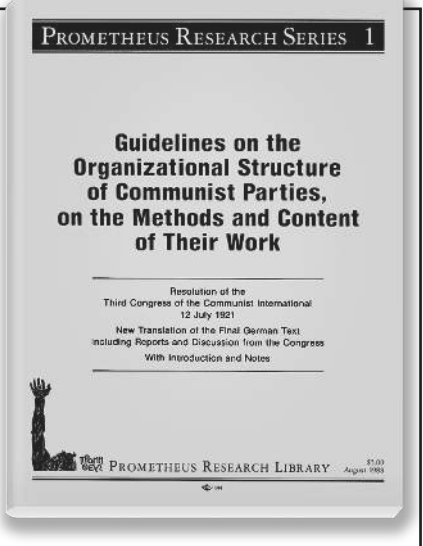
When class and social struggle do break out, what is needed is a revolutionary party that has learned the programmatic and historic lessons of previous class battles and is able to lead the proletariat forward to state power. There are not too many of us, but there is no one else who has the same Marxist goals. So this is our job. On that slightly daunting note, I will conclude. ■

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Reprinted here is an article from Australasian Spartacist No. 227 (Spring 2015) followed by an article that appeared in Spartacist at the time of the 1965-66 massacre.

## Australasian SPARTACIST

Fifty years ago, beginning in October 1965 and continuing through early 1966, over a million Indonesian Communists, workers, peasants and ethnic Chinese were slaughtered in one of the most savage massacres in modern history. This bloodbath, a holy war against Communism, was carried out by an alliance between the army and Islamic fanatics with the direct involvement of the American CIA, aided and abetted by its Australian counterpart ASIS. This catastrophe for the Indonesian working class was a direct product of the support by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), as well as their mentors in Beijing and Moscow, to the capitalist government of Sukarno and his Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI). The PKI leadership preached “joint unity” with Sukarno and the PNI to form a “united national front, including the national bourgeoisie” which would carry out “not socialist but democratic reforms.”

This class-collaborationist program was based on the Menshevik/Stalinist dogma of “two-stage revolution,” which led to the bloody defeat of the Second Chinese Revolution of 1925-1927. The Indonesian proletariat was politically disarmed and was unable to defend itself when the Indonesian generals, led by Suharto and backed by the imperialists, struck to behead the PKI, the largest Communist party in the capitalist world. This resulted in 32 years of repressive military rule before the blood-drenched Suharto regime was toppled following two years of economic crisis and massive student-centred protests in 1998.

The key lesson of Indonesia 1965 is that the PKI’s class-collaborationist “united national front” was a program of betrayal and that the liberation of the workers and oppressed masses in countries of belated capitalist development like Indonesia requires fighting for the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution. This program holds that in semicolonial countries, where the capitalist rulers are tied by a thousand threads to the dominant world powers, only the proletariat mobilised independently and leading the oppressed masses can overthrow the local bourgeoisie and tear off the imperialist yoke. This task is inseparably linked to the fight for proletarian revolution in the advanced capitalist countries, opening the road to socialism. It is necessary to build internationalist revolutionary workers parties in the semicolonial countries and in the imperialist heartlands as part of the fight to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution.

For a detailed analysis of the events of 1965, see “Lessons of Indonesia 1965,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 55, Autumn 1999. ■

# Fifty Years Since Anti-Communist Massacre in Indonesia



Alleged Communist rounded up by Indonesian Army in wake of Suharto’s imperialist-sponsored 1965 coup.

Camera Press

## “Indonesia: Lesson in Betrayal”

*Spartacist* No. 5, November-December 1965

The reign of terror being carried out by the Indonesian army against the working class of that country follows logically from a process of treachery tragically familiar in the annals of working class struggle. The working people of Indonesia are now *paying with their blood* for the betrayal by the leadership of the 3,000,000-member, pro-Chinese Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI), which must share guilt for the present violence. Workers and militants of all countries, particularly those who look to the CP of China for “revolutionary” example and direction, cannot afford to ignore the warning of this classic lesson.

### Mao’s Peaceful Coexistence

Guided by the Mao government’s “bloc of four classes” doctrine and need for “Peaceful Coexistence” with “progressive, non-aligned” capitalist “friends,” such as Indonesian President Sukarno (a former collaborator with colonialism), the PKI—largest Communist party in the capitalist world—has been helping administer Indonesian capitalism while suppressing the struggles of the Indonesian workers and keeping them wedded to Sukarno’s police-state. Meanwhile the Chinese

press has heaped continuous praise upon Sukarno, mentioning nothing of Indonesia’s poverty-stricken economy, the abysmally poor conditions of Indonesian workers, Sukarno’s military aid to Laotian right-wingers, etc. (This position has been echoed by Maoists in the U.S.; the October 1965 issue of *Progressive Labor* magazine reprints a “revolutionary” speech of Sukarno, apparently as a contribution to “Marxism-Leninism”!)

Nowhere is the Maoist opportunism of the PKI better reflected than in their adherence to “Bung (Brother) Karno’s” cynical strategy of “Nasakom”—a Popular Front of nationalists, religious groups, and Stalinists under the roof of class collaboration. Following this policy, the PKI concerned itself with the “national interests” of the Indonesian bourgeoisie, pressured for reforms, and endeavored to woo various ministers and sections of the military leadership over to its “struggle against U.S. imperialism.” Accepting Sukarno’s promise to arm the workers and peasants “if necessary,” the PKI called for “co-operation between the people and the Armed Forces,” and to offset unrest over Indonesia’s economic deterioration raised as a major slogan

“*For the Maintenance of Civil Order, Help the Police!*” This counter-revolutionary policy led directly to the present violence and the Army’s work is undoubtedly facilitated by it.

In return for its aid, “Bung Karno” bestowed cabinet posts and other favors upon the PKI, including outlawing left-wing political opposition (indiscriminately labeled “Trotskyist” by the Maoists). This symbiotic relationship was further illustrated last March, when Communist petroleum workers took control of Standard Vacuum’s refineries at Sungei Gerong and Pendopo. Instead of consolidating these gains and pursuing a program directed toward workers’ power, the PKI allowed the Sukarno government to *give back* these plants to their imperialist owners. Foreign Minister Subandrio, another “friend” of the PKI, issued apologies to the firms and assured them that “there would be no further embarrassment of Americans” (*N.Y. Times*, 19 March 1965). Two months later, at the celebration of the 45th anniversary of the PKI, the party chairman D. N. Aidit eulogized His Excellency: “*Among us...is Bung Karno. The clear sky above us is witness to it. Thousands of eyes see him. Millions of people are listening to him over the radio and watching him on their TV screens.... Sukarno’s portrait hangs beside those of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin.*”

### Proletarian Leadership

Modern history has amply demonstrated that the outstanding problem facing the international working class is the question of leadership—i.e., the necessity for an international revolutionary party which, on the basis of its program, can lead the working people to the conquest of state power in every country. A further illustration of the counter-revolutionary nature of Maoism and its own version of “Peaceful Coexistence” is China’s cynical support to the recent “palace coup” [the overthrow of Ahmed Ben Bella by Houari Boumedienne] in Algeria (where, unlike Indonesia, Peking does not control the mass party of the poor)—idiotically parroted in the U.S. by the Progressive Labor Party’s judgment that (in spite of Boumedienne’s recent oil give-away to France) the coup was a “revolutionary advance” because of Boumedienne’s rejection of the “Trotskyites,” Yugoslavs, etc., who “surrounded” Ben Bella (China’s former “friend”) and because of his “staunch support” of Peking’s upcoming Afro-Asian Conference (*Challenge*, 27 July). Mao’s former “ally,” the Indian government, is now an imperialist pawn, as China’s new “friend,” Pakistan, was yesterday, and will be tomorrow. Similar pursuits have led the Mao government to *suspend struggle* in one country after another while seeking collaboration with capitalist or feudal rulers such as Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia or the “patriotic bourgeoisie” of Japan “against U.S. imperialism.”

### Counter-revolutionary Maoism

This line toward Japan, carried out by the big pro-Maoist Japanese Communist Party, has the gravest strategic consequences of all. Japan with its exceptional economic vulnerability and instability, its militant, organized working class and radical student movement, has been ripe for building a mass revolutionary party. At each point Chinese policy has deflected the proletariat from this course. A proletarian revolution in Japan, the industrial powerhouse of Asia, would profoundly alter the relationship of forces upon the whole planet. Such a revolution could *only* be carried out by a working class acting through soviets, armed and with a conscious party at its head—everything that China is not. Overnight U.S. imperialism’s power in East Asia would vanish; *but the Maoist bureaucracy would be swept away in the same*



Photo Deppen



Howard Sochurek

Far left: Mao fetes Sukarno during 1956 visit to China. Left: Indonesian Communist leader Dipa Nusantara Aidit at 1955 rally. Communist Party’s alliance with nationalist leader Sukarno paved way for bloody massacre.









# Victory to the Kohler Strike!



WV Photos

About 2,000 members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 833 have been on strike against the Kohler manufacturing company near Sheboygan, Wisconsin, since November 16. Ninety-four percent of the workers voted to reject the company's contract offer, angered by the continuation of a two-tier wage scale and drastic hikes in health insurance costs. This is the first strike against Kohler Company,

a major producer of plumbing products, since 1983. A 3,000-strong rally and march of strikers and other trade unionists was held on November 21 (photos above). A WV sales team spoke to many workers who knew about the long history of hard-fought battles against the viciously anti-union Kohler family, including the strike in 1934 during which two strikers were shot dead and 47 wounded by

company guards and special deputies. When workers at Kohler walked out in April 1954, they began what was to be the longest strike in U.S. history—it was finally settled in 1966. One black striker with 20 years at Kohler told WV that sometimes “you just have to stand up and fight.” Today, older, Tier A workers are bitter that younger, Tier B workers doing the same jobs get less than two-thirds of

the pay. However, Kohler strikers at the rally were unaware that, despite heavy opposition from auto workers, the UAW bureaucracy had just forced through contracts with the Detroit Three (GM, Ford and Fiat Chrysler) that not only preserved the wage tiers but created new ones. As at Kohler, workers in auto are outraged by the perpetuation of divisive tiers. *Equal pay for equal work!*

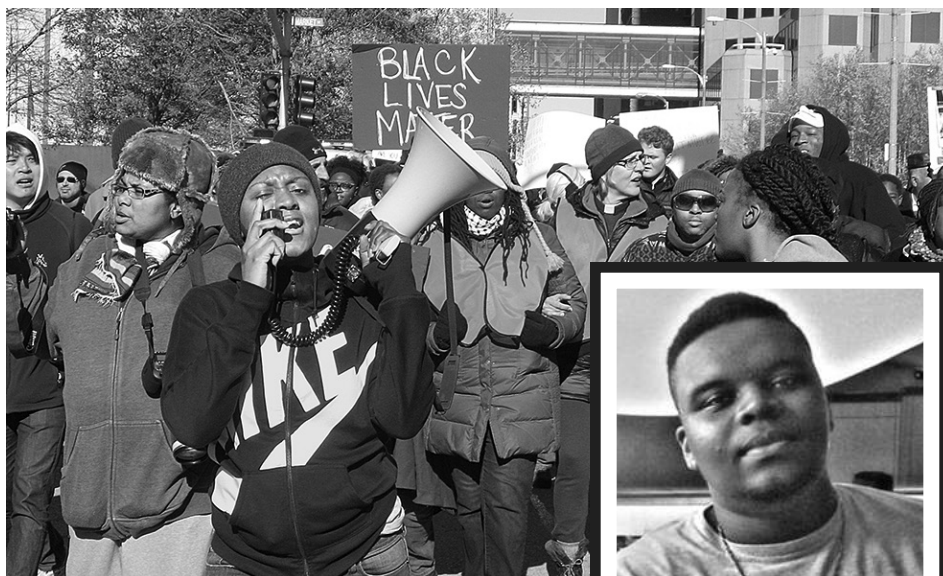
## Missouri...

(continued from page 12)

view that the only avenue of struggle is one of pressuring the rulers to act in the interests of those they viciously exploit and oppress. Just as the Black Lives Matter movement has looked to the Feds to rein in the killer cops, the student protesters overwhelmingly appeal to agents of capitalist class rule, e.g., the campus administration, to transform the universities into arenas of racial diversity and inclusion. The idea that the campuses can be transformed into oases of racial equality under capitalism is a pipe dream. Life in the “ivory tower” is but a reflection of the reality of American capitalism, whose entire existence has been rooted in black oppression.

### Liberal Nostrums and Racist Reaction

There was, understandably, much celebration when Wolfe resigned, especially given the racist arrogance with which he had dismissed the demands of black students. But replacing the university president will not change the role of the campus administration, whose job is to run the university in the interests of society's capitalist rulers. Fundamentally, universities under capitalism exist to educate and train administrators, technicians and intellectuals, as well as the next generation of war criminals, union-busting lawyers and murderous spies needed to advance the interests of U.S. imperialism against the working class and dark-skinned people at home and abroad. The affirmative



WV Photo, Facebook (inset)

**November 2014 protest in St. Louis, Missouri, against racist cop killings, including that of Michael Brown (inset), slain by Ferguson police in August 2014.**

action programs in education, which we defended, were won through the massive civil rights movement protests of the 1960s but were intended to defuse social struggle. These gains, albeit largely token, were granted with the aim of co-opting a thin layer of the black population, the so-called “talented tenth,” some of whom would go on to serve America's rulers as mayors, police chiefs, military officers, etc.

Wolfe has been replaced, at least temporarily, by Mike Middleton. The retired deputy chancellor and one of the first black law graduates from the university, Middleton was himself involved in the black student protests at Mizzou in 1969.

Will that make any real difference? For the past eight years, this country has been ruled by a black president, Barack Obama. His presence in the White House has done nothing to stem the vicious racial oppression of black people. The ghetto poor are little more than targets for the trigger-happy racist cops. Similarly, the people of Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria continue to be maimed and killed by U.S. drones and airstrikes.

For the racist rulers of America, Obama's election provided a much-needed facelift for U.S. imperialism. The image of a black man in the highest office of the land provided a thin gloss on murderous capitalist class rule. A black student protester at Yale expressed the disillusion that is now widespread: “It really is hard to believe because we want to believe that we're a post-racial society, but it's just not true” (*New York Times*, 11 November). Nor will it ever be true short of a successful proletarian socialist revolution that shatters this entire system of racial oppression and class exploitation. In the absence of any such perspective, the Black Lives Matter movement, like so many other movements before it, is rapidly being sucked into the Democratic Party electoral machine in the interminable 2016 presidential campaign.

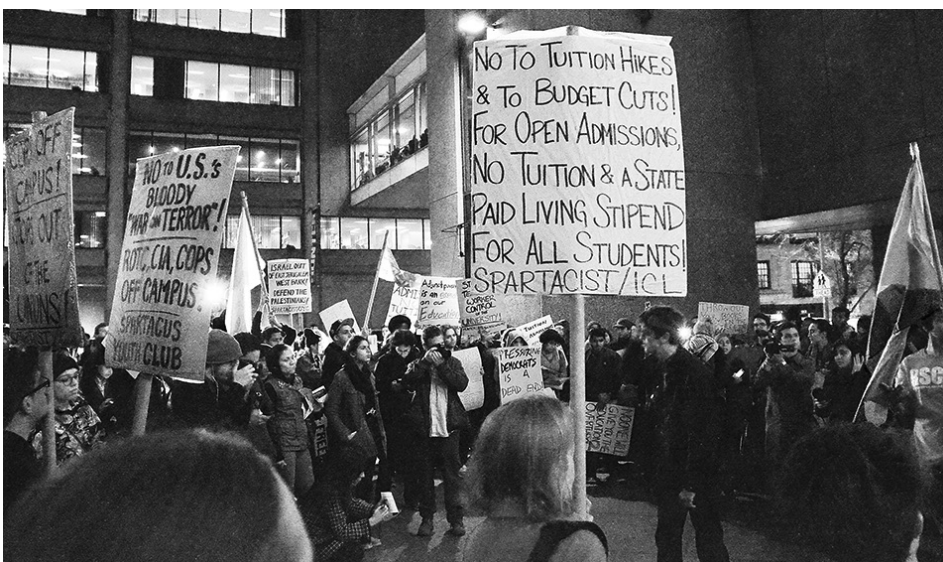
Many anti-racist activists have appealed for “speech codes” and “codes of conduct” in an attempt to transform the campuses into so-called “safe spaces.” Such appeals disarm the victims of racist attacks on colleges by fostering illusions in the supposed “neutrality” of the university administration, itself an extension of the capitalist

state. Among the demands at Amherst College are that the university president discipline “racially insensitive” students as well as that the campus cops issue a statement of “protection and defense” of the protesters against any retaliation. The notion that the police would protect protesters is a suicidal illusion. Anything that gives the campus administration and its cops greater authority allows them freer rein to crack down on political dissent by leftists, black students and other minorities. It also plays into the hands of right-wingers who, while whining about “free speech,” aim to purge and silence all opposition to the status quo.

### For a Class-Struggle Fight for Black Freedom!

Amid the all-sided offensive against black people in this country, it is hardly surprising that any notion of social equality seems a distant prospect. In this context, the limited and symbolic demands of the black students and other minorities are both an understandable reaction to the very real racist bigotry permeating the campuses and an accommodation to it. After a recent visit to the Mizzou campus, a WV sales team reported that few of the students they spoke to looked beyond raising awareness and breaking down racist stereotypes. This perspective reflects the mistaken belief that racial oppression is the result of “bad ideas” that can supposedly be overcome through “sensitivity training.” On the contrary, black oppression is deeply rooted in this country that was built on the backs of black slaves. Today, the majority of the black population remains forcibly segregated at the bottom of society, subject to desperate poverty and police terror, while the rulers wield anti-black racism to divide and weaken the working class.

Unlike liberals and others who seek to sanitize the racist status quo, our purpose as Marxists is to change that reality by fighting to mobilize the power of the multiracial working class behind a series of demands that address the felt needs of the working and oppressed masses, including free, quality, integrated education for all. This requires breaking the grip of the Democratic Party on both the unions and the black population. The working class needs its own party, a revolutionary workers party that champions the cause of all of the oppressed. We seek to win a new generation, both on the campuses and elsewhere, to the perspective of socialist revolution, which will lay the basis for the genuine liberation of black people and the freedom of humanity. ■



WV Photo

**New York Spartacus Youth Club joins November 12 protest at Hunter College for free tuition, cancellation of student debt and \$15 minimum wage.**



# WORKERS VANGUARD

In the wake of the nationwide explosion of outrage against racist cop terror, protests are now sweeping campuses across the country against the pervasive racism faced by the dwindling number of black youth “lucky” enough to have made it into a university. Skyrocketing tuition and the decades-long assault on affirmative action programs, which granted a measure of access to higher education for black youth, have led to a wholesale racist purge at colleges and universities. The few remaining black students are treated like, at best, undeserving outsiders. This message is also delivered by frat rats and other bigots with provocations reminiscent of the KKK, like the effigy of a black body swinging from a noose on the renowned “progressive” campus of UC Berkeley in 2012.

The current protests were sparked by students at the University of Missouri in Columbia, little more than 100 miles from Ferguson, where the police execution of Michael Brown ignited mass demonstrations last year. Protests at “Mizzou” began in September after black student Payton Head, president of the Missouri Students Association, described in a Facebook post how he had been terrorized by racists in a pickup truck screaming the “N” word. Spearheading the protests were a group of black students called Concerned Student 1950, referring to the year when black students were first admitted to the university. The University of Missouri system president Tim Wolfe called out the campus cops to disperse demonstrators.

After it was reported that a swastika had been smeared in feces on the wall of a dorm bathroom in late October, a black graduate student began a hunger strike to demand that Wolfe be ousted. Many students, faculty and staff walked out in

## Campus Racism Sparks Protests



November 9: University of Missouri students cheer following resignation of university president Tim Wolfe. AP

support, an action that was spurred by graduate student workers who had earlier fought back and won against the university’s attempt to cut off their health insurance. But it was the school’s black football players, supported by their white coach

and teammates, who turned the tide with the threat that they would boycott the next home game if Wolfe didn’t resign. Cancellation of the game would have cost the school a million dollars. Wolfe resigned, as did the chancellor of the university.

The Mizzou football team’s threatened boycott underlines the power of the college athletes who generate billions for university administrations as well as major corporations such as broadcasting and video games manufacturers. As we wrote in our *Young Spartacus* article “College Sports Plantation” (WV No. 1054, 17 October 2014) supporting the fight by college athletes to unionize, strike and collectively bargain for wages, health and other benefits currently denied them: “While students in general have virtually no social power, if college athletes were to withdraw their labor and go on strike, it could have a significant impact.”

Such power all the more lies in the hands of the multiracial working class whose labor produces the wealth that is appropriated in the form of massive profits by the minuscule, and ruthless, capitalist class—the owners of the means of production. The sons and daughters of the working class, white as well as black and Latino, have increasingly been priced out of a college education or are buried under mountains of student debt. Here lies the potential for a class-struggle fight—allying the students with the power of labor—for free, quality, integrated education for all including open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for all students. A central obstacle to the power of labor being brought to bear is the misleaders of the unions who are not even defending their own members, much less lifting a finger in defense of the embattled black population.

Given the long history of betrayals by the trade-union bureaucrats, it is not surprising that there is little to no appreciation of the social power of the working class. This has done much to condition a

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## For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

### Racist Terror Attack in Minneapolis

NOVEMBER 24—Last night, five Black Lives Matter (BLM) protesters were shot by three masked race terrorists in Minneapolis. While the perpetrators fled, the cops attacked those trying to help the victims, including with pepper spray. One activist reported that a cop taunted protesters about the shooting: “This is what you asked for.” All five victims were hospitalized, including one shot in the stomach. Protesters have been demonstrating outside the Fourth Precinct police station in response to the cop killing earlier this month of Jamar Clark, a 24-year-old black man. Activists have faced not only police repression and arrests but also repeated threats, including masked men at their rallies. Four days before the shooting, an online video was posted of a pair of white supremacists brandishing a pistol and threatening to turn up at the protests. The Minneapolis BLM has vowed that its rallies will continue.

Last night’s shooting highlights the racist terror and reaction that are integral to American capitalism. Such attacks are an auxiliary to the powerful murder



Lorena de la Cuesta

After black activists were shot during Minneapolis Black Lives Matter protest on November 23, demonstrators continued rally against racist terror.



Wheeler/Minneapolis Star Tribune

apparatus of the capitalist state, the main source of racist violence. The race terrorists and fascist scum are emboldened by the daily terror meted out to black

people and minorities by the thugs in blue. We seek to mobilize the multiracial working class in defense of the victims of racist terror and against every mani-

festation of racial oppression. Police terror will be finally done away with when the working class sweeps away the capitalist order through socialist revolution.