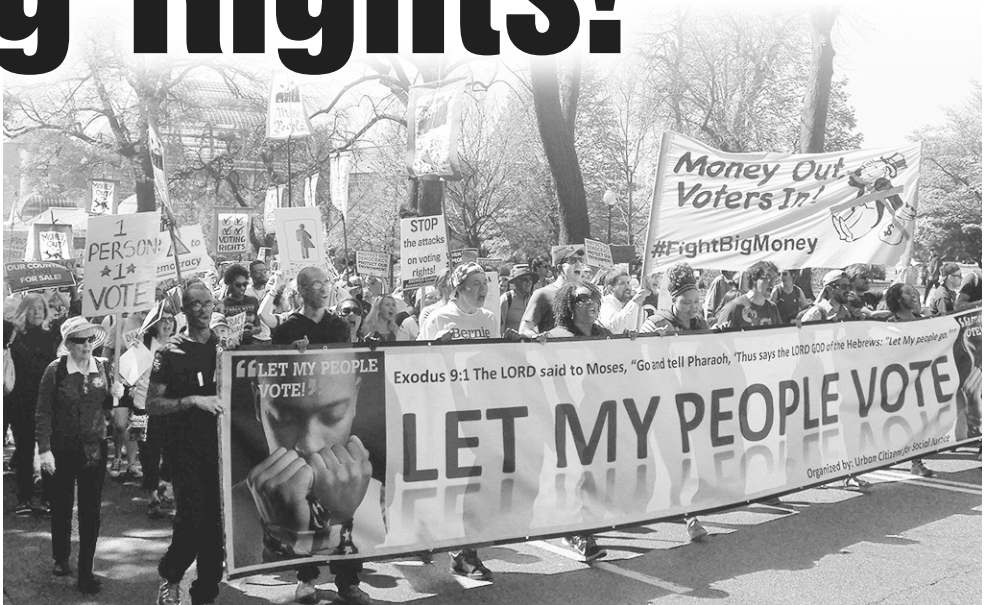


No to the Capitalist Democrats and Republicans!

**Down With Racist Attacks
on Voting Rights!**



King/Wisconsin State Journal



Apollo/Pacific Press

Left: Voting location in Wisconsin. Voter ID laws amount to modern-day poll tax. Right: Voter rights rally in Washington, D.C., April 17, builds illusions in the power of the ballot box.

This presidential election will likely pit all-around bigot Donald Trump against arch-warmonger Hillary Clinton. The bourgeoisie's top two contenders are feared and loathed by many, and the elec-

tion has already been marked by escalating attacks on voting rights. Since the last presidential election, new or tougher voter ID laws will be in place in 15 states by November. In all, 33 states have laws

on the books requiring voters to provide a government-issued photo ID, disenfranchising over 13 percent of adults: the poor, the elderly, students and, above all, black people and other minorities.

According to Zoltan L. Hajnal, author of a study on voter ID laws, "We're finding typically that strict voter ID laws double or triple the gap in turnout between *continued on page 8*

Picket Lines Mean Don't Cross

Verizon Strike: Stop the Scabs!

MAY 16—Battle lines have hardened in the strike against Verizon by 39,000 members of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). Five weeks into the strike, the largest in the U.S. since 2011, Verizon remains dead set on crushing the unions. At the bargaining table, the telecom giant, which is swimming in profits and hungry for more, refused to budge from its insistence on being able to reassign workers at will to locations far from their homes for up to two months, out-source work to non-union contractors and further gut the unionized workforce. Disgusted picketers told WV salesmen that, at the end of April, the company spent a cool half million to send its "last, best and final offer" via FedEx to every worker, bypassing the union bargaining committee.

As we go to press, at the urging of President Obama's secretary of labor, Thomas Perez, the unions and company have agreed to resume bargaining. Workers must beware: these federal mediation efforts are not neutral but generally aimed at extracting concessions from unions. We noted in "Victory



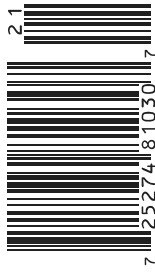
WV Photo

NYC strike rally at 100 Wall Street, May 5.

to Verizon Strike!" (WV No. 1088, 22 April) that a key issue in the strike is to organize the workers in Verizon's highly profitable wireless division. Around 100 wireless technicians are members of the CWA and 80 workers in wireless retail stores have joined the union, but the com-

pany is refusing to grant them a contract. But these are only a tiny fraction of the 70,000 wireless workers who remain overwhelmingly unorganized. Verizon has been placing full-page ads for scab labor in big city newspapers and has brought in replacement contrac-

tors from down South. One such thug threatened Long Island picketers with a machete. Another drunk scab hit a striker in Massachusetts with his pickup truck. These strikebreakers are in addition to the scab army of 20,000 Verizon management and non-union workers that the company began training months before the strike began. Worse still, some unions are crossing picket lines, including members of IBEW Local 25, who are doing contract electrical work in several Verizon offices on Long Island. Workers on the picket lines remain determined, despite having their health insurance coverage cut off by the company. Because Verizon has long avoided hiring new workers in unionized job titles, the core of those manning the picket lines are a highly skilled and experienced bunch. Some have two and even three strikes under their belts. Flying pickets are confronting scabs doing installations and repairs on the street. CWA pickets at hotels, reinforced by Teamsters and honored by Hotel Trades Council members, have resulted in scabs being driven out of a dozen hotels, where they were not only being housed but also being dispatched for jobs. Last week, acting on a motion from Obama's National Labor Relations Board *continued on page 8*



On the Need to Break with Opportunists

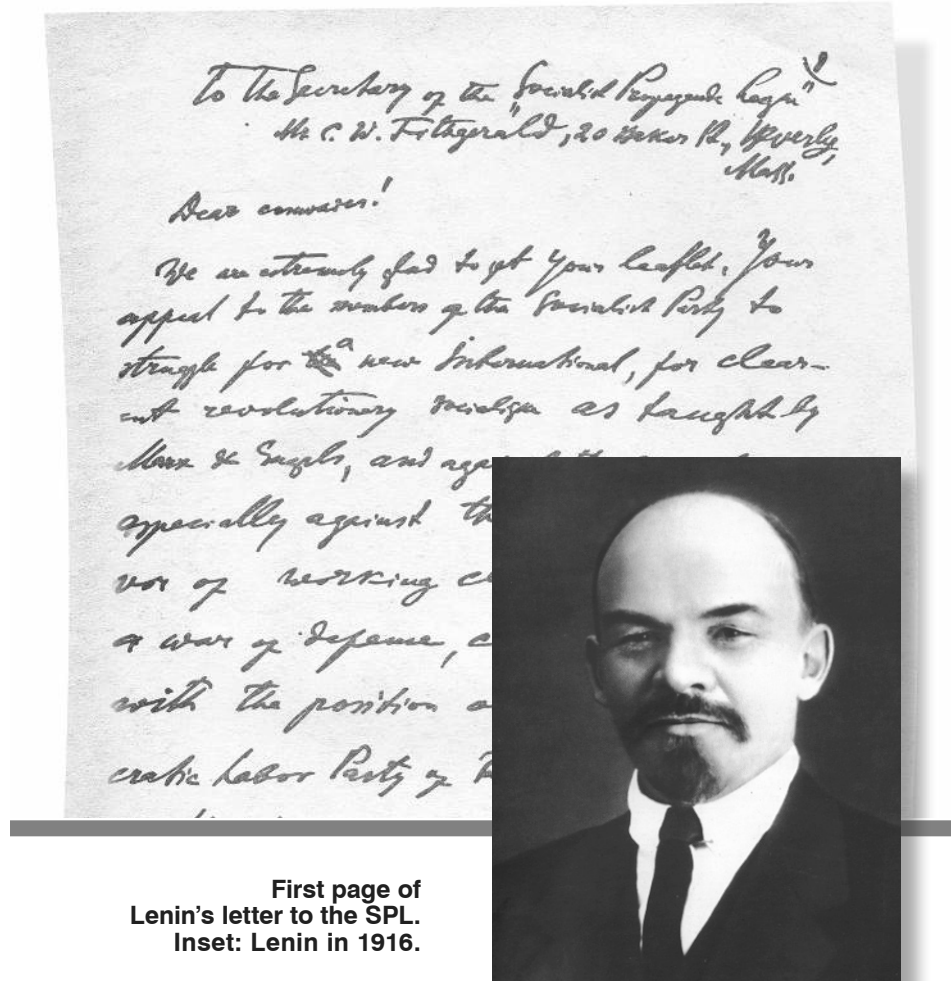
We reprint below a November 1915 letter originally written in English by Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin to the Socialist Propaganda League (SPL) of the U.S. Lenin's letter was part of his efforts to regroup genuine Marxists in the struggle to forge a new revolutionary international party. The outbreak of the interimperialist World War I in 1914 had revealed the bankruptcy of the old Second (Socialist) International, founded in 1889 and to which virtually all existing ostensibly socialist parties adhered. With only a handful of exceptions, these parties had voted war credits for their governments, supporting their own ruling classes' ruthless scramble for profit and plunder.

This betrayal was echoed by the heads of the trade unions. Carl Legien, head of the major German union federation, was an ardent social patriot who enforced a policy of *Burgfrieden* (class peace) during the war. Similarly, after the U.S. entered the war in 1917, the head of the American Federation of Labor, Samuel Gompers, served on President Woodrow Wilson's Council of National Defense.

Lenin's struggle for a new international came to fruition with the founding of the Communist (Third) International in 1919, which followed the conquest of power by the proletariat in the October 1917 Russian Revolution. However, forging new, Leninist vanguard parties required a series of political fights to break the revolutionary elements from social-democratic practice and program and to purge the centrist waverers. In his letter to the SPL, Lenin delineates areas of political disagreement, as well as agreement.

In September 1915, a small group of socialists met in Zimmerwald, Switzerland. The delegates at Zimmerwald were not politically homogeneous, ranging from revolutionaries like the Bolsheviks to outright reformists like the Russian Mensheviks. Lenin was a signatory to the Zimmerwald Manifesto, which he regarded as a call to struggle against the chauvinist policies of the official Social Democratic parties. However, he regarded the Manifesto as evasive on several key points. These included its failure to expose the opportunism that lay behind the rot in the Second International as well as its failure to lay out revolutionary methods of fighting against the war, including the organization of street demonstrations against the governments and fraternization in the trenches.

The Left Zimmerwald group organized by Lenin also put forward its own resolution, which received a minority of votes at the conference. This resolution declared against the illusions in disarmament brought about by decisions of diplomats and governments, asserting that a lasting peace could only be achieved by socialist



First page of Lenin's letter to the SPL. Inset: Lenin in 1916.

revolution. It proclaimed, "The slogan is civil war, not civil peace."

An October 1915 manifesto by the Socialist Propaganda League was one of the earliest attempts to cohere a revolutionary opposition within the American Socialist Party. A copy of this manifesto found its way to Lenin, who wrote the letter reprinted here in response. The Boston-based SPL, composed mainly of Latvians (Letts), was among the most influential of the far-left Socialists who had roots in the tsarist empire. (For more on the SPL and its relation to the founding of the American Communist Party, see *The Communist International and U.S. Communism, 1919-1929* by Jacob A. Zumoff, reviewed in WV No. 1067, 1 May 2015.)

The SPL included militants who had been active in the Lettish Social-Democratic Labor Party, which was affiliated to the Russian Social Democrats, and one of whose members signed the Left Zimmerwald manifesto. During the October Revolution, the Lettish army divisions and Red Guards, drawn heavily from Lettish farm laborers, played a heroic role in securing Petrograd for the revolutionary forces. The Lettish Rifles

(*Strelniki*) later provided an essential core for the newly organized Red Army.

"Letter to the Secretary of the Socialist Propaganda League" by V.I. Lenin, November 1915

Dear Comrades!

We are extremely glad to get your leaflet. Your appeal to the members of the Socialist Party to struggle for a new International, for clear-cut revolutionary socialism as taught by Marx and Engels, and against the opportunism, especially against those who are in favor of working class participation in a war of defence, corresponds fully with the position our party (Social-Democratic Labor Party of Russia, *Central Committee*) has taken from the beginning of this war and has always taken during more than ten years.

We send you our sincerest greetings & best wishes of success in our fight for true internationalism.

In our press & in our propaganda we differ from your programme in several points & we think it is quite necessary that we expose you briefly

these points in order to make immediate & serious steps for the coordination of the international strife of the uncompromisingly revolutionary Socialists especially Marxists in all countries.

We criticise in the most severe manner the old, Second (1889-1914) International, we declare it dead & not worth to be restored on old basis. But we never say in our press that too great emphasis has been heretofore placed upon so-called "Immediate Demands," and that thereby the socialism can be diluted: we say & we prove that all bourgeois parties, all parties except the working-class revolutionary Party, are liars & hypocrites when they speak about reforms. We try to help the working class to get the smallest possible but real improvement (economic & political) in their situation & we add always that *no* reform can be durable, sincere, serious if not seconded by revolutionary methods of struggle of the masses. We preach always that a socialist party not uniting this struggle for reforms with the revolutionary methods of working-class movement can become a sect, can be severed from the masses, & that that is the most pernicious menace to the success of the clear-cut revolutionary socialism.

We defend always in our press the democracy in the party. But we never speak against the centralization of the party. We are for the democratic centralism. We say that the centralization of the German Labor movement is not a feeble but a strong and good feature of it. The vice of the present Social-Democratic Party of Germany consists not in the centralization but in the preponderance of the opportunists, which should be excluded from the party especially now after their treacherous conduct in the war. If in any given crisis the small group (for instance our Central Committee is a small group) can act for directing the mighty mass *in a revolutionary direction*, it would be very good. And in *all* crises the masses can not act immediately, the masses want to be helped by the small groups of the central institutions of the parties. Our Central Committee quite at the beginning of this war, in September 1914, has directed the masses not to accept the lie about "the war of defence" & to break off with the opportunists & the "would-be-socialists-jingos" (we call so the "Socialists" who are *now* in favor of the war of defence). We think that this centralistic measure of our Central Committee was useful & necessary.

We agree with you that we must be against craft Unionism & in favor of



Latvian rifle battalions in Petrograd played heroic role in 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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

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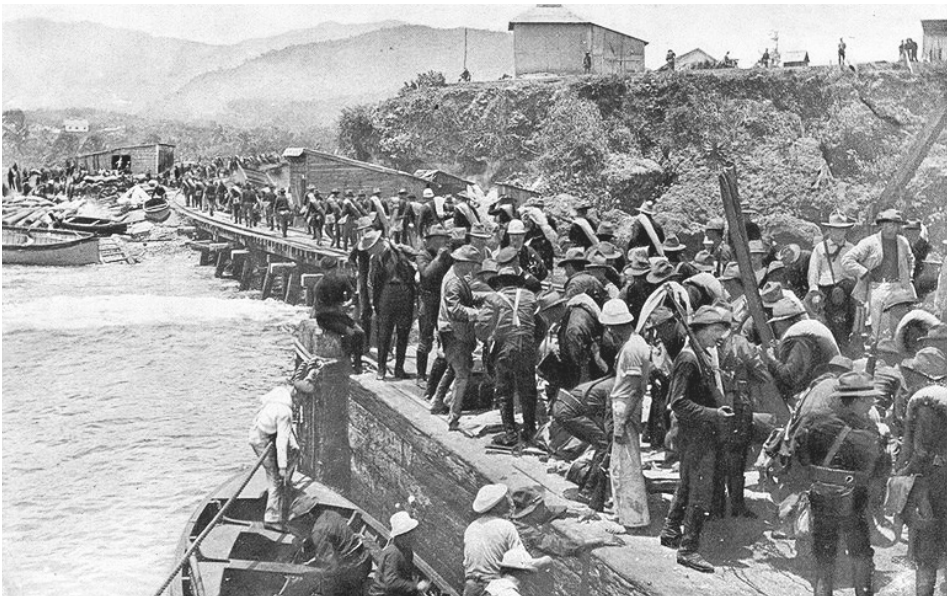
No. 1090

20 May 2016

industrial Unionism, i.e. of big, centralized Trade Unions & in favor of the most active participation of *all* members of party in *all* economic struggles & in *all* trade union & cooperative organizations of the working class. But we consider that such people as Mr. Legien in Germany & Mr. Gompers in the U.S. are bourgeois and that their policy is not a socialist but a nationalistic, middle class policy. Mr. Legien, Mr. Gompers & similar persons are not the representatives of working class, they represent the aristocracy & bureaucracy of the working class.

We entirely sympathize with you when in political action you claim the “mass action” of the workers. The German revolutionary & internationalist Socialists claim it also. In our press we try to define with more details what must be understood by political mass action, as f. i. [for instance] political strikes (very usual in Russia), street demonstrations and civil war prepared by the present imperialist war between nations.

We do not preach unity in the *present* (prevailing in the Second International) socialist parties. On the contrary we preach *secession* with the opportunists. The war is the best object-lesson. In *all* countries the opportunists, their leaders, their most influential dailies & reviews are *for* the war, in other words, they have in reality *united* with “their” national bourgeoisie (middle class, capitalists) against the proletarian masses. You say, that in America there are also Socialists who have expressed themselves in favor of the participation in a war of defence.



James Burton

U.S. troops land at Daiquiri, Cuba, June 1898. Spanish-American War marked emergence of U.S. as an imperialist power.

We are convinced, that unity with such men is an evil. *Such* unity is unity with the national middle class & capitalists, and a *division* with the international revolutionary working class. And we are for secession with nationalistic opportunists and unity with international revolutionary Marxists & working-class parties.

We never object in our press to the unity of S. P. [Socialist Party] & S.L.P. [Socialist Labor Party] in America. We always quote letters from Marx & Engels (especially to Sorge, active member of American socialist movement), where both condemn the sectarian character of the S.L.P.

We fully agree with you in your criticism of the old International. We have participated in the conference of Zimmerwald (Switzerland) 5-8.IX.1915. We have formed there a *left wing*, and have proposed *our resolution* & our draught of a manifesto. We have just published these documents in German & I send them to you (with the German translation of our small book about “Socialism & War”), hoping that in your League there are probably comrades, that know German. If you could help us to publish these things in English (it is possible only in America and later on we should send it to England),

we would gladly accept your help. In our struggle for true internationalism & against “jingo-socialism” we always quote in our press the example of the opportunist leaders of the S.P. in America, who are in favor of restrictions of the immigration of Chinese and Japanese workers (especially after the Congress of Stuttgart [of the Second International], 1907, & *against* the decisions of Stuttgart). We think that one can not be internationalist & be at the same time in favor of such restrictions. And we assert that Socialists in America, especially English Socialists, belonging to the ruling, and *oppressing* nation, who are not against any restrictions of immigration, against the possession of colonies (Hawaii) and for the entire freedom of colonies, that such Socialists are in reality jingoes.

For conclusion I repeat once more best greetings & wishes for your League. We should be very glad to have a further information from you & to *unite* our struggle against opportunism & for the true internationalism.

Yours *N. Lenin*

N.B. There are *two* Soc.-Dem. parties in Russia. Our party (“*Central* Committee”) [the Bolsheviks] is against opportunism. The other party (“*Organization* Committee”) [the Mensheviks] is opportunist. We are *against* the unity with them.

You can write to our official address (Bibliothèque russe. For the C. K. 7 rue Hugo de Senger. 7. Genève. Switzerland). But better write to my personal address: W1. Ulianow. Seidenweg 4a, III *Berne*. Switzerland. ■

Letters

On Jeremy Corbyn

24 March 2016

British Ruling Class Bares Its Teeth

Dear WV:

Regarding your article “Britain: Banana Monarchy” (WV 1082 [29 January]): Are the working class supporters of Jeremy Corbyn aware of the military’s threats to overthrow a Corbyn government? If so, what is their reaction to that? I would think that this is a golden opportunity for the Spartacist League/Britain to drive home two truths that are usually very difficult for people to believe:

1. The enthusiastic *working class* response to Corbyn’s campaign shows that winning over the masses to support a radical program is **possible**: there is massive discontent with the ravages of capitalism. What is needed is an organization that is big enough and well-known enough to fight for that program (therefore, people should join the SL).

2. The panicky *ruling class* response (the generals’ threats) proves that realizing such a program using Corbyn’s methods (i.e., bourgeois elections) is **impossible**; shows that there is indeed a ruling class and that it will throw aside the make-believe of bourgeois “democracy,” if it must, to preserve its power (therefore, people should join the SL).

Fraternally,
Jack L.

WV replies: The fact that tens of thousands of working-class people joined or rejoined the Labour Party in support of Corbyn is a welcome development. As the article Jack refers to pointed out, “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.” While addressing issues that are deeply felt by working people, his election represents a working-class-based opposition to the rightist Blairite wing of the Labour Party. The Blairites are unashamedly committed to free-market capitalist exploitation. They carried the Labour Party’s support to imperialist military slaughter to new heights and wanted to sever all ties with the unions. However, there is a very wide gulf between the level of political consciousness required to support Corbyn’s Left-Labourite parliamentary “socialism,” and the understanding needed for Corbyn’s mass base to be won to the revolutionary internationalist program of the SL.

Historically, the consciousness of the British working class is heavily imbued with illusions that the interests of working people can best be served by electing a “socialist” government. Corbyn’s supporters are surely well aware of the statement on BBC television by General Houghton, head of Britain’s armed forces, that Corbyn is unfit to become prime minister. As Jack correctly suggests, the general’s intervention confirms an elementary truth understood by Marxists: that Parliament is a talk shop whose purpose is to provide a democratic cover for the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, which is maintained through special bodies of armed men. But it would be wishful thinking to assume that, from this one incident, the mass of the working class would draw the same conclusion as Jack does, namely that the ruling class “will throw aside the make-believe

of bourgeois ‘democracy,’ if it must” and “therefore, people should join the SL.”

For the SL/B and ICL, Corbyn’s election represents an opening to reach a wider audience with our propaganda. It opens up a political debate about socialism and the means to achieve it, into which Marxist revolutionaries can intervene. While we support many of the elementary reforms Corbyn stands for, we also counterpose our revolutionary program to his parliamentarism. It will be in the course of tremendous class and social struggles, and through the application of tactics by the nucleus of a Leninist vanguard, that the mass of the working class (as opposed to exceptional individuals) will make the leap from supporting Labourite reformism to achieving the consciousness needed to build a revolutionary party.

Don’t Forget Guam

31 March 2016

Dear *Workers Vanguard*,

In “U.S. Out of Guantánamo!” [WV No. 1086, 25 March] there was a notable omission. When speaking of the 1898 conflict between the U.S. and Spain, the article listed the territories seized from Spain: Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines, but neglected to mention Guam, which was also annexed by the U.S. and still remains a U.S. territory to this day.

CGs,
Jonah

WV replies: Good point. While a speck on the map of the Pacific, Guam plays an outsized role in U.S. imperialism’s military reach into East Asia. In 1951, Gen-

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eral Douglas MacArthur pointed to the U.S. hold on a “chain of islands extending in an arc from the Aleutians to the Marianas,” from which the U.S. could “dominate with sea and air power every Asiatic port from Vladivostok to Singapore and prevent any hostile movement into the Pacific.” Guam is located in the southern half of what Chinese military spokesmen have dubbed the “Second Island Chain” (the “First Island Chain” includes Okinawa, the Philippines and Taiwan). Hosting several military installations, Guam is today at the core of the U.S. “pivot” aimed at the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state and also North Korea. This situation underscores the importance of China’s efforts to fight imperialist military encirclement, including by developing territory in the South China Sea.

On Sharapova and Sports

4 April 2016

As a longtime reader of *Workers Vanguard*, I appreciate your hard Marxist politics and writing on a wide range of topics, including the article, “Who’s Next? Sports Snoops Slam Sharapova” [*Workers Vanguard* No. 1086, 25 March]. In that vein, I highly recommend a book I’m currently reading, “Sport in Capitalist Society: A Short History,” by Tony Collins.

Joel

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Squirming Centrists

Again on IG's Defense of Popular Front in Brazil

Our front-page article “Brazil Impeachment: Workers Have No Side” in WV No. 1089 (6 May) exposed the Internationalist Group (IG) for its support of the capitalist popular-front government headed by Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) president Dilma Rousseff against the drive to impeach her. Obviously stung, the IG dashed off a scattershot response barely days after WV hit the streets (“SL/ICL Impeached By Its Own Past,” internationalist.org, May 2016). The IG’s haste is matched by its convoluted alibis for defending the Rousseff government in a situation that its own Brazilian comrades describe as a “dispute between two bourgeois forces” that “share the same fundamental program of resolving, the capitalist economic crisis by attacking the working people.”

The IG sneers that the “single count of WV’s indictment” against them is that its call “No to Impeachment” is “a vote of political support for Rousseff’s popular-front government.” (How about a second count of adulating Stalin as commander-in-chief?) In the case of Brazil, it may be one count, but in political terms it is the equivalent of murder in the first degree, i.e., a betrayal of the proletariat. As we wrote last issue:

“To oppose Rousseff’s impeachment would mean a vote of confidence in—that is, political support to—the PT-led popular front. To favor impeachment would amount to support to the right-wing political forces mounted against Rousseff. As Marxists who stand for the political independence of the proletariat, we say the working class has no side in this conflict.”

Deriding our defense of the Marxist principle of working-class independence from the government and all representatives of the capitalist class enemy as “passive neutrality,” the IG proclaims that we have “no program for class struggle in Brazil.” In fact, proletarian political independence is the precondition for workers to fight in their own class interests. It is the IG that has given up on the fighting capacity of the Brazilian working class by calling on workers to defend the Rousseff government. The key task, we wrote, is to “fight to break the proletarian base of the PT and the trade unions away from their current leadership as part of the struggle for socialist revolution and for workers rule.”

Not so for the bold “class warriors” of the IG, which has staked out a position as militant defenders of the PT popular front. Its Brazilian cohorts, the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (LQB), call for no less than an “unlimited general strike” to “block impeachment by the nest of corrupt politicians in Congress” as well as “to smash the judiciary/police right-wing threat” and “prevent the budget cuts and sink the privatizations and labor and pension ‘reforms.’” Thus, the workers are to

mobilize against the austerity attacks that have been perpetrated by the PT-led popular front by...fighting to keep the head of that government in power! So much for smashing the military, judicial, police and prison apparatus, which was at the core of capitalist rule under Rousseff, just as it is now that she has been suspended from office. Or does the IG consider these forces neutral when commanded by a popular-front government as opposed to right-wing bourgeois parties?

“Pure sophistry,” protests the IG, arguing that far from supporting Rousseff, its opposition to her impeachment is aimed at blocking the “seizure of power” by the “traditional bourgeois right wing.” On

Now they have trouble differentiating themselves from the rest of the popular-front left in Brazil.

In “Brazil’s Opportunist Left Tailing After the Bourgeois Blocs” (internationalist.org, April 2016), the LQB denounces other self-proclaimed socialist organizations for calling the movement to impeach Rousseff a coup. Yet the IG, masters of confusion, denounces us for commenting on its statement that a coup in Brazil is unlikely and leaving out their “explanation of the mounting dangers of an authoritarian regime being installed without a coup d’état”—i.e., through a vote in Congress. Thus the IG parrots classic fight-the-right reformism by supporting the



Rio de Janeiro, 29 April 2014: Education and health workers strike against popular-front Brazilian government of Dilma Rousseff, demanding better salaries and working conditions.

May 12, Michel Temer of the bourgeois PMDB did take over the presidency following a Senate vote to suspend Rousseff pending an impeachment trial. The PMDB was one of the bourgeois coalition partners in the PT-led government. Far from “seizing power,” Temer was already the vice president, having been Rousseff’s running mate in 2010 and 2014—and thus next in line for the presidency. In short, the PT-led government paved the way for the growing forces of right-wing reaction aimed at the working class, the poor and the oppressed.

The IG snorts that the LQB, “uniquely on the Brazilian left, opposed the PT-led popular front from the beginning.” Whatever the case, they aren’t opposing it now. We have little idea of the LQB’s actual record on the ground in regard to the PT popular front. The International Communist League severed relations with this outfit when it refused our demand that its leader relinquish his post at the head of a cop-infested union in Volta Redonda.

dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in its “democratic” popular-front face rather than in its “reactionary” form.

All their “revolutionary” bombast is meant to cover up the plain fact that they have *taken a side* against impeachment. If they had a representative in the Brazilian Congress, that would mean voting “no,” i.e., a vote to keep the head of the popular front in office. We noted last issue that sometime Trotskyist leader Edmund Samarakkody was confronted with a similar situation in the Ceylonese (Sri Lankan) parliament in 1964. He and one of his comrades voted for an amendment put forward by a right-wing politician that brought about the downfall of a popular-front government. (The amendment condemned the government for failing to protect working people’s living standards.) Samarakkody was roundly denounced for capitulating to the right wing, aiding the forces of imperialist-inspired reaction, etc. He later repudiated his courageous vote.

Today, the IG huffs at our “tortured attempt to contrast saying no to impeachment in Brazil” to “justifying a vote that brought down the government of Sri Lanka in 1964,” a position that IG leader Jan Norden powerfully defended a few decades ago when he was a leading member of our tendency. Trying to square the circle, the IG declares: “We uphold both positions, which are in no way contradictory.” Really?! Samarakkody’s vote was to bring down the popular front. The IG’s “No to Impeachment” position in Brazil upholds the popular front, with arguments that echo those who denounced Samarakkody for his principled action. What changed is that Norden went from being a revolutionary Trotskyist to becoming the leader of

a slimy centrist organization that peddles its “class struggle” wares in the shadow of the Brazilian popular front.

The IG finds itself in the uncomfortable position of claiming to find a Marxist precedent for their defense of Rousseff in what they falsely claim was our opposition to the impeachment of U.S. Democratic president Bill Clinton. The IG argues: “*By the SL’s current logic, in opposing impeachment it supported Clinton and the Democrats*” (emphasis in original). Indeed, that would have been the logic had we opposed the impeachment. The problem for the IG is that we never did! In the article the IG cites as evidence of our opposition to the impeachment, we quoted the following statement from a previous article:

“Bill Clinton is commander in chief of U.S. imperialism, and as such a deadly enemy of working people and minorities in the U.S. and around the world. But we are not indifferent to the anti-sex witch-hunt which has now targeted Clinton. The seemingly limitless powers of the Starr chamber to pry into Clinton’s and Lewinsky’s private lives through harassment and intimidation are a threat to the most elementary right to privacy for the population as a whole.”

—“Impeachment Drive Threatens Right to Privacy for All,” WV No. 697, 25 September 1998

This was simply a statement of fact. We also addressed the fact that many in the American ruling class were concerned that impeachment could damage the office of the imperial presidency. After the House of Representatives voted to impeach Clinton in December 1998, we reiterated the danger of the anti-sex witchhunt while noting that the weakening of the American imperial presidency “would not be a bad thing from the standpoint of the interests of the working class and the oppressed” (“Clinton Impeachment and U.S. Imperialism,” WV No. 704, 8 January 1999).

The IG declares itself the repository of our revolutionary heritage, which they claim ended for us with their cowardly defection from our organization in 1996. To do so requires some not inconsiderable distortion of this heritage. In “SL/ICL Impeached By Its Own Past,” the IG writes: “Back in the days when *Workers Vanguard* was the voice of revolutionary Trotskyism, the Spartacist League explicitly supported the impeachment of Richard Nixon.” The article disingenuously asks, “According to the present-day SL’s logic, did this mean supporting the Democrats?”

In fact, a large part of our articles on Nixon’s impeachment was devoted to attacking the pro-impeachment left as “useless donkeys” for the Democrats at a time when Nixon was increasingly exposed over the Watergate break-in. We did not raise the call for his impeachment, which, we noted, “can only mean a desire to have another *bourgeois* ruler.” But as Congress considered impeaching Nixon, we supported this while noting that Watergate was basically a dispute within the capitalist class and insisting that “Impeachment Is Not Enough!” In “What Labor Should Do About Watergate” (WV No. 34, 7 December 1973) we stated: “For his truly enormous crimes against the working class Nixon should be removed from office at once.... A class-struggle answer to Watergate must shift the axis of struggle. *The fight to remove Nixon must become a fight not to replace Nixon with Gerald Ford, but a fight to replace the rule of capital with a workers government!*” As impeachment hearings dragged on in the summer of 1974, we emphasized our class opposition to this imperialist war criminal by demanding that Nixon be extradited to Hanoi, where he could be tried by his victims.

Our *support* for Nixon’s impeachment as a means to further the class struggle and weaken the imperial presidency is the antithesis of the IG’s *opposition* to the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff. We’ll leave it to them to continue flailing about trying to explain how supporting a bourgeois government furthers proletarian struggle. Keeping their “hands in the boiling water” in Brazil has so poached the IG/LQB’s brains that they can’t tell the difference between supporting and opposing the class rule of the bourgeoisie. ■

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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 the MOVE Prisoners!

Three members of the MOVE 9—Debbie, Janet and Janine Africa—had a parole hearing on May 12, having spent over 38 years in prison. As we go to press, no determination on their parole has been announced. MOVE, a predominantly black, radical, back-to-nature commune upholding the right of armed self-defense, has been targeted for vicious state repression ever since it was established in Philadelphia in the early 1970s. On 8 August 1978, after a months-long siege, an army of nearly 600 cops unleashed a fusillade of gunfire and then stormed MOVE's Powelton Village home. One police officer, James Ramp, was killed in the cops' own cross fire. At least eight witnesses testified that no gunshots came from the MOVE house, and no fingerprints of any MOVE member were found on the weapons supposedly recovered from their home. Despite this evidence of their innocence, nine MOVE members were framed up for the cop's death and convicted on conspiracy and murder charges. They were sentenced to prison terms of between 30 and 100 years.

The latest parole hearing was held the

From left to right, Debbie (Sims) Africa, Janet (Holloway) Africa and Janine (Phillips) Africa: Victims of decades-long racist state vendetta against MOVE.



Justice for the MOVE 9

day before the 31st anniversary of the 13 May 1985 MOVE massacre. In that signature racist atrocity of the Reagan years, black Democratic Philadelphia mayor Wilson Goode and his city administration, collaborating with the Feds, firebombed MOVE's house on Osage Avenue. Eleven black people, including five

children, were killed and an entire city block burned to the ground.

After four decades, the state's vendetta against MOVE has not subsided. The racist capitalist rulers and their police thugs remain committed to keeping the surviving members of the MOVE 9 buried alive behind bars. Since becoming eligible for

parole in 2008, not one MOVE 9 member has been released. Two, Merle and Phil Africa, have already died in prison hell-holes. In February, Eddie Africa was denied parole and the board smeared him as a risk to public safety. But despite persistent persecution and harassment, the surviving MOVE members remain strong and outspoken, steadfast fighters not only for their own freedom but also for the freedom of others, not least political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, a longtime MOVE supporter.

The Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—sends monthly stipends to the imprisoned MOVE members as part of the PDC's program of support to class-war prisoners. In an April 14 letter to the parole board demanding the release of Janet, Debbie and Janine Africa, the PDC noted: "It is an injustice that these men and women were ever incarcerated at all. Their continued confinement compounds that injustice on a daily basis."

Letters demanding freedom for the MOVE prisoners should be sent to the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole, 1101 South Front Street, Suite 5100, Harrisburg, PA 17104-2517. The names for each of the board members are at www.pbpp.pa.gov. ■

— Victim of Racist Frame-Up — Gary Tyler Finally Freed

On April 29, Gary Tyler, who had been framed up on bogus murder charges, was finally released from the notorious Angola prison hell that had been his home for over 40 years, eight of them in solitary. In the fall of 1974, Tyler was one of dozens of black students confronted by a vicious racist backlash in newly desegregated Destrehan High School. Such scenes played out not merely in the Deep South of Tyler's Louisiana but across the country, including in the Northern liberal city of Boston. With racist animosity fever hot, on 4 October 1974, school officials canceled classes. Tyler and his black schoolmates were hustled into a school bus, which was then pelted with rocks and bottles by a KKK-organized mob of over a hundred. A shot rang out striking Tim-

othy Weber, a 13-year-old white student, who later died at the hospital.

Despite the fact that a man with a rifle was on the scene and the driver of the bus assured the cops that no shots came from within, the black students were searched at gunpoint. When Tyler intervened to stop a deputy from harassing his cousin, he was arrested for "disturbing the peace," and hauled off to the sheriff's office where he was brutally beaten. The cops promised that if he confessed to the shooting, he would merely be sent "to Scotland" for a few years, but Tyler insisted on his innocence and was charged with murder.

Police uncovered no weapon in the bus after two separate searches over three hours. A subsequent "search" lasting a bare few minutes purportedly revealed a .45 cal-

ibre pistol stuffed in Tyler's seat. That gun never made it to trial, having "disappeared" after ballistics tests showed that the bullet that struck Weber was a .22 calibre. It was later revealed that the .45 had been stolen from a firing range used by the sheriff's department. All of the witnesses who testified against Tyler later recanted, saying they were terrorized into testifying. Tyler's classmate Larry Dabney stated, "The deputies didn't even ask me what I saw. They told me flat out I was going to be their key witness," adding that he was told to "sign the statement they put together for me or I was going to jail for ten years."

The state barred Tyler's family from the courtroom. His attorney, who had never tried a criminal case, spent only an hour with Tyler preparing the defense. The trial judge instructed the all-white jury to presume that Tyler was guilty. Convicted at the age of 17, Gary Tyler became the youngest person sentenced to death in the U.S. Two years later, the U.S. Supreme Court declared Louisiana's death penalty statute unconstitutional, and Tyler's sentence was commuted to life without parole. Tyler's cause was taken up by thousands. At its 1976 convention, the American Federation of Teachers passed a resolution supporting Tyler. Songs by Gil Scott Heron and UB40 called for his release.

The pain of Tyler's decades of incarceration was made worse by the tantalizing whiff of freedom that came with appellate court acknowledgment that he should never have been convicted and with parole board recommendations for his release—only to be kept behind bars. In 1980, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit ordered a new trial, declaring that Tyler had been convicted on the basis of the judge's unconstitutional charge to the jury and that his trial was "fundamentally unfair." One year later, the court reversed itself on the technicality that Tyler's attorney had failed to object to the jury instructions at the trial. On three occasions, the Louisiana Board of Pardons recommended a reduction of his sentence, which would



Equal Justice Initiative

Gary Tyler

have allowed release after 20 years, but each time the governor turned him down.

Earlier this year, the Supreme Court ruled that its 2012 decision that mandatory life sentences without parole for juveniles were unconstitutional could be applied retroactively. To avoid protracted litigation, the state of Louisiana agreed to reduce Tyler's sentence to 21 years—less than half of his time served—if he pleaded guilty to manslaughter. Without acknowledging firing the fatal bullet, Tyler accepted the plea deal.

The Free Gary Tyler Committee has called for donations to help his transition to life outside prison to be made payable/sent to: Liberty Hill Foundation, 6420 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90048. ■

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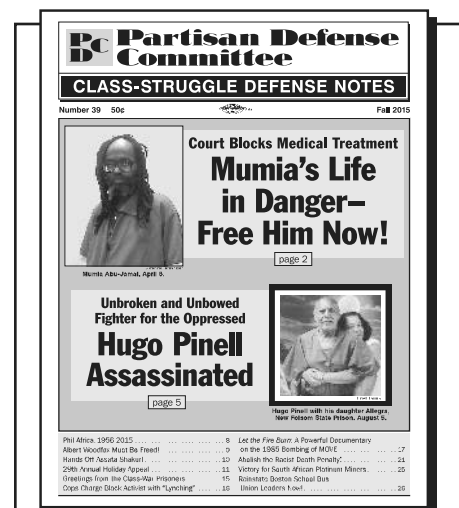
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Canadian Monument to Anti-Communism Ottawa Celebrates War Criminals, Fascists

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SPARTACIST CANADA



Since 2008, a coterie of mostly East European-derived far-right nationalists calling itself Tribute to Liberty has sought to build a memorial in Ottawa to the supposed 100 million “victims of Communism” in the Soviet Union and elsewhere. The former Conservative government embraced the project as its own, lavishing at least \$1.5 million on it and promising more. The recently elected Liberals were quick to assert that, despite some haggling over cost and site, it would go ahead. The NDP social democrats, for whom anti-Communism has long been an article of faith, likewise threw their support to the proposed monument.

In reality, this is a monument not only to virulent anti-Communism, but to the Canadian bourgeoisie’s fear and loathing of the struggles of workers and the oppressed. A real tribute to liberty would be a memorial to the 27 million Soviet soldiers and civilians who perished in the fight against Nazi Germany in World War II. It was the Soviet Red Army that smashed Hitler’s military juggernaut, ended the fascists’ demented Thousand Year Reich and liberated the Nazi death camps throughout East Europe. The Canadian ruling class and the nest of counterrevolutionaries that is pushing for this monument seek to bury that history in a morass of falsehood and slander.

But, you might ask, why a memorial now? Communism supposedly died with the destruction of the Soviet Union 25 years ago, according to the bourgeoisie’s mouthpieces. The answer is simple: to this day, the capitalist rulers want to expunge and extirpate any memory of workers struggles against the system of private property, especially those struggles which were victorious. Workers are supposed to accept that the only possible world is that of present-day capitalist society with its brutal exploitation and unemployment, racism and poverty, war and the menace of fascism. Above all, the bourgeoisie wants to erase all memory of the historic significance and the gains of the October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia.



Former Conservative Party cabinet minister Jason Kenney (center) unveils design for anti-Communist monument, December 2014.

The Revolution gave flesh and blood reality to the program laid out by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* 70 years earlier. It was the singular event of the 20th century, and echoes today, almost 100 years later. This was the first time in history that the working class took and held state power. The establishment of the Soviet workers state, combined with the program of international proletarian revolution that animated the Bolsheviks, 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 Union isolated. Amid conditions of material scarcity exacerbated by imperialist invasion and civil war, a conservative bureaucratic caste centred on Joseph Stalin usurped political power from the Soviet working class 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. Nonetheless, the Soviet Union’s military might—victorious in World War II even under bureaucratic Stalinist rule—was a testament to the power of the planned, collectivized econ-

omy that catapulted Russia, a backward peasant country, into becoming a modern industrial and military powerhouse.

Big Lies and Dirty Truths

They really should call it the “Joseph Goebbels Monument to Anti-Communism,” because the Tribute gang gets its “facts” from *The Black Book of Communism*, a concoction produced by a gaggle of anti-Communist “historians” that was first published in France in 1997. Goebbels, Hitler’s propaganda minister, honed the art of the Big Lie: lie repetitively, the bigger the better, and people will come to believe it. We denounced this tract at the time as “846 pages of lies and amalgams aimed at justifying repression against organizations and individuals who might still look to communism, and at contributing to counterrevolutionary efforts to destroy the Cuban, Chinese, Vietnamese and North Korean deformed workers states” (*Black Book: Anti-Communist Big Lie*, WV No. 692, 5 June 1998).

Like the *Black Book* authors, the monument’s supporters lump together communism and fascism as evil twins. This is both lie and cover-up: initially, Hitler’s Nazi regime was not only tolerated but admired by key sections of the English and American ruling classes. Members of the royal family in Britain and American luminaries such as Henry Ford and Charles Lindbergh had open pro-Nazi sympathies. Another admirer of Hitler was Liberal prime minister Mackenzie King, who slammed the door on desperate

Jews trying to flee Nazi terror. Less than 5,000 were allowed into Canada, the fewest among the imperialist “democracies.”

As long as Hitler stuck to smashing German trade unions and killing Communists and Jews, neither Washington nor London said boo. The Germans only got into trouble when Nazi territorial ambitions clashed with those of other powers, including the rising American and declining British imperialist bourgeoisies.

This history underscores that World War II was no “war for democracy” but, at bottom, an interimperialist conflict for global political and economic domination (as was World War I). While sharply opposing all the imperialist combatants, Trotskyists stood for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union which, despite its Stalinist degeneration, remained a workers state where capitalist and landlord exploitation had been overthrown.

After the war, Canada’s attitude toward Jewish refugees was summed up by a government official as “None is too many.” No such restrictions were applied to Nazi and other war criminals from East Europe. Even a 1986 report by the government’s Deschênes Commission, censored and whitewashed as it was, had to admit that many hundreds of Nazi war criminals were welcomed to Canada in the decade after the war (for details, see “Canada Protects Nazi Butchers,” *Spartacist Canada* No. 68, June 1987).

The reason? This was the period of the anti-Soviet Cold War, and these blood-drenched killers were embraced by the Canadian rulers as “freedom fighters” in the drive to destroy the Soviet Union. Ukrainian-Jewish historian Altı Rodal, author of a secret 560-page report to the Deschênes Commission, revealed how RCMP officers destroyed records to ease the immigration of Nazis and their East European henchmen. “After 1955 and the Cold War paranoia, the entire purpose of immigration screening seems to have been to keep out Communists,” she said. “If you could prove you were a Nazi, you had proved you were not a threat” (*Globe and Mail*, 18 March 1987).

Among those spirited into Canada were some 2,000 hard-core Ukrainian fascists. Some were members of the German-organized and commanded 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (Galician), which was renamed the First Division of the Ukrainian National Army following the Nazis’ surrender in May 1945. Others were supporters of Stepan Bandera’s Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), whose armed wing was the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). It was of no concern to the Canadian ruling class that many of these people had committed heinous crimes.

Bandera’s OUN conducted anti-Jewish pogroms in whatever part of Ukraine it had active forces. The author of the OUN’s military doctrine in the late 1930s had announced: “The more Jews killed during the uprising, the better for the Ukrainian state.” In 1943-44, the OUN carried out ethnic cleansing in Volyn and eastern Galicia, slaughtering between 70,000 and 100,000 ethnic Polish civilians, along with the few Jews who had escaped the Germans. As for the Galician Waffen-SS, they were among the most fanatical fascists who swore a military oath of allegiance to Hitler upon enlistment, seeking to destroy “Jew-Bolshevism.” Beginning



Toronto Star



Reuters

Left: Paul Grod, president of Ukrainian Canadian Congress, who lauded Galician Waffen-SS, at January 2015 anti-Russia protest. Right: Ukrainian fascists assault trade-union headquarters in Odessa, May 2014, killing more than 40.

as Hitler's personal bodyguard, the SS greatly expanded under Heinrich Himmler to carry out industrial-scale mass murder of Jews, communists and others deemed sub-human by the Nazis. On the Eastern front it was the SS Einsatzkommando units who butchered those civilians who had not been ensnared in the net of the extermination camps.

Waffen-SS as a Tribute to Liberty?

To this day, fascist collaborators of the German Nazis such as the OUN, the UPA and the Galician Waffen-SS are considered heroes by groups like the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC). And this brings us to Tribute to Liberty. Who are they?

Behind a veneer of respectability, Tribute to Liberty is a counterrevolutionary rabble. Its spokesmen are, in the main, the offspring of immigrants from the parts of East Europe where capitalism was overturned after the local bourgeoisies fled behind the defeated Nazis. One of its donors is the Canadian Slovak League (CSL). In “Memory Politics: Ottawa’s Monument to the Victims of Communism,” historian Gregor Kranjc cites RCMP reports during WWII which stated that the CSL supported the “policies of an independent Slovakia under Hitler.” Kranjc adds that “as late as the 1990s, the Canadian Slovak League’s Toronto chapter commemorated the death of Father Tiso, the leader of the Nazi puppet state of Slovakia who oversaw the deportation of tens of thousands of Slovak Jews to the death camps” (activehistory.ca, 17 March 2015).

One of the Tribute notables is Paul Grod, a lawyer and business executive. Grod is the president of the UCC, which in turn is affiliated with the Ukrainian World Congress (UWC). True to its roots, the UWC's webpage blares out, "Glory to Ukraine!—Glory to Heroes!" This is part of the salute of the fascist Banderaite UPA described above. Grod is also an honorary member of the Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association (UCCLA), which was set up explicitly to oppose the Deschênes Commission's feeble efforts to track down Nazi war criminals.

As UCC president, Grod's 2010 Remembrance Day message paid tribute to the Ukrainian National Army (aka the Galician Waffen-SS), the OUN and the UPA in his list of Ukrainian heroes to be saluted. The UCC and UCCLA glorify these fascists because they fought against the Red Army. The mass murders of Jews and Poles carried out by the OUN and Galician SS are either denied or relabelled: savagery against Jews is morphed into "respectable" anti-Communism as Jews were deemed to be Reds, hence agents of Stalin's secret police, and thus fit only for extermination.

Whitewashing Fascists: Multiculturalism and Anti-Communism

The postwar embrace of Waffen-SS butchers is testimony to the fact that no mass murderer or war criminal is too

filthy for the anti-Communist purposes of the Canadian ruling class. Indeed, having saved these Ukrainian fascist scum and their supporters from the just wrath of those who stopped their genocidal drive, successive Canadian governments nurtured them with material support and respectability.

The cover for this has been the policy of multiculturalism. Promoted heavily by the Liberal Party as an expression of tolerance for all cultures (which is why many right-wingers hate it), this policy has nothing to do with championing the rights of immigrants and minorities. Rather, it was designed to encourage the “voluntary” cultural and racial segregation of the population while elevating petty-bourgeois



Yevgeni Khaldei

Soviet soldiers raise red flag over Berlin's Reichstag, 1945. Soviet Union crushed Nazi vermin.

“community leaders.” Nationalist leaders in the Ukrainian diaspora quickly grasped the program’s potential and became among its most ardent supporters.

Swedish-American historian Per Anders Rudling has usefully exposed how official multiculturalism helped advance the fortunes of anti-Jewish ideologues and rabid Ukrainian reactionaries:

“Following the introduction of official multiculturalism in 1971, Canadian government agencies actively aided the development of Ukrainian nationalist myth making. They sponsored the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, funded the construction of nationalist memorials, and supported the ultra-nationalist press.”
—“Memories of ‘Holodomor’ and National Socialism in Ukrainian Political Culture,” *Rekonstruktion des Nationalmythos?* (2013)

The University of Alberta in Edmonton, for example, has had a Canadian Institute for Ukrainian Studies (CIUS) since 1976. On its board was one Petro Savaryn, a volunteer in the Galician Waffen-SS who made no secret of his past, nor his pride in it. The Canadian ruling class seamlessly integrated such scum into its ranks: Savaryn was a vice-president of the Alberta Progressive Conservative Party and from 1982-86 the chancellor of the University of Alberta. The CIUS administers bequests from veterans of the Waffen-SS, including from one Volodymyr Kubijovyc, who was an initiator of this Nazi outfit. As recently as 2011 and 2014, this university institute issued four more endowments honouring these butchers! In the hands of Canada's rulers, multiculturalism is more akin to the careful collection and preservation of pure cultures of pathogenic bacilli done by an imperialist germ warfare lab. What is prized is the most toxic.

This is not just ancient history: the February 2014 “revolution” in Ukraine was in fact a coup, heavily backed by U.S. imperialism and leaders of the European Union. Its stormtroopers (rather literally) were outright fascists, organized mostly from two parties, Svoboda and Right Sector; both were represented in the new Ukrainian government and its military formations.

At the time of the coup, Svoboda's leader Oleg Tyagnibok claimed that a "Moscow-Jewish mafia" controlled Ukraine. Svoboda was originally called the Social-

National Party of Ukraine, an obvious reference to the German Nazi (National Socialist) party. As for Right Sector, it considers Svoboda too liberal (!) and one of its components prefers uniforms styled after Hitler's SS. The leader of its Western Ukraine section, Aleksandr Muzychko, pledged shortly before his murder to fight against "Jews, communists and Russian scum until I die." (For more detail, see "Ukraine Coup: Spearheaded by Fascists, Backed by U.S./EU Imperialists," WV No. 1041, 7 March 2014.)

From its origins in the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), the NDP has stood at the forefront of anti-Communist hysteria. In the 1940s and '50s, the CCF played a crucial role in

driving Reds out of the unions. More recently, the New Democrats were as rabid as Harper's Conservatives on the question of political and material support for the new Ukrainian government and even more hawkish toward Russia. At a November 2014 celebration of the Kiev protests in Toronto, former NDP MP Peggy Nash sounded like a Banderite revanchist: "One, it is important to stand firm against Putin and the foreign aggression of Ukraine, and we cannot ever accept the loss of Crimea or the loss of the territories in the east. We have to stand firm in solidarity with Ukraine!" (newpathway.ca, 11 December 2014). This must have been welcome news for the most anticipated speaker that night—Valeriy Chobotar, a commander of Right Sector forces in Donetsk!

Acting on behalf of the regime in Kiev and its imperialist sponsors including Canada, Right Sector and other fascist militias are waging a bloody war against insurgents in the predominantly Russian-speaking eastern provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk. As Leninist internationalists, we denounced the imperialist hysteria over the obvious desire of the Crimean population to quit Ukraine and join Russia, declaring “Crimea is Russian!” We defend the right to self-rule for Donetsk and Luhansk, up to and including independence and/or amalgamation into Russia. This in no way implies political support to Russia’s capitalist strongman

Vladimir Putin, or to Russia's chauvinist ambitions.

What We Should Remember

Somehow we doubt that the Ottawa monument will record the Jews who perished when Canada said, "None is too many." Nor will you see any commemoration of the thousands of Ukrainian Communists who died in the fighting to establish the Soviet Ukraine after 1917, and later to defend it from the Nazi invaders. In fact, it was the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky which, in leading revolutionary struggle against the Russian tsarist autocracy, championed the right of the oppressed Ukrainian people to self-determination. After the Revolution, it was Lenin who insisted on the right of working people to study the Ukrainian language and speak it in all Soviet institutions. Not all Ukrainians adore the fascist ilk of the Banderaites, and many are horrified (along with their ethnic Russian neighbours in East Ukraine) at the gang of far-right nationalists now ruling in Kiev.

“Communism is the doctrine of the conditions for the liberation of the proletariat”: Engels’ declaration, made more than 150 years ago, retains all its power today. In fact, communism is a society as yet unachieved on this planet, one where all the world’s productive resources have become collective property, where material abundance exists for all persons and where class and national divisions have disappeared.

The struggle for a communist future remains the only way forward for working people in Canada as elsewhere. The barbarous capitalist profit system is rooted in brutal exploitation of the working class, oppression of minorities, vicious racism and war. The 1917 October Revolution showed the way to an egalitarian future for mankind, but Stalin and his successors betrayed this struggle. The first victims of his repression were the Trotskyists who fought to continue on the internationalist road of October, including Trotsky himself, who was killed by a Stalinist assassin in Mexico in 1940. To the end, Trotsky stood for the military defense of the Soviet Union, despite Stalin's betrayals, recognizing its huge accomplishments thanks to the overthrow of capitalist rule. Today, we Trotskyists of the International Communist League dedicate all our resources to the fight for new October Revolutions through the reorganizing of a world party of socialist revolution, the Fourth International.

The Canadian rulers seem intent on building this monument to a Big Lie. But note that a victorious workers revolution in Canada will have a few historical tributes of its own, honouring heroic fighters against capitalism and oppression. As a modest start, what about taking the visage of the racist bigot and first prime minister John A. Macdonald off the \$10 bill and renaming every Macdonald Street in Canada? Instead, the workers could honour the man he executed, Métis [people of mixed Native-European descent] leader Louis Riel. And among those to whom the workers will pay tribute are those who have struggled for the overthrow of imperialism and capitalist rule throughout the world, starting with the leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution. ■

[illegible]

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Voting Rights...

(continued from page 1)

whites and nonwhites” (*New York Times*, 1 May).

The assault on the right to vote has mainly been carried out by Republican governors and legislators in the name of preventing “voter fraud.” Everyone knows this is a lie: the real motive is suppressing the vote of black people and others who are likely to support the Democrats. For their part, the Democrats posture as defenders of the franchise, particularly in contested swing states, as they cynically exploit fears of the openly racist Republicans to mobilize black voters. However, in the blue state Rhode Island, it was the Democratic legislature that instituted a voter ID law in 2011.

In office, the Democrats carry out massive assaults on black people, workers and the oppressed. Bill Clinton ended “welfare as we know it” and escalated the “war on drugs,” sending more people to federal prison than under Reagan and Bush Sr. combined. Barack Obama bailed out Wall Street on the backs of working people and shredded democratic rights, as well as attacking the unions, deporting record numbers of immigrants and ordering murderous drone strikes against civilians in



Governor's Office

April 22: Virginia governor Terry McAuliffe signs executive order restoring voting rights to more than 200,000 ex-felons.

South Asia, the Near East and Africa. We oppose on principle voting for any party that represents the capitalist class enemy, including both the Democrats and Republicans.

For the mass of the population, even the most basic democratic rights were won through bitter struggle. For black people, this struggle has been bitter indeed. A bloody Civil War was necessary to smash slavery and give former slaves the rights of citizens, including the right to vote and to hold office. But the promise of black

equality during Radical Reconstruction was betrayed as the Northern capitalists forged an alliance with the former slave-owners to exploit the former slaves. The freedmen were forced into sharecropping and tenant farming in the South, and the system of Jim Crow segregation emerged, with the Democratic Party as its architect. Through legal restrictions backed up by Klan terror, black people were effectively deprived of the right to vote.

The courageous battles of the civil rights movement of the 1950s-60s regained for-

Verizon...

(continued from page 1)

(NLRB), a federal judge barred the CWA from any further picketing of six New York hotels. This underscores that the capitalist courts and government are on the side of the bosses.

De Blasio's NYPD Scabherders

New York mayor Bill de Blasio's professional scabherders, the NYPD, have been mobilized en masse to ensure that management and scabs can cross picket lines. In many locations, particularly in New York City, picketers are confined to police pens, and cops patrol the picket lines. On May 9, as the police were chauffeuring scabs through picket lines in front of the City View Inn in Long Island City, a cop driving a police van full of scabs plowed into a CWA member, sending him to the hospital. The cop then sped off, clipping a car in his rush to get away. Elsewhere, at a facility in Garden City, Long Island, local mounted police cleared a pathway for scabs through a picket line. The frustration of strikers, who carry placards bearing the slogan “Don't Cross Our Picket Line,” is enormous when scabs stroll into their work locations.

The strikebreaking role of the cops has been an eye-opener for many strikers, who are fed the lie by trade union bureaucrats that cops are “union brothers.” A representative of the Court Officers Association was one of the speakers at the May 5 strike rally in Manhattan. In a Facebook posting, Michael Gendron, executive VP of CWA Local 1108, assured strikers that “the role of the police is to be impartial” and to “make sure that no one gets hurt.” *No!* The police are the armed thugs of the capital-

ist class. Class-conscious militants must fight for cops, prison guards and security guards to be thrown out of the unions—they're not part of the labor movement.

At the start of the strike last month, Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders, competing in the New York Democratic presidential primary, visited the picket lines to mouth support for the strike. The use of the cops against strikers by the “progressive” de Blasio shows the true face of the Democratic Party. Deceptively promoted by union leaders as “friends of labor,” the Democrats are simply the other major party of U.S. capitalist rule.

It is necessary to build mass picket lines that scabs *cannot* cross. Mass pickets would inevitably pose a confrontation with the cops, courts and government. To win would require mobilizing allies of the phone workers on the streets and on the picket lines to shut Verizon's operation down. All of labor has a stake in the outcome of this critical strike. A number of major unions have sent contingents to the picket lines, including 32BJ SEIU property services workers, TWU Local 100 transit workers and AFSCME DC 37 city workers. The president of UWUA Local 1-2 utility workers, whose members recently voted to authorize a strike against Con Edison, spoke at a strike rally. Teamster drivers for UPS have been instructed not to cross Verizon picket lines to deliver packages.

A major obstacle to building effective labor solidarity *in action* is the pro-capitalist union leadership. The great industrial unions were built through class-struggle methods such as mass pickets, sit-down strikes and secondary boycotts in the massive class battles of the 1930s and 1940s. (See our pamphlet *Then and Now*, which has sold well on the picket lines.) The trade union bureaucracy rarely

Chris Graham



May 9: Paramedics treat CWA picketer after he was hit by car driven by scabherding NYPD cop.

takes a page from that union-building playbook these days. Instead, it prostrates itself before the anti-labor laws and pushes reliance on the capitalist government and its political parties, particularly the Democrats. We fight for the complete independence of the workers movement from the bourgeois state and the capitalist Republican and Democratic parties and for the forging of a class-struggle workers party.

Writing about the 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strikes, which were led by Trotskyist militants and which forged the Teamsters as a powerful industrial union, James P. Cannon, the founding leader of American Trotskyism, underscored the political program that underpinned that victory:

“The policy of the class struggle guided our comrades; they couldn't be deceived and outmaneuvered, as so many strike leaders of that period were, by this mechanism of sabotage and destruction known as the National Labor Board and all its auxiliary setups. They put no reliance whatever in Roosevelt's Labor Board; they weren't fooled by any idea that Roosevelt, the liberal ‘friend of labor’ president, was going to help the truck drivers in Minneapolis....

“Our people didn't believe in anybody or anything but the policy of the class struggle and the ability of the workers to prevail by their mass strength and solidarity.”

—James P. Cannon, *The History of American Trotskyism* (1944)

For International Labor Solidarity!

A big issue for labor in this strike has been Verizon's outsourcing and offshoring of union work. Every trade unionist naturally opposes outsourcing to non-union outfits. However, for decades the union tops have responded to mass job losses and unemployment with calls for increased protectionism. The “save American jobs” chauvinism of the bureaucrats promotes the lie that workers in the U.S. have a common “national interest” with their exploiters. By blaming workers abroad for jobs lost in the U.S., it also

mal democratic rights for black people in the South. But the civil rights movement, crippled by a liberal, pro-Democratic Party leadership, was unable to challenge the poverty, joblessness, rotten housing, etc. which are embedded in American capitalism. And like all reforms in capitalist society, the gains of the civil rights movement were limited and reversible. Since the early 1970s there has been a relentless rollback of the gains won by the civil rights movement.

In 2013, the Supreme Court gutted the 1965 Voting Rights Act with the rationale that racism had been largely overcome. This ruling kicked off a barrage of anti-voting laws. The same day the court ruled, the Texas attorney general announced the state would enact a law it had been trying to force through since 2012. Considered the most stringent voter ID law in the country, it requires voters to present photo identification such as a Texas driver's or gun license, a military ID or a passport. In 2012, a federal district court unanimously had ruled that this provision would disproportionately burden poor minorities, forcing many to travel hundreds of miles to obtain the necessary paperwork. More recently, in a separate case, a federal court in Texas found that over 600,000 registered voters don't have the requisite voter IDs. That decision was appealed by Texas

serves to foment bigotry against Asian and Latino workers and to poison the possibility of international labor solidarity.

The prospects for such class solidarity across national borders were powerfully shown when call center workers in the Philippines doing contract work for Verizon contacted the CWA to express their solidarity with the current strike. The CWA leadership took the positive step of sending a delegation, which met up with representatives of call center employee network BIEN Philippines, the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) union, and the international telecommunications union federation UNI. On May 11, the CWA delegation and these groups picketed a Verizon call center in Quezon City, in metropolitan Manila. Later, when the unionists visited a Verizon office southeast of Manila, they were chased and stopped by masked company security guards on motorcycles brandishing automatic weapons. These goons called in a police SWAT team who detained the unionists before eventually releasing them without charge. That same day, BIEN Philippines issued a statement calling on all Filipino call center workers to support the U.S. Verizon strikers and declaring that “their fight represents the global fight of workers for job security, decent working conditions and meaningful wage.”

The system of capitalism is based on the exploitation of the working masses by the bourgeoisie, who seek ever greater profits. In a socialist society, the billions that today go into the coffers of a handful of bankers and industrialists would be used to provide free mass transit; quality medical and elder care; quality, integrated education; decent, affordable housing and clean water for all. But to secure all of these things requires a workers revolution led by a multiracial workers party that overthrows the capitalist system and replaces it with an egalitarian socialist society internationally. ■



Stand Up to Verizon

Kilusang Mayo Uno (May 1st Movement) activists at rally in the Philippines supporting Verizon strike, giving taste of international workers solidarity.

(continued from page 12)

Both the PiS and the bourgeois opposition rely on anti-communism. While the KOD accuses the PiS of acting like the old Stalinist regime, PiS leader Kaczynski labels his opponents “communists and thieves” and “the worst sort of Poles.” Pawel Kukiz, a sometime PiS ally, asserts that the KOD is financed by a “Jewish banker.” Another parliamentarian, Kornel Morawiecki, invokes the language of Hitler lieutenant Hans Frank, who ran the Nazi administration of occupied Poland, ranting that, “Law is not sacred. The good of the nation is above it.... If it does not serve the nation, it is lawlessness.” The PiS and Kukiz’s 15 benches in the Sejm erupted in a standing ovation for these words. In the 1980s Morawiecki was the founder and leader of an underground counterrevolutionary group, Fighting Solidarność.

The PiS and PO can both rightly claim the mantle of *Solidarność*. The future PO and PiS leaders were politically shaped as reactionaries by that movement. The “neo-liberal,” pro-EU policy of the PO (represented by current EU “president” Donald Tusk) is one face of *Solidarność*; the overtly chauvinist, clericalist and populist stance of the PiS is the other. *Solidarność* promised that the overthrow of the PRL deformed workers state and the embrace of the Western bankers and the U.S.-led



PAP

WORKERS VANGUARD

Bolshevism” fit in neatly with the Polish nationalist myth of a “Jewish-Communist” conspiracy against Poland. After the counterrevolution, the Polish bourgeoisie enshrined in its 1997 constitution the despicable equation of communism with Hitlerite fascism. A new chapter in this murderous mythology has been added by Szydło’s minister of national defense, Antoni Macierewicz, a notorious fan of the anti-Jewish tsarist forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Macierewicz claims that “terrorism” is “a product of socialist-Soviet thought,” which he blames for “provoking a giant wave of people’s migration, which is to destabilize the whole European continent” (tv-trwam.pl, 11 March). He later added that such “terrorism” has its “media form,” as exemplified by the “leaf-letting activities of the Bolshevik army in 1939” (wyborcza.pl, 17 March).

These anti-communist tirades amount to a threat that disseminating leaflets propagating socialist ideas or defending immigrants might bring accusations of “terrorism” by the Polish capitalist state. If any class-conscious worker has doubts about whether to defend immigrants against racist attacks, you should keep in mind that your trade union or leftist organization is next in the crosshairs of the same capitalist state and the fascist goon squads. ***Down with the anti-immigrant and anti-communist witchhunt!***

The working class is the only social class that has the power and interest to champion all the oppressed on the road to ousting the class rule of the bourgeoisie and replacing it with a socialized planned economy under the rule of workers councils. This understanding was formulated by Lenin in *What Is To Be Done?* (1902): the vanguard of the working class, represented by the revolutionary party, should act as the “tribune of the people.” Lenin’s Bolshevik Party fulfilled this role, as was evident in the composition of the first revolutionary government of Soviet Russia, many members of which came from various oppressed peoples of the tsarist “prison house of peoples.” For example, Trotsky was Jewish, Stalin was Georgian and Felix Dzerzhinsky—who was the first leader of the Cheka, the Soviet commission to combat counterrevolution—was Polish.

As revolutionary Marxists, we don’t give advice to the bourgeoisie on its immigration quotas. The call for “open borders” raised by some bourgeois liberals and leftist groups reflects illusions in the EU as a superstate, moreover one representing a “social Europe”; these are bourgeois myths. We call on the working class to struggle for ***full citizenship rights for all immigrants*** who are in this country. ***For worker/minority mobilizations to stop fascist attacks! No to racist deportations!***

Reactionary Catholic Offensive Against Women

The government’s election promise of 500 zlotys [\$127] in [monthly] benefits for every child a family has after the first one, aimed at enhancing its populist stance, will actually serve to reinforce the oppressive bourgeois family and help drive women out of the labor market. The PiS electoral victory has fueled social reaction across the board and encouraged the Catholic church in its attacks on women, sexual minorities and youth, as seen for example in plans to bar access to the “morning after” pill without a prescription, which will especially affect young women.

More recently, Kaczynski and Szydło spoke out in favor of a renewed initiative by the Catholic hierarchy for a total ban on abortion. The existing law, enacted in 1993, overturned the right to abortion under the deformed workers state. The 1993 law is called a “compromise” because it allows for abortion when the fetus is seriously deformed, when pregnancy poses an immediate threat to the woman’s life or health or is the result of rape or incest—and even then only if the doctor’s “conscience” allows for performing an abortion. But a total ban on abortion remains widely unpopular, especially among poor and working-class women who cannot afford to travel outside the country to get one. When the bishops issued a diktat to

Down With Court Sentences of Polish Communists!

The following was written by our comrades in the Spartakusowska Grupa Polski.

MAY 15—On March 31, four members of the Communist Party of Poland (KPP) were sentenced in absentia by the court in Dabrowa Górnicza, in southern Poland, to nine months of community service and fines for propagating a “totalitarian system of state.” Their alleged “crime”: publishing “contents referring directly to the idea of a communist system of state and to Marxism and Leninism...which, in the context of historical experience, is a negation of democratic values” (trybuna.eu, 28 April). The next day, the lower house of parliament, the Sejm, unanimously adopted a law banning the use of names for buildings, streets and squares that “commemorate people, organizations, events or dates symbolizing communism” (trybuna.eu, 4 April).

The attack on the KPP represents the most serious attempt to criminalize communism in bourgeois Poland since the ban on “communist symbolism” in 2010, which was overturned by the Constitutional Tribunal after being in force for a year. It is in the class interest of all workers organizations to demand: ***Down with the convictions of the KPP activists! Down with the ban on communist ideas and all moves to eliminate communist symbols—especially monuments to the Soviet soldiers who liberated Poland from Hitlerite fascism!***

These attacks are taking place under the rightist one-party Law and Justice (PiS) government, the clericalist successor to the Solidarność counterrevolution that overthrew the Polish deformed workers state in 1989-90. The assault on the right of leftists to organize goes hand in hand with heightened threats

against Jews, Roma and immigrants and coincides with the government’s drive to ban abortion completely. It is also a part of the PiS’s efforts to consolidate authoritarian rule, in accordance with the reactionary traditions of the Polish bourgeoisie in the interwar period.

While we differ programmatically with the reformist-Stalinist KPP, we insist that the government’s vicious vendetta against communism targets not just this party but the democratic rights of all leftist and working-class organizations. At bottom, by attempting to outlaw Marxist views, the government seeks to outlaw the right to organize and to rob the working class of the only program through which it can become conscious of its class interest in replacing this capitalist system with workers rule—the first step toward building a socialist future.

Catholics demanding support for a total ban, it sparked a series of mass demonstrations against the “torture of women,” complemented by dramatic staged walkouts from churches as the priests were reading the pastoral letter during Sunday mass.

Initiated by Razem, the protests were soon taken over by a coalition of feminist and other “non-party” groups hoping to attract the KOD, whose support for democratic rights goes no further than defending the draconian 1993 “compromise.” But not all protesters accept the shackles fashioned by Solidarność counterrevolution, as shown by a chant at a rally in front of the Sejm on April 9: “Liberty, equality, abortion on demand!” We say: ***Free abortion on demand as part of quality health care for all! Down with the concordat! For strict separation of church and state!*** A revolutionary workers government would expropriate all church

history and values” with the U.S. and boasted: “Poland takes its NATO obligations very seriously,” especially in opposing “Russia’s aggression.” Waszczykowski ran through capitalist Poland’s long history of service to U.S. imperialism, from troop deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq to its agreement to host an American missile base targeting Putin’s capitalist Russia.

Even after the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92, the Polish bourgeoisie retained its deep-seated anti-Russian chauvinism. Defense Minister Macierewicz insists that Russia has been at war with Poland since the presidential plane crashed in 2010 while landing in fog in [the Russian city of] Smolensk, killing Lech Kaczynski and much of Poland’s military and political elite. Without any evidence, Macierewicz claims the plane was blown up by Russia. Kaczynski and Co.

because of its chauvinist “Euroskeptic” stance speaks to the bankruptcy of the social democrats who embrace the EU. Originating as an economic adjunct to the anti-Soviet NATO alliance, the European Union is a reactionary imperialist-dominated consortium, with Germany on top, whose purpose is to better squeeze sweat from the workers in their own countries and more effectively dominate the weakest countries, like Greece today. We Trotskyists oppose this imperialist project from the standpoint of proletarian internationalism. Likewise, we opposed the extension of the EU in 2004 (when Poland joined). The European imperialists raised a series of criteria for entry into the EU that represented a program of brutal social attacks. For example, in Poland the significantly reduced mining sector was “rendered competitive,” that is, miners were laid off en masse and pits were closed. Unemployment compensation was so low that it was not enough for survival. Referring to the fact that the German car manufacturer Opel [a subsidiary of General Motors] paid lower wages at its factory in Poland, our German comrades wrote:

“Workers in Germany must help workers in Poland to fight for decent wages and working conditions against the greed for capitalist profits which was unleashed by the counterrevolution. For this, a revolutionary party is necessary, based on a program of internationalist class struggle. Ultimately, only a planned economy under the control of the working class can eliminate the glaring economic and social differences between various countries.”
—*Spartakist* No. 157, Winter 2004-5 [quoted in WV No. 848, 13 May 2005]

It is necessary to fight for workers revolutions to sweep away all the European bourgeoisies on the road to the formation of a ***Socialist United States of Europe***. It will take a massive expansion of the forces of production under the rule of the proletariat to lay the basis for a world socialist order, which will finally transcend the historically obsolete framework of nation-states and put an end to hunger, oppression and war. ***Down with the imperialist EU!***

As the PiS intends to build a strong “national” industry out of the myriad of small and medium Polish-owned factories which flourished on the remnants of the once significant socialized industrial base destroyed after the counterrevolution, it will increase the exploitation of the proletariat in Poland. In order to struggle effectively against the reactionary PiS regime, Polish workers must counterpose proletarian internationalist solidarity to chauvinism and defend the democratic rights of all the oppressed in capitalist society. Inspired by the legacy of the “Three L’s”—Lenin, Luxemburg and Liebknecht—the proletariat must once again fight for the revolutionary unity of the Russian, Polish and German workers. The aim of the SGP is to build a revolutionary workers party, modeled on the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky. ***For new October Revolutions! For the reforging of Trotsky’s Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution! ■***

Anti-missile system in Poland, January 2016. U.S. and Polish military cooperation under NATO is aimed at capitalist Russia.



properties in Poland. As history has shown, women will be among the most tenacious fighters for a socialist revolution.

Down With NATO and the EU!

The imperialist overlords of the EU hypocritically wring their hands over the new government’s threats to the “rule of law.” But the PiS regime simply ignored an appeal by the EU’s Venice Commission that “Warsaw end a standoff with its highest court by accepting a ruling that the government broke the law” (ft.com, 11 March). U.S. Republican Senator John McCain, joined by two Democrats, wrote an open letter to Szydło appealing to “shared democratic values” and expressing concern that the government’s actions against the Constitutional Tribunal and state media “undermine Poland’s role as a democratic model for other countries in the region.” Szydło replied: “The interest and good will of the American politicians cannot be changed into instructing and imposing actions concerning my fatherland” (reuters.com, 14 February).

Notwithstanding this cynical charade, the PiS is not about to snub its imperialist patrons nor are Washington and the EU about to cut off Poland. On February 16, the *New York Times* published a groveling piece by PiS foreign affairs minister Witold Waszczykowski. This avowed “Islamophobe” pointed to Poland’s “shared

were on their way to a commemoration of the Polish officers killed by Stalin’s secret police in 1940 in the Katyn forest. As we wrote earlier on Katyn:

“Revolutionary Marxists do not support the indiscriminate killing of the bourgeois officer caste any more than that of factory owners or bourgeois politicians. (Those personally responsible for crimes and atrocities against the working masses are another matter; they will certainly be subject to revolutionary justice.) ***Nevertheless, Katyn is not a crime against the Polish working people.*** These were the military officers of a fascistic, anti-Semitic dictatorship which regularly butchered workers and even bourgeois dissidents.”

—“Pilsudski and Counterrevolution in Poland,” WV No. 293, 20 November 1981

For its part, U.S. imperialism needs Poland not only as a model for “democratic” counterrevolution in the remaining deformed workers states (China, Cuba, Vietnam, North Korea, Laos) but also as a springboard for NATO provocations against Russia. The Obama administration has sent a stream of diplomats to Poland to make sure that the NATO summit to be held in Warsaw in July goes smoothly. The summit is to be preceded by military maneuvers near Russia’s western flank involving 25,000 troops from 24 countries. ***No to U.S. troops and bases in Poland! Down with NATO!***

That working people look to the PiS (and rightist and fascist formations elsewhere)

WORKERS VANGUARD

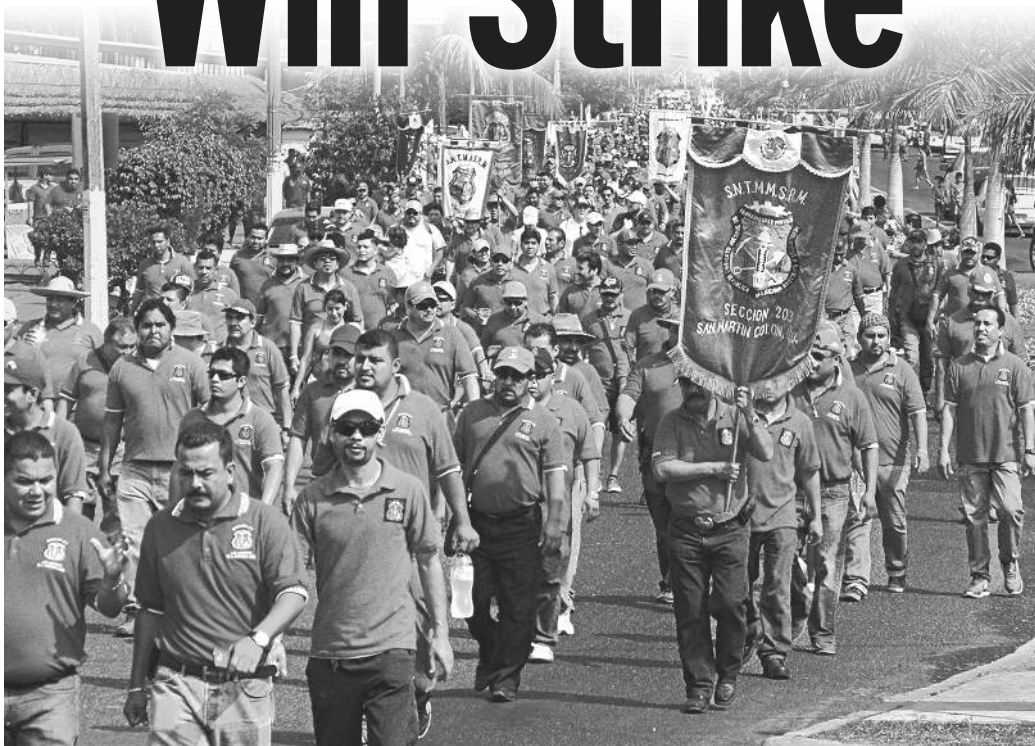
Mexican Steel Workers Win Strike

The following article is translated from *Espartaco* No. 45 (May 2016), newspaper of the Grupo Espartaquista de México.

ESPARTACO

In a refreshing show of power, Local 271 of the Mexican mining and steel workers union (SNTMMSRM) went on strike in March against the global steel giant ArcelorMittal. For more than a year, the biggest steel producer in the world has been telling its workers in Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán, that some of them will have to be sacrificed so that the company can maintain its obscene profits. (ArcelorMittal's CEO is worth \$13.1 billion.) After many months of negotiations and in response to more than 300 layoffs, 3,500 workers at the steel plant stopped production at noon on Friday, March 4. The workers paid no heed to the decision by the Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Board (JFCA) an hour earlier refusing government authorization for the strike.

Seeing that the workers were not cowed by the JFCA, the government threatened to send in its armed thugs to ensure the safety of the plant and its surroundings. The workers know exactly what that means, since two of their comrades died at the hands of government forces while defending their strike ten years ago. This time, the union mobilized quickly, got letters of support from powerful workers organizations internation-



Lázaro Cárdenas, April 20: After winning strike against ArcelorMittal, world's largest steel producer, trade unionists march in commemoration of two workers killed by police during 2006 strike.

ally and led a demonstration on March 12 of about 10,000 people, including other union contingents (notably the SNTE/CNTE teachers). In the end, the union settled the strike; instead of being laid off, 125 unionized workers were relocated and

81 took voluntary early retirement with 100,000 pesos [\$5,500] in severance pay. The workers also won no reprisals and full pay for the days of the strike.

The SNTMMSRM as a long history of confrontation with the mining bosses.

The fact that miners receive better wages than most workers in Mexico is a reflection of their being organized in a union and being willing to play hardball. Likewise, the bosses understand that their profits derive from the labor of the miners, steel workers and others who play a role in the production of steel. The bosses would like to destroy the union and trample on the workers at will. They have not succeeded, though not for lack of trying.

On 19 February 2006, a mine explosion in Pasta de Conchos, Coahuila, killed 65 miners. In the wake of this industrial murder, and in a clear attempt to divert attention away from itself and the mining bosses, the government launched a union-busting attack, removing the national leader of the union [Napoleon Gómez Urrutia], bringing charges against him and freezing the union's bank accounts. After other union officials were arrested, Gómez Urrutia fled to Canada. On the heels of repeated work stoppages throughout the country protesting the attack, a 2006 strike in Lázaro Cárdenas, which lasted over four months, handed the bosses and their government a humiliating defeat: the workers got their raise, they got paid for the duration of the strike, and the company had to recognize Gómez Urrutia as general secretary of the union.

We oppose binding arbitration in the struggles between labor and capital. The government tries to pretend, through the JFCA, that it is a neutral intermediary

continued on page 9

Poland: Far-Right Government Targets Immigrants, Women, Leftists

We print below the translation of an article from *Platforma Spartakusowców* No. 20 (April 2016), newspaper of the *Spartakusowska Grupa Polski*, Polish section of the International Communist League.

Platforma SPARTAKUSOWCÓW

Since its victory in the parliamentary elections last October, the clerical-chauvinist Law and Justice (PiS) Party led by Jarosław Kaczyński has launched a series of rapid-fire measures aimed at stifling dissent and implementing its reactionary agenda. While the PiS previously led a coalition government a decade ago, and Lech Kaczyński, Jarosław's twin brother, was president until his death in 2010, this is the first time since the restoration of capitalism in Poland in 1989-90 that a single party controls the presidency and both the Senate and the Sejm [the lower chamber of parliament]. With Kaczyński firmly in charge from the backseat, President Andrzej Duda, elected in May 2015, and newly elected Prime Minister Beata Szydło have rushed to consolidate the party's grip on the state administration.

The state media, the civil service and the heads of the military, the police, the special (intelligence) services and state-



7,000-strong protest in front of Polish parliament against total ban on abortion, April 9. Placards read: "Sentenced to death by 'defenders of life'" and "Hands off our wombs."

owned companies have been purged and replaced by regime loyalists. The Constitutional Tribunal, which is perceived by the PiS as an obstacle on the road to total control, has been paralyzed. Attorney General Zbigniew Ziobro, who held the same post in the previous PiS government, will have the power to intervene in any investigation and to utilize illegally obtained evidence.

The planned law on "anti-terrorist activities" vastly expands the powers of the intelligence services and police for spying and repression, especially against foreigners. Published materials will be censored for "injuring or defaming the Polish Republic or the Polish nation." The new government also plans to create a 35,000-strong territorial defense militia this year. Drawn

from existing paramilitary formations, many of them fascist, this militia is to be used against immigrants and other "threats" to "state security" (ncss.org.pl, 5 April). All of this has been accompanied by a steady fusillade of threats against immigrants, Muslims, Jews, women and leftists, including a frontal assault on what few reproductive rights women retain in Catholic-dominated capitalist Poland.

The PiS scored just less than 38 percent of the vote in the parliamentary election, but this was enough to defeat the former governing coalition, Civic Platform (PO) and the Polish Peasant Party (PSL). Joining these parties in the Sejm are the "free market" Nowoczesna [Modern] party of banker Ryszard Petru and the reactionary populist Kukiz'15 coalition led by rock star Paweł Kukiz, which includes a number of legislators from the fascist National Movement. The PiS was able to get an absolute majority in the Sejm because several parties failed to get the minimum number of votes needed for parliamentary representation. These include the Razem [Together] Party, a petty-bourgeois grouping that stands for a more "social" way of managing capitalism. Also absent from the Sejm is the social-democratic Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), a product of

continued on page 10