

Capitalists Poison Flint



Jim West photos

Left: Flint, Michigan, residents receive bottled water from Red Cross. Right: Protest at State Capitol in Lansing, Michigan, January 19. Flint residents are still forced to pay exorbitant rates for toxic water. Sign demands: Eliminate Water Bills!!

The majority-black, historically working-class city of Flint, Michigan, and an entire generation of its children have been poisoned by the capitalist rulers through the contaminated public water supply. As one woman told the *Wall Street Journal* (21 January), “We’re nothing but the walking dead in Flint.” Labor must protest this racist atrocity!

In April 2014, under an “emergency manager” appointed by Republican gov-

ernor Rick Snyder, it was decreed that to save money, Flint would stop buying its water from Detroit and use water from the industrially polluted Flint River. Immediately, residents began to complain about the discolored, stinking water and how it was causing illness including rashes, nausea, hair loss and headaches. In October 2014, a General Motors plant in Flint stopped using water from the municipal supply because it was corroding engine parts. But

the government at all levels exhibited less concern for the people of Flint than GM showed for its engine parts. A year-long campaign of lies denying that the water was dangerous to health was followed by a massive cover-up, involving unusual interagency collaboration and bipartisan cooperation. Once the cover-up collapsed, “investigations” were announced and the falling out among thieves began.

Three weeks ago, with the story mak-

ing national headlines, Governor Snyder declared a state of emergency and later mobilized the National Guard supposedly to distribute bottled water. But make no mistake, the real role of the National Guard is not to distribute water—United Auto Workers (UAW) volunteers and others had already been doing that. The Guard’s purpose is to help maintain racist law and order and to clamp down on

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Down With Obama’s Deportations!

Central American Refugees: Let Them Stay!

Once again, the nativist, anti-immigrant rants spewed by the leading Republican presidential hopefuls all but assure a massive Latino vote in November for the Democrats, the “lesser evil” party of racist U.S. imperialism. Barack Obama first waltzed into the White House with the heavy backing of Latino voters in 2008, having promised a “path” to citizenship for millions of undocumented immigrants. But that path was marked with a giant exit sign.

With a record-breaking 2.5 million deportations already during Obama’s presidency, the administration rang in its last year in office by ordering a series of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) raids over New Year’s weekend in Georgia, North Carolina and Texas. Those

targeted had mainly fled extreme violence and poverty in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Scores were deported, dozens were dragged into federal detention centers, and thousands more were left terrified that they would be next.



Getty

Mesa, Arizona, October 15: Shackled immigrants wait to board I.C.E. deportation flight.

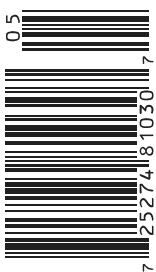
Obama has, in effect, issued a death warrant for many of the refugees, mainly women and children, being expelled. Since their story first grabbed headlines

in 2014, when an estimated 100,000 Central American refugees crossed the border, at least 83 people have been killed after being sent back. The same

conditions of desperate poverty and violence—a hell created and reinforced by over a century of U.S. imperialist subjugation—led to a new spike in border crossings by Central Americans in late 2015. The homicide rate in El Salvador swelled by 70 percent last year, surpassing that of Honduras as the world’s highest for a country not in the midst of war. Women are particularly compelled to flee, subject to terror, rape and extortion by gangs and military thugs.

The “choice” for the millions of undocumented immigrants who risk their lives to set foot in this country is either to hide in the shadows or to languish in shoddy, overcrowded I.C.E. dungeons. The immigration detention facilities strewn across the country, including for-profit prisons, are mandated by Congress to fill a daily “bed quota” of 34,000. They are notorious for violence and mistreatment, including insufficient food and water. In late October, dozens of Central American women went on hunger strike in a Texas facility to protest the brutal conditions and to demand their immediate release.

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After 20 Years Lori Berenson Finally Home



Democracy Now!
Lori Berenson giving an interview on January 4.

On December 3, 46-year-old Lori Berenson landed at Kennedy International Airport, having served a 20-year sentence in Peru (the last five years on parole). She was one of the thousands of victims of state terror carried out by paramilitary bands, cops and the military under President Alberto Fujimori in the 1990s. She arrived back in the U.S. with her six-year-old son, Salvador, who was born in prison. The Partisan Defense Committee and the Spartacist League, with which it is affiliated, congratulate Berenson on her release.

Berenson was grabbed off a Lima bus

in November 1995, arrested along with more than 20 others in raids by the feared “anti-terrorist” police (Dincote). Only six weeks later, she was convicted by a frame-up military tribunal of treason and of being a leader of the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA), a Cuban-influenced guerrilla group formed in the early ’80s. Its name derived from a leader of an indigenous rebellion against Spanish colonial rule in the late 1700s. The MRTA mainly targeted military installations and foreign-owned businesses, in contrast to the Maoist Sendero Luminoso (Shining

Path) movement, which often launched murderous attacks on workers and peasants unions as well as armed clashes with the MRTA.

Sentenced to life, Berenson was locked up in the notorious Yanamayo prison located in the Andes at over 12,000 feet, her tiny unheated cell open to the elements. The isolation and unbearable conditions drove some of the political prisoners there to attempt suicide. After three years and suffering from illnesses brought on by the relentless cold and the poor food, Berenson was transferred to Socabaya prison near Arequipa a day before her case was to be brought before the Washington-based Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. After an international outcry over her treatment, Peruvian officials in 2000 admitted Berenson was not an MRTA leader and ordered her retried before a special civilian court for those accused of terrorism. A three-judge panel convicted her in 2001 of “collaborating with terrorism” and sentenced her to 20 years.

Berenson had arrived in Peru in 1994 after working in Central America and seeing firsthand the endemic poverty, inequality and injustice. “I realized,” she said in a 2011 interview, “that behind suffering was politics.... There are interests behind that—political, economic—in having a social class be relegated to dying in misery, and being exploited, and being harmed, and suffering repression” (*New York Times Magazine*, 6 March 2011).

In the 1990s, Peru was in the grips of a brutal “anti-terrorism” campaign waged by President Fujimori. He is now disgraced, and has been imprisoned since 2007 for among other things, corruption, kidnapping and murder—but not, of course, for his myriad crimes against the urban and rural masses of Peru. Throughout the decade of his presidency, Fujimori was backed by both the Bush I and Clinton administrations. Peru received millions in U.S. military aid for the “war on drugs,” which the army and police prosecuted viciously in remote areas known to be guerrilla strongholds. Fujimori set up death squads that massacred indigenous peasants and disappeared leftists. At the behest of the IMF, he imposed austerity and privatized previously nationalized industries, which deepened the already desperate poverty in the cities and countryside. There were forced sterilization

campaigns, which largely targeted the indigenous population. Any opposition to the regime was equated with terrorism; in an 18-month period alone, over 500,000 people had been detained.

The SL and PDC defended Berenson and all victims of this onslaught of right-wing repression. In December 1996, the MRTA spectacularly seized the Japanese ambassador’s residence in Lima, demanding freedom for 450 of their comrades (including Berenson) in exchange for the 72 high-ranking government officials, military officers and businessmen they held hostage. The siege lasted 126 days and ended in a bloodbath: government commandos stormed the villa and executed all 14 guerrillas. Understanding that this massacre would strengthen the hand of repressive regimes throughout the hemisphere, the SL and other sections of the International Communist League initiated or joined protests in major U.S. and Canadian cities as well as Mexico City, Tokyo and Berlin.

For her part, Berenson acquitted herself with honor under harsh and dangerous conditions. In 1996, with her conviction by hooded judges a foregone conclusion, she declared to the press: “In the MRTA there are no criminal terrorists. It is a revolutionary movement.” She used the publicity she received as an American to speak for the wounded and tortured prisoners who would never be heard. Over the years, Berenson continued to speak out on behalf of her fellow political prisoners and to denounce the horrific conditions under which they were held. She did not renounce her political views or the MRTA, even during her civil trial when hopes for her release were raised, despite widespread vilification of her in the Peruvian and American press.

The insufferable conditions that moved people like Lori Berenson to action still exist throughout South and Central America and indeed throughout the world. While Marxists understand the attraction of petty-bourgeois guerrillaism to radicalized students and intellectuals, we recognize that only the social power of the proletariat can root out the source of this social misery, the capitalist-imperialist system itself. While the peasantry is an amorphous class ranging from landless day laborers to well-to-do farmers who exploit the labor of others, the working class is concentrated and organized. It powers the capitalist engine and can lead all the oppressed—poor peasants, indigenous peoples, women—to achieve national liberation, agrarian revolution and modernization in countries plundered by imperialism.

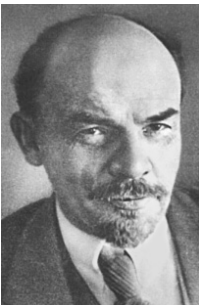
Such historic gains can only be achieved through the conquest of power by the proletariat, that is, through socialist revolution—the expropriation of capitalist property and establishment of a planned collectivized economy. Ultimate victory for the toiling masses of Latin America requires international extension of the revolution to the bastion of U.S. imperialism and to other industrialized economies. This task requires a disciplined international organization of revolutionary working-class parties—a reformed Fourth International—that can link the struggles of the workers of the semicolonies to those in the imperialist centers. ■



TROTSKY

The Trotskyists Remained Faithful to October

The heroic Soviet spy Leopold Trepper created the “Red Orchestra” that transmitted invaluable intelligence to the USSR from occupied Europe and Nazi Germany during World War II. In his memoirs, Trepper recalled the Trotskyists’ heroism in the face of Stalin’s purges in the 1930s. We Trotskyists of the International Communist League continued the struggle for unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialism and coun-



LENIN

terrevolution as well as for proletarian political revolution to sweep away the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy until the final destruction of the USSR through capitalist restoration in 1991-92. Today, we apply this same program to the remaining deformed workers states: China, Cuba, Laos, North Korea and Vietnam.

The glow of October was being extinguished in the shadows of underground chambers. The revolution had degenerated into a system of terror and horror; the ideals of socialism were ridiculed in the name of a fossilized dogma which the executioners still had the effrontery to call Marxism.

And yet we went along, sick at heart, but passive, caught up in machinery we had set in motion with our own hands. Mere cogs in the apparatus, terrorized to the point of madness, we became the instruments of our own subjugation. All those who did not rise up against the Stalinist machine are responsible, collectively responsible. I am no exception to this verdict.

But who did protest at that time? Who rose up to voice his outrage?

The Trotskyites can lay claim to this honor. Following the example of their leader, who was rewarded for his obstinacy with the end of an ice-axe, they fought Stalinism to the death, and they were the only ones who did. By the time of the great purges, they could only shout their rebellion in the freezing wastelands where they had been dragged in order to be exterminated. In the camps, their conduct was admirable. But their voices were lost in the tundra.

Today, the Trotskyites have a right to accuse those who once howled along with the wolves. Let them not forget, however, that they had the enormous advantage over us of having a coherent political system capable of replacing Stalinism. They had something to cling to in the midst of their profound distress at seeing the revolution betrayed. They did not “confess,” for they knew that their confession would serve neither the party nor socialism.

—Leopold Trepper, *The Great Game* (1977)

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Partisan Defense Committee

The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

Free Leonard Peltier Now!

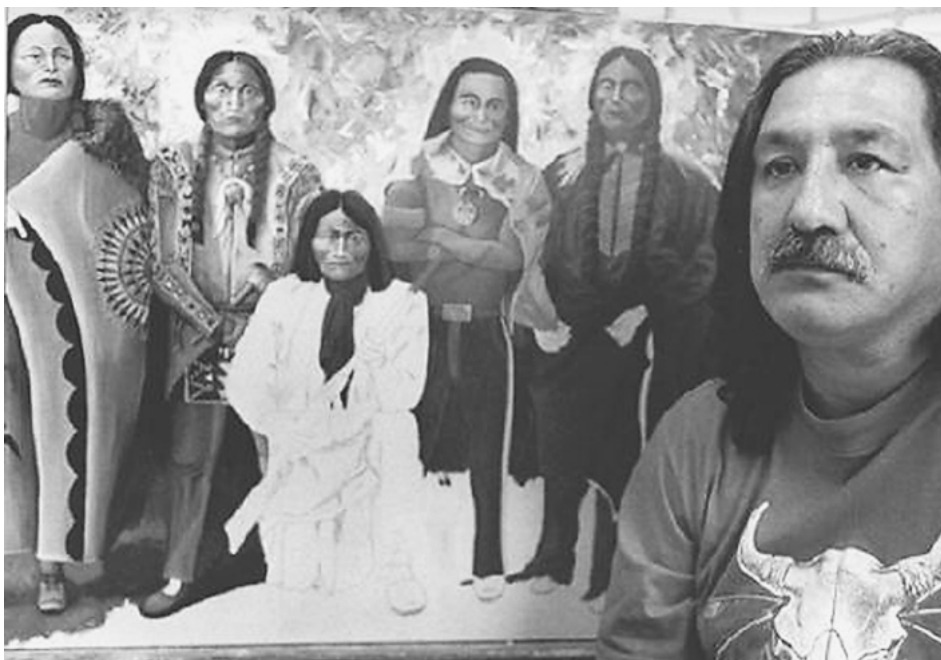
Leonard Peltier is one of the most prominent political prisoners in America. Peltier's imprisonment for his activism in the American Indian Movement (AIM) symbolizes this country's racist repression of indigenous people, the survivors of centuries of genocide. February 6 marks 40 years since Peltier was arrested on frame-up charges of killing two FBI agents. This began his long ordeal of incarceration. Peltier's innocence has always demanded his freedom, but a new health crisis makes it more urgent than ever that he be released *now* to get quality medical attention for a life-threatening abdominal aortic aneurysm.

In the early 1970s, the government turned its sights on AIM, which was combating the grinding poverty of Native Americans and the continued theft of their lands. The Feds and the energy companies were intent on grabbing the rich uranium deposits under land of the Oglala Lakota people in western South Dakota. The Pine Ridge Reservation became a war zone as the hated Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the FBI trained and armed thugs to terrorize and brutalize AIM activists. Between 1973 and 1976, these killers carried out more than 300 attacks, murdering at least 69 people.

When 250 FBI and BIA agents, SWAT cops and vigilantes launched an assault against Pine Ridge in June 1975 and the FBI came up two agents short, Peltier and three others were charged with their deaths. Peltier sought refuge in Canada, but was caught and held in solitary confinement for ten months. Charges were dropped against one of the others, while AIM supporters Dino Butler and Bob Robideau were acquitted. Jurors at the trial in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, stated that they did not believe the government witnesses and that it seemed "pretty much a clear-cut case of self-defense."

The government went into overdrive to make sure Peltier would be convicted. Perjured affidavits secured his extradition to the U.S. The trial was moved to Fargo, North Dakota, a town where racism against Native Americans was prevalent, and held before an all-white jury. To preclude another acquittal on grounds of self-defense, the judge excluded evidence of government terror against Pine Ridge activists. Defense witnesses were barred from testifying, and the prosecution concealed ballistics tests showing that Peltier's gun could not have been used in the shooting. In 1977, Peltier was found guilty and sentenced to two consecutive life sentences.

The intent of the racist capitalist rulers to see this innocent man die in prison has been clear from the start. Peltier's legal



Leonard Peltier in front of one of his paintings.

Jeffrey Scott

40 Years Behind Bars

rights have consistently been trampled: calls for a new trial; requests for documents under the Freedom of Information Act; applications for parole; demands for medical treatment—all denied time and again. In a 1985 appeal hearing, the lead government attorney admitted: "We can't prove who shot those agents." A 2003 ruling from the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals stated: "Much of the government's behavior at the Pine Ridge Reservation and in its prosecution of Mr. Peltier is to be condemned." But the appeals were denied anyway. There is no justice in the bourgeoisie's courts for fighters against racist and capitalist injustice like Leonard Peltier.

The Feds' vendetta against Peltier and other AIM leaders was part of the FBI's notorious Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) of surveillance, disruption, frame-up and murder. Launched in the 1950s, COINTELPRO initially targeted the Communist Party and the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party. It was later deployed against other left organizations, antiwar activists and especially against radical black activists in the 1960s. The Black Panther Party bore the brunt of the Feds' attacks: members were framed up and imprisoned by the hundreds while 38 were killed in cold blood.

AIM was formed in 1968 to fight police harassment in Minneapolis and quickly caught the FBI's eye. AIM forged ties

with Chicago Black Panther leader Fred Hampton who, along with Mark Clark, was gunned down in his apartment by the Chicago cops on 4 December 1969. That same year, AIM started its 19-month occupation of Alcatraz Island to demand the return of stolen Native land.

Like Peltier, many former Panthers still languish in prison, among them Mumia Abu-Jamal and Albert Woodfox. The Partisan Defense Committee publicizes their cases and provides support to them and eleven others through our Class-War Prisoner stipend program. Funds for this program are raised during the PDC's annual Holiday Appeal. While supporting all possible legal proceedings on behalf of the class-war prisoners, we place no faith whatever in the courts, which are part of the apparatus used by the capitalist class to maintain its rule. We look to the social power of the multiracial labor movement to lead the poor and oppressed in struggle

against the capitalist exploiters and their system of private property.

The vindictiveness of the Feds toward this unbowed fighter for Native Americans, who is also a gifted writer and artist, knows no bounds. In his four decades behind bars, Peltier has been subjected to supermax hell, punitive prison moves, long stretches in solitary and brutal beatings. Denied transfer to North Dakota to be near his people, he is incarcerated nearly 2,000 miles away in Florida. Peltier has diabetes and high blood pressure, has suffered a stroke and a heart attack, and he is partially blind in one eye. Twenty years ago he underwent surgery in prison to fix a defect in his jaw that had prevented him from eating solid food. The operation was so botched that he almost died and needed six blood transfusions. To avert public awareness of Peltier and the injustice inflicted on him, an association of former FBI agents forced the removal of four of his paintings from a Native art installation in Washington State last November.

In a November 26 statement to his supporters, Peltier spoke of the pain and neglect he was suffering even before his latest diagnosis:

"I wish I could lie to you and tell you I'm doing O.K., but that would not be fair to you.... I cannot walk but very slowly and while hanging on to someone for support. But after a few steps I'm O.K. So I move right along with the crowd. But those first few steps are awfully painful. I asked for a cushion, but was told they don't have any here—and to make one myself from a blanket. Well, news flash. I did this and every time I did they took it away. Yep, for some reason this is illegal. Then I have to deal with the other medical problems. So, yeah, this is my Sundance."

The PDC has written to President Obama to demand Peltier's urgent release. Peltier's defense committee urges supporters to mention Leonard's current health crisis when calling the White House to voice support for clemency now, and to also demand that he receive the best possible care by contacting: Federal Bureau of Prisons, 320 First St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20534, (202) 307-3198, info@bop.gov. We urge our readers to do likewise. You can also write to Leonard Peltier, #89637-132, USP Coleman I, P.O. Box 1033, Coleman, FL 33521. ■



Spartacist League Forums

Finish the Civil War! For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Abolitionist Politics in the Fight to End Slavery

Speaker: Don Cane, Spartacist League Central Committee

BAY AREA

Saturday, February 13, 2 p.m.

303 Hudson St.,
Lower Level, Oakland

(Berkeley Korean United Methodist Church,
at College and Manila Aves.)

For information: (510) 839-0851
slbayarea@fastmail.net

NEW YORK CITY

Saturday, February 27, 3 p.m.

322 West 48th Street, Manhattan
(Between 8th and 9th Aves.—
Take A, C or E to 42nd Street)

For information: (212) 267-1025, nysl@tiac.net

LOS ANGELES

Saturday, February 20, 4 p.m.

Metropolitan Community Church
4607 Prospect Ave.

(One block east of Vermont, near the Vermont/
Sunset Red Line Metro Station)

For information: (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

CHICAGO

Saturday, March 5

Time and location
to be announced

For more information: (312) 563-0441
chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net

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30th Annual PDC Holiday Appeal

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

NEW YORK CITY

Saturday, January 30
3 to 6 p.m.

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

Information: (212) 406-4252

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Sunday, January 31
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Oakstop, 1721 Broadway
West Wing Gallery
Suite #203
(at 19th St. BART stop)

Information: (510) 839-0852

(212) 406-4252 • partisandefense@earthlink.net • www.partisandefense.org

Refugees...

(continued from page 1)

Last summer, a federal judge ordered the swift release of children and their parents from family detention centers, noting their “deplorable conditions.” The government has appealed that order while continuing to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to detain families. With no access to government-provided legal counsel, non-citizens caught in this prison web rely on volunteer attorneys and immigrant advocacy groups for information on appeals and asylum claims. After exposing procedural violations, abuse or inadequate medical care inside detention centers, some lawyers and activists report being prohibited from meeting with their clients.

The current roundups and deportations are the latest anti-immigrant attacks by the capitalist rulers, which have helped feed a general assault on the wages and living conditions of all working people. The bosses fan the flames of anti-immigrant chauvinism and racial hostility to pit workers against each other, the better to divide and weaken the labor movement. It is of vital interest for labor and all fighters against exploitation and oppression to demand: *No deportations! Free all the detainees! For full citizenship rights for all immigrants!* Everyone who makes it into this country should have all the rights of those born here.

Fleeing U.S.-Made Hellholes

The recent raids struck fear into Latino families from coast to coast. Many of Obama’s fellow Democrats, like Illinois Congressman Luis Gutierrez, expressed anger about the raids, which the White House defended as a way to deter further waves of refugees. Gutierrez & Co. complained that they were not consulted ahead of time, clearly concerned that the Democrats’ “friend of immigrants” image may be fading. Just hours before Obama’s State of the Union speech, some 140 Congressional Democrats issued a statement criticizing the roundups as “ineffective” and suggesting a more “humane” policy in line with “time-honored American values.”

Those “values” are defined by the capitalist rulers’ drive to further amass profit through their system of exploitation and oppression, turning the screws on workers and the oppressed at home and carrying out imperialist plunder abroad. U.S. subjugation of its Latin American “backyard” is part of a world imperialist order in which a handful of advanced capitalist countries dominate and exploit the more backward ones, in turn spurring mass emigration. In Central America, the miserable poverty of the masses—the backdrop to the murderous gang wars—is the product of imperialist depredation. The



January 15 immigrant rights rally outside Supreme Court. As president, Obama has overseen a record 2.5 million deportations.

corrupt local bourgeoisies preside over this brutal system, viciously suppressing the working class and peasantry. As we spelled out in a fuller article on Central American refugees (WV No. 1050, 8 August 2014), the social fabric of these countries was ripped apart by the dirty wars of the 1980s against leftist insurgents and by the increased militarization that accompanied the “war on drugs.” Added to that toll is the economic ruin brought about by the U.S.-imposed Central American Free Trade Agreement.

Secretary of State John Kerry recently announced a “resettlement” program for Central American asylum seekers that would set up processing centers run by the United Nations in nearby Latin American countries—a way for the U.S. to keep the refugees out. Equally cynical was a December 2014 White House initiative that encouraged Central American children to apply in their home countries for refugee status. Out of the more than 6,000 minors who applied, exactly *five* arrived in the U.S. last year. The U.S. has bolstered the Mexican government in its own crackdown on Central Americans trying to reach *El Norte* by giving it tens of millions of dollars. Of the estimated 400,000 Central Americans crossing into Mexico annually, the Mexican state arrested almost 93,000 between October 2014 and April 2015.

Many have set their hopes on Obama’s November 2014 executive order that professes to give over four million undocumented immigrants temporary reprieve from deportation and a chance at work permits. While the prospect of some of the undocumented not being deported would be welcome, the measure would apply only to those in the country at least five years and to parents of U.S. citizens. It would require immigrants to register with the government, pass background

checks and pay exorbitant fees for a shot at three years of legal status. Even if they get this, they would have no job protections or government benefits. Nevertheless, the proposal was too much for GOP governors, who got a federal judge to block the plan. The issue will now be decided by the Supreme Court.

Major sections of the bourgeoisie have long demanded that Washington put some order into what they see as a dysfunctional immigration system. Obama’s “reforms” and serial waves of deportations both serve that aim. At the same time, policy differences in the bourgeois parties at bottom reflect the needs of different sectors of the ruling class, some of whom are more dependent on exploiting immigrant labor than others. Nonetheless, both Democratic and Republican administrations have instituted greater border controls and enforced restrictions on immigrants’ rights.

The rulers’ policies are mainly but not solely designed to maintain a pool of low-wage labor, with immigrants kept in constant fear that any challenge to their exploitation will bring I.C.E. agents to their doors. More broadly, anti-immigrant campaigns strengthen the repressive powers of the capitalist state, which are especially used against black people and other minorities as well as to suppress working-class struggle. Repression against immigrants (especially Muslims) in the name of the “war on terror” has served as the leading edge in an assault against the democratic rights of the mass of the population, helping also to inflame national chauvinism and ethnic hatred.

The Lesser-Evil Con

The Democratic Party has for years banked on the fears among black people, women and others of what a victory for the nakedly racist, reactionary Republicans might unleash. Against the likes of the egomaniacal demagogue Donald Trump, even Marco Rubio, a darling of anti-Communist *gusanos*, has been under fire from his Republican competitors for his “soft” immigration posture because he once supported a “path to citizenship” for some undocumented immigrants. In addition to Trump’s smearing of Mexicans as rapists and murderers and his calling for all Muslims to be barred from entering the U.S., both he and Ted Cruz are pandering to the yahoos by saying they would deport all eleven million undocumented immigrants.

As for the Democrats, Hillary Clinton, who established her credentials as a future Commander-in-Chief in her years as Secretary of State, backed Obama’s earlier expulsion of refugees but now claims she won’t be the next “deporter in chief” if elected president. Bernie Sanders, who has a long record of support to U.S. imperialist wars and occupations, clucked his tongue over Obama’s “inhuman” approach to the Central American refugee crisis. Say what they will on the campaign trail, “deporter in chief” will be in the job description of whoever makes it to the White House. Regulating the flow

of immigrant labor is one of the tasks of the CEO of U.S. capitalism.

Toward the end of the widely reviled Bush administration, massive demonstrations in 2006 for immigrant rights gained nationwide attention. The bourgeois politicians, church officials and labor officials who led the protests consciously directed them into Democratic Party electoralism, with the common chant, “Today we march, tomorrow we vote.”

In a January 6 statement, AFL-CIO chief Richard Trumka criticizes the I.C.E. roundups and offers that union halls might become temporary sanctuaries for refugees, at least until “full and fair legal proceedings” take place. Pious words from a union officialdom that has barely lifted a finger to defend immigrants. The labor movement should be opposing *all* deportations and launching organizing drives to bring immigrant workers, with or without papers, into the unions. Such a struggle, which is necessary to revitalize the unions in this country, is undermined by the labor tops’ loyalty to the capitalist Democratic Party and their embrace of the “national interests” of U.S. imperialism. Unlocking the social power of the working class—with white, black, Latino and other workers fighting together against their common capitalist enemy—requires a struggle for a new leadership of labor, one based on the political independence of the workers from all capitalist parties and state agencies.

As Marxists, our task is not to advise the bourgeoisie on alternative immigration policy, which would necessarily mean accepting the parameters of a system predicated on exploitation and oppression. Our call for full citizenship rights for all immigrants is part of the strug-



Oakland, California: Spartacists join ILWU longshore union march against racist cop terror on May Day 2015.

gle to advance the class consciousness and solidarity of the multiracial working class. The workers need their own party, one that will link the defense of immigrants to the cause of black freedom and the fight for labor’s emancipation from wage slavery. Such a party is necessary to prepare the working class for the revolutionary battle to end capitalist-imperialist rule and build a planned economy under a workers government.

Socialist revolution is the necessary precondition to the economic reorganization of human society through freeing the productive forces from the fetter of private ownership. Immigrant workers are slated to play a crucial role in this fight. As we wrote in the 2000 Programmatic Statement of the Spartacist League/U.S.:

“The vast numbers of immigrant workers now toiling in U.S. factories can be a powerful leaven to the class struggle here, as many of them come from countries with stronger traditions of labor militancy and anti-capitalist struggle. Likewise, these workers are a natural pool for recruitment to the revolutionary party and such recruits can constitute a nucleus for organizing Trotskyist parties in their native lands. For socialist revolution from the Yukon to the Yucatán and throughout the Americas!” ■

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S.

Local Directory and Public Offices

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4

WORKERS VANGUARD

Courageous Soviet spy and accomplished epidemiologist Marcus Klingberg died in Paris on November 30 at the age of 97. Klingberg, a Polish Jew who worked for many years as a high-ranking scientist in Israel, passed critical information to the Soviet Union about the Israeli state's stockpile of lethal chemical and bacterial weapons. He provided this information out of a deep loyalty to the Soviet Union for giving him the opportunity to fight the Nazis, who massacred his entire family during World War II. The Israeli government, which considered him to be "the most damaging spy in Israel's history," secretly tried and imprisoned Klingberg in 1983. He languished in prison for almost 16 years.

The obituaries of Klingberg in the bourgeois press paint a picture of a cold, calculating spy straight out of a Tom Clancy novel. But in his memoirs, *Hameragel Ha'akharon* (*The Last Spy*), published in Hebrew in 2007, Klingberg reveals the true nature of the man whom we honor for his service to humanity:

"I still believe in communism: It will likely not happen in my lifetime but in 10, 20, 50 years—I'm almost certain—the people will return to communism. It will happen when people are disappointed by unbridled capitalism, which strives to destroy the rights of workers everywhere.... Socialism will win in the end!"

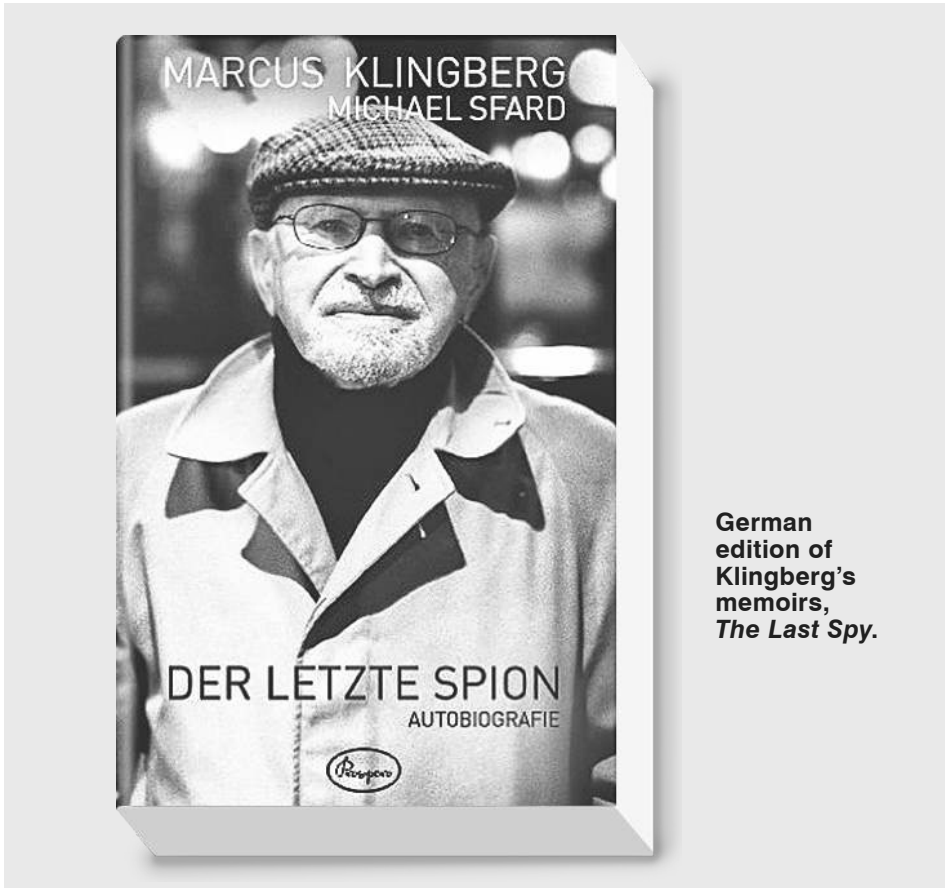
Avraham Mordechai Klingberg, known as Marcus or Marek, was born into an Orthodox Jewish family in October 1918 in Warsaw, Poland. He studied medicine at the University of Warsaw and became an anti-fascist activist on the eve of World War II. At this time, he was also first exposed to Marxist ideas. After the Nazi invasion of Poland in September 1939, Klingberg heeded his father's insistence that "at least one of us has to survive" and fled to Minsk in the Soviet Republic of Byelorussia (now Belarus), where he was able to complete his studies. In his memoirs, Klingberg notes that what convinced his father to encourage him to leave was a conversation with an officer in the German army who warned him that all Jews in Poland were going to be exterminated.

On the very day that Germany invaded the USSR, 22 June 1941, Klingberg volunteered for the Soviet Red Army in order to fight the fascists. In the conflict between imperialist powers—primarily the U.S. and Britain against Germany and Japan—World War II was a reactionary struggle on all sides to seize new arenas of exploitation and defend existing ones. Workers had no stake in that interimperialist conflict. However, it was the duty of the international proletariat to defend the USSR—the homeland of the Russian Revolution—against imperialist attack. The Soviet Union, then a degenerated workers state, carried out the overwhelming brunt of the fighting against Hitler's Germany, and it was the Red Army that defeated the Nazi scourge, at the cost of 27 million Soviet lives.

The Soviet Union's military might, even under bureaucratic Stalinist rule, was a testament to the power of a planned, collectivized economy, which catapulted Russia, a backward peasant country, into becoming a modern industrial and military power-

Marcus Klingberg

(1918-2015)



Soviet Spy Remembered

house. The Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917 was the first time in history that the working class took and held power. The establishment of the Soviet workers state, tied to the spread of revolution internationally, offered the prospect of development toward a socialist society of genuine equality and abundance for all. However, the defeat of revolutionary opportunities, most importantly in Germany, left the Soviet workers state isolated. Amid conditions of material scarcity, exacerbated by imperialist invasion and civil war, a conservative bureaucratic caste centered on Stalin usurped political power in the Soviet Union starting in 1923-24. The Stalinist bureaucracy renounced the struggle for international workers revolution in the name of "building socialism in one country" and seeking "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. The gains won by the 1917 Revolution were endangered by Stalinist rule and were ultimately overthrown through capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92, a catastrophic defeat for the working class worldwide.

During WWII, Klingberg worked as a medical officer on the front lines until

wounded in the leg by shrapnel. After this injury, he continued to serve in the Red Army, leading an anti-epidemic unit in Molotov (now Perm) near the Urals. One of his many accomplishments was stopping the spread of a typhus outbreak that would have infected untold numbers of Soviet soldiers; he rose to the rank of captain by the end of the war. When Klingberg returned to Poland in 1944, he learned that his parents and only brother had perished in the Treblinka extermination camp.

Klingberg never forgot his debt to the Soviet Union, a country that allowed him to not only survive but also become a world-class scientist. In his memoirs, Klingberg writes: "When I arrived in the Soviet Union, I was a penniless Polish Jewish refugee who had not completed his medical studies. When I left in December 1944, I was the chief epidemiologist of Byelorussia...and an ardent communist."

In 1948, Klingberg emigrated to Israel with his daughter and wife, Wanda, who was a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto and a fellow scientist. For years, he moved comfortably in elite Zionist intellectual and political circles, despite his leftist and openly pro-Soviet views. From his memoirs, it is clear that Klingberg was always very critical of the Zionist government's treatment of Palestinians and other Arabs.

Klingberg rapidly climbed the ladder of the Israeli medical establishment and later became deputy scientific director of the top-secret Israel Institute for Biological Research (IIBR) in Ness Ziona, where research was conducted on chemical and biological weapons. The IIBR stockpiled at least 43 types of unconventional weaponry, from viruses to poison derived from mushrooms. These could certainly have been used against neighboring Arab states and against Palestinians in the occupied territories. Klingberg also believed that the Zionists shared this information with imperialist powers like the U.S. and Britain.

Klingberg's service in providing information to the Soviets about experimental weapons research earned him the Order of the Red Banner of Labor, the Soviet

Union's second-highest honor. In the preface to his memoirs, Klingberg notes, "I had nothing to do with nuclear secrets, but I am still convinced today that the information I handed to the Soviet Union prevented the U.S. from employing certain weapons during the Cold War."

Klingberg was not alone in exposing Israel's arsenal of death. In prison, his cell was next to that of Israeli nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu. In 1986, Vanunu exposed that the Zionist rulers had produced enough nuclear weapons and delivery systems not only to incinerate every Arab capital but also to bomb major cities in the Soviet Union. Vanunu was finally released from prison in 2004. However, he is still forbidden from leaving Israel, where he is under strict surveillance. Just last year, he was detained and put under house arrest simply for giving a TV interview. We continue to defend Mordechai Vanunu and call for Israel to allow him to leave immediately!

While the Israelis suspected Klingberg of being a spy for years, it was not until the early 1980s, when the CIA passed on a tip to Shin Bet (Israeli secret police) from a Soviet defector, that they acted against him. Around that time, Klingberg also happened to be quite vocal about his research debunking U.S. claims that Laos and Vietnam had used a Soviet-supplied biological weapon against counterrevolutionary forces. Klingberg had correctly concluded that the so-called "yellow rain" was, in fact, nothing more than naturally occurring bee feces.

On 19 January 1983, Shin Bet kidnapped Klingberg and interrogated him for days. To explain his disappearance, the Israeli government circulated rumors that Klingberg had entered an insane asylum in Switzerland or possibly abandoned his wife and daughter and fled to the Soviet Union. After his arrest, Klingberg was tried in secret by a military tribunal, convicted of espionage and sentenced to 20 years in prison. Klingberg's jailers assigned him a false name and he spent ten years in solitary confinement. During his incarceration, he had several strokes and suffered from a number of other ailments. Wanda Klingberg, who had also spied for the Soviets but avoided imprisonment, did not live to see her husband's release.

After nearly 16 years in prison, Marcus Klingberg was moved to house arrest in Israel until 2003, when he was finally able to leave the country. He was allowed to



Reuters

April 2004: Mordechai Vanunu leaves prison after serving 18 years for disclosing Israel's massive nuclear arsenal.

emigrate to Paris to be with his family on the condition that he would never speak of his work at Ness Ziona.

In a review of Klingberg's memoirs, the *Haaretz* journalist Yossi Melman was scandalized that Klingberg does not express "one iota of regret for his deeds." Damn right. In a 2010 article, Klingberg reaffirmed that he never regretted passing weapons secrets to the Soviets: "My feelings about this remain with me despite the fall of the Soviet Union—a country to which not only I owe my life, as well as my career in epidemiology and my most useful work; but, above all, the opportunity to fight fascism." ■



Yevgeny Khaldei

Soviet soldiers trample Nazi flag on outskirts of Vienna, 1945.

Student Protests...

(continued from page 12)

confront. In a massacre reminiscent of the apartheid era, 34 striking Marikana miners were shot dead in 2012 by the police. The Marikana massacre showed the true face of racist, neo-apartheid South Africa. The Tripartite Alliance—made up of the African National Congress (ANC), South African Communist Party (SACP) and the COSATU trade-union federation—rules on behalf of the white capitalist class, which now includes a few black faces, as well as their imperialist overlords in Washington and London. The South African capitalists continue to derive their massive profits from the superexploitation of the mainly black working class.

The current protests have tapped into the profound discontent of the oppressed over the betrayed promises of liberation from white minority rule. As one sign read: “Our parents were sold a dream in 1994; We’re here for a refund.” The extreme racial and class divide in the education system is but one measure of how the legacy of apartheid—from “Bantu education” to the Land Acts to the migrant labour system—continues to stamp every aspect of life in South Africa. The “Fees Must Fall” demonstrations were preceded by the “Rhodes Must Fall” protests, which denounced the glorification of Cecil Rhodes and other colonial pigs in monuments throughout the country, as well as the endemic racism in universities.

The skyrocketing cost of university fees falls most heavily on the small percentage of black youth who manage to make it into university despite the atrocious state of primary and secondary education for the black masses. It is significant that protesting black, coloured [mixed-race] and Indian students have been joined by white students, who have often placed themselves in the front line of the protests in an attempt to shield black classmates from police attack.

Comrades of Spartacist/South Africa participated in the anti-fees protests, calling for *free education and a living stipend for all!* Quality education, from preschool to the doctorate level, should be the right of all in society, not a privilege for the few who can afford it. We call to nationalise universities like Wits in Johannesburg, the University of Cape Town (UCT) and Rhodes in Eastern Cape, and to open them to all who want to study there. The resources and facilities at these elite universities stand in contrast to the decaying, underfunded universities—such as Tshwane University of Technology and UWC—that the majority of poor and working-class students are consigned to. Government ministers have lauded themselves for increasing the budget for National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) loans by billions. In reality, many working-class families that can’t afford the tuition fees don’t qualify for NSFAS. Those who do are condemned to debt bondage to repay the loans—even though many can’t find jobs. **Abolish the student debt!**

The apartheid divisions in primary and secondary education, along with fees, lead to university drop-out rates of up to 60 percent for black students. In order to overcome this, full remedial education programmes must be implemented at the universities, linked to a programme of public works, not least to expand the existing infrastructure for higher education. We also call to abolish the campus administrations as personified by the hated Wits vice-chancellor Adam Habib. **For student-teacher-worker control of the universities!**

Many students wrongly believe that the main obstacle to free education is government corruption. The ANC-led government is plenty corrupt, as are *all* capitalist governments. But the reason the neo-apartheid capitalist rulers have no interest in the education of the mass of black people is because they have little to offer them for a future other than poverty, unemployment or brutal superexploitation. The “anti-corruption” campaigns being

led by various forces are actually intended to deflect the anger of workers and the oppressed away from the capitalist class and into the dead end of “cleaning up” capitalism. This was clearly seen with the protests called by Unite Against Corruption in September and October, which were supported by the NUMSA metal workers union bureaucracy, various NGOs, religious organisations and bourgeois parties such as the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). These campaigns serve to tie NUMSA and other unions to anyone who is “anti-ANC,” including very right-wing forces—for example, the white-dominated Democratic Alliance, while not participating in the marches, made clear its support to the “anti-corruption” campaign.

The forces behind these campaigns seek to manipulate popular revulsion at the Tripartite Alliance’s betrayals in order to promote their own reactionary ends, including anti-black racism. The “Zuma Must Fall” protests this December were largely white and filled with barely concealed racist venom. Spartacist/South Africa opposes these campaigns. They are counterposed to the necessary struggle to sweep away the system of production for

the president of the Wits SRC, bitterly complained, “It is a talk shop, and we are tired of that.” But while the PYA’s SRC leaders are more directly exposed to the pressure of the angry students, this does not fundamentally change their sellout politics. Just a few days after walking out of the meeting with Blade, the Wits SRC reached an agreement with the campus administration to assist with getting student registration back on track and discouraging protest. This agreement was reached even as the university was essentially put on lockdown, with riot gear-clad security guards and a court interdict in place to prevent further “disruptions.” In opposition to such treachery, we seek to win student militants to a revolutionary programme based on the struggle for working-class power. During the protests at Wits, we raised a placard reading: “Blade, Habib, Ramaphosa & Co.: Frontmen for Racist Neo-Apartheid! For a Black-Centred Workers Government!”

Many of the “Fees Must Fall” protesters have rightly linked their demand for free education to the demands that campus workers, who are hired through outsourcing, be made permanent university



AP

Reactionary “anti-corruption” protest in Johannesburg, December 16.

profit through proletarian revolution and to replace it with a social system where production will be for human need. This is the only way to root out the evils of neo-apartheid capitalism.

Break with the Tripartite Alliance!

The anti-fees protests have starkly exposed the role of the ANC/SACP/COSATU Alliance and its junior version, the Progressive Youth Alliance (PYA), in containing social discontent on behalf of the Randlords. The PYA largely sought to ride the wave of the student protests at the beginning, including by (reluctantly) leading a march of tens of thousands to the ANC’s Luthuli House in Johannesburg in October. But as soon as Zuma announced that there would be no fee increment, the PYA began working overtime to stop further protest, openly acting as the lackeys of the university administrators. During a PYA press conference in January, the senior leaders of the ANC Youth League, the South Africa Students Congress and the Young Communist League spewed vile slanders against those who continued to protest. They denounced them as “counter-revolutionaries” seeking to “hijack” the students’ grievances in the interest of “regime change,” even implying that they are trained by the CIA. The PYA made clear what lies behind this demagoguery in a January 14 joint statement: “There is no reason for strikes to continue when the people’s government has addressed all relevant immediate concerns of students.”

The January PYA press conference was too hard to stomach even for many of the PYA-affiliated Student Representative Councils (SRC) leaders. On the same day, representatives from the SRCs of Wits, University of Johannesburg, UCT and other universities walked out of a meeting with Blade Nzimande, the minister for higher education and general secretary of the SACP. One of those who walked out,

employees, paid living wages and receive the same benefits as academic staff, such as free enrolment for family members. While several university administrations have agreed “in principle” to some measures against outsourcing, protests have continued to ensure implementation and to extract further concessions.

In Tshwane, Pretoria, a campaign under the slogan “Outsourcing Must Fall” was launched in January, leading to the shutdown of University of Pretoria and UNISA campuses for over a week. The campaign, mobilising not only campus workers but also municipal cleaners, has been largely led by the Workers and Socialist Party (WASP), which is affiliated with the pseudo-Trotskyist Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI). The “Outsourcing Must Fall” manifesto raises supportable demands, including permanent employment for outsourced workers and a wage increase to R10,000 [\$600]. But it undermines the important and necessary fight against outsourcing by embracing security guards as part of the working class. The CWI has long had a record of championing security guards, police and prison guards as “workers in uniform.” Security guards—like cops and prison guards—are not workers, but are hired to protect the property of the bosses. It is particularly grotesque to campaign for “better working conditions” for security guards at the same time that the university administrations are hiring whole armies of them to clamp down on student protest.

Many South African trade unions—including COSATU affiliates as well as “independent” unions—organise cops and security guards. The fact that the state, including the police forces, now contains many more black faces than under apartheid does not mean that it is any less an institution for capitalist oppression. As under the old apartheid system, in the “new” South Africa the cops are agents

of capitalist organised violence against the working class and the whole of the oppressed population. We say: Cops, security and prison guards out of the unions!

For a Leninist Workers Party!

The protesting students must be backed by the kind of social power displayed by the Marikana miners. In the face of the government’s brutal crackdown, the miners remained defiant, keeping the mines shut until they finally won their demands. South Africa has plenty of social tinder. What is sorely lacking is a revolutionary leadership that can unite the many just grievances in the society behind the working class, which uniquely has the power to bring the capitalist system to its knees. What is essential is the forging of a Leninist vanguard workers party that acts as the tribune of the people, fighting every manifestation of oppression with the goal of workers rule. The struggle to build such a party is intrinsically linked to the fight for a new, class-struggle leadership of the unions, independent of the capitalist state and all capitalist parties.

The way forward in the fight for free education, decent healthcare, jobs and housing lies through mobilising the power of the working class in opposition to all parties committed to capitalist rule. This includes not only the bourgeois-nationalist ANC but also the bourgeois-populist Economic Freedom Fighters of Julius Malema, which despite its more radical posturing also represents capitalist class interests. This was recently highlighted by Malema’s trip to London in November, where he spoke at Chatham House, a top think tank of the British bourgeoisie. His efforts to reassure the investors of the EFF’s potential usefulness for stabilising neo-apartheid for the capitalists were well received by many. According to the director of the SA-UK Chamber of Commerce, one senior South African executive who attended said, “I think we actually agree on many things. If you could just calm down the rhetoric and adopt a softer approach, I think we could stop to talk about partnerships.”

As we in Spartacist/South Africa and our comrades in the International Communist League have always stressed:

“This capitalist regime, based on the superexploitation of the black proletariat, must frustrate the aspirations of every section of the oppressed. Widespread expectations for better housing and jobs cannot be met; even simple democratic demands such as the right to an education for all children or the right of women to birth control and abortion are denied to the overwhelming majority by social inequality and lack of facilities. If the masses’ frustration does not find expression along *class* lines it will fuel and embitter every other kind of division.”

—*The Fight For a Revolutionary Vanguard Party: Polemics on the South African Left* (April 1997)

We fight for a black-centred workers government as part of a socialist federation of Southern Africa. It will take a workers government centred on the black majority to break the power of the Randlords, expropriate capitalist property and begin the socialist reconstruction of society, finally opening the road to the liberation of the black masses. Such a government would not be racially exclusive, but would unite the many black tribal- and language-based groups along with the coloured and Indian populations, while providing ample room and full democratic rights for those whites who would accept a government based on the black working class.

Only by extending socialist revolution internationally, especially to the imperialist centres, and building a world planned economy can the material conditions of life for the masses of Southern Africa and the rest of the neocolonial world be lifted to a level of abundance for all. Radical-minded students who aspire to a socialist future must join the fight to build a revolutionary workers party like the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky. Spartacist/South Africa is committed to the construction of such a party, which will represent the necessary instrument for leading the fight for socialist revolution as part of a reformed Trotskyist Fourth International. ■

Race and Class Under Neo-Apartheid

Below is the second part of an article that was originally 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 appeared in WV No. 1081, 15 January.

PART TWO

The DA's [Democratic Alliance] default response to exposures of racist outrages in the Western Cape is to point out that similar things are happening in the rest of the country, where the ANC is in government. Responding to the outcry over revelations that local police in Worcester were issuing a new "dompas" [pass book] that black and coloured gardeners and domestic workers were required to carry in order to enter certain wealthy white suburbs, Helen Zille pointed out that the same system was being promoted in ANC-run Gauteng.

Indeed, in March 2015 the Gauteng MEC [Member of Executive Council] for "community safety" convened a "Rural Safety Summit" with representatives from the police and various farmers organisations—the African Farmers Union of South Africa, as well as right-wing white racist outfits like the Transvaal Agricultural Union and Agri SA. The summit adopted a plan for increased police repression in rural farming communities, including the directive that "farmers must hire legal and documented workers and create profile cards to be verified at local stations." This in fact reveals a lot more about neo-apartheid South Africa and the Tripartite Alliance government than Zille and the DA intend—namely, it is but one example of how, fundamentally, both the ANC and the DA defend *white privilege*. Obviously, they come at this from very different starting points, but in both cases it is a function of *administering the racist capitalist system*.

Going back to the ANC's founding days in 1912, its aim has always been to promote the development of a black elite to join in the exploitation of "its own" people. They didn't want to leave that to the Boers and the British. While at times adopting more or less populist rhetoric and militant protest tactics to mobilise the black masses behind this aim, the final goal never changed. And the path to this goal necessarily led to striking a deal with the white rulers and acting as their black front men. The anti-coloured chauvinist demagoguery of some ANC leaders—just like their promotion of anti-immigrant bigotry—is in large part designed to *conceal* this fundamental reality by scapegoating coloureds and other marginalised oppressed groups for the miserable living conditions of the black majority.

Black nationalism—the false view that all black people share a common interest standing above class divisions—is the key obstacle to revolutionary consciousness among the South African proletariat. It is the ideology through which the working-class base of COSATU [Congress of South African Trade Unions] and the SACP [South African Communist Party] is subordinated to the bourgeois ANC and the capitalist exploiters via the Tripartite Alliance. Even with the enormous discontent and anger against the ANC and its Alliance partners, nationalism remains the dominant form of false consciousness among black workers. After the platinum

South Africa



Striking black and coloured farm workers from De Doorns, Western Cape, rally in Cape Town, January 2013.

For a Black-Centered Workers Government

belt around Rustenburg became a "no go area" for the ANC following the Marikana massacre and the massive wave of militant wildcat strikes by mineworkers in 2012, it was the bourgeois nationalist-populists of Julius Malema's Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) that gained the most in the 2014 elections.

The dominance of nationalist false consciousness among the proletariat is above all a product of the *overwhelming weight of national oppression* felt by the black majority. To address this burning issue and set the proletarian and plebeian masses against the nationalist misleaders, we have advanced a programme for proletarian leadership in the struggle for national liberation, encapsulated in the slogan of a "black-centred workers government."

We fight to win class-conscious coloured workers and other anti-racist coloured activists to this programme. This is based on the understanding that the fight for

national liberation of the oppressed black majority is *the* strategic motor force for workers revolution to smash the racist neo-apartheid system that oppresses all of the non-white toilers. The oppression of coloureds (and Indians) is directly conditioned by the superexploitation of the black proletariat, and any meaningful fight to end this oppression necessarily means fighting for the national liberation of the oppressed black majority. Likewise, any meaningful fight for black liberation means an unyielding fight against black nationalism, which is riddled with anti-coloured and anti-Indian bigotry. This understanding is critical for building a racially integrated Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party that can intervene and fight for revolutionary leadership among all sections of the oppressed. Under a black-centred workers government, there would be an important role and full democratic rights for coloureds, Indians and

Asians, and those whites who accept a government centrally based on the black working people.

Particularly in the early years of neo-apartheid, many South African leftists vehemently objected to our slogan, arguing that by acknowledging that there are differences and divisions among the non-white masses, we echoed the line of the apartheid rulers who constantly played divide-and-rule among the racial groupings and sought to promote tribal and ethnic identities. Instead, these leftists—including the New Unity Movement, the forerunners of the Democratic Socialist Movement/Workers and Socialist Party and the pseudo-Trotskyists who are now in the orbit of the ILRIG (International Labour Research and Information Group) labour think tank—embraced the ANC-promoted illusion of "non-racialism." In doing so, they ignored the real and dramatic expressions of division along colour, national and tribal lines in Mandela's neo-apartheid state. The nationalist fictions of the "rainbow nation" and "nation-building" were their means for *denying reality*, because their reformist programmes are fundamentally incapable of *changing it*.

Thus, in 1997 a Cape Town-based fake-Trotskyist outfit, the Workers International Vanguard League (WIVL, now renamed Workers International Vanguard Party) wrote us a 19-page "open letter" that was largely devoted to retailing the nasty slander, "The Spartacists promote racial divisions in South Africa." WIVL objected to our call for a black-centred workers government, because to them it meant "a workers' government in South Africa should have a racial guarantee worked into its very constitution." In our reply to WIVL (printed, along with WIVL's "open letter," in *Hate Trotskyism, Hate the Spartacists* No. 1, July 1998), we pointed out that this "colour-blindness" was in reality a mask for WIVL's accommodation to coloured parochialism and a denial of the structural racial hierarchy of South African capitalism with its special oppression of black Africans at the bottom.

In South Africa, *class exploitation is integrally bound up with national oppression*. Despite a sizeable coloured proletariat, especially in the Western Cape, and an urban Indian working class in Natal, the overwhelming majority of workers are black Africans. WIVL's attack on our call for a black-centred workers government was in fact an attack on Leon Trotsky himself. In his only substantive writing on South Africa, a 1935 letter to South African revolutionaries, Trotsky insisted:

"It is entirely obvious that the predominant majority of the population, liberated from slavish dependence, will put a certain imprint on the state.

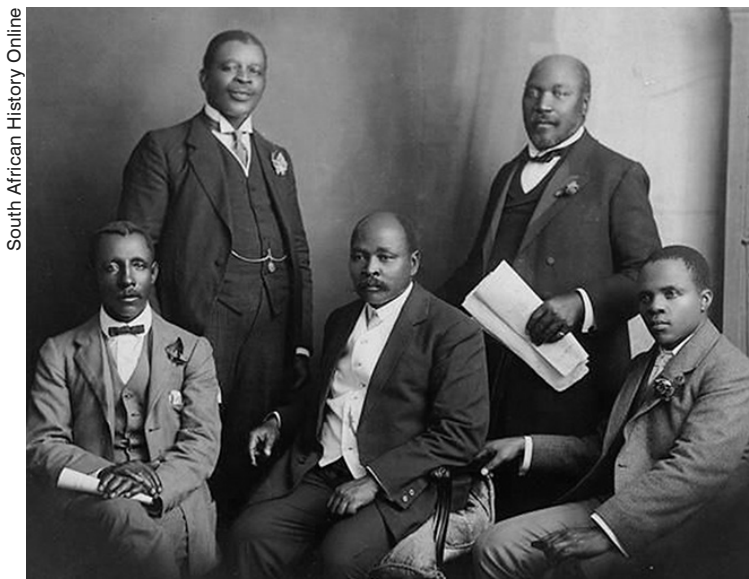
"Insofar as a victorious revolution will radically change not only the relation between the classes, but also between the races, and will assure to the blacks that place in the state which corresponds to their numbers, insofar will the *social* revolution in South Africa also have a *national* character."

—reprinted in *The Fight For a Revolutionary Vanguard Party: Polemics on the South African Left*, April 1997

Our recognition that proletarian revolution in South Africa is the supreme act of national liberation in no way entails the slightest political support to nationalism as an ideology or to the project of "nation-building." South Africa is not a nation but a colonial-derived state, encompassing diverse peoples and based on a brutal racial hierarchy. The

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Leaders of petty-bourgeois South African Native National Congress, forebear of ANC, 1914.



South African History Online

South Africa...

(continued from page 7)

boundaries of almost all African states, including South Africa, were drawn arbitrarily by the colonial powers and have no national legitimacy. A single tribe or people often were dismembered between two or more countries, while two or more historically antagonistic peoples were often forced together in a single state. A democratic, egalitarian and rational solution is impossible under capitalism. The fight for a black-centred workers government in South Africa is part of our perspective of a socialist federation of Southern Africa.

Combating nationalist ideology means confronting the prejudices and chauvinist stereotypes about coloureds that are common among black Africans, which the ANC, EFF and other nationalists promote. In many African languages, racially derogatory terms like *amaBoesman* (“bushman”) are the standard—sometimes the only—words to refer to coloureds. There is also a widespread misconception that the coloured population simply

inhabited South Africa over the centuries—slaves from East Africa and South and Southeast Asia; Dutch and other white European colonisers; the Khoikhoi, San and other native inhabitants.

While there was a complex racial hierarchy in the Cape Colony during the time of slavery, the consolidation of these diverse peoples into the coloured population as it essentially exists today—a race-colour caste of intermediate status in the racial hierarchy—was a later development. This process was intimately bound up with the formation of a modern capitalist economy in South Africa in the late 1800s. As Ian Goldin argues in *Making Race—The Politics and Economics of Coloured Identity in South Africa* (1987): “It was no accident that the period which saw the evolution of a distinct Coloured identity also saw a dramatic transformation of labour” as people migrated to the towns of the Cape Colony in search of employment. Goldin describes how this distinction emerged among the labour force in the 1890s, with employers on the docks, on the farms and elsewhere dividing workers into “Natives”—who they preferred to hire for unskilled and heavy manual work—and



Paul Alberts

District Six, Cape Town, 1974: More than 60,000 people were forcibly removed under Group Areas Act, which declared multiracial neighborhood a “white area.”

there has generally been much less support for the DA among coloured working people in the rural areas—the agricultural regions of the Western Cape, as well as much of the Northern Cape—than in urban areas.

In terms of communist intervention, a key focus must be the industries where black and coloured workers are integrated *at the point of production*—for example, in auto factories in the Eastern Cape, as well as in agriculture in the Western Cape. The racial divisions between blacks and coloureds go against the basic material interests of the working class, and the very workings of capitalist exploitation compel the workers to organise collectively against the employers. Class struggle creates the objective conditions for combating and breaking through the racial and other divisions: every hard-fought strike inevitably poses the need for *class unity* against the capitalists.

Take the farm workers strike of 2012–13 in the Western Cape. A focal point of the strike was De Doorns, which in 2009 was the site of violent anti-immigrant pogroms that forced some 3,000 mostly Zimbabwean immigrants to flee to refugee camps. According to some reports, these attacks were sparked by South African labour brokers, who, in an effort to eliminate competition from Zimbabwean labour brokers, incited the anti-immigrant mobs by blaming Zimbabwean workers for “stealing” jobs from South Africans. This and many other examples show how the white farm owners and parasites like the labour brokers play divide-and-rule in order to keep all of the different sections of farm labourers viciously exploited, including by pitting men against women, permanent workers against seasonal workers, coloured workers against black workers, etc.

When the strikes broke out in 2012, the farm owners tried to use the same tactics to undercut the strike by sowing divisions, with support from the Western Cape government of Zille and the DA. But this failed to break the solidarity and unity of this militant strike across racial and national lines. One strike committee leader told Jesse Wilderman of Wits University: “The people were all united—Zim, Sotho, coloured, Xhosa speaking—everyone was united.... The strike brought back the struggle culture [of] the 1980s and we were really united across the whole group” (*Farm Worker Uprising in the Western Cape: A Case Study of Protest, Organising, and Collective Action*, 26 September 2014). The strikers faced down extreme state repression and won a modest concession when the minimum wage was raised from R69 to R105 (\$4 to \$6) per day.

In response to even this incredibly meagre increase in starvation wages, the racist farm owners carried out a whole range of reprisals aimed at intimidating and scapegoating strike militants. The farmers have combined the reprisals with calculated provocations designed to promote divisions among the workers. Some farmers have brought in new foreign workers to get around the increased minimum wage, some are reportedly bussing in coloured workers from other areas to avoid hiring seasonal workers who were active in

the strike, and others have evicted permanent workers who participated in the strike from on-farm housing. There are indications that these measures have succeeded, in some areas, in reviving the old reactionary national and racial divisions. Thus, Wilderman reports that one group of workers he interviewed in De Doorns threatened a repeat of the 2009 pogroms.

A key lesson from the strike and its aftermath is that while the economic struggles of the workers do *pose* the need for class unity across racial and other divisions, in and of themselves these struggles are not capable of forging this unity on a consistent and lasting basis. For that, a revolutionary workers party of the Bolshevik type is needed. As Lenin explained in *What Is To Be Done?* (1902), history shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is unable to spontaneously generate socialist consciousness. That consciousness must be introduced from without, through the intervention of a vanguard party that has summed up the lessons of the history of class struggle internationally in a revolutionary Marxist programme. Such a party would not limit its intervention to the immediate economic struggles of the working class, but must act as a *tribune of the people*, able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects.

The Bolshevik party built by Lenin fought vigorously for the democratic rights



Zimbabwean victims of anti-immigrant attacks against farm workers in De Doorns, Western Cape, November 2009.

arose from miscegenation between black and white people. This misconception is often accompanied by anti-coloured prejudices—that coloured people “don’t know where they come from,” are “unreliable,” etc. It reflects an acceptance of the notion of “races” as inherent, fixed biological categories—a fallacy that has traditionally been promoted as part of racist pseudo-scientific attempts to justify slavery and black oppression by “proving” that blacks are “inferior.” (For a debunking of these myths in the U.S. context, see “The ‘Bell Curve’ and Genocide U.S.A.,” *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 12, February 1995.)

Racial categories are a product of human *social relations*, not of genetics, which means that the corresponding racial identities, prejudices, etc., are shaped by the particular historical development of the society in which they exist. The coloured population is made up of various mixtures of the different peoples that have

“cape boys” or “coloureds”—who were preferred for artisan jobs as carpenters, brick layers, etc.

Class Struggle and the Role of Communists

It would, of course, be wrong and extremely one-sided to think that the relations between blacks and coloureds are *only* characterised by antagonisms and mistrust. Besides the examples of racial clashes, there are also notable examples of struggle against the bourgeoisie’s divide-and-rule tactics. Against those who promote racial stereotypes, it is important to stress that the coloured population is by no means homogeneous (nor is the black population, for that matter)—political and social attitudes vary widely between individuals, based on class background, personal experiences and other factors. Moreover, the prevalent attitudes among the coloured population are also not fixed, but vary with time and location. For example,

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There are important differences between the patterns of national/racial oppression in South Africa and tsarist Russia. Most significantly, whereas the majority of the workers that made the 1917 Russian Revolution were ethnically Russian—fighting against Russian exploiters who oppressed other nationalities—in South Africa, the overwhelming majority of workers suffer national oppression at the hands of a white minority. Moreover, the various peoples that inhabit South Africa do not constitute separate nations, as they are integrated into one economy. Despite these differences, the approach of Lenin and the Bolsheviks is very relevant for addressing the racial, tribal and other divisions among the oppressed here—especially with regard to the burning need to mobilise the proletariat in defence of immigrants.

One flashpoint for racial antagonisms in recent years has been affirmative action. Controversy escalated in 2011 in response to proposed amendments to the Employment Equity Act that would have required employment targets and quotas to reflect national, as opposed to regional, demographics. This was justifiably seen by coloureds in the Western Cape as a racist attack on them, as it would mean that despite being a majority in the region, the employment targets for coloureds would be pegged at about 9%. The logic of the proposal is a racist programme of forced population transfers—one of the many reactionary directions that capitalist “nation building” can take. This was spelled out by Jimmy Manyi (then leader of the Black Management Forum and later a spokesman for the ANC government), who in multiple interviews railed against the “over-concentration” of coloureds in the Western Cape.

In a similarly nationalist vein, Manyi also decried the high numbers of Indians who had benefited from affirmative action and “Black Economic Empowerment,” implying that they should be excluded from both. While the proposed change in affirmative action was dropped from the final amendment following a ruling by the Cape Town Labour Court, there has been a sustained anti-Indian campaign in recent years, centred in KwaZulu-Natal and driven by black business associations trying to cut out Indian competition for state tenders and the like. This reactionary crap is supported by members of the ANC and Malema’s EFF. While the EFF today poses as “friends” of the coloured people and has gained some coloured support in the Western Cape, it should not be forgotten that in 2011, when they were leading the ANC Youth League, the current EFF leaders Malema and Floyd Shivambu were

Solidarity's court case was on behalf of ten *prison guards* (nine of them coloured



and one white), who had been passed over for promotion based on quotas using national demographics. It must be clear that *all* jailers—whether black, coloured or white—are the bitter class enemy of workers and the oppressed. Just like the police, their job is to mete out racist repression in defence of the capitalists. They have no place in the trade unions or other working-class organisations.

While we defend affirmative action against racist rollback and also oppose the racist attempts to exclude coloureds and Indians, the aim of communists is not to defend the miserable status quo under capitalism. Affirmative action is incapable of solving the pervasive, racist discrimination in employment and education, because it is premised on maintaining the capitalist system under which the oppressed are pitted against each other for a handful of jobs in a society with a massive level of unemployment.

What's urgently posed is a political struggle within the trade unions for a new, class-struggle leadership. Such a fight

must be waged against both the treacherous pro-Alliance leaders of COSATU and their reformist opponents like the NUMSA metal workers union bureaucracy. A class-struggle leadership would seek to unite workers—black and coloured, male and female, employed and unemployed, etc.—in common struggle, based on the understanding that all their interests are fundamentally antagonistic to those of the capitalists. As long as workers are pitted against each other in competition for a limited pool of jobs, the bosses will always play divide-and-rule to weaken the labour movement.

What's needed is a fight for union control of hiring, with special union-run programmes aimed at reaching out to and training workers from specially

oppressed layers. This must be linked to the fight for jobs for all, demanding that the available work be divided at no loss in pay among all those capable of working. We need a class-struggle fight to smash labour-broking slave labour, mobilising the unions to fight for permanent jobs for contract workers, with equal pay for equal work, union conditions and full union protection for all workers. This includes fighting for full citizenship rights for all who have made it here.

The ANC's policy document "Affirmative Action and the New Constitution" written by Albie Sachs in 1994, makes it explicit that affirmative action was chosen as an alternative to the obvious solution to begin addressing the monumental injustices of white minority rule, which would have been to "confiscate the spoils of apartheid and share them out amongst those who had been dispossessed."

This, of course, was *never* something the ANC was going to do, at bottom because of its commitment to maintaining capitalism. And this points to the issue that underlies the continued racial and tribal divisions among the non-white masses, like so many of the other burn-

ing issues of economic and social backwardness that are the racist legacies of imperialist domination and apartheid and cannot be resolved under capitalism. Leon Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution uniquely points the way forward to the economic and social modernisation of countries of belated capitalist development. Its application in South Africa is encapsulated in the call for a black-centred workers government.

Adequate housing for the millions in the townships, squatter camps and villages, including racially integrated housing, free quality education, the eradication of *lobola* and other traditional patriarchal practices oppressive to women: these desperately needed measures require the overthrow of neo-apartheid capitalism. A black-centred workers government in South Africa would *start* by expropriating the Randlords and their black front men, seizing the “spoils of apartheid” and the means of production. Under a workers government, these would be used not merely to redistribute wealth, but more fundamentally to reorganise and *expand* production on a socialist basis, which is what is really needed to bring about the economic and social modernisation so desperately needed.

The success of socialist transformation will depend crucially on the international extension of the revolution, particularly to the imperialist centres. Proletarian revolution internationally would mean the expropriation and centralised control of the productive wealth of North America, Europe and Japan. The full, rational utilisation of economic resources, particularly investment embodying the most advanced technology, will produce a quantum leap in labour productivity, moving rapidly toward a fully automated economy. The resulting vast increase in output will allow the massive transfer of productive resources to the more backward countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The victory of proletarian revolution on a world scale will, of course, not be an easy task. But it is the only alternative to capitalist barbarism. As explained in the ICL's "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program" (1998), this victory "would place unimagined material abundance at the service of human needs, lay the basis for the elimination of classes and the eradication of social inequality based on sex and the very abolition of the social significance of race, nation and ethnicity. For the first time mankind will grasp the reins of history and control its own creation, society, resulting in an undreamed-of emancipation of human potential, and a monumental forward surge of civilization. Only then will it be possible to realize the free development of each individual as the condition for the free development of all."

This is what Spartacist/South Africa fights for as a section of the International Communist League. We urge those looking for an alternative to the vicious racism and oppression of neo-apartheid capitalism to check out our revolutionary, internationalist Trotskyist programme. ■

SPARTACIST SOUTH AFRICA

No. 13 Spring 2015

Greece: EU Imperialists Tighten Screws on Workers, Poor

For Workers Struggle Against EU Starvation Diktat



Main: Supporters of PASOK, a trade-union formation affiliated with the Greek Communist Party, protest against new austerity measures in Athens, July 22. Inset: Homelessness has severely increased in Greece in wake of financial crisis.

Down With the EU! No to Syriza Sellout!

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Hate Trotskyism, Hate the Spartacists

— a bulletin of opponent material

NUMBER 1

A Reply to the Workers International Vanguard League

Introduction

"LRP's South Africa Lash-Up"
 Reprinted from Workers Vanguard No. 667, 2 May 1997

**"Open Letter to the Spartacist League by the
National Central Committee of the Workers
International Vanguard League"**
 Reprinted from an unpublished letter, 1 October 1997

**"A Reply to the Workers International
Vanguard League"**
 By Spartacist South Africa, 18 July 1998

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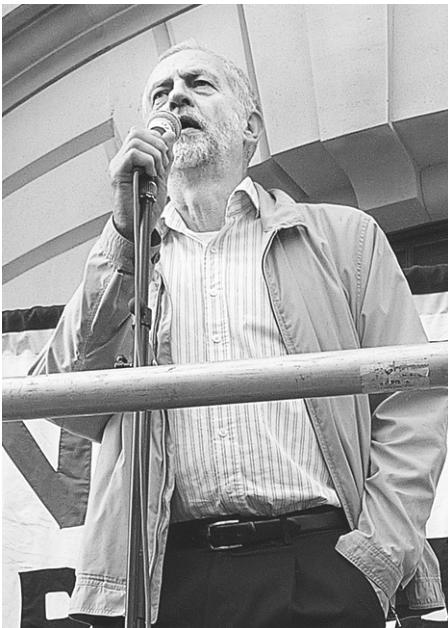
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part of a relentless campaign by the Tories, the capitalist press and the right wing of the Labour Party to oust him as party leader. Corbyn’s political platform goes beyond the parameters of what is acceptable to the British ruling class, who convinced themselves that, with the demise of the Soviet Union and apparent death of old Labour “socialism,” the class war had been resolved in favour of the capitalists. For the Tory establishment and the Blairite right wing of the Labour Party, Corbyn’s landslide election as Labour leader, based on talk of socialism, trade-union rights and immigrant rights, was a nasty shock. What really makes Corbyn unacceptable—the red lines he has crossed—is that his opposition to both NATO and Trident would undermine Britain’s prestige as an imperialist power and its “special relationship” with the U.S.

Not coincidentally, the same television programme that interviewed General Houghton also featured none other than Maria Eagle, then shadow defence secretary, who is seen as one of the prime candidates in the Parliamentary Labour Party to oust Corbyn. Eagle fully agreed with the general on Britain’s need for a nuclear deterrent to “defend our nation.” Moreover, she was “completely comfortable” with the Chief of the Defence Staff weighing in and “expressing himself in those terms.” The general was in fact issuing a warning against the leader of her own party who, incidentally, had been elected leader with the biggest mandate in the history of the Labour Party.

To his credit, Corbyn issued a formal complaint about Houghton’s breach of the “constitutional principle” that the military stays out of party politics. In his protest letter Corbyn argued that it “is essential in a democracy that the military remains politically neutral at all times.” But the capitalist state, with the armed forces at its core, is not neutral: it is the executive body of the capitalist ruling class.

The current favourite backed by the ruling class to oust Corbyn is the Labour shadow foreign secretary Hilary Benn, whose speech in Parliament banging the war drums for the bombing of Syria drew a standing ovation from Prime Minister David Cameron’s Tories—as well as from some of the 66 Labour Members of Parliament (MPs) who voted for the bombing, against the wishes of the leader and the vast majority of the party membership. Benn’s speech caused the establishment to go weak at the knees in adoration. It was



Splash News
Jeremy Corbyn speaks at demo against Trident nuclear missile system last year in London.

Army in Northern Ireland, backing the murderous, sectarian Orange statelet and the Loyalist paramilitaries; later they both commanded troops in the bloody imperialist occupation of Iraq. Corbyn’s opposition to British military interventions in the Near East makes him a particular target for the brass.

In early January, Corbyn attempted to assert political control of his shadow cabinet in a reshuffle. Eagle was replaced as shadow defence secretary, and evidently a deal was struck with Hilary Benn, allowing him to keep his job as shadow foreign secretary as long as he doesn’t openly defy the leader. Corbyn recently raised the prospect that sitting MPs might be dropped from the next electoral slate by the party membership when he said that “policies will be developed through the democratic participation of our own hugely expanded party and supporters.” This put the Blairite MPs in a state of horror, which is delightful to see, over their political futures. “A growing number of us fear a bloodbath” is how one of them put it recently in regards to upcoming changes to constituency boundaries which mean up to ten prominent opponents of Corbyn (including Benn) will have to face membership selection for new seats.

Corbyn’s campaign for and election to the party leadership have set off a class battle within Labour. Corbyn and the tens of thousands who joined the party to support him (it quickly doubled in size) have set in motion a process to reforge the party’s historic links to its working-class base. This is a reversal of the direction the party had been heading, propelled by Tony Blair,



Reuters
General Nicholas Houghton (resembling Christmas tree) confers with British prime minister David Cameron, March 2015.

“one of the great orations in our Parliament” gushed Tim Collins, a retired army colonel (*Telegraph*, 3 December). Not a modest man, Collins rated Benn’s “call to arms” in Parliament as being comparable to his very own pre-battle speech to his troops on the eve of the 2003 Iraq invasion, which was reportedly displayed in George W. Bush’s Oval Office. “We go to liberate, not to conquer,” said Collins, but will “wipe them out if that is what they choose.” Both Collins and Houghton earned their stripes with the British

towards becoming an overtly capitalist party. Any move that weakens the grip of the Blairites within the party is in the interests of the working class in its struggles against the capitalist class. As the Spartacist League/Britain has stated from the beginning, we have a side in the class war raging in the Labour Party. Against the right-wing attempts to oust him, we say: *Defend Jeremy Corbyn’s right to run the Labour Party, and in his way!*

The plots against Corbyn bring to mind the 1980s book and television show,

A Very British Coup, in which a left-wing Labour government is destabilised by forces including MI5 and the CIA, aided and abetted by right-wingers in the Labour Party and trade-union leadership. You don’t have to go far back in history to find evidence of the British capitalist state plotting the overthrow of a democratically elected government. In 1975, the British monarchy used its “reserve powers” to depose the Australian government of Labor Party prime minister Gough Whitlam in a CIA-engineered “constitutional coup” (see “The CIA, the Queen’s Agent and the Man Who Got in the Way,” *Workers Vanguard* No. 1061, 6 February 2015).

There is convincing evidence of a plot involving military and intelligence personnel to overthrow Britain’s Labour prime minister Harold Wilson in the 1970s. Wilson was a one-time leftist who moved to the right. In office he provided support to U.S. imperialism in its dirty, losing war in Vietnam. Even so, Wilson was not trusted by the bourgeoisie to bring the combative trade unions to heel in the midst of an economic crisis. The former intelligence officer Peter Wright, in his memoirs, *Spycatcher*, confirmed allegations that Prime Minister Wilson had also been targeted by MI5 as a suspected KGB agent. In the 2006 BBC documentary *The Plot Against Harold Wilson*, Brian Crozier, another former intelligence officer, alleged that the army “seriously considered the possibility of a military takeover” against Wilson. Crozier should know. According to the *Guardian* (9 August 2012), he had “lectured army officers about the risks of a Marxist-Leninist takeover of the ruling Labour Party in the 1970s,” and on one occasion, after telling a group of officers about the potential need for a military coup, “the audience, in his words, ‘rose as one man, cheering and clapping for fully five minutes.’”

In the same documentary, retired major Alexander Greenwood claimed that he had been building up a private army and that a speech had been prepared for the Queen to deliver as part of a coup that would have placed Lord Mountbatten in charge of the country. These claims are given credence by troop manoeuvres at Heathrow Airport at the time, about which Wilson knew nothing. Shortly after the Heathrow manoeuvres, Wilson resigned “on the grounds of ill-health.”

A historic example of the officer corps threatening a coup is the March 1914 mutiny at the Curragh military camp in Ireland, then under British rule. The Liberal government of Herbert Asquith in England had struck a deal with the Irish Nationalist leaders John Redmond and Joseph Devlin for an Irish Home Rule bill, conceding a form of devolved administration. The Protestant Loyalists in the north, organised as the armed Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), rose up in opposition to the legislation, outraged at the prospect of the majority Catholic population being granted any autonomy—however restricted and tokenistic—from the British colonial rulers. When the government tried to send troops from the Curragh Camp in County Kildare to Ulster, the overwhelming majority of officers stated they would resign their commissions rather than move against the UVF. The mutinous officers had been encouraged by Director of Military Operations Major-General Sir Henry Wilson who had been conspiring with the Tories. Prime Minister Asquith had even been under pressure from the king, George V, to grant concessions on behalf of the Loyalists by threatening to withhold Royal Assent to Home Rule and even to dismiss the prime minister. Asquith backed down, and Ulster was excluded from the Home Rule bill—a prelude to the bloody partition of Ireland a few years down the road.

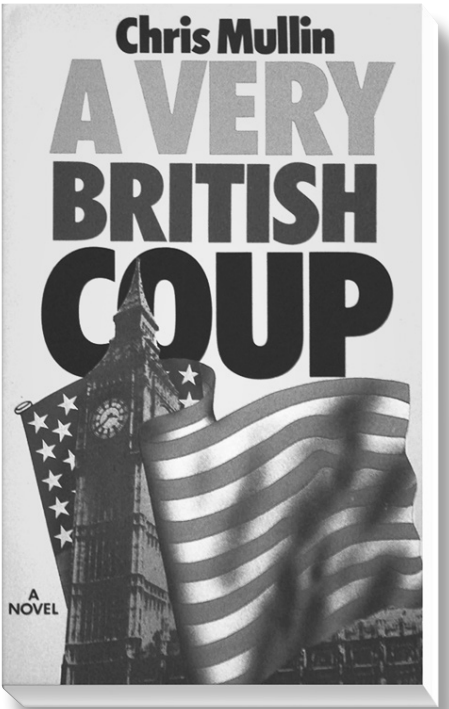
Lenin interpreted this episode as “an epoch-making turning-point, the day when the noble landowners of Britain tore the British constitution and British law to shreds.” He continued:

“All saw what the bourgeoisie and the Liberals have been hypocritically concealing (they are hypocrites everywhere,

but nowhere, perhaps, such consummate hypocrites as in Britain). All saw that the conspiracy to break the will of Parliament had been prepared long ago. Real class rule lay and still lies *outside* of Parliament. The above-mentioned medieval institutions, which for long had been inoperative (or rather seemed to be inoperative), quickly came into operation and proved to be *stronger* than Parliament. And Britain’s petty-bourgeois Liberals, with their speeches about reforms and the might of Parliament designed to lull the workers, proved in fact to be straw men, dummies, put up to bamboozle the people. They were quickly ‘*shut up*’ by the aristocracy, the men in *power*.”
—V.I. Lenin, “Constitutional Crisis in Britain,” 10 April 1914

We Need Workers Republics!

While we defend Corbyn and his supporters against right-wing attacks, our Marxist worldview is counterposed to his parliamentarist programme. A fundamental difference is on the question of the state. Corbyn’s politics are a left-wing version of old Labour (or social democracy) which views the state as impartial. The function of the military, police, courts and pris-



Politics imitates art: 1982 novel depicts coup plot against left-wing Labour prime minister.

ons—the “special bodies of armed men,” as Lenin referred to them—is to defend the class rule of the tiny core of capitalists, who own the wealth and means of production, against the rest of the population. Parliament is a talk shop whose purpose is to provide a “democratic” cover for the class dictatorship of the capitalist exploiters and oppressors. Parliament is a facade behind which the real business of state is conducted—in the boardrooms of giant banks and corporations. The working class cannot simply take over the machinery of the capitalist state and adapt it for its own class rule. The state must be shattered in the course of a socialist revolution that places the working class in power based on workers councils.

In decisive class conflicts, the full might of the bourgeois state is arrayed against the working class and its allies without any pretence of neutrality, as was shown during the miners strike of 1984-85. Under Margaret Thatcher the capitalist rulers mobilised police-state occupation and civil war in the coalfields. The right wing of the Labour Party, then led by Neil Kinnock, and the Trades Union Congress stood in outright opposition to the embattled miners. The “lefts” in the Labour and trade-union bureaucracy expressed sympathy with the miners but refused to mobilise other unions to strike alongside them, a betrayal which ultimately led to the miners’ defeat.

Corbyn’s opposition to British imperialism’s wars amounts to a more “rational” strategy for British imperialism. In the row over Trident missiles, he has suggested that Britain could retain the submarines but without the nuclear warheads. The working class has no interest in maintaining capitalist Britain’s military capacity or its army. Invoking the slogan famously raised by German revolutionary Karl Liebknecht

during World War I, Lenin summed up this principle in the words: “‘Not a penny, not a man,’ not only for a standing army, but even for a bourgeois militia” (“The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution,” September 1916). British imperialism today acts as a toady of the U.S. because the U.S. is the dominant world power and bestrides the world as Britain once did. The British rulers have accumulated enormous wealth over centuries and have a significant military capacity. The notion that “little England” could somehow opt out of the world system is a fantasy; moreover, it is based on a reactionary nationalist perspective. To fully meet the needs of the working people for jobs, decent healthcare, housing and education requires the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism in Britain, the rest of Europe and beyond, led by an internationalist revolutionary party.

Rare within the Parliamentary Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn is an avowed republican. In contrast, the leader of the GMB union, *Sir* Paul Kenny, is proving his worth as a recently appointed knight of the realm by condemning Corbyn for his opposition to Britain’s nuclear arsenal. Corbyn, as opposition leader, has been admitted to the Queen’s Privy Council, but by all reports did not kneel before “her majesty.”

When asked during his leadership campaign about his attitude to the monarchy, Corbyn said the issue could wait, as his focus was on social justice. While he obviously was trying to avoid being entangled by a media provocation, his answer does reveal a certain mindset—one that regards



Belfast Telegraph; Amalgamated Press (inset)
Lieutenant General Hubert Gough (inset) led March 1914 mutiny of army officers who refused to suppress reactionary Ulster Volunteer Force (above), which was mobilizing to resist Home Rule in Ireland.

the monarchy as, although undemocratic, somewhat benign. The monarchy is meant to justify vast class inequality as the natural order of things, to inculcate servility and to celebrate the acceptance of one’s place in class society, free of tumultuous social struggle. The monarchy retains its power as a rallying point for reaction and, as a last resort, would likely provide a figurehead for a military takeover should the bourgeoisie be unable to contain the struggle of the working class by the traditional parliamentary means.

We say: Abolish the monarchy, the House of Lords and the established church. We are for the right of self-determination for Scotland and Wales as part of our programme for working-class power leading to a federation of workers republics in the British Isles.

Against the Labourite myth that socialism can be phased in gradually through bourgeois-democratic channels, Leon Trotsky stressed in his writings on Britain that the British working class needs to learn instead from the country’s revolution-

Flint...

(continued from page 1)

any unrest by the population. Uniformed guardsmen and state police have been asking for ID before giving out bottled water, which is intimidating, particularly for undocumented immigrants. Remember what the National Guard did in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina: they hampered aid and prevented desperate residents from fleeing the flooded city. It is in the interests of workers and the oppressed to oppose the presence of the National Guard in Flint and demand its withdrawal.

Today, capitalist politicians from Snyder to Hillary Clinton pretend to be shocked, shocked, about Flint’s contaminated water. But the simple fact is that neither the union-busting governor nor city officials nor the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) nor the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) gave a damn about the health of the citizens of Flint. For the capitalists, working people only have value when there are profits to be made out of exploiting their labor, and as for black people, we know how little their lives matter to the ruling class. In Flint, unemployment is high and more than 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. These people had become expendable.

Poisoning the Water, Step by Step

As soon as four months after the switch-over, the Flint water supply was found to contain bacterial contamination. Later, high levels of dangerous chemicals (trihalomethanes) were found as well. In February 2015, an independent study revealed that the Flint River water was causing lead to leach from old pipes into the water supply. Indeed, the cost-cutting DEQ had decided to save even more money by not requiring the city to treat the water with corrosion control additives.

A group of Virginia Tech researchers who sampled the water in 271 Flint homes last summer found that some contained lead levels high enough to meet the EPA’s definition of toxic waste. Another study by a local pediatrician showed the percentage of Flint children with elevated levels of lead in their bodies had doubled since 2013. Lead poisoning is known to cause irreversible brain damage. State officials sprang into action...to cover up



UAW
Auto workers occupied GM plants in Flint during 1936-37 sit-down strike.

the problem. Last July, DEQ spokesman Brad Wurfel expressed the views of his government bosses when he said, “Anyone who is concerned about lead in the drinking water in Flint can relax.” Worried city residents were dismissed as “anti-everything” troublemakers; one of the whistle-blowing doctors was blasted for sowing “hysteria.”

Earlier this month, officials reported a spike in Legionnaires’ disease in Genesee County, where Flint is located, following the switching of the water source. One of the scientists involved in the water testing had predicted that the lack of corrosion control would lead to higher levels of *Legionella* bacteria.

The EPA is authorized to act directly to deal with issues like the Flint water crisis, but preferred to exhort the DEQ while doing nothing itself. The London *Guardian* (16 January) quoted an August 20 email from EPA program manager Jennifer Crooks hoping all the attention to Flint just “dies down.”

At a public appearance in Detroit on January 20, President Obama shed crocodile tears for the children of Flint, but refused to declare the horrific situation there a “disaster,” thus blocking additional funds that such a designation would have opened up for the tormented city. At the same time, Obama congratulated himself for his administration’s bailout of the

auto industry, which is supposed to have boosted the American economy—not that most of us would have noticed any such upturn. In fact, the auto bailout was public assistance to the auto bosses and their creditors; it was accompanied by the shredding of UAW contracts, prohibition of strikes, wholesale destruction of wages and working conditions and the proliferation of multi-tier wages. The pro-Democratic Party trade-union leadership worked hand in hand with the auto companies in presenting the profitability of the American car industry as worth any sacrifice on the part of the working people.

Flint was the birthplace of General Motors in 1908 and a center of automobile manufacturing through the 1980s. In 1936-37, it was one of the places where auto workers waged sit-down strikes. The governor responded by deploying the National Guard, armed with machine guns, outside occupied plants. The strikers eventually forced the auto bosses to recognize the UAW, part of a wave of militant labor organizing. At its peak, the city supported a population of 200,000, some 80,000 of them employed as auto workers with decent union wages and benefits. That changed when GM began pulling out of the city in the late 1980s. The American capitalists decided to invest in other sectors of the economy at the expense of manufacturing, while shifting manufacturing to the non-union South. Today the population of Flint has fallen below 100,000. Nearby Detroit was bled dry by the bourgeoisie, who then manipulated and enforced the city’s bankruptcy—largely a scam to steal workers’ pensions.

Michigan has its own special way of administering the transition of formerly industrial cities into bleak landscapes of urban decay. The governor has the right to appoint an emergency manager to take control of any city government or school

ary traditions. The bourgeoisie itself came to power through the Roundhead English Revolution, backed by the lower classes of the day, against the Royalist landed aristocracy. It was compelled to fight a civil war and to finish off feudal class rule with the execution of King Charles I. The republic that followed under the bourgeois revolutionary Oliver Cromwell lasted only a couple of years after his death.

But the restoration of the monarchy and the House of Lords did not restore the absolutist monarchy. The class rule of the bourgeoisie, based on a state that defended capitalist property relations, had been secured by the revolution and, as Trotsky explained, could not be liquidated by the reactionary legislation of the Restoration because “what has been written with the sword cannot be wiped out by the pen” (*Where Is Britain Going?* [1926]). Trotsky also pointed out that the “British bourgeoisie has erased the very memory of the seventeenth-century revolution by dissolving its past in ‘gradualness,’” all the better to prevent the working class from drawing any revolutionary lessons.

A Leninist-Trotskyist party must base itself on those lessons and on the understanding that the construction of a socialist society can only take its first step through the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist state. The Spartacist League/Britain seeks to build a revolutionary workers party based on that programme, which saw its fulfilment in the overthrow of the capitalists and establishment of workers rule in the October 1917 Russian Revolution. ■

district in fiscal disarray in order to force through cutbacks of essential services. For years, Democratic and Republican governors alike have used emergency managers to effectively seize power and legal authority from mayors and city councils. After a 2012 referendum curbed the power of emergency managers and returned authority to elected officials, the legislature simply passed a new law reinstating their powers.

While Flint today is a far cry from its heyday as a center of integrated labor power, a multiracial working class still exists in the region and possesses great potential power through its ability to stop production and thereby cut off capitalist profits. But to wield the unions’ power in defense of their own members and in defense of the vital needs of the whole working people and the unemployed requires a class-struggle leadership in place of the misleaders who push partnership with the capitalist bosses and their parties. A fighting labor movement would lead the struggle for a massive program of federally funded public works, employing union members at union wages, to rebuild this country’s crumbling infrastructure—including replacing ancient lead water pipes in Flint and elsewhere. At bottom, what is required is a workers revolution that takes this country out of the hands of the parasitic capitalist rulers and opens the road to an international socialist planned economy of abundance.

The Flint water crisis—a 100 percent man-made disaster—illustrates in an intensified way the increasing decrepitude that afflicts basic infrastructure more broadly. It also illustrates a more immediate truth: in America today, it does not even require the genocidal fantasies of a Hitler or the special cowardice of a racist cop with a 12-year-old in his sights to poison a black and poor population. ■

Workers Vanguard Readers Circle

**Chicago: Emanuel Must Go! Enough with the Democrats!
We Need a Multiracial Workers Party!**

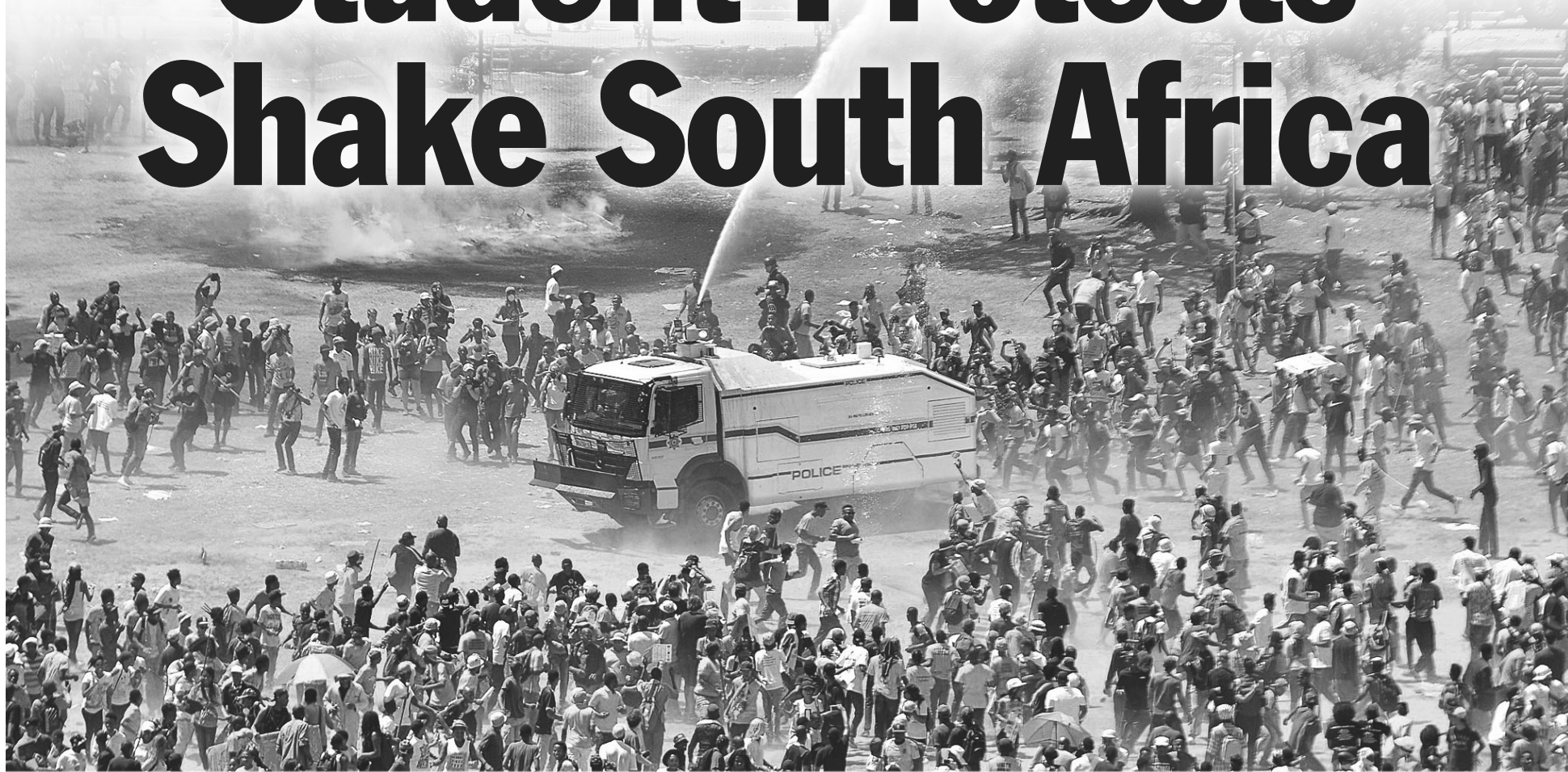
This readers circle will be discussing the above article in *Workers Vanguard* No. 1081.

CHICAGO

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Student Protests Shake South Africa



Pretoria, October 2015: Police deploy water cannon, stun grenades to repress student protest against tuition hikes.

The following article was written by our comrades of Spartacist/South Africa, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Under the call “Fees Must Fall,” hundreds of thousands of university students protested against the exorbitant cost of higher education last year, shutting down campuses across South Africa and marching on the seats of government. While proposed fee hikes of up to 11.5 percent were the initial spark for the protests, they continued even after President Jacob Zuma’s announcement on 23 October 2015 that there would be no fee increases in 2016. As many students have pointed out, the cost of tertiary education was already prohibitively expensive for students from poor and working-class families. They want free education *now*. Zuma’s announcement this January of (yet) another commission of inquiry was rightly denounced by many as an attempt to stall and defuse the situation with bogus talk shops.

Workers Must Mobilize in Fight for Free Education!

This year, protests broke out at universities in Johannesburg and Pretoria before classes even began. Protesters blocked registration, demanding that no one be excluded from registering by having to pay either up-front fees or outstanding debt, and many have linked the students’ demands to the fight against outsourcing and the slave wages of campus workers.

From Johannesburg and Cape Town to Pretoria and Port Elizabeth, protesting students and campus workers have faced brutal attacks by the cops and private security guards, who have fired stun grenades, tear gas, water cannon and rubber bullets at the protesters. In Cape Town, 23 protest-

ers were arrested and initially charged with “treason” for attempting to enter parliament as the finance minister gave his budget report in October. In November, the University of the Western Cape (UWC) campus was practically turned into a war zone, with police and heavily armed security guards chasing down students, dozens of whom were arrested and thrown in jail. At the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, the year-end exams were moved off campus to the nearby military base—something that was done in the 1980s amid mass protests against the white-supremacist apartheid regime. Spartacist/South Africa demands: **Drop**

all charges against the anti-fees and anti-outsourcing protesters! Police and security guards off the campus!

The working class has every interest in taking up the cause of the students. It is the sons and daughters of working people and the poor who are being excluded from university education by high fees. And it is the overwhelmingly black proletariat that has borne the brunt of outsourcing—the increasing use of temporary and contract workers, including through parasitic labour brokers. Unless there is an effective fightback, the conditions of the black masses will only worsen, especially as the economy continues its downward spiral. It is critical that the power of the organised working class and its unions be mobilised to support the protesters, including to defend them against state repression.

The police violence faced by the students is but a taste of what protesting township poor and striking workers routinely

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Britain: Banana Monarchy

LONDON—The election of left-winger Jeremy Corbyn as Labour Party leader has so upset the British establishment that the normal protocols of the “mother of parliaments” have been flouted in favour of public threats by military officers of the highest rank to depose him. Only days after Corbyn’s election came a statement from an unnamed “senior serving general” to the *Sunday Times* (20 September) forecasting that members of the armed forces would begin directly and publicly challenging Corbyn if he tries to scrap the Trident nuclear missile system, pull out of NATO or if he announces “any plans to emasculate and shrink the size of the armed forces.” According to the *Sunday Times*, the general said that “the army

Defend Jeremy Corbyn’s Right to Run the Labour Party!

just wouldn’t stand for it. The general staff would not allow a prime minister to jeopardise the security of this country.” He went on to say that people in the military “would use whatever means possible, fair or foul to prevent that,” and that “you would face the very real prospect of an event which would effectively be a mutiny.”

Then, on 8 November, on the BBC’s flagship Andrew Marr show, the serving head of the armed forces, General Sir

Nicholas Houghton, effectively declared Corbyn unfit to become prime minister. Aired amid the pomp of “Remembrance Sunday,” a day celebrating Britain’s imperialist wars, the show was a slickly orchestrated and carefully delivered warning from the British establishment that if a Corbyn-led Labour Party were voted into office, the election would be declared null and void. When Marr solicited the general’s opinion on Corbyn’s stated refusal to ever use nuclear

weapons, Houghton replied: “Well, it would worry me if that thought was translated into power.” This diplomatic phrase, from a man whose reputation is that he does not “shoot from the lip” but chooses his words carefully, is nothing short of a coup threat. As he vented concern over what policies are acceptable in a government, in military dress uniform, on a day dedicated to the armed forces, the general could well have been declaring a military coup in a Central American “banana republic.” But in Britain—with its hereditary sovereign, who is head of state and head of the armed forces—“banana monarchy” would be more apt.

The general’s attack on Corbyn is

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