

We Need a Multiracial Workers Party!



Chicago: Emanuel Must Go! Enough with the Democrats!

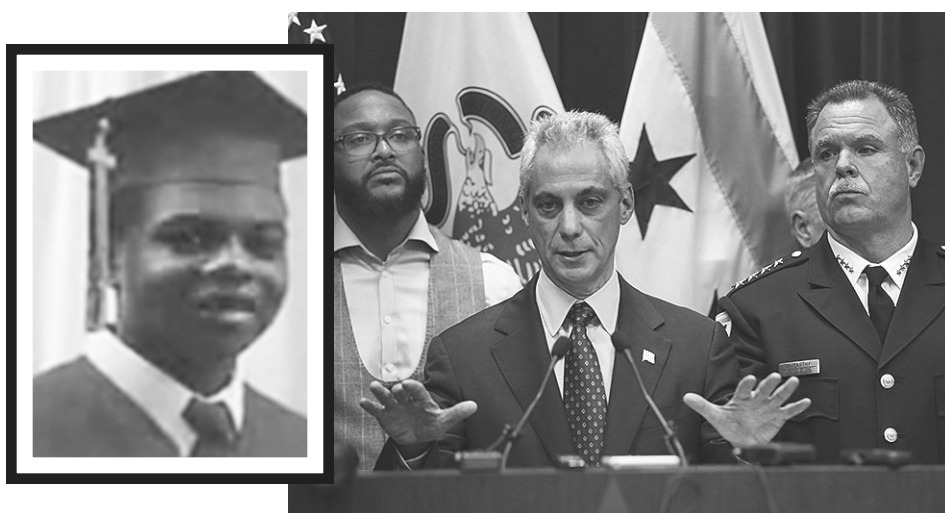
WV Photo

Chicago, December 24: Protesters demand ouster of Democratic mayor of “Segregation City,” Rahm Emanuel.

The arrogant labor-hating, cop-loving Democratic mayor of Chicago, Rahm Emanuel, is on the ropes. The seething anger of black people, Latinos, the working class and the poor at the misery of life in “Segregation City” burst into the open with the release of the chilling video showing 17-year-old Laquan McDonald being pumped with 16 bullets by a Chicago cop—most of them fired as he lay wounded in the street. But even more than this depraved execution, which was perpetrated in October 2014, it was the cover-up by the Emanuel regime that lit the fuse.

Facing a highly contested election in February 2015, with his job dependent on corraling the black vote, Emanuel wouldn’t have had a prayer if the video of McDonald’s execution had been released. All the stops were pulled out to bury it. Days after Emanuel won the runoff election, a \$5 million settlement was paid to the McDonald family, who had yet to even file a lawsuit, with the explicit provision that the video not be made public. But the jig was up in late November when the city was finally forced to release the video.

Only hours before it was released, the Cook County state’s attorney, Anita Alvarez, suddenly found cause to file first-degree murder charges against the cop who emptied his clip into McDonald. Daily protests immediately erupted demanding Emanuel’s head, and they haven’t stopped. In late December, a 55-year-old black mother of five was killed by the cops. She had simply opened her door to let the police in after her upstairs neighbor called them about a mentally distraught black youth, whom the police also shot dead. An article in the *Washington Post* (2 January)



Emanuel addressing November 24 press conference with then Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy (right) just before releasing video of cop killing of Laquan McDonald (inset).

described the scene Emanuel faced when he was called back to Chicago:

“Mayor Rahm Emanuel cut short a family vacation this past week and returned to a city in crisis: On the North Side, more than a dozen people stood outside his house, hurling insults. On the West Side, a close aide was punched and kicked while attending a prayer vigil for a police shooting victim. And all week long, there were protesters, haunting one of Emanuel’s biggest political donors, haranguing his police force, beating a papier-mâché likeness of his face at City Hall.

“More than a month has passed since a judge forced Emanuel and other city officials to release a graphic video of a white Chicago police officer shooting a black teenager 16 times. But public anger over the fatal shooting of Laquan McDonald in 2014 has not dissipated. Instead, it has grown bitter and more personal.”

With Emanuel’s approval rating dropping through the floor, polls show that a majority of the Chicago population wants him out. Emanuel must go! But the point isn’t to replace this strutting bully with a “nice guy” face of Democratic Party rule in a city lorded over by this capitalist party for over 80 years. To quote Emanuel

against himself, “You never want a serious crisis to go to waste.” The crisis now rocking his regime and reverberating up to the highest echelons of the Democratic Party opens the door for *our* class—the multiracial working class—to launch some real struggle not only in its own interests but also in the fight against racist cop terror and in defense of all the oppressed.

Now Is the Time to Fight!

The Chicago Teachers Union (CTU), whose contract expired in June, is in a face-off with Emanuel’s City Hall, which is out to ax thousands more jobs while further slashing wages and benefits. The anger of the union ranks is palpable. In mid December, almost the entire membership cast ballots in a strike vote. Ninety-six percent voted to strike and are champing at the bit to hit the bricks. The 2012 strike by Chicago teachers was widely popular and supported by black and Latino parents whose children attend the segregated and decrepit schools that pass for public education. They continue to burn with hatred for Emanuel, who in the aftermath of the

strike shut down 50 schools—the biggest school closure in U.S. history—most of them in Chicago’s ghettos and barrios.

With the city administration shaken, the CTU should seize the opportunity and strike in defense of public education. Such a strike could galvanize the seething discontent against Emanuel and his racist police marauders as well as provide the spark for other unions to fight. The largely black workforce in Chicago transit is working without a contract. Last month, the city’s bus workers union passed a motion declaring:

“ATU Local 241 condemns racist cop terror, as gruesomely displayed in the murder of a black youth, Laquan McDonald, by the Chicago Police. Our ATU Local knows firsthand about racist cop brutality. Local 241 takes a stand and will issue a statement to be sent to all area unions against the killing of Laquan McDonald and all racist cop terror, as well as the City Hall cover up. We urge all unions to do the same.”

Emanuel recently showed up at a Chicago transit garage to promote the Democrats’ union-busting slave-labor Second Chance Program for hiring ex-convicts to work for poverty wages and no benefits as evidence of his “concern” for those victimized by the criminal injustice system. A transit worker told WV that the bosses announced they were turning off the PA system, worried that workers would use it to chant “16 shots.”

All the raw material is there to launch a class-struggle fight that could fuse the power of labor to the anger of the ghettos and barrios. But sitting on top of this volcano are the trade union bureaucrats. For decades, they have kept a tight lid on labor struggle, subordinating the social power of the multiracial working class to the interests of its exploiters, particularly as represented by the capitalist Democratic Party.

This is equally true of the “progressives” who head the Chicago teachers’
continued on page 6



Life and Death at the Post Office

2 December 2015

Dear Workers Vanguard,

As a letter carrier for 25 years (now retired), I had plenty of experience with the callous indifference to the lives and health of the workers that was the trademark of postal management. But even I was appalled by a recent column in October's *Postal Record*, the monthly journal of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) entitled "The brutal summer behind us." In this article the NALC Director of Safety and Health details a long list of carriers who collapsed on the job due to heat-related illnesses. He

explains that this year there have been 23 heat-related illnesses reported to him, the majority of which required hospitalization.

Here are several of the examples that he lists:

"On May 22, a career letter carrier was hospitalized as a result of heat illness for a period of four days, and then almost two months later, the USPS issued her a letter of warning for failing to work in a safe manner." He reports that this discipline was later thrown out after a grievance and OSHA complaint were filed.

Further:

"On July 15, a letter carrier called his

supervisor to report that he was vomiting and cramping due to the heat. The supervisor did not immediately call 911, causing a one hour delay in providing medical attention that resulted in hospitalization. Two months later, this employee has not returned to work.

"On July 29, during a 105-degree heat index day, a carrier tried to call his supervisor, but was unable to speak. A customer took the phone to speak to the supervisor, who first asked how much mail does he have left? The customer told the supervisor that she would take the carrier to the hospital. The supervisor told her not to and that he would go to the route to take him. The supervisor then picked up the carrier, delayed taking him to the hospital, and instead took him to the office to get paperwork while leaving the injured carrier in a hot vehicle."

These gross examples are confirmed by my own experience. When I was working in the Oakland area in 2002, a carrier in a nearby town who was on light duty due to a kidney ailment was forced to deliver mail on a very hot day. He collapsed from massive heat stroke and subsequently

died. My local felt compelled to send a small donation to his family—we could all imagine the same thing happening in our Post Office.

After recounting these horrific examples, the NALC article goes on to tepidly recommend that carriers: "Take this issue up at your safety (or labor management) meetings so that you can jointly develop a plan to have in place before next year's heat waves." The sell-outs running the NALC may imagine that working jointly with management will get you somewhere, but this is a lie and a delusion. It took class struggle (like the massive postal strike of 1970 which defied the government's anti-strike laws and won!) to win any gains for postal workers. Today, facing cut-backs, post office closures and lay-offs, all the NALC leadership offers is to endlessly beg the class enemy in Congress, wooing sympathetic Democrats whom they sell to the membership as "friends of labor." What's needed is hard class struggle by the multiracial working class as part of the fight to build a revolutionary workers party fighting for a workers government. Those who labor must rule.

In Struggle,
D.C.,
retired letter carrier



TROTSKY

The Heritage of Lenin

In January of each year, communists honor the Three L's: Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg. German Spartacist leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were assassinated in January 1919 by the reactionary Freikorps, acting at the behest of the Social Democratic Party, as part of the crushing of a workers uprising. Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin died in January 1924. Keeping with early communist tradition, in 1945 the then-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party published a special "Lenin Memorial Number" of its theoretical journal devoted to the

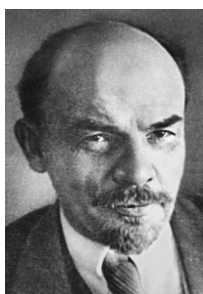
supreme architect of the proletarian revolution.

At a time when the whole Socialist movement consisted of loose, sprawling, easy-going parties, with an accommodating attitude toward every perversion of the Marxist program; in the period when the whole of Social Democracy was beginning to fall victim to opportunism; when party work was designed primarily for the winning of electoral successes and conducting loyal oppositions in the various bourgeois parliaments and legislative assemblies, Lenin came forward and pioneered an entirely new type of revolutionary Marxist party, never before seen in history. Lenin's party was tight-knit, compact, bound by an iron discipline, based upon unyielding adherence to Marxism—the science of the proletarian revolution. Lenin's party was built for revolutionary combat. It was designed specifically to launch the revolutionary offensive against the citadel of capitalism. How eloquent are Zinoviev's words in his speech on Lenin [30 August 1918] and how much they tell us of the real Lenin when he says: Lenin never permitted anybody to insult Marx. No! How could he? Lenin was no dabbler, no dilettante. Lenin was deadly serious about the proletarian revolution. How could he therefore tolerate any lightmindedness or playfulness toward the theory of scientific socialism?

Lenin was not the only left-winger in the Second International. The Socialist movement had many other great revolutionary leaders. Some like Rosa Luxemburg had a masterful understanding of Marxism and possessed superb talents. But they did not comprehend the indispensability of a Leninist-type party. Only Lenin fully understood, fully grasped *what kind of party* the proletariat needed in order to triumph. And he had the iron will to drive through despite all opposition and calumny and create *that kind* of a revolutionary party. Just as the Paris Commune revealed to the working class the form of its rule, the form under which the Dictatorship of the Proletariat would be exercised, so Lenin's Bolshevik Party showed in practice the type of organization the proletariat must have in order to make the revolution and secure its victory.

The German proletariat paid dearly for this lack, for the absence of a Leninist party. In 1918, the revolution rose in Germany and the whole country was covered with a network of Soviets. But the revolutionary vanguard, the Spartacists, were unprepared. They had not yet forged a genuine revolutionary party, closely tied to the working class and capable of leading it in action. The revolution inevitably rolled over their heads and the Social Democratic traitors were able to deflect and abort the revolution. It was different in Russia. A year before in 1917, when revolutionary conditions ripened, Lenin was ready. The Bolsheviks under Lenin seized the favorable opportunity and led the greatest revolution in the history of mankind. Marxism found its highest historical expression and vindication in Bolshevism.

—"The Heritage of Lenin," *Fourth International*, January 1945



LENIN

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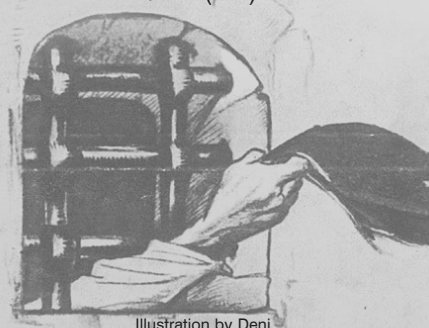


Illustration by Deni

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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

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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. 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 January 12.

No. 1081

15 January 2016

Full Democratic Rights for Transgender People!

We note the death of David Bowie (1947-2016), whose music and gender-bending inspired many.

The right-wing bigots notorious for going after black people, immigrants, women and gays have launched a new crusade against transgender people and the front line is the bathroom. Last November, a broad anti-discrimination measure called the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance was defeated following a hysterical media campaign suggesting that transgender people would rape women and children in public lavatories. The Houston ordinance was actually about outlawing discrimination on the basis of race, age, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity in employment, housing and public spaces. The measure's opponents won with an ad of a man entering a women's restroom with a narrator intoning, "Protect women's privacy. Prevent danger."

Meanwhile, a bill currently on the agenda in Wisconsin would ban transgender K-12 students from using school restrooms and locker rooms that correspond to their gender identity, i.e., how they identify or prefer to be identified even if it differs from their biological sex at birth. Spearheading the campaign in Wisconsin is the Christian fundamentalist outfit Alliance Defending Freedom, which views same-sex marriage (or anything contrary to the dark ages of Christianity) as an abomination. Under the cloak of "privacy" concerns, the organization has lobbied for and provided the model for so-called "bathroom bills" in states like Kentucky, Nevada, Texas and Florida. Such legislation would mandate that individuals use only the facility that matches the sex on their birth certificates—with some bills carrying a potential prison sentence for a violation. Aptly dubbed "show your papers to pee," the bills thus far have failed.

Transgender and gender non-conforming people—that is, anyone whose appearance, behavior or dress falls outside of bourgeois gender norms—face an exceptionally high degree of harassment. Around 75 percent of transgender students report being verbally harassed at school and more than 30 percent physically assaulted. Transgender individuals are vulnerable in public spaces, especially if the difference between their preferred gender identity and their biological sex is apparent. Barring them from bathrooms would turn them into criminals while inviting further harassment and physical violence.

Everyone—regardless whether they match the skirt-clad or pants-clad signage on the door—should be able to go about their business in peace. Sex-segregated toilets, which appeared before the turn of the 20th century, had a lot to do with Victorian prudishness. Especially amid social anxiety over women increasingly entering the workforce, separate facilities were

people, vicious stereotypes of black men sexually preying on white women are still pushed and were long used to justify segregation and to mobilize lynch mob terror.

Lately, trans celebrities like Laverne Cox and Caitlyn Jenner have captured the media spotlight, while series like *Transparent* and *Orange Is the New Black* and movies like *The Danish Girl* and *Tan-*

conforming people in 2015. Of those 22, most were black and Latina women and half were involved in sex work. Given the level of misreporting and distrust of the police—who routinely terrorize homeless people and sex workers—the total number of murders is likely far higher.

Violence against gays, lesbians and transgender people is not merely or even primarily the result of individual narrow-mindedness or ignorance. It is a concentrated expression of the bigotry flowing from entrenched gender roles in the monogamous, patriarchal family. The main source of the oppression of women and youth in class society, the institution of the family reinforces rigid notions of "manhood" and "womanhood" which condition and bolster anti-gay as well as anti-trans prejudice. Along with organized religion, the family instills ideological conservatism, pushing conformity and obedience to bourgeois codes of morality that proscribe anything that deviates from "one man on one woman for life."

The oppressive family serves not just as a source of individual torment (for most, at least), but as a key economic prop for capitalism, ensuring both the "rightful" inheritance of property for the bourgeoisie and the raising of the next generation of wage slaves. As fighters for the socialist liberation of humanity, Marxists do not see our task as "remaking" the family to fit a different or alternative template. In a communist future, after several generations of socialist development based on a worldwide collectivized economy, economic scarcity will have been overcome and classes and private property will have disappeared. The institution of the family will be replaced by collective means of caring for and socializing children and by the fullest freedom of sexual relations.

While sexuality and gender identity are

"Bathroom Bill" Bigotry



Houston, October 2015: Bigoted campaign against anti-discrimination ordinance whipped up anti-transgender hysteria.

mandated to "protect" women's modesty.

Just as the war against women's right to abortion is linked to all-sided right-wing reaction, the scapegoating and marginalization of transgender people is part of the generalized bigotry that pervades this class-divided and deeply anti-woman and anti-sex society. If the reactionaries get away with attacking this particularly small and vulnerable section of society, they will be further emboldened to go after working people and all the oppressed.

In this country, the myth of the sexual predator has been a component of every anti-sex drive aimed at banishing those considered "deviant" to the margins of society. Like today's transgender bogeyman, gay people have long been witch-hunted—branded as dangerous child molesters unfit to be teachers—in order to whip up social panic. In this racist society founded on the oppression of black

people, vicious stereotypes of black men sexually preying on white women are still pushed and were long used to justify segregation and to mobilize lynch mob terror. Lately, trans celebrities like Laverne Cox and Caitlyn Jenner have captured the media spotlight, while series like *Transparent* and *Orange Is the New Black* and movies like *The Danish Girl* and *Tan-*

gerine have highlighted the experiences of transgender people. Though their presence is increasingly visible in pop culture, transgender people are stigmatized in capitalist society and face daily discrimination in employment, education and health care. At least one in five trans people has experienced homelessness at some point in their lives; in New York City, the average age at which a trans person becomes homeless is around 13 years old. Many suffer impoverishment, abuse and rejection from their families and are often driven to sex work to survive. For the transgender population in prison, already hellish conditions are made worse by untold physical brutality. Those who identify as female in a men's prison or male in a women's prison face assault, rape and the torture of solitary confinement. It is a constant struggle to get adequate medical attention, including hormone therapy. Chelsea Manning, who was convicted of espionage and sentenced in 2013 to 35 years behind bars for heroically exposing crimes of U.S. imperialist barbarity, has endured such gruesome mistreatment.

Nationally, around 40 percent of trans or gender non-conforming people attempt suicide. A 26-year-old Utah trans woman posted a suicide note on Facebook last year: "From a very young age I was told that people like me are freaks and abominations, that we are sick in the head and society hates us. This made me hate who I was. I tried so hard to be just like everyone else but this isn't something you can change.... Please help fix society."

Last February, Bri Golec, a 22-year-old in Ohio exploring a transgender identity, was stabbed to death by her father. In October, Kiesha Jenkins, a black transgender prostitute in Philadelphia, was shot to death after being assaulted by four men. These were two of the 22 documented murders of trans and gender non-

conforming people in 2015. Of those 22, most were black and Latina women and half were involved in sex work. Given the level of misreporting and distrust of the police—who routinely terrorize homeless people and sex workers—the total number of murders is likely far higher.

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While sexuality and gender identity are



Facebook

Kiesha Jenkins, transgender woman beaten and shot to death in Philadelphia, October 2015.



WV Photo

Spartacist-initiated mobilization in Chicago, June 1982, brought out 3,000 to stop Nazi provocation against Gay Pride march.



Workers Hammer

Class War in the British Labour Party

LONDON—Ever since Jeremy Corbyn was elected leader of the British Labour Party last September, the party has been in a state of internal class warfare. Corbyn is a decades-long member of old Labour’s left wing and is hugely popular among working people. Pitted against Corbyn and his followers are the vast majority of Labour Members of Parlia-

WORKERS HAMMER

ment (MPs) who uphold the legacy of Tony Blair and are unashamedly committed to “free-market” capitalist exploitation and imperialist military slaughter in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and elsewhere.

The latest round in Labour’s class war erupted over a New Year reshuffle of the shadow cabinet. Corbyn’s plight brings to mind a quip by Harold Wilson (who had an undeserved reputation as a leftist) after his election as Labour leader in 1963: “You must understand that I am running a Bolshevik revolution with a tsarist shadow cabinet.” To his credit, Corbyn managed to rid the parliamentary party leadership of some of his most vociferous right-wing enemies. He removed Maria Eagle from shadow defence secretary to a harmless post in “culture.” Eagle had ostentatiously solidarised with the public declaration by the commander of Britain’s armed forces that Corbyn is unfit to become prime minister. Coming from the serving head of the country’s armed forces, the general’s statement invokes the spectre of a military coup.

Amid much controversy, Corbyn allowed Hilary Benn to keep his post as shadow foreign secretary, but it appears that Benn has to keep his mouth shut if he wants to stay in the shadow cabinet. Benn’s claim to fame is his much-lauded speech in Parliament in December backing Tory [Conservative Party] prime minister David Cameron’s motion for British forces to join the U.S. bombing in Syria. Grotesquely, Benn evoked “internationalism” to mean that Labour had a duty to respond to the call from French “President Hollande, the leader of our sister Socialist party,” to join the bombing campaign in



Reuters



Parliament TV

Warmongering chief of the defence staff General Nicholas Houghton and Blairite Labour MP Hilary Benn (right), prominent advocate of British bombing in Syria, united in hatred of left-wing Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn (top left).

Tories, Blairites Turn the Screws on Jeremy Corbyn

Syria in the wake of the criminal terrorist attacks in Paris last November. Benn’s speech was met with wild cheering by Tory and many Labour MPs, and lavish accolades in the bourgeois media. At the same time, it was hilariously lampooned by Scottish comedian Frankie Boyle as Hilary Benn’s revenge on his late father Tony, in the spirit of the Johnny Cash song, “A Boy Named Sue.” Tony Benn was the elder statesman of the Labour left and until his death an opponent of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Corbyn’s attempt to assert his leadership over the party resulted in threats of resignations from several members of the shadow cabinet, if, for example, Benn got the axe. In the face of constant attempts to destroy him—which are orchestrated by Blairite Labour MPs in cahoots with the military, the BBC and other bourgeois media—we Marxists defend Cor-

byn’s right to run the Labour Party, and in his way. We say good riddance to the right-wing Labour cabal from the shadow cabinet. Any measure that will weaken the hold of the Blairites on the party is in the interest of the working class and its struggle against the capitalist order. At the same time, we counterpose our proletarian, internationalist and revolutionary programme to Corbyn’s parliamentary reformist framework.

Reprinted below is an article which first appeared in *Workers Hammer* No. 233 (Winter 2015-2016), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain.

* * *

From the moment he was elected as Labour Party leader, the bourgeoisie’s gangs in Westminster and their attack dogs in the capitalist press have been out to destroy Jeremy Corbyn. Day after day he is slandered and vilified by everyone from the military’s top brass to the capitalist press and of course [Prime Minister] David Cameron. However, to paraphrase Winston Churchill, while Corbyn’s opponents sit on the Tory benches opposite him, his enemies are the vast majority of Labour MPs sitting behind him who are determined to depose him.

Barely a week after Corbyn’s election, an unnamed British general was quoted in the *Sunday Times* (20 September 2015) predicting “an event which would effectively be a mutiny” in the armed forces should Corbyn ever become prime minister. What gored the ox of the military chiefs was Corbyn’s opposition to renewing Britain’s Trident nuclear missile system and his statement that, as prime minister, he would never press the nuclear button. On the occasion of “Remembrance Sunday” the head of Britain’s armed forces, General Sir Nicholas Houghton, appeared on television in military dress uniform to pronounce Corbyn unfit to be prime minister. Corbyn formally protested against Houghton’s breach of the

convention that serving military officials do not comment on political matters.

Houghton’s attack on Corbyn was immediately seconded by Labour’s shadow defence secretary, Maria Eagle, who is prominent among the “get Corbyn” cabal. Another is Simon Danczuk, the right-wing Labour MP from Rochdale, who has threatened to instigate a coup against Corbyn as leader if Labour performs poorly in the local elections next May. Many in this clique of MPs disavowed Blair when his name became so toxic that it would spoil their chances of ever being elected. But their lust for bombing in Syria, for shoot-to-kill, and their gut-level commitment to fleecing the poor while further enriching the rich, show them to be unreconstructed Blairites.

Tristram Hunt, the former shadow education secretary, recently addressed the Labour club at Cambridge University. To rally his young, elite class brethren, Hunt told them: “You are the top 1%. The Labour Party is in the shit. It is your job and your responsibility to take leadership going forward” (*Guardian*, 2 November 2015). Hunt and Chuka Umunna MP, who like to refer to themselves as “The Resistance,” formed Labour for the Common Good, one of the myriad groupings within the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) that would like to eject Corbyn.

The bourgeois media was apoplectic when Corbyn appointed *Guardian* columnist Seumas Milne to be his director of communications and strategy. Milne is critical of the British establishment, particularly for their military interventions in the Near East. The *Financial Times* was outraged by Milne’s simple factual statement that “Western claims to be the champions of human rights and humanitarian intervention are treated with derision across much of the world” (*FT*, 23 October 2015). To the *FT*, and to the City [of London] bankers and capitalist entrepreneurs whose interests it serves, Milne’s cardinal sin was that he supported the miners union during the epic 1984-85 strike. (For a review of Milne’s book on the strike, *The Enemy Within*, see “1984-85: What It Would Have Taken for the Miners to Win,” *Workers Hammer* No. 145, April/May 1995.)

In the warfare within the Labour Party, we are seeing the effects of two classes co-existing in one party, an inherently unstable situation. As we wrote last issue, we welcomed Corbyn’s campaign for party leader, which addressed issues that are deeply felt by working people. These fundamental issues cannot be solved within the framework of Corbyn’s parliamentary reformism. However, Marxists have a side in this conflict, in defence of Corbyn against the Blairite and other bourgeois forces who want to take him down.

Imperialists Out of the Near East!

The event that really put the wind in the sails of the right-wing Labour MPs was the “national security” hysteria whipped up by Cameron & Co. following the horrendous attacks by Islamic terrorists in Paris on 13 November. We Marxists utterly condemn such indiscriminate attacks on civilians. We also recognise that it is the imperialists’ crimes in the Near East—U.S., British and French—



Workers Hammer

London, June 2015: Workers and youth fed up with austerity participate in 250,000-strong protest.

When the Cameron government seized on the Paris attacks to endorse shoot-to-kill by Britain's police and to beat the drums for joining the U.S.-led bombing campaign in Syria, Labour's right wing howled along with the Tories and ramped up a campaign to paint the Labour leader as untrustworthy on matters of "national security." Like rabid dogs they seized on Corbyn's refusal to give blanket support to shoot-to-kill, as though it were high treason. Unison [public workers union] general secretary Dave Prentis joined Corbyn's attackers, grotesquely declaring that "rows over Trident or shoot to kill are distractions no one needs" (*Independent*, 21 November 2015). Unite [Britain's largest trade union] leader Len McCluskey also piled in, lecturing Corbyn to stop making "inappropriate" comments on shoot-to-kill. McCluskey feigned support for Corbyn when thousands of Unite union members were active in Corbyn's campaign, only to stab the Labour leader in the back when he came under fire from the right.

As regards Syria, Corbyn told Sky News “I’m just not convinced that a bombing campaign will actually solve anything,” indeed it “may well make the situation far worse” (16 November 2015). His views incensed Blairite MPs, who provided the bourgeois press with a steady stream of invective. The BBC’s political editor, Laura Kuenssberg, hounded him in a television interview, and in a follow-up article cited (unnamed) Labour MPs complaining that Corbyn “is not fit to be our leader or in any senior position in this country” (BBC News, 16 November). Kuenssberg’s piece also baited Corbyn over his links to Stop the War, sensationalising a blog that had appeared on its website linking the Paris attacks to Western interventions in the Near East.

As Trotskyists who defended the Soviet Union, we have long pointed out that the Taliban, Al Qaeda and Islamic State (ISIS) are all first- or second-generation offspring of the U.S.-sponsored “holy war” against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Against the numerous reformist groups that joined the imperialists in demanding the withdrawal of Soviet troops, we called for the defeat of the CIA’s Islamist cut-throats and proclaimed, “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!” The Soviet Union was based on a historically progressive collectivised and planned economy—a product of the Bolshevik-led workers revolution of October 1917—albeit, beginning in 1923-

With the demise of the Soviet Union, the British capitalist rulers thought the class war was all over, that they had won, and all of this nonsense about the working class was history. Describing their view in the 1990s, deputy editor of the *Telegraph* Allister Heath wrote: “It seemed as if the free-market counter-revolution of

December 2015: British Tornado taking off from Cyprus base two days after Parliament approved bombing in Syria. Below: Spartacist contingent at “No Attack on Syria” protest, London, August 2013.

Corbyn's nomination for the leadership was a fluke, but the outpouring of support for his campaign was not. Under the Blairites and the Tories, a huge amount of social tinder was building up at the base of British society. Blair was and remains widely despised for his decision to join Bush's war and occupation of Iraq in 2003, as well as for his commitment to

To believe the bourgeois press, anyone might think Corbyn is a flaming Bolshevik. In fact he is not, and does not claim to be, a revolutionary. He is a principled and steadfast exponent of the politics of the old Labour “left,” embodied in the “little England socialism” espoused by the late Tony Benn. All old Labour governments have loyally served the capitalist rulers, carrying out attacks on the working class at home and supporting British imperialism in its wars—including World Wars I and II. The “parliamentary socialism” espoused by Benn and Corbyn is based on the illusion that the way to advance the cause of the workers and oppressed is

What is objectively posed in Britain today is the need for a new kind of party. We seek to build a revolutionary workers

continued on page 7

WORKERS HAMMER 
 102101 • WINTER 2011 •
 Manuscript of the Spartacist League

Class war in the Labour Party

Tories and Blairites fight the screw on Corbyn

THE SPARTACIST LEAGUE has been the only Marxist group in the Labour Party to support the election of Ed Miliband as leader. It has done so because we believe that the Labour Party is the only mass organisation in Britain that can bring about a radical change in the country. We believe that the Labour Party is the only mass organisation in Britain that can bring about a radical change in the country. We believe that the Labour Party is the only mass organisation in Britain that can bring about a radical change in the country.

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Down with anti-Muslim repression!

US, Britain, France out of the Near East!

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Marxist newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain

£31/year — Britain, Ireland (Europe outside Britain and Ireland: £5; Other: £7)
 US\$101/year

Order from/make checks payable to:
 Spartacist Publications

PO Box 42886, London N19 5WY, Britain

Spartacist Publishing Co.

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Dear Brother and Sisters:

The Amalgamated Transit Union Local 241 Executive Board meeting of December 18, 2015, as well as the 7:00 pm Mass Membership meeting of December 1, 2015, passes the following resolution:

ATU Local 241 condemns racist cop terror, as gruesomely displayed in the murder of a black youth, Laquan McDonald, by the Chicago Police. Our ATU Local knows firsthand about racist cop brutality. Local 241 takes a stand and will issue a statement to be sent to all area unions against the killing of Laquan McDonald and all racist cop terror, as well as the City Hall cover up. We urge all unions to do the same."

"WE URGE YOU TO DO THE SAME."

In Solidarity
The Officers and Executive Board Members
ATU Local 241

Chicago city bus workers union resolution denouncing racist cop terror, including McDonald's killing, and City Hall cover-up, urges "all unions to do the same."

Chicago...

(continued from page 1)

union. While the hated Emanuel regime scrambles to stay in power, CTU vice president Jesse Sharkey, who is supported by the International Socialist Organization, offers Emanuel the opportunity for redemption. In an interview with *Chicago Magazine* (14 December) after the teachers had voted to strike, Sharkey opined that "if Rahm Emanuel is really the effective leader he claims to be"(!) he would



@garcia4chicago

March 2015: Phony “friend of labor” Democrat Jesus “Chuy” Garcia campaigns for mayor. Behind him, CTU vice president Jesse Sharkey who has long been supported by the International Socialist Organization.

be shaking down his banker and hedge fund manager buddies to shell out money to resolve the Chicago Public Schools' budget crisis! Such an insane pipe dream could only be peddled by a true believer in the myth that the Democrats represent the interests of the "little guy," as opposed to the capitalist rulers they serve.

On January 6, the CTU House of Delegates voted to demand the resignation of both Emanuel and State's Attorney Alvarez, arguing that they "impeded the criminal justice system," and thus eroded "public trust and confidence in their leadership." As revolutionary Marxists, we welcome such erosion of trust. Kicking Emanuel and Alvarez out of office would be richly satisfying. Our purpose is to fight to translate the mounting anger and discontent into a conscious understanding that the working class needs its own party—not an electoral vehicle vying to be the administrators of the capitalist state and its cops, courts and jails—but a party that would play a leading role in a broad fight against the ravages of capitalism. Such struggle, drawing in the unemployed, immigrants and the poor, would include fighting for such demands

as quality, integrated public schools and housing and decent jobs, public services and health care for all.

Obama Stands by His Man

The Chicago bourgeoisie, whose fortunes have been well served by the brutal austerity measures enforced by their snarling pit bull in City Hall, are worried that Emanuel may no longer be able to maintain control over the masses of working people, blacks and Latinos. Emanuel's crisis extends all the way up to the Obama White House, where he served as chief of staff before landing the mayor's job in Chicago, which he secured with the backing of America's first black president. When Emanuel was floundering in the most recent elections, Obama helped secure his victory, including by flying in to Chicago to promote him.

A high-level operative in Bill Clinton's administration, today Emanuel is being described as "political kryptonite" for Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign. With Clinton trying to woo Black Lives Matter activists, Emanuel is a liability and not just for covering up the crimes of the racist Chicago cops. He was an architect of Bill Clinton's 1994 crime bill, which dramatically increased the number of cops and the number of blacks and Latinos rounded up and entombed in America's prisons. With both Clintons now cynically apologizing for such "tough on crime" policies and Hillary trying to strike a populist pose, the despised Emanuel could be damaging. Even some candidates in the reactionary, racist circus that is the Republican presidential primary season are demanding that Emanuel come clean.

Obama is standing by his man, with his chief of staff announcing that the president



WV Photo

September 2012: Teachers and supporters march through downtown Chicago on first day of widely popular strike in face of Emanuel's union-busting.

Drop Charges Against Black Labor Activist Mike Elliott!



WV Photo

**Mike Elliott speaking at PDC
united-front rally against govern-
ment repression, October 2005.**

We print below a January 7 letter of protest to the Cook County prosecutor, Anita Alvarez, from the Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Socialist League.

The Partisan Defense Committee condemns the arrest of Michael Siviwe Elliott, a retired member of United Auto Workers Local 551 and former Chair-

has full confidence in Emanuel. Chicago Democratic Party politicians like Danny Davis and Bobby Rush are also working to shore up Emanuel's rule. In a letter to the editor of the Chicago *Sun-Times* (18 December), Rush, a former Black Panther, argues that he knows "better than anyone that emotions are running high and we would like to see change within the city." But as a longtime loyal servant of the Chicago Democrats, he concludes: "If Rahm were to resign, Chicago would only move from one chaos to another chaos."

Where Rush finds “chaos,” we see opportunity in the fight to break workers, blacks, Latinos and others from the grip of the Democratic Party. For decades, this party has played on racial and ethnic hostilities to divide and weaken the working class and to strengthen the hand of the notorious killers and torturers in the Chicago Police Department. The race, gender or ethnicity of the mayor doesn’t matter; the job of the city’s chief executive is to enforce the rule of racist capitalism. In 1983, Chicago’s first black mayor, Harold Washington, came into office under the slogan, “It’s our turn.” Although his election was met with a barrage of racist reaction, it wasn’t long before Washington went after the very unions that had

man of its Education Committee, well known for his activism in the union and against racism and police brutality. He is also the Labor Committee Chair of the Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression.

On December 29th, while riding on a Metra commuter rail line, Michael Elliott was arrested and then falsely charged with battery on a Metra police officer and reckless conduct in retaliation for using his cellphone to record the cop's manhandling of a woman passenger. The Metra police also outrageously seized Elliott's phone and turned it over to the Chicago cops infamous for both the destruction of evidence and spying on blacks, labor and leftists. This blatant act of retaliation comes after the brutal killing of black youth Laquan McDonald by the Chicago Police and the subsequent cover-up, particularly the suppression of a video recording of the police killing.

We demand that the charges be dropped against Michael Siviwe Elliott and that his cellphone be immediately returned.

supported his election, including the ATU and CTU. Throughout the Washington years, and those of his successor Richard M. Daley, the notorious “midnight crew” under police commander Jon Burge continued to extract phony confessions from black men through such interrogation techniques as battery clamps to the genitals.

Today, many of the protests against the execution of Laquan McDonald have been headed up by a coterie of “progressive” Democrats, ranging from Jesse Jackson Sr. to Jesus “Chuy” Garcia, who was Emanuel’s opponent in last year’s mayoral election. Their aim is to keep outrage within the electoral confines of the Democratic Party, and they call on people to register to vote. The union bureaucracy has also long been integral to building electoral support for the Democrats. During last year’s election, some unions supported Emanuel while others, most prominently the CTU, as well as the ATU, stumped for Garcia. Now, with hatred burning for Emanuel, these forces are trying to promote a “kinder, gentler” face of Democratic Party rule. The myth that the capitalist Democrats are the “friends” of blacks and labor has long served to tie workers and the oppressed to the class enemy.

For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

The Black Youth Project 100, an organization of black activists who have been prominent at many of the Chicago protests, raises demands to “defund the police and invest those dollars and resources in Black futures” as well as for “investments in Black communities that promote economic sustainability.” But the capitalist rulers are not about to defund the police thugs who serve as a front-line defense of their system, which is rooted in brutal exploitation and the forcible subjugation of the majority of the black population at the bottom of this society. Black oppression is structurally embedded in American capitalism. It is not going to be overcome short of a socialist revolution in which the working class rips the economy out of the hands of the racist capitalist rulers and reorganizes it on an egalitarian socialist basis.

The ruling class only throws money

Labour Party...

(continued from page 5)

party, based on the lessons of the Bolshevik Revolution and modelled on the party led by Lenin and Trotsky that brought it to victory. Such a party will be part of a Leninist-Trotskyist international and will start from the understanding that only through mobilisation in mass struggle can the working class fight for its own interests and in defence of all the oppressed. The overall aim must be the root-and-branch overthrow of the capitalist order through socialist revolution, as a first step towards the elimination of poverty and inequality in a global socialist order.

Building such a party requires sharp political struggle against the existing misleaders of the trade unions, who refuse to wage the class struggle, including against the Trade Union Bill that is now going through Parliament, the worst attack on the trade unions in years. Its provisions include raised thresholds for strike votes and further restrictions on picketing. The bill also permits the use of agency workers as scabs, which is currently prohibited. Yet the only action the TUC [Trades Union Congress] officialdom has taken to “kill the bill” is to “mobilise” several hundred trade unionists for a lobby of Parliament. Treacherously, Len McCluskey, the head of Unite, has made an offer to Cameron to drop opposition to the bill if the government will allow electronic balloting instead of postal votes on strikes (which the union leaders say will increase the numbers voting).

It was not the anti-trade union laws that defeated the workers at Grangemouth oil refinery in 2013 when they voted to strike in defence of their union representative. Rather it was Len McCluskey who called off the strike before it even began, leading to a terrible defeat for the workers [see “Union Bashing at Scottish Oil Refinery,” WV No. 1035, 29 November 2013]. What greater argument could there be for a new generation to come forward in the trade unions to form a new leadership, one that is committed to waging the class struggle—the means by which the unions were built.

Building on the enormous support that swept him to leadership of the party, Corbyn supporters in October launched Momentum, an organisation of both Labour members and non-members. Momentum’s website lists among its aims to “encourage mass mobilisation for a more democratic, equal and decent society.” Various reformist groups including the Socialist Party and Socialist Workers Party (SWP) have joined or declared their support for Momentum.

The Blairite grouping Labour First cautioned MPs against this “Hard Left takeover” of the party by Corbyn supporters. We oppose witch hunts against the left in the Labour Party, as we opposed the purge of the Militant tendency in the 1980s. But we would point out that much of what is being described as the “hard

left” of Labour is to the right of Corbyn on a number of key questions. The Alliance for Workers Liberty (AWL) for example, refused to call for British troops out of Iraq and, during the NATO bombing of Libya in 2011, issued a statement (23 March 2011) titled: “Why We Should Not Denounce Intervention in Libya.”

The Socialist Party, which in an earlier incarnation as the Militant tendency spent decades within the old Labour Party, is now making it known that they would like to be re-admitted to Labour. On the day of Corbyn’s victory they wrote: “All those who have been forced out or expelled in the past for fighting against cuts and for socialist ideas should be invited back” (socialistparty.org.uk, 12 September 2015). The Socialist Party formed its electoral vehicle, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in 2010 with elements of the RMT union bureaucracy. TUSC

Trident nuclear missile sub leaving base in Scotland. Blairites, military brass are hysterical over Corbyn’s opposition to renewing Trident.



grew out of the reactionary 2009 construction strikes at the Lindsey oil refinery which called for “British jobs for British workers.” Because of this adaptation to chauvinism, we have said “No vote to TUSC!” in elections.

Expropriate the Capitalist Class

The solution offered by Corbyn and his shadow chancellor John McDonnell to the ravages brought by capitalism is increased public spending and a programme of renationalisations. Marxists support renationalisation of vital services like rail and utilities. But we counterpose expropriation of the bourgeoisie to Labourite illusions in nationalisation schemes, such as Corbyn proposed for workers in the steel industry facing job-slashing. In October the Thai-owned SSI on Teesside went into liquidation, with 2,200 jobs lost, followed by Tata Steel announcing 1,200 job cuts in Scunthorpe and Scotland. Overall, at least one in six of the 30,000 remaining steel jobs in the country are slated to be eliminated.

The response on the part of the trade-union leaders in Unite, Community and the GMB unions was to blame China for “dumping” their cheaper steel in the British market and to call on the British gov-

ernment to enact protectionist import controls. Corbyn also pushes protectionism, which is inherent in his old Labour programme. Protectionism provides a cover for rejecting the class struggle in favour of class collaboration and promotes vile anti-foreigner racism. To such wretched appeals to one’s “own” government, Marxists counterpose a class-struggle fight by the trade unions against closures and for jobs for all, with no loss in pay. What’s needed is a perspective of international solidarity and struggle.

And it takes some *chutzpah* for the trade-union leaders to blame Britain’s deindustrialisation on the Chinese when the steel workforce was decimated under Margaret Thatcher [in the 1980s]. Corbyn and McDonnell have engaged in China-bashing, obscenely attacking the Tories for cultivating close links with Beijing. As opposed to lining up with the imperial-

ists, the working class must defend China, where capitalist rule was overthrown by the 1949 Revolution.

The Socialist Party called for “the steel trade unions and Jeremy Corbyn to demand nationalisation of the steel industry” (socialistparty.org.uk, 11 November 2015), and the SWP demanded that the unions should “force the government to nationalise the industry” (*Socialist Worker*, 20 October 2015). The devastated steel industry is itself a testament to the bankruptcy of old Labour reformism, which regards the nationalisations of industry by the post-World War II Labour government as a step towards socialism. In fact these nationalisations were undertaken as a giant bailout of declining British capitalism.

Buried under the mound of protectionist, social-democratic rubbish over the latest steel closures is the fact that in 1980, most of the country’s 150,000 steel workers went on strike against Margaret Thatcher’s Tory government. This was Thatcher’s first assault on a major union. Had the steel strike won, it could have stopped the “Iron Lady” in her tracks. We, along with thousands of militant strikers, called for a general strike to repulse the

anti-union offensive. But the TUC allowed the steel workers to hang.

The defeat of that strike cleared the decks for Thatcher’s showdown against the miners. The miners were defeated, not mainly due to the massive state repression the union faced, but to the treachery of the union leaders whose perspective did not go beyond the election of a Labour government. While the Labour leadership under Neil Kinnock was openly hostile to the strike, the “lefts” such as Tony Benn offered no alternative, despite many speeches about solidarity with the miners.

Following the defeats of the steel workers and the miners, the Thatcher government intensified the deindustrialisation of Scotland, South Wales and the north of England, while increasing the dominance of banking and finance in the City of London. The English chauvinism of successive Westminster governments—Labour and Tory—has fuelled the rise of Scottish nationalism. Today the Corbyn-led Labour Party is trying to win back the support recently lost to the bourgeois nationalists. But simply to begin to address the issues of jobs for all, free quality health care and education for all, as well as to regenerate the former industrial areas requires the overthrow of capitalist rule. The Westminster Parliament embodies the pre-eminent status given to finance capital, centred in London. We Marxists uphold the right of self-determination for Scotland and Wales, as part of our programme for a voluntary federation of workers republics in the British Isles.

Our aim is to build a multiethnic revolutionary workers party, forged in political struggle against Labourism, which has served to tie the working class to the capitalist exploiters for over a century. A Leninist vanguard party will be built on the understanding that the interests of workers and the oppressed are utterly counterposed to those of the capitalist exploiters and can only be realised through a government based on workers councils (soviets), not the bosses’ Parliament.

In his writings on Britain, Leon Trotsky, co-leader with Lenin of the Bolshevik Revolution and founder of the Red Army, debunked Labourite illusions that parliamentary “gradualness” ran in the blood of the English working class. Trotsky pointed to the tradition of revolutionary struggle embodied in the Cromwellian bourgeois revolution of the 17th century and in the nascent proletarian revolutionary Chartist movement that emerged in the first half of the 19th century. James Bronterre O’Brien, an Irish-born leader of the Chartists, gave voice to the need for the working class to fight in its own interests instead of begging its oppressors:

“My motto is... ‘What you *take* you may have.’ I will not attempt to deal with the abstract question of right, but will proceed to show that it is POWER, solid, substantial POWER, that the millions must obtain *and retain*, if they would enjoy the produce of their own labour and the privileges of freemen.” ■

at black communities when necessary to douse the fires of rebellion. The last time was in the 1960s, when “war on poverty” programs aimed to quell ghetto upheavals; once they were quelled, the money dried up. The main beneficiaries of these programs were a thin layer of the black community, many of them former leaders of the fight for black rights. Like Bobby Rush, many were co-opted into the Democratic Party. Today everyone from George Soros to the Ford Foundation is courting the leaders of the Black Lives Matter movement, many of whom are rapidly getting pulled behind Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign.

In an article on socialistworker.org (15 December), the International Socialist Organization asks: “Will Rahm Pay for All the Black Lives Lost?” Their answer is to advise Chicago’s rulers: “Instead of spending hundreds of millions of dollars on legal settlements for brutal cops, much less the vast sums devoted to police militarization and surveillance, the city

of Chicago should devote resources to programs that create living-wage, union jobs.” The half billion dollars that the rulers of Chicago have paid to people killed and tortured by their cops over the past decade is part of the overhead they pay for the armed guard dogs of their system. It is only through struggle that the working people and oppressed will wring concessions from the overlords of capitalist America.

There is no question that the capitalists are sitting on mountains of cash, the ill-gotten gains of a system based on the exploitation of the many for the profits of a few. The problem is that you are not going to get your hands on this wealth by appealing to the rulers to reorder their priorities to serve human needs. The policies of U.S. capitalism are determined not by elections or by “pressure from below” but by the interests of the ruling class, as overseen by the Democrats and Republicans alike, and the balance of forces in the class struggle.

The crisis faced by Emanuel’s Democratic Party regime demonstrates the pressure that has been building up at the base of this society and that at some point will explode. The key to unlocking the social power of the multiracial working class is to break the political chains, forged by the trade-union misleaders, that shackle labor to its exploiters. What is needed to defend the interests of workers, blacks, immigrants and others against the bourgeoisie is a multiracial revolutionary workers party. Such a party would provide the vitally necessary leadership for struggle against oppression and exploitation. Through such struggles, the workers will be armed with the political understanding that if there is to be fundamental change, the entire system of capitalist wage slavery must be swept away. When the working class takes power into its own hands, the workers government will expropriate the capitalists’ productive wealth and establish a rationally planned, collectivized economy. ■

A Spartacist Pamphlet

1934 Strikes

Class-Struggle Leadership
Made a Key Difference

Then and Now

Minneapolis, May 1934. At the Battle of Dupont Run, thousands of strikers and supporters routed cops and overwhelming special deputies.

AUSTRALIA...-81 BRITAIN...-75 CANADA...-69 EUROPE...-61 SOUTH AFRICA...-62 USA...-1934

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(continued from page 12)

superexploitation of mainly black labour by the same capitalist class that ruled under apartheid—now with a sprinkling of non-white faces. In order to deflect the growing anger at the base of society away from itself and the racist capitalist rulers, the ANC-led Alliance inevitably resorts to pitting different sections of the oppressed against each other.

Since the 1990s, we have repeatedly warned that if the seething discontent of the masses does not find expression along *class lines*, it will fuel and embitter every other kind of division. The deadly anti-immigrant pogroms of 2008—in which 62 people lost their lives—and the smaller outbreaks of anti-immigrant violence that have become a grotesquely common feature of life in the years since are stark proof of this grim fact.

The goal of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), of which Spartacist/South Africa is a section, is the establishment of a *world communist society*. Only then will economic scarcity be eliminated as a result of the qualitative advance in production made possible by collectivising the wealth and resources of society in the service of human needs. In a communist society,



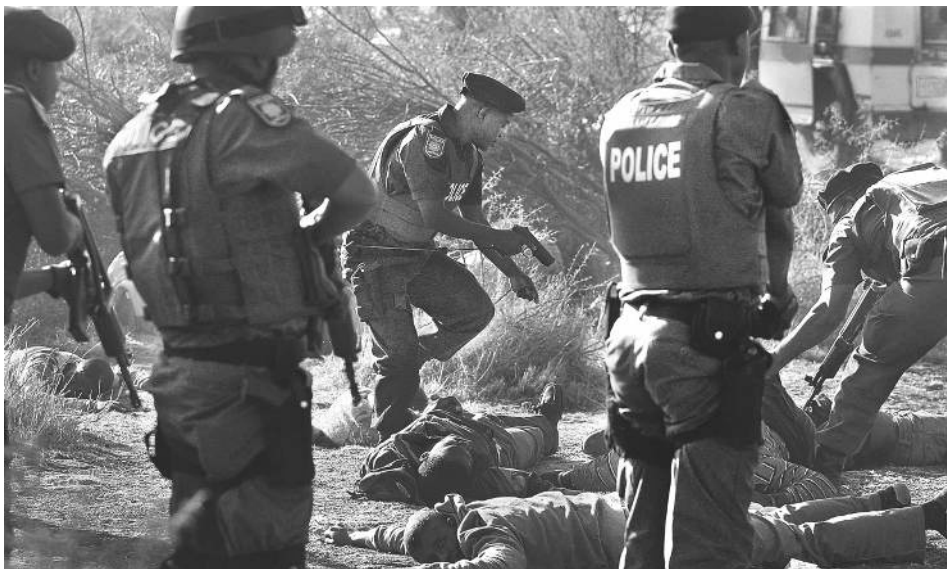
National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa on strike in Durban, 2013. In South Africa, black proletariat is key to Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution.

all forms of racial discrimination and oppression—along with the very existence of race, ethnicity and nationality as categories of any social significance—will be nothing but memories of a barbaric capitalist past. But getting there requires a series of workers revolutions to sweep away capitalist rule, including especially in the imperialist centres. Combating the very real racial, national and other prejudices that today divide the working class is a crucial part of forging the revolutionary leadership—i.e., a Leninist vanguard party—needed for working-class victory.

Snapshots of Black-Coloured Divisions Under Neo-Apartheid

Racial tensions between the black majority and the coloured minority have various expressions and causes, but a big factor is feelings of coloured marginalisation in post-1994 South Africa. As one popular saying goes, many coloured people feel that "there's no brown in the rainbow nation." This marginalisation has served to reinforce anti-black resentment, as the bourgeois-nationalist ANC is perceived to represent the black majority and favour them at the expense of coloureds. The tensions and mistrust are, of course, stoked and manipulated by the capitalists, their political parties and media mouthpieces, who exploit them for their own benefit. While they are not always openly expressed, often smouldering beneath the surface, there are plenty of cases where these tensions break out in the open because of one thing or another that lights the spark.

A recent example is the conflict between black and coloured parents



Marikana massacre, August 2012: Police slaughter 34 striking Lonmin Platinum miners. ANC-COSATU-SACP government attacks workers on behalf of white bourgeoisie and imperialists.

and teachers following the appointment of a black principal and two black deputy principals at Roodepoort Primary School, an integrated school with a majority of black pupils that is situated in the predominantly coloured neighbourhood of Davidsonville, Roodepoort (west of Johannesburg). Feeling that the appointments had snubbed the coloured residents and pupils, protests were launched in

marginalised minorities now needs [sic] to stand politically on their own" to attend the Gauteng launch of the Patriotic Association of South Africa in Davidsonville!

The protests had an unmistakable anti-black thrust, with parents demanding the school's coloured pupils "needed a principal of their own race" (news24.com, 22 February 2015) or complaining that it's "only just black people that are...making it violent" (702.co.za, 20 February). They have also been vitriolic in their denunciation of the teachers' union SADTU, with a DCF statement accusing SADTU members of bribery and demanding a Hawks [Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation] investigation into the union. The DCF also blames the union for the wretched state of education, denouncing it for having "no prospects or ideals...other than focussing more on its growth and the protection of its members."

As Marxists, we oppose interference by the capitalist state into the trade unions as a matter of principle. We have sharp political criticisms of the pro-capitalist leadership of SADTU, as well as that of the other unions. But our perspective is to replace these misleaders with a class-struggle leadership that would seek to strengthen the fighting capacity of the unions against the bosses. Calls like that of the DCF for state intervention are aimed at crippling the unions. Labour must clean its own house; this is not the task of the class enemy.

The racial polarisation in Davidsonville serves to undermine the conditions of *all* teachers, and inevitably makes it more difficult to fight against funding cuts and other attacks that will worsen the conditions of the pupils. Black teachers at the school have rallied around the principal (their boss), while coloured teachers boycotted class demanding her removal. In June, it was reported that disciplinary letters were handed out to 14 teachers. Amidst this nasty racial polarisation, the school was shut down

[illegible]

racist capitalist ruling class and its political representatives, which include both the ANC and the DA. This class unity is in no way an automatic outcome of growing mass discontent, but must be *fought for*. That means fighting against *all* manifestations of racial oppression and against *all* racial, ethnic and national prejudices.

A popular cliché to describe feelings of coloured marginalisation post-1994 is: “First we weren’t white enough and now we’re not black enough.” Mohamed Adhikari, a coloured academic from the University of Cape Town who has written extensively on coloured identity, notes:

“A principal cause for Coloured dissatisfaction with the new order...is that members of the Coloured community, especially the working classes, see themselves as having gained little, if any, tangible benefit from the new dispensation.... In the Western Cape, the unwinding of distortions caused by the Coloured Labour Preference Policy is not only affecting the Coloured community adversely but is also perceived to be the result of government policy unfairly advantaging Africans.”

—*Not White Enough, Not Black Enough—Racial Identity in the South African Coloured Community* (Double Storey, 2005)

In many respects, the living standards of the coloured masses *have* deteriorated significantly since the early 1990s. To cite just a few examples, the number of coloured people living in poverty increased by 20 percent between 1996 and 2012; the incarceration rate among coloured people—who make up 18 percent of the prison population—is far higher than among other racial groups;



Helen Zille, Western Cape premier and former head of white-dominated Democratic Alliance, addressing capitalist Exporters Club, July 2015.

and social ills like gang violence, drug addiction and alcohol abuse hit the coloured poor more severely than other communities.

On top of this, government ministers and other high-ranking officials from the ANC have periodically launched vicious anti-coloured diatribes that give the lie to the ANC’s charade of “non-racialism.” Sometimes these chauvinist rants retail the nationalist line that since coloured people were “privileged” under apartheid, their oppression was less real and they deserve to suffer more today. For example, Tokyo Sexwale once said he wanted to “vomit” when “others try to use (our) legitimate grievances” (*Cape Times*, 19 September 1994). Other times, they simply promote vile racist stereotypes of coloureds, like when Roderick Blackman Ngoro—at the time media advisor for the ANC mayor of Cape Town—railed in 2005 that coloureds would “die a drunken death” if they did not “undergo an ideological transformation,” i.e., vote for the ANC (not surprisingly, few heeded his directive).

It is crucial to expose and combat this nationalist filth as part of fighting the influence of anti-coloured prejudices among the black proletariat and poor. Black workers must be won to the understanding that they too have a vital interest in fighting against the capitalist ANC government’s attacks on the coloured people, as this fight is crucial to the integrity of the working class and its ability to wage class struggle against the common enemy. A particularly clear illustration was in 1997, when Sexwale’s



Johannesburg, 1983: UDF drew in blacks, coloureds and Indians in opposition to apartheid while politically subordinating them to the ANC.

ANC provincial government in Gauteng moved to begin collecting back rates and rent from tenants in the coloured township of Eldorado Park, justifying this with nationalist demagoguery about settling the score for coloured “privileges” under apartheid. Since then, the ANC government has launched the same attacks on tenants in black townships.

Coloured Sectoralism: A Dead End

At the same time that we combat the anti-coloured demagoguery of the ANC and other black nationalists, we also recognise that the “not black enough” cliché is an expression of *backward consciousness* in response to the very real marginalisation and continued oppression of coloureds under neo-apartheid. Though manifesting itself in various, often contradictory, forms, a feature of this false consciousness is pseudo-nationalist *coloured sectoralism*: the interests of the coloured people are seen as separate from (and, in many cases, antagonistic to) those of the black majority, and therefore coloureds supposedly need to “look out for their own.” In practical political terms, this has in fact mainly translated into support for the DA and other *white* bourgeois parties as a purported “lesser evil.”

The politics of bourgeois lesser-evilmism are often accompanied by anti-black prejudices that play on racist stereotypes of Africans as inherently corrupt, violent, etc. For example, in 2003 award-winning coloured actor Anthony Wilson spoke at an arts festival forum on coloured identity, railing: “The Boers stole, but at least they budgeted and did not steal everything. They stole the cream, but the darkies are stealing the cream, the milk and the bucket. We swapped five million farmers for 34 million blacks” (*Cape Argus*, 2 April 2003). This poisonous anti-black racism would be music to the ears of the late P.W. Botha, who in the 1980s launched the Tricameral Parliament—offering a phoney franchise to coloureds and Indians, and excluding blacks—in an (unsuccessful) attempt to bolster white minority rule by promoting divide-and-rule.

Wilson’s rant was polarising, including among coloured political commentators. Cape Town radio personality Nigel Pierce sharply condemned the racist poison spewed by Wilson and others who promote the myth of *swart gevaar* (the “black peril”) and notions of racial superiority among the coloured population, saying, “If we go that route, we’ll marginalise ourselves.” In contrast, Rhoda Kadalie apologised for Wilson’s rant, saying it was “very encouraging, because I think people need to talk about it.... Coloured people rightly feel that they have been left out of the pie, and that they get the crumbs.” This argument, like Wilson’s own attempt to justify his racist remarks by warning that “the oppressed should not become the oppressors,” plays on and promotes a widespread misconception that the racial hierarchy in post-1994 South Africa has somehow been inverted, and that coloured people are suffering because *blacks* are now on top.

This is a profoundly false picture of the nature of neo-apartheid capitalism. At an economic level, it is simply absurd. By almost any social measure—poverty, unemployment, life expectancy—it is blatantly obvious that the racial hierarchy that existed under apartheid remains intact, with whites on top, Indians and coloureds occupying intermediate strata, and blacks at the very bottom. For example, in 2012 the average household income of whites was 1.5 times that of Indians, 3.6 times that of coloureds and six times that of blacks.

Coloured sectoralists often draw an analogy between the ANC post-1994 and the National Party (NP) post-1948. This is just as false. Whereas the policies of the NP really did economically benefit the white population as a whole, eliminating any trace of white poverty and insuring that even less skilled whites got well-paid jobs in the civil service, the ANC has obviously done no such thing for the vast majority of blacks, whose conditions have in many respects gotten worse since 1994. Nor could it be any different, for the main source of profits for the South African capitalists remains, as it has been for over a century, the superexploitation of black labour.

This heavy overlap between class exploitation and racial oppression is a unique product of European colonisation as it played out in South Africa. That overlap did not fundamentally change in 1994—otherwise there would have been no possibility of a negotiated settlement between the ANC and the white rulers. What changed is that the ANC-led Alliance was installed in government as *black front men* for the capitalist rulers, who are (still) overwhelmingly white. To be sure, this has also resulted in the growth of a privileged black elite, including a handful of black capitalists like Patrice Motsepe and Cyril Ramaphosa, who have used their political connections to become exploiters in their own right.

The big lie—promoted by both the likes of Anthony Wilson and the Tripartite Alliance—is that the bourgeois government and the black elite are representative of the black majority. If anyone needed any proof that this is a lie, they

got it with the Marikana massacre—including Ramaphosa’s role encouraging police action on behalf of the Lonmin board. Marikana starkly exposed that this government does *not* represent the interests of the black masses, but those of the South African capitalists and their imperialist big brothers.

Coloured sectoralism is a *dead end* that only serves to isolate the coloured oppressed from their best potential ally—the black proletariat—and tie them to their worst enemy—the racist white bosses. The clearest demonstration of this is the considerable coloured support for the DA and other white parties, particularly in the Western Cape, in the 1994 and subsequent elections.

Many leftists impressionistically believed that the collaboration between black and coloured anti-apartheid activists meant that racial divisions had been eliminated. For example, the ANC-aligned United Democratic Front (UDF), which led the campaign to boycott the Tricameral Parliament elections in 1984, had a mass base among the coloured population in the Western Cape. UDF and other leftist coloured activists promoted “coloured rejectionism”—the idealist notion that a distinct coloured population was simply an artificial invention of the white rulers—as a response to apartheid’s racist divide-and-rule.

These leftists were shocked when in the 1994 elections a majority of coloureds in the Western Cape voted for the National Party, who won the province in large part through a campaign of crude *swart gevaar* propaganda. As the ICL observed at the time, “The actual prospect of a black nationalist government, however liberal its ideological stance, opened up clearly visible fissures within the non-white population” (“South Africa Powder Keg,” *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 12, February 1995).

The ANC gained control of the Western Cape in the 1999 and 2004 elections—albeit with a minority of the vote in both—as the NP went into terminal collapse and the DA was emerging as the main white opposition party. Since 2009, the DA has won the Western Cape with clear majorities, both by exploiting coloured disillusionment and resentment over the ANC’s attacks on the poor and anti-coloured demagoguery, and by stoking anti-black prejudices with *swart gevaar* tactics.

One certainly doesn’t have to be an apologist for the bourgeois-nationalist ANC to recognise that the neoliberal DA is (also) bad news for *all* the oppressed, including not least coloured people. In Cape Town and the Western Cape, local and provincial DA governments have meted out vicious cop terror to all who dare to stand up and fight against racial oppression and grinding poverty—from coloured fishing communities and backyard dwellers, to black shack dwellers, to black and coloured farm workers. State repression and union-busting provocations show the real meaning of the DA’s nauseating “open, opportunity-driven society” neoliberalism: “open” season

continued on page 10

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Prison Health Care...

(continued from page 12)

shot Faulkner. Mumia was on death row for nearly 30 years until his death sentence was set aside, and in 2011 the Philadelphia district attorney's office dropped its long-standing effort to legally lynch him. He is now serving life without parole, and the state is intent on seeing him die in prison. At his December hearing, the DOC counsel sneeringly asked Mumia why he did not get a hepatitis C test earlier than 2012. Mumia replied: "I never agreed to blood tests while I was on death row, because I didn't trust the doctors." We have long championed freedom for Mumia, a demand that is even more urgent now given his dire prognosis. ***Free Mumia Now!***

The same is true for other class-war prisoners locked up in America's dungeons. Leonard Peltier has been incarcerated for nearly 40 years for his activism in the American Indian Movement. He has long had severe health problems, including diabetes and a heart condition, which have been exacerbated by prison conditions. After suffering months of excruciating abdominal pain, Peltier now needs emergency surgery for a potentially fatal abdominal aortic aneurysm. Peltier and Mumia are two of the 14 class-war prisoners who are supported by the Partisan Defense Committee's stipend program and annual Holiday Appeal.

Medical neglect of those incarcerated in America is pervasive. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in three prisoners is infected with hepatitis C, which can lead to deadly liver disease. New antiviral pills cure over 90 percent of patients in as little as 12 weeks with few side effects. Price-gouging pharmaceutical companies charge nearly \$100,000 per treatment, which the prison authorities and politicians are determined not to cough up. Prisoners in Pennsylvania, Minnesota and Massachusetts have filed class-action suits demanding hepatitis C treatment. During Mumia's hearing, the head of Pennsylvania DOC medical services admitted that only *five* men are



Santa Barbara County, CA, July 2015: Vigil for Ray Herrera, who died due to medical neglect while in county jail.

being treated for hepatitis C—out of an estimated 10,000 infected men in the state prison population!

Prisons are the concentrated expression of the depravity of capitalist society. Those the ruling class sees as the useless residue of a system rooted in exploitation and racial oppression are locked up, brutalized and tortured. Thanks to the decades-long crusade for mass incarceration, promoted by both the Democrats and Republicans under the guise of the racist “war on crime” and “war on drugs,” the U.S. now has more than two million people behind bars, the highest proportion in the world, the majority of them black and Latino. Not only have greater numbers of people been locked up, but their sentences are longer and their treatment more barbaric—all in the name of “punishment.”

Along with the cops, courts and military, the prisons are a core component of the capitalist state, which exists to defend the rule of the bourgeoisie against the working class and oppressed and to suppress labor struggle. It is in the vital interest of the multiracial working class to fight against the brutal conditions of prison life. Many workers, especially black workers, are directly affected by mass incarceration, either themselves having served time or having family and friends who are entangled in the capitalist injustice system.

The purpose of the Spartacist League is to build the multiracial revolutionary workers party that can unite the power of the working class with the anger of the ghettos in the fight for workers power. It will take proletarian socialist revolution to destroy the capitalist prison system and to sweep away all the barbaric institutions of the bourgeois state.

Cruel, but not Unusual

In racist capitalist America, the apparatus of punishment is based on religious precepts of retribution and penitence. All the basics for good health—decent food, clothing and shelter—are rationed so as to cause physical and mental distress, destroy dignity and reduce the prisoner to a subhuman condition. Tens of thousands, including teenagers, are locked in solitary confinement that makes and keeps people insane, while others suffer overcrowding, which aids the spread of infections. Brutal beatings by sadistic guards happen every day.

A 2013 public health study calculated that the conditions in U.S. state prisons are so deadly that life expectancy drops two years for every year incarcerated and begins to recover as soon as inmates are released. Even a court-appointed medical monitor of the California prisons said in 2006: “Needless deaths occur weekly in our prisons, either from lack of access to care, or worse, from access to it.”

The Department of Justice's own figures show that strokes, diabetes and issues relating to heart and kidney problems are all significantly more prevalent in prison than in the general population. High blood pressure is the most common chronic condition in prison. Infectious diseases are rife, from hepatitis C to outbreaks of flu and tuberculosis. The HIV rate in prisons is more than three times that of the general population.

While the prison population is slightly shrinking, the number of women in prison is increasing. Incarcerated women face

particular medical cruelties. Prisons ration pads, tampons and pain medication, making daily life, even for healthy women, an exercise in degradation. About one in 30 women who enter prison are pregnant. They are often forced to carry unwanted pregnancies to term as part of their punishment. The Hyde Amendment, enacted in 1977 under Democrat Jimmy Carter, requires that federal prisoners cover the total cost of abortion. Even if they have the money, women are subject to extra delays and stigmatizing rules that make getting an abortion nearly impossible. Furthermore, prenatal care is commonly denied, and many women are shackled during labor. Those wanting to have a child suffer the cruelty of separation, as their babies are ripped from them soon after birth.

The denial of adequate health care for prisoners is not a question of money; it reflects the ideology of punishment that goes hand in hand with the puritanical crusade that criminalizes addiction to drugs and alcohol. An article on the Al Jazeera America website (26 October 2015) reports that cities and counties across the country have shelled out tens of millions of dollars to settle lawsuits over jail inmate deaths from drug or alcohol



WV Photo
Former class-war prisoner Lynne Stewart, addressing 2015 New York City Holiday Appeal, fought for compassionate release from prison while suffering from cancer.

withdrawal, even though the treatments cost pennies. Those prisoners who manage to receive treatment have to overcome enormous obstacles to keep getting their medication; those who complain of side effects risk being labeled uncooperative and removed from treatment altogether.

The unspeakable horrors of America's prisons were highlighted by the September 1971 Attica prison uprising in upstate New York. The courageous prisoners declared: "WE are MEN! We are not

South Africa...

(continued from page 9)

for untrammelled exploitation by the racist capitalists.

The DA dresses up its defence of white privilege by presenting itself as the saviour of “minority groups, fearful of majority tyranny and single party domination,” as Helen Zille put it in 2008. But what the DA racists stand for is just *one* (white) minority. Cape Town, which has been governed by the DA since 2006, is widely regarded as one of the most racist cities in the country. Media reports of white racist attacks were so frequent that the city government launched a bogus “Inclusive City” campaign in March 2015 to try to fix its image problem. It is not uncommon to hear stories of even black celebrities and politically well-connected members of the black elite being turned away from Cape Town’s “up-market” restaurants and hotels because they’re not white.

Some bitter lessons from the history of white minority rule are worth recalling for anyone with illusions that white bourgeois parties like the DA are some kind of "friend" of the coloured people. Beginning in the early 1900s, successive white minority governments pursued the tactic of aiming the most severe racist measures first at the black majority, only to later follow them up with similar attacks against other non-whites. An example was influx control and residential segregation. The 1923 Urban Areas Act provided for the compulsory registration of black Africans and gave local authorities the power to keep them out of urban areas and deport those deemed "idle and undesirable." This and other

laws were used to deport tens of thousands of blacks from the Western Cape, especially in times of economic downturn when the capitalists had less demand for cheap labour to exploit.

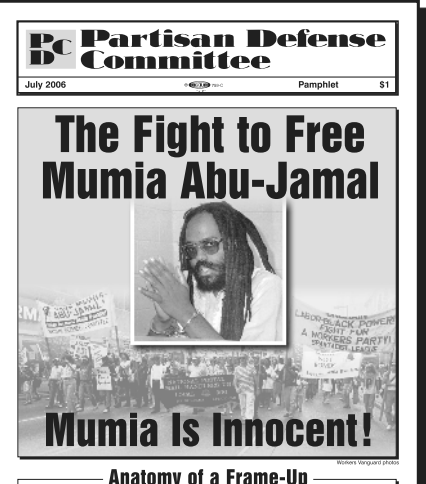
The white rulers cynically and demagogically passed off these measures as an act of benevolence for the coloured community, “protecting” them against competition from black labour. Petty-bourgeois coloured misleaders like Abdullah Abdurahman, president of the African Political Organisation (APO, later renamed African People’s Organisation), sometimes opposed these attacks on black Africans *in words*. But *in practice*, the APO and Abdurahman aided and abetted this racist divide-and-rule, for example by appealing to the government to merely exempt coloureds from residential segregation, or even calling on the white *baas* to replace black workers with coloureds. The APO’s right-wing opponents among the coloured political elite were even worse, openly embracing Barry Hertzog’s racist National Party.

The end result was only to weaken resistance to the white racist onslaught and sabotage the possibilities that existed at the time for common struggle by the black and coloured oppressed. With apartheid, the system of racial segregation was taken to a whole new level, and even the limited concessions to coloureds, made to promote divide-and-rule, were scrapped. For example, following the 1950 Group Areas Act some 150,000 coloured people were forcibly evicted from their homes and communities in the Cape Peninsula between 1957 and 1985, most of them relocated to desolate coloured ghettos like the townships in the Cape Flats.

[TO BE CONTINUED]



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beasts,” and raised demands including for a healthy diet and decent medical care. New York governor Nelson Rockefeller responded by ordering a massacre that crushed the uprising and killed 39. After the slaughter, hundreds of naked, overwhelmingly black prisoners were lined up in the yard like slaves at auction. Here was a searing image of the reality of black oppression in the U.S. where it endures as a fundamental prop of capitalist class rule.

The uprising brought attention to the conditions of prisoners, not least their health care. In the following years, many states were found to be providing health care so poor that it was deemed unconstitutional in federal courts. But rather than providing medical care, prison authorities contracted out prison health care to private companies—a trend that accelerated with the explosive growth of the prison population in the 1980s and ’90s. States have privatized some services or whole prisons, allowing ghoulish entrepreneurs to rob prisoners and their families blind for phone calls, visits and medical fees.

As a result of the tough sentencing laws of the 1990s and harsh parole revocation policies, the prison population is aging, with one in six prisoners now over 50 years old. These prisoners make up a large portion of those with chronic health conditions. The private “health care” companies have responded by further curtailing necessary tests and medications. Corizon, the largest prison health care company, recently lost several contracts with state prisons and with Rikers Island jail in New York City. At Rikers, medical failures by the company have been linked to up to a dozen deaths, including that of Bradley Ballard, who died in 2013 after being deprived of insulin and left in a cell with no food or running water for six days. Nationwide, more than 1,300 legal suits have been filed against Corizon in the last five years. Showing their utter contempt for the well-being of prisoners, the Pennsylvania DOC brought in Corizon’s medical director at Rikers as an “expert witness” at Mumia’s recent hearing!

The Pennsylvania class-action suit for hepatitis C treatment points out that denying prisoners medicine because of financial considerations is unconstitutional. In November 1976, the Supreme Court ruled in *Estelle v. Gamble* that prisoners have a constitutional right to health care under the Eighth Amendment’s ban on cruel and unusual punishment. (A few months before, this same Court reinstated the death penalty, ruling that execution was *not* cruel and unusual punishment!) Whatever recourse the *Estelle* ruling gave prisoners to fight medical negligence and malpractice was dealt a hefty blow with the 1996 Prison Litigation Reform Act (PLRA).



Victims of medical neglect in custody: Courtland Lucas, died 2009, St. Louis; Jovon Frazier, died 2011, Manatee County, Florida; Victor Woods, died 2014, Rikers Island, New York City.

The Act, signed into law by President Bill Clinton, further curtailed the rights of prisoners to fight against all kinds of abuse, requiring them to exhaust local grievance procedures before filing suit in court. The burden of proving compliance with the whims and technicalities of prison bureaucracy can be truly Sisyphean—the goalposts keep being moved further away. As a lawyer for the Southern Center for Human Rights explained: “We lost numerous prisoners who died because of the PLRA. These issues should have been in front of the court long ago, but we were forced to wait and watch our clients die” (quoted in Benjamin Fleury-Steiner, *Dying Inside* [2011]).

Even prisoners with terminal illnesses are not spared the indignities of America’s prison system. Compassionate release for those facing death, allowing them to spend their last days with their loved ones, is routinely denied. The federal prison system, in which over 200,000 people are locked up, grants on average less than two dozen compassionate releases each year. Among those few who have been released is former class-war prisoner and leftist lawyer Lynne Stewart, who was framed up in a “war on terror” show trial. Suffering from stage IV breast cancer, Stewart was finally released in December 2013, after a months-long fight for compassionate release, a demand supported by more than 40,000 petitioners worldwide, including the PDC. The fact that Stewart was released has allowed her to get proper medical care, which has arrested the spread of the cancer for now.

Marxism vs. Crime and Punishment

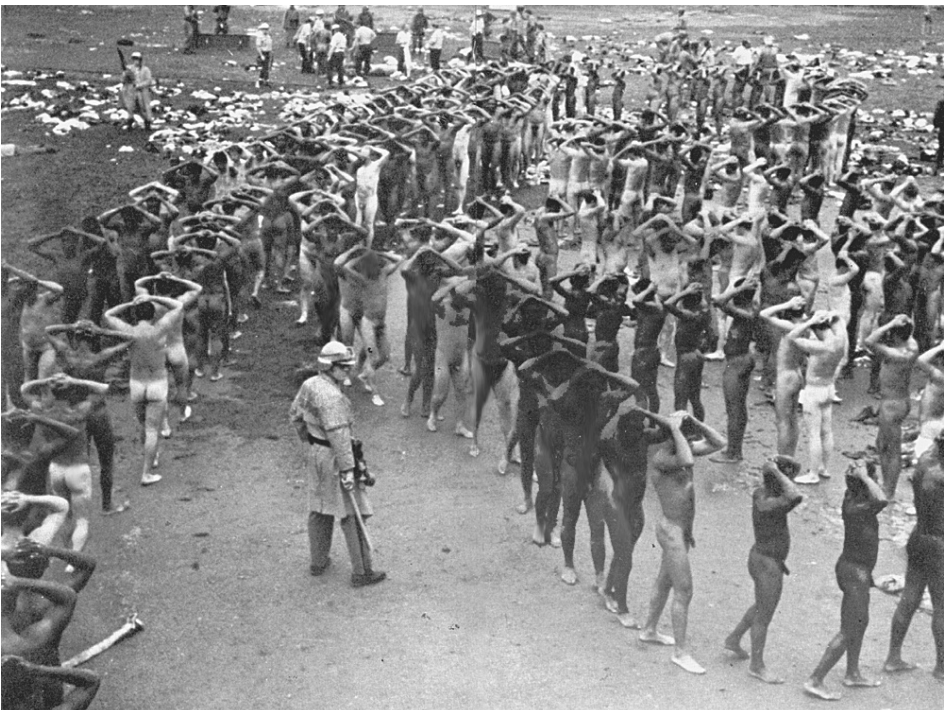
The vast, historically ingrained system of racist state repression cannot be fundamentally changed through tinkering here and there. It has to be overturned through a workers revolution that erects in its place a workers state to defend the revo-

lution against capitalist restoration. When the workers internationally take political power and put the wealth now appropriated by the tiny class of exploiters to the service of humanity, they will lay the material basis for achieving an egalitarian communist society, ultimately doing

individuals—for the protection of others, as well as of the offenders themselves. This separation would be done without the brutality and deprivation that define the American prison system, but rather with education, medical care, rehabilitation and the goal of reintegration as productive members of society.

Such was the approach of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky that led the October 1917 Russian socialist revolution. Their determination that the legal apparatus of a workers state would not be based on retribution found its fullest expression in the 1919 party program, which advocated “a fundamental alteration in the character of punishment, introducing conditional sentences on an extensive scale, applying public censure as a means of punishment, replacing imprisonment by compulsory labour with retention of freedom, and prisons by institutions for training” (quoted in E.H. Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, Vol. 2 [1959]).

There can be no fair or “humane” system of justice for the working class



Prisoners forced to run gauntlet of baton-wielding guards following murderous crushing of 1971 Attica prison rebellion.

away with any need for a state apparatus of repression.

As Marxists, our attitude toward crime and punishment is that we are against it. Much of the theft, fraud and violence in society is a result of the material scarcity inherent in capitalism and is bolstered by reactionary ideologies like racism and bigotry. We do not proceed from the standpoint of punishing the offender. A humane and rational society may well find a need to separate certain dangerous

and oppressed in a society based on exploitation. Our perspective is that of Lenin and Trotsky—for socialist revolutions to overturn capitalism worldwide and the repressive state machinery that defends it. With its central position in production, the working class has both the social power and the material interest to shatter the capitalist order. To bring that consciousness to the proletariat requires forging a revolutionary workers party of the Bolshevik type. ■

Transgender People...

(continued from page 3)

end anti-gay prejudice and violence. The legalization of same-sex marriage has less to do with social acceptance of unorthodox sexual practices and more to do with promoting bourgeois respectability by fitting gay relationships into the “family values” monogamous mold.

In the U.S. during the last several decades—a period of Christian reaction and attacks on workers, the poor and the oppressed—the gay rights movement as a whole has become more conservative. Unwavering ties to the Democratic Party have further hamstrung the “LGBT movement.” While posturing as the friends of the oppressed against their Republican foes, the Democrats are the *other* capitalist party of racism, war and “family values,” pandering to religious backwardness, busting up labor unions and repressing political dissidents (like Chelsea Manning). Support to the Democrats means acceptance of the capitalist order, which is antithetical to any genuine fight for the liberation of women, gays, black people or any of the oppressed.

Liberal “lifestyle” and “identity” politics continue to predominate in the struggle for gay and transgender rights. Lifestyleism is a belief that the sum total of individual lifestyle choices can effectively transform society. But being gay or trans is not in itself political. Pursuing an unconventional lifestyle may go against societal norms, but it will take a fundamental social and economic transformation to change the institutions that are the source of deeply rooted attitudes toward gender roles and sexuality.

The theory of “identity” politics—which presumes that only those experiencing the oppression can combat it—relies on the false notion that everyone outside the group is part of the problem. By this logic, men can never oppose anti-woman chauvinism and straight people can never fight anti-gay bigotry. A twisted version of such dead-end politics can be seen with the feminists known for waging venomous campaigns against trans people. Negatively referred to as TERFs (trans exclusionary radical feminists), these feminists argue to exclude (male-to-female) trans women because they are not “real” women and have “male privilege”!

Communists seek to build a revolutionary workers party as the “tribune of the people,” which 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,” in the words of V.I. Lenin (*What Is To Be Done?* [1902]). The working class, which

lacks any interest in the preservation of the bourgeois order, must be won to the understanding that its historic mission is to overthrow the capitalist order and open the road to human freedom for *everyone*. ■

Women and Revolution

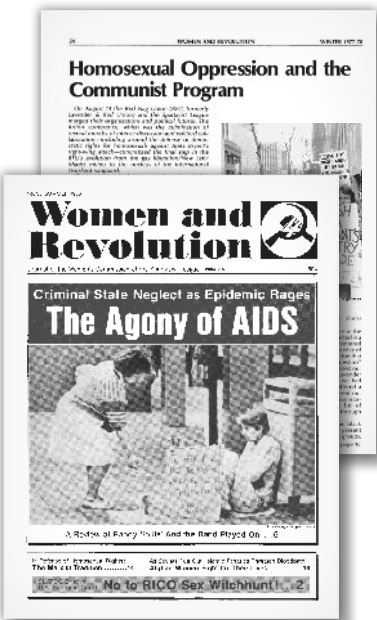
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Race and Class Under Neo-Apartheid

South Africa



Gallo photos

At left, residents of coloured township near Johannesburg protest over failure of ANC-led government to provide basic services, 2009. Right: Black education official escorted by cops at Roodepoort Primary School amid anti-black protests by coloured residents, August 2015.

The article reprinted below was published in December as a supplement to Spartacist South Africa, newspaper of the International Communist League's South African section. The term "coloured" refers to the mixed-race, partly Malay-derived population in that country.

PART ONE

It is now 21 years into the "new" South Africa, and of the myths proclaimed in 1994, that of the "rainbow nation" today stands exposed as perhaps the most threadbare lie of all. To anyone with eyes to see, it is clear that today's South Africa is anything but a paradigm of racial harmony. Indeed, in many important respects racial antagonisms have *increased* in recent years, and a real hardening of racial attitudes can be seen both among different oppressed racial groups and among the

For a Black-Centered Workers Government

privileged white minority. Expressions of ethnic and racial exclusivism—like car stickers and T-shirts proclaiming "100% Zulu" and "100% Venda," or pronouncements of being "Coloured and Proud"—have increased noticeably. Meanwhile, a survey released last year by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) revealed that only 52.8 percent of whites surveyed in 2013 agreed that apartheid was, in the words of the survey, "a crime against humanity"—down from 70.3 percent in 2003.

As Marxists, we understand that these

retrograde developments at the ideological level are fundamentally a product of the brutally oppressive, racist *material and social reality* that continues to define life in South Africa. More than two decades after the end of the apartheid system of rigid, legally enforced racial segregation and white supremacy, the vast majority of the country's non-white masses still live in "Third World" misery, alongside a "First World" inhabited mainly by the white minority. Despite some moderate increase in socialising and other interactions across racial lines—mostly among

the wealthy—the relationships between whites and blacks largely remain those of masters and servants. Racial oppression and degradation are the material basis for white racist ideology, as is clearly reflected in the numerous cases of white racist attacks on black domestic workers that get reported in the media. On a much larger scale, the 2012 Marikana massacre was a bloody reminder that the lives of black workers are just as cheap today as under apartheid.

The growth of racial, tribal and other divisions among the oppressed non-white masses is also a product of the racist neo-apartheid system, which the capitalist ANC-led [African National Congress] Tripartite Alliance government is responsible for administering and maintaining. Far from delivering the "better life for all" that was "promised" in 1994, this government acts as enforcers for the

continued on page 8

Prison Health Care Nightmare

Mumia Abu-Jamal, America's foremost class-war prisoner, is once again fighting for his life against Pennsylvania prison authorities. Mumia is demanding treatment for hepatitis C and a ravaging hepatitis C-associated skin condition that has plagued him for over a year. He is demanding damages for the deliberate indifference to his high blood sugar that caused him to be admitted to intensive care last March on the verge of a diabetic coma, and he is protesting that his family and lawyers were later prevented from visiting him in the hospital. In September, a magistrate judge recommended dismissing his case, stating that Mumia would not be "irreparably harmed" by the withholding of hepatitis C treatment! In fact, Mumia nearly died last year and his life remains in danger.

This past December, federal district judge Robert Mariani decided to hear Mumia's case over the objections of the

Mumia's Life Still in Danger

Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC). The hearing shined a spotlight on the state's callous disregard and negligence for the prisoners in their "care." Mumia himself captured what is at stake when he told the court that with hepatitis C medication "I can live; without it I may die."

The punitive treatment of Mumia Abu-Jamal is part of a decades-long vendetta by the capitalist state against this former Black Panther who became known as "the voice of the voiceless" for his searing journalism in the 1970s. He exposed the racist Philadelphia police campaign against the MOVE organization, the largely black back-to-nature group he came to support.

Mumia was framed up for the 1981 killing of Philly police officer Daniel Faulkner. Police and prosecutors manufactured evidence to convict him, including by terrorizing witnesses and concocting a fake confession two months after his arrest. Following a 1982 trial, Mumia was sentenced to death explicitly for his political views. In 1995, a warrant was signed for his execution, but protests around the world helped make his name known internationally and the execution was stayed.

The courts have time and again refused to consider evidence proving Mumia's innocence, including the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia,

continued on page 10



freemumia.com

Mumia Abu-Jamal, November 2015.