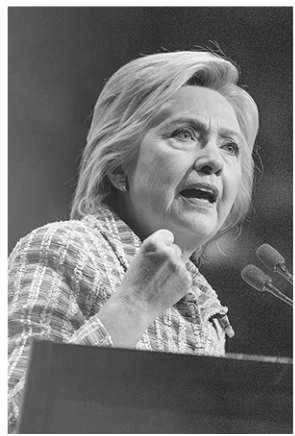


War Criminals Rally Behind Hawk Clinton



AP (inset); U.S. Army



Xinhua

Hillary Clinton (inset) advocates more aggressive U.S. policies toward Russia and was main promoter of 2011 war in Libya. Left: Anti-missile system deployed during NATO exercises in Poland, January. Right: June 2011 NATO bombing of Libyan capital, Tripoli.

Coming off the Democratic National Convention—where retired four-star Marine general John Allen roused the party faithful into jingoistic chants of “USA! USA!”—Hillary Clinton has been racking up endorsements from a veritable rogues’ gallery of U.S. imperialism’s leading warmongers, mass murderers and Dr. Strangeloves. In early August, 50 former top national security advisors to Republican administrations going back to Richard Nixon signed a letter declaring that their party’s presidential nominee, Donald Trump, “would be the most reckless President in American history.” What moved them to jump ship was not Trump’s flagrant racism, a card the GOP has been playing for decades, albeit somewhat more *sotto voce*.

Rather, these Republicans lost it when Trump opined that he would not necessarily support the Baltic NATO states if Russia attacked. For more than a decade, the U.S. imperialists have been provoking capitalist Russia, including through a military buildup of NATO forces on its borders. Now the Democrats and many Republicans are seizing on Trump’s stated affinity for Vladimir Putin to portray him as a Manchurian candidate, a puppet for the Russian president. In a 5 August *New York Times* op-ed piece titled “I Ran the C.I.A. Now I’m Endorsing Hillary Clinton,” Michael Morell, former acting director of the CIA, put it baldly: “In the intelligence business, we would say that Mr. Putin had recruited Mr. Trump as an unwitting agent of the Russian Federation.”

In contrast, Morell promotes Clinton’s qualifications to be Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism. He points to her role as an “early advocate of the raid that brought Bin Laden to justice” (i.e., murdered him and threw his body into the sea) and a consistent promoter of a “more aggressive approach” in Syria (i.e., bomb ‘em back to the Stone Age). He salutes her willingness to “use force” and “her

Capitalist Green Party No Alternative

We Need a Revolutionary Workers Party!

capacity to make the most difficult decision of all—whether to put young American women and men in harm’s way.” No wonder that she has for months been getting the support of several leading neocons who worry that Trump is an “unreliable” loose cannon. In short, Clinton is a proven, gold-plated war hawk.

Donald Trump is a dangerous demagogue, capable of saying and doing just about anything. And there is plenty for working people and the oppressed to fear as he incites a frenzy of “America First” chauvinist reaction among his supporters, who include the race-terrorists of the KKK and other fascists. It is this fear that the Democrats have cynically played on to get black people, immigrants, workers and the now-dejected youthful followers of Bernie Sanders to rally behind Clinton.

In the Democratic primaries, 77 percent of the black vote went to Clinton. Overwhelmingly, black people see the former party of the Confederacy and the Jim Crow South as the only option to defeat Trump. It was heartbreaking to see the mothers of Sandra Bland, Eric Garner, Trayvon Martin and others killed at the hands of the cops or racist vigilantes on stage at the Democratic Convention for the coronation of a woman who reviled young black men as “superpredators” and backed her husband’s racist anti-crime bill and the destruction of welfare.

As always the labor misleaders offered their services, with AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka also taking the stage to push the whopping lie that Clinton will “protect workplace rights” and “stand

up to Wall Street.” The union tops’ allegiance to the Democrats is an old shell game. Their subordination of the interests of the working class to the party of their exploiters has left a trail of broken strikes, busted unions and the ongoing destruction of the livelihood of working people.

Meanwhile, as she tries to court Republicans, Clinton’s attentions are directed not to the traditional base of the Democrats but to wooing Wall Street and the generals, spies and other operatives of U.S. imperialism into her “big tent.” And she has been very successful. As *Black Agenda Report* editor Glen Ford wrote in “Hillary Stuffs Entire U.S. Ruling Class into Her Big, Nasty Tent” (10 August):

“It’s a funky place to be—especially for the traditional Black, brown and labor ‘base’ of the party, now squished into a remote and malodorous corner of the tent, near the latrine, clutching the pages of a party platform that was never meant to bind anyone....

“She is the candidate of the imperial war machine, whose operatives have flocked to her corner in dread of Trump’s willingness to make ‘deals’ with the Russians and Chinese. She is the candidate of multinational corporations, which are perfectly confident she is lying about her stance on TPP and other trade deals. And she is the candidate of the CIA and its fellow global outlaws, who will thrive as never before with a president in the White House who cackles ‘We came, we saw, he died’ when the leader of an African county is murdered by Islamic jihadists supported by the United States.”

If elected, Clinton will have her trigger-happy fingers on the nuclear button. For his part, Ford, like other radical liber-

als, not to mention a cast of self-proclaimed socialists, looks for refuge in the capitalist Green Party.

From Bernie Sanders to the Greens

Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin succinctly explained that the fraud of bourgeois democracy amounts to deciding “once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people.” In this contest between perhaps the two most despised candidates in U.S. history, we aim to drive home the Marxist understanding of the class nature of the capitalist order, and the need to build a multiracial revolutionary workers party independent of and in opposition to the rule of the capitalist class enemy and all its parties.

In contrast, organizations like Socialist Alternative (SAIt) and the International Socialist Organization (ISO), notwithstanding their rare genuflections to Marxism, are busy trying to pump some air into the deflated tire of bourgeois electoralism by channeling discontent into support for the Green Party’s presidential candidate, Jill Stein. Having spent the last year rallying behind Bernie Sanders and his calls for a “political revolution against the billionaire class,” SAIt wailed that Sanders “walked out on that strategy, and called for a vote for the very establishment we have been fighting against.” In fact, he did exactly what he promised when he launched

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FROM THE ARCHIVES
OF THE ICL

—25 Years Ago—

“Soviet Workers:
Defeat Yeltsin-Bush
Counterrevolution!”

See Page 2



“Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!”

25 Years Ago

Twenty-five years ago, Boris Yeltsin’s ascension to power in the Soviet Union was a pivotal event leading to the restoration of capitalism in the home of the October Revolution. We reprint below excerpts from “Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!” (WV No. 533, 30 August 1991), which was translated into Russian and circulated in over 100,000 copies throughout the USSR. As Trotskyists, we had always defended the Soviet Union against imperialism and internal counterrevolution because it was a workers state, based on a planned, collectivized economy. At the same time, we fought for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist, nationalist caste sitting atop the workers state and to return to the internationalism and proletarian democracy of Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks.

In August 1991, there was a botched coup attempt by supposedly hardline opponents of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, who was committed to the gradual reintroduction of capitalism while also pushing *glasnost* (openness). The coup plotters were no less committed to capitalist restoration; they merely sought to maintain the USSR as a unitary state (dominated by Russia). Seizing on this coup, U.S. imperialism (then led by the first President Bush) employed its stooge, Yeltsin, to mount a counterbid for power.

A month after the coup, we forthrightly stated: “In an armed struggle pitting outright restorationists against recalcitrant elements of the bureaucracy, defense of the collectivized economy would have been placed on the agenda whatever the Stalinists’ intentions” (WV No. 535, 27 September 1991). However, all wings of the bureaucracy proved equally bankrupt. As Bush openly backed Yeltsin and the petty-bourgeois rabble and fascistic scum supporting him, the pathetic coup plotters refused to lift a finger. They ignominiously collapsed within days.

When we issued the statement below, the proletarian state power had been fractured but not yet destroyed. The imperialist-installed Yeltsin regime was fragile and the working class had not moved. Ours was the first widely circulated piece of propaganda calling for workers action to smash the counterrevolutionary drive. We concretized this perspective through calling for independent workers committees to prevent layoffs and privatization by taking over control of production, for the formation of committees of soldiers and officers in the armed forces to prevent anti-Communist purges and the use of the army against the interests of the workers, and for multinational workers defense guards to ward off communalist massacres.



Top: Counterrevolutionary rabble on Yeltsin’s barricades in Moscow, August 1991. Below: George Bush and Boris Yeltsin celebrate capitalist restoration in former Soviet Union at signing of arms control treaty, January 1993.

However, decades of Stalinist rule had systematically destroyed the consciousness of the Soviet working class, rendering it mute and passive. Under the anti-Marxist dogma of building “socialism in one country,” the Stalinist misrulers capitulated to the imperialists and suppressed numerous international revolutionary opportunities, for example, China in 1927, Spain in the 1930s and Italy following World War II. Through repression and lies they methodically attacked every aspect of the revolutionary and internationalist consciousness of the Soviet proletariat. Finally, with the bureaucracy having fatally undermined the Soviet economy through gross mismanagement and corruption, the heirs of Stalin proclaimed that socialized property had been a “failed experiment” and capitalism was really the only possible system. At the same time, the accompanying virulent nationalism was a huge impetus to counterrevolution in East Europe and the multinational Soviet Union.

As the document of the Second International Conference of the ICL in 1992 stated: “The events of August 1991,

placing the forces of open capitalist restoration in the ascendancy in the Soviet Union, marked a turning point in contemporary world history. A piecemeal consolidation of this counterrevolution has taken place. The degenerated workers state of Stalin and his heirs has been destroyed, representing a world-historic defeat for the international working class” (“For the Communism of Lenin and Trotsky!” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 47-48, Winter 1992-93).

The bourgeoisie and the bulk of its camp followers on the reformist left hailed the counterrevolution and proclaimed the “death of communism.” Meanwhile, the peoples of the former USSR were

plunged into the most desperate poverty. U.S. imperialism, no longer challenged by Soviet military might, was emboldened to launch more wars and occupations against dependent and semicolonial peoples across the world.

Unevenly and not without contradictions, a rightward shift took place internationally, reflected in a retrogression in proletarian consciousness, wherein the connection between working-class struggle and the goals of socialism was severed. We in the ICL, the party of the Russian Revolution, continue the struggle to win the working class to Marxism in order to open the road to new Octobers.

* * *

The working people of the Soviet Union, and indeed the workers of the world, have suffered an unparalleled disaster whose devastating consequences are now being played out. The ascendancy of Boris Yeltsin, who offers himself as Bush’s man, coming off a botched coup by Mikhail Gorbachev’s former aides, has unleashed a counterrevolutionary tide across the land of the October Revolution. The first workers state in history, sapped and undermined by decades of Stalinist bureaucratic misrule, lies in tatters. The state power has been fractured, the Communist Party—its bureaucratic core—shattered and banned from the KGB and armed forces, the multinational union is ripping apart as one republic after another proclaims secession.

But while Yeltsin & Co. now see a clear field to push through a forced-draft reintroduction of capitalism, *the outcome is not yet definitively decided*. As the imperialists rejoice and the pro-capitalist petty bourgeoisie exult, Soviet workers are facing a disaster of catastrophic proportions: every gain for which they, their parents and grandparents sacrificed is on the chopping block. An explosion of even greater nationalist strife is looming. The lash of capitalist exploitation being introduced amid universal economic dislocation threatens widespread hunger and mass unemployment in the coming winter. The Soviet proletariat, whose capacity for militant action was dramatically shown in the miners strike of the summer

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Spartacist

Moscow, November 1991:
ICL banner at Red Square rally on anniversary of Bolshevik Revolution.
Inset: Russian-language statement calling on Soviet workers to defeat counterrevolution.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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

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No. 1094

26 August 2016

Бюллетень Спартаковцев

SPARTACIST

Приложение № 5

ЦЕНА: 10 коп.

Обанкротившийся сталинизм открывает шлюзы для капиталистической реставрации

Советские рабочие! Долой ельцинско-бушевскую контрреволюцию!

27 августа 1991 года. Рабочие Советского Союза, а в действительности и рабочие всего мира, потеряли безграничную культуру, опустошающую наследия которой начинают проявляться сейчас.

После провала переворота рост контрреволюции в Советском Союзе поддерживает в настоящий момент прогнивший режим "новой мировой войны", доминирующий в военном отношении. Социальных

Unionize Low-Wage Workers!

The Service Employees International Union (SEIU)-initiated Fight for \$15 campaign held its first national convention on August 12-13 in Richmond, Virginia. Several thousand young and overwhelmingly black and Latino workers from some 20 industries across the country, including fast food, home health care and airport operations, were bused in for the occasion. Packing the meeting hall and filling the streets in a follow-up march, the boisterous workers expressly wanted to engage in a fight to achieve union representation and end the poverty wages and tenuous employment that are increasingly common for workers—black, white and Latino—in capitalist America. Winning such gains will take serious class battles. But the SEIU bureaucracy, long wedded to the illusion of a partnership of labor and capital, is committed to the opposite course: the lie that the way to advance workers’ interests (here a still-paltry \$15 minimum wage) is to lobby capitalist Democratic Party politicians.

Union officials set up the weekend as one big pre-election photo-op for the Democrats, who no less than the Republicans are a party of the capitalist class enemy. In her headline speech, SEIU honcho Mary Kay Henry contended that labor unity “is especially important this year, with this election. We all know that one of the candidates for president is try-



August 13: Low-wage workers at Fight for \$15 national mobilization in Richmond, Virginia.

ing to divide us in dangerous and sometimes frightening ways.” Donald Trump is certainly frightening, but Hillary Clinton—the favorite of Wall Street—is no “friend of labor.” Notably, several black workers told *Workers Vanguard* that they were not voting for any candidate.

The “Richmond Resolution” passed at the convention called for pushing the right candidates for president, Senate and other

elected offices, which alongside other activities would supposedly “balance the power that the richest Americans have in our government.” No amount of voting for, or pressuring, the Democrats will change the reality that the government rules on behalf of the capitalist masters of this class-divided society, in which the handful who own the banks and industry amass profits by exploiting the laboring masses. There can be no “balanced power” between the exploiters and the exploited in the capitalist government. The only way for workers to throw off their chains is to wrest the productive wealth from the hands of the capitalists in a socialist revolution and establish a workers government.

The Fight for \$15’s upcoming September 12 national day of action planned for state capitols across the country is more of the same—another attempt by the union tops to divert into legalistic channels the evident fighting spirit of the low-wage workers, who are frustrated by the campaign’s four years of incessant begging with little to show for it. Truth is, an entirely different kind of mobilization is needed to win increased pay and union recognition from the bosses: strike action at the workplace. By withholding their labor and cutting off the flow of profits,

workers have the potential to wrest better wages and working conditions from the employers and to organize the unorganized. Unions are forged in class struggle. With low-wage workers often atomized and easily replaced, crucially important to victory are concrete acts of labor solidarity by existing unionized workforces in related industries, such as the transportation and warehouse supply chain in the case of fast food.

Campaign organizers said they selected Richmond, the seat of the former Confederacy, as the convention site in order to draw the link between the country’s racist history and low wages. (Conveniently for the union bureaucrats, the city is also the home base of Democratic vice presidential nominee Tim Kaine.) This link was hardly news to the many black workers in attendance. Chants of “Black lives matter!” erupted throughout the weekend’s events in protest against the rampant cop terror endemic to this viciously racist society, where the black population is confronted every day by the legacy of chattel slavery.

With anti-black racism wielded by the bosses to pit black and white workers against one another, what is urgently needed is for the working class as a whole to champion black liberation. Especially in the South, any serious effort to unionize will have to directly confront the deep racial divide that has crippled past organizing drives. The labor fakers, who do their level best to avoid struggle even to defend and expand their own organizations, must go, to be replaced by a new union leadership willing to fight it out class against class.

After the march through the streets of Richmond ended at a statue of Confederate general Robert E. Lee, pockets of workers cried out: “Tear it down!” Like chattel slavery before it, the system of wage slavery deserves to perish. To those who want to make a fight of it instead of begging the Democrats for crumbs, we offer the perspective of building a multiracial workers party in which black workers will be within the front ranks. Such a party will be dedicated to shattering the capitalist order once and for all and ushering in an egalitarian socialist society. ■

Workers Vanguard

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Break with the Democrats and Republicans! No Support to Capitalist Greens!

Elections 2016: Racist Bigots and Imperialist War Hawks

We Need a Multiracial Workers Party to Fight for Socialist Revolution!

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Sunday, October 16
Time and location to be announced
For information: (510) 839-0851
slbayarea@fastmail.net

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Saturday, October 8, 2 p.m.
Quaker House, 5615 S. Woodlawn Ave.
For information: (312) 563-0441
chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net

LOS ANGELES

Saturday, October 15, 3 p.m.
Metropolitan Community Church
4607 Prospect Ave.
(One block east of Vermont, near the Vermont/Sunset Red Line Metro Station)
For information: (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

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Saturday, September 24, 3 p.m.
322 West 48th Street, First Floor
Manhattan
(Between 8th and 9th Avenues—Take A, C or E to 42nd Street)
For information: (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net

MONTREAL

Vendredi 16 septembre à 18h30
Un témoignage
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26 AUGUST 2016

3

Germany's “War on Terror” Threatens Immigrants, Leftists, Workers

We print below a translation of an August 19 leaflet issued by the Spartakist-Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands, German section of the International Communist League.

The fatal shooting of nine immigrants in Munich on July 22 was an abhorrent racist crime. The man who did it was a fascist student, who chose to carry out his attack on the fifth anniversary of the mass murder in Norway of social-democratic youth by the fascist Anders Breivik. In the same week, there were two terrible terrorist attacks near Würzburg (July 18) and in Ansbach (July 24), both supposedly carried out by ISIS sympathizers. In Ansbach, 12 people were injured by the bomb with which a Syrian refugee blew himself up. Near Würzburg, a 17-year-old, probably of Afghan origin, attacked tourists from Hong Kong on a train with an ax and knife, seriously injuring five people.

The bourgeois state had evidently been waiting for an opportunity to set in motion its machinery of repression. On the Friday evening after the attack in Munich, the whole city was paralyzed under the flimsy explanation that the cops were looking for several attackers with rifles. They cordoned off the Stachus [central square], shut down the entire public transport system until Saturday morning and ordered the whole population of the third-largest city in Germany to stay at home. There was talk of a state of emergency, and 2,300 police and security forces were deployed, including the GSG 9 (special unit of the federal police). Forty-four men from the Austrian anti-terror unit Cobra were flown in by helicopter. To put some impetus behind her demand to make it easier to deploy the Bundeswehr [German army] domestically, Minister of Defense Ursula von der Leyen put 100 soldiers of a military police regiment on alert.

The whole thing was a well-prepared civil war maneuver, basically aimed at practicing ways of suppressing the working population when they again move against the capitalist system. The capitalists know that their system arouses the opposition of the exploited. In France, the Socialist Party-led government used the ongoing state of emergency, supposedly imposed against Islamic terrorists, against the mass mobilizations of workers seeking to stop the new anti-union law. For the last 15 years, the German government has also been using the “war against terror” as a pretext for the militaristic mobilization of the state; this has been directed above all against Muslims but ultimately has the workers movement as a whole in its sights.

A special forces commando shot



Heavily armed police during lockdown of Munich following shooting by lone fascist, July 22.

dead the perpetrator of the train attack near Würzburg as he was fleeing. When Renate Künast (Green Party member of parliament) rightly questioned this targeted killing, the head of the German cop association started a vicious online campaign against her—which some Green politicians joined—to nip in the bud any and all criticism of the role of the police. Bavarian minister of the interior Joachim Herrmann (CSU) [Christian Social Union, Bavarian affiliate of Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU)] likewise immediately justified the final deadly shot.

Four days after the attack in Ansbach, Chancellor Merkel announced a nine-point plan “against terror,” which is intended to further tighten the national security laws in force since 2001. The most ominous aspect is that the Bundeswehr and police can now carry out joint exercises for “major terrorist situations.” This June, the CDU/CSU-SPD [Social Democratic Party] government implemented a new package of anti-terror laws. Further, it is setting up a new office to assist the secret service and the Federal Criminal Police to decrypt internet communications—one more attack on everyone's privacy. **Down with the “war against terror”! Down with all the national security laws!**

The government is seeking to make it easier to deport people more quickly, now even to war zones like Syria. The federal minister of the interior, Thomas de Maizière, is planning to restrict medical confidentiality, which is especially intended to intimidate those doctors

who courageously campaign against the deportation of refugees. CSU and CDU ministers are agitating to abolish dual citizenship, which the SPD leadership has so far rejected. It is in the most basic interests of the working class not to be divided along ethnic lines, but to forge unity of all workers regardless of background. The unions must work for the integration of refugees into the working class, with equal pay for equal work. This will also enormously improve the chances of fighting against the capitalists and their government. **Hands off dual citizenship! Full citizenship rights for all who live here! For union action to stop deportations!**

The intensified state terror at home goes hand in hand with German imperialism's increased interventions abroad. The Bundeswehr is now deployed in Africa, the Near East, the Mediterranean, the Balkans and Afghanistan. We demand in every case: **Bundeswehr out!** German imperialism has an extremely bloody history; in its war of annihilation against the Soviet Union (1941-45), over 27 million Soviet citizens were killed. The Hitler regime shored up the German bourgeoisie's rule and destroyed the independent organizations of the working class. The bourgeoisie is responsible for the Holocaust—the industrial murder of millions of Jews, Roma and Sinti [Gypsies]—and the persecution and murder of communists and countless others. The Wehrmacht occupied the Balkans and subjugated the peoples living there. Today, German imperialism still sees the Balkans and East Europe as its backyard and defends its rapacious interests there against the other imperialists. Through the EU, it subjugates the other peoples of Europe, raking in massive profits with the aid of the euro. **Down with the EU and German imperialism!**

The imperialists are the biggest terrorists in the world, and their destruction of the Near East, which is escalating day by day, is responsible for people being driven to flee, some of them into the arms of Islamists. The development of ISIS is the direct result of the policies of the U.S. and other imperialists, who destroyed countries like Libya, Iraq and Syria. We welcome every setback for the imperialists and therefore take a military side with the Islamic State when it fights against the imperialists and their ground troops, which are the mainly Kurdish SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces) and the *pesh merga*. The only solution for the oppressed masses is a series of workers revolutions with the perspective of a socialist federation of the Near East. **Imperialists out of the Near East!**

Deploying the Bundeswehr at home is nothing new, but in contrast to France or the U.S. [e.g., the National Guard], for instance, it is not seen as normal. After Germany's defeat in World War II and the end of the fascist regime, police and military functions were initially strictly separated. However, when the Bundeswehr was reorganized, reserve units were set up for “homeland protection.” Since 2013, 2,700 soldiers have been on standby in the 16 federal states to assist the police when the situation requires. An article in *taz* newspaper, “Soldiers for the Rebellious People” (10 August 2012), explains what kind of situations are meant:

“According to a general clause of the European Union, they could be deployed to assist in the case of a political general strike against supply facilities, violent mass protests, social disturbances or civil disobedience actions such as strikes and/or street barricades affecting transport and energy or the health care system.”

In 2008, the Bundeswehr was deployed against leftist demonstrators at the G8 summit in Rostock. Fighter jets flew low over the heads of the leftists, who were simply protesting the gathering of imperialist heads of state. Next year, the imperialist G20 plans to meet in central Hamburg. The intimidation against possible protests started early with a brutal cop raid in July on two leftist housing projects in the Hafenstrasse. Two hundred fifty cops, some armed with automatic weapons, forced their way into the houses; the residents, refugee solidarity activists, were threatened at gunpoint and 30 people were detained. The workers movement has an interest in defending leftists against all state terror because these are the same cops whose job is to protect the capitalists' private property and who act as scabherders during strikes. We say: **Cops out of the DGB union federation!**

The reformist left, with the leadership of the Left Party in the front line, see things quite differently. Sahra Wagenknecht welcomed the cop action in Munich, and she calls on the state to carry out such actions more often. In a press statement of July 25 she explained: “Mrs. Merkel and the government now have a special responsibility to win people's confidence in the continued ability of the state and its security forces to act.” Wagenknecht wants to strengthen this bourgeois state which, as Marx and Engels explained, is nothing other than the instrument of oppression

continued on page 9



April 5: German defense minister Ursula von der Leyen with German troops at Camp Castor in Mali.

SPARTAKIST

HEIMATGEBIER VON DER SPARTAKISTEN-ARBEITERPARTEI DEUTSCHLANDS

№ 213 SOMMER 2016 € 0,50

EU: Feind von Arbeitern und Immigranten

Brexit: Niederlage für die Bankiers und Bosse Europas!

London, 20. Juni – Spartakist League Britain demonstriert mit Tausenden von Corbyn-Anhängern in Westminster. Tausende sind gegen die anstehende britische EU-Entscheidung für ein Arbeiter Europa.

Über das britische Parlament, das die EU-Entscheidung über die britische Mitgliedschaft in der EU entscheidet, wird diskutiert. Die EU-Entscheidung ist ein wichtiger Schritt in der Entwicklung der britischen Mitgliedschaft in der EU. Die EU-Entscheidung ist ein wichtiger Schritt in der Entwicklung der britischen Mitgliedschaft in der EU.

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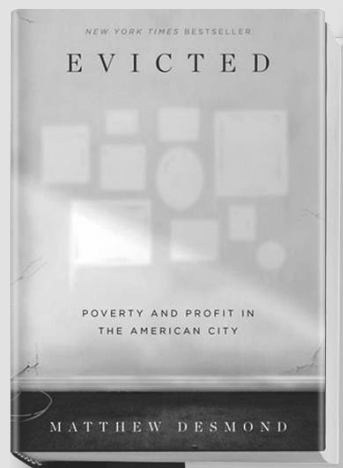
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Evicted

Poverty and Profit in the American City

A Book Review by Cliff Edwards and Simone Hayes



Harvard sociologist Matthew Desmond's 2016 book *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* examines the impact on the poor of rising housing costs and declining/stagnating incomes in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crash. Many tenants now pay more than 50 percent of their incomes in rent—over 70 percent with the soaring cost of utilities included—challenging their ability to survive on a daily basis. The result: a plague of evictions. Desmond's book documents the lives of eight individuals and their families—both black and white—in the process of eviction from their homes. There are, as well, sketches of a landlord or two, seemingly included in the interest of “fairness” to those who find themselves compelled to throw their tenants out in order to turn a profit—and landlords are an integral component of Desmond's purported solution to the housing crisis.

Evicted has been greeted with one rave review after another from critics across the spectrum of bourgeois opinion, from the left-liberal *Guardian* to the plutocratic *Wall Street Journal*. In a review in the *New York Times* (22 February), Jennifer Senior described the book as “unignorable,” concluding that “it will no longer be possible to have a serious discussion about poverty without having a serious discussion about housing.” The fact that the poor, especially the black and Hispanic residents of America's ghettos and barrios, live in dismal circumstances and are often thrown into the streets is hardly a revelation—except, evidently, to the excited reviewers. Nonetheless, when Desmond details the struggles of those who have only a few bucks left after their rent is paid, he is trenchant and compelling, perhaps informed by his parents' eviction while he was in college.

An American City

Desmond conducted his research in Milwaukee, which he notes is “a fairly typical midsize metropolitan area,” much like Minneapolis, Baltimore, Cincinnati and many others. In Milwaukee, one in fourteen renters is evicted by court order each year. There are almost as many “informal” evictions—where your stuff is dragged out to the curb without legal authorization. One in five black female renters in Milwaukee reports being evicted as an adult, triple the rate for white women. Court records show that women living in black areas of Milwaukee are twice as likely to be evicted as their male neighbors. “If incarceration had come to define the lives of men from impoverished black neighborhoods, eviction was shaping the lives of women,” Desmond writes, concluding: “Poor black men were locked up. Poor black women were locked out.”

Milwaukee is one of many cities in racist America that are described as the country's most segregated. During the civil rights era, hundreds of marches for integration were turned back by racist mobs and cop terror. An influx of immigration in the 1970s resulted in a segregated Latino enclave. To this day,

“separate and unequal” prevails in the city. Racist discrimination, cop harassment, poverty and unemployment trap black tenants in the worst slums of Milwaukee's North Side. Black tenants—and households with children—are most likely to have to endure broken windows and appliances; rats, roaches and bedbugs; lack of heat and failing plumbing. The slums also return high rates of profit for landlords—dilapidated property is cheap and chronically poor tenants have

exploiters to drive down living conditions across the board.

The Making of a Crisis

With rents nationally projected to rise another 8 percent this year, the living conditions of the working poor and the unemployed are likely to shift from the excruciating to the unendurable. Democratic president Bill Clinton's destruction of “welfare as we know it” in the 1990s means that today benefits barely cover



Lott/NY Times

Milwaukee family thrown out of home, February.

little choice but to accept crippling rent and horrific living conditions.

Desmond's research includes a run-down white trailer park in Milwaukee's far South Side. There he documented pervasive racial prejudice that obscured how much the white trailer park residents had in common with the black slum dwellers. Anti-black racism is a key ideological prop of American capitalism. Far from bestowing some form of privilege on white poor and working people, racism hampers social struggle and divides the working class, allowing the capitalist

rent for those who can even get welfare. The workfare program Clinton applied to the whole country was pioneered in Milwaukee, where it drove 22,000 desperate families off the welfare rolls. Since the 1980s, when many public housing projects began to be razed, such assistance for renters as was available from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has been in decline.

In 1992, HUD instituted a demolition program under the Orwellian acronym of HOPE VI that destroyed 270,000 units of public housing—a 19 percent decrease in

WV Photo



Halstead/Life

Destruction of Chicago public housing, State Street projects, July 1999. Right: President Bill Clinton signing draconian bill mandating eviction from public housing for those caught up in racist “war on drugs,” 1996.

public housing stock. At the same time, the federal government increased the use of housing vouchers. Vouchers—government payments to private landlords—became the largest housing subsidy program. Supposedly designed to cap the rent payments of qualifying recipients at 30 percent of their income, vouchers are available only for the poorest of the poor; the average income of voucher recipients is \$12,000 to \$14,000 a year. Only two million renters—a quarter of those supposedly eligible for such assistance—actually receive it. With no requirement for private landlords to accept housing vouchers, the program has reinforced residential segregation. The number of people receiving rent voucher assistance has frozen, while the number in need of assistance has gone up and up.

Desmond is well aware of this history. He characterizes the current state of affairs as “one of the worst affordable housing crises in generations.” Nevertheless, he projects the sunniest optimism regarding prospects for the future: “The good news is that much has already been accomplished. America has made impressive strides over the years when it comes to housing.” Well, not quite. In 1960, American renters paid on average 19 percent of their yearly income toward housing costs. Today that figure is 30 percent.

Liberal Delusions

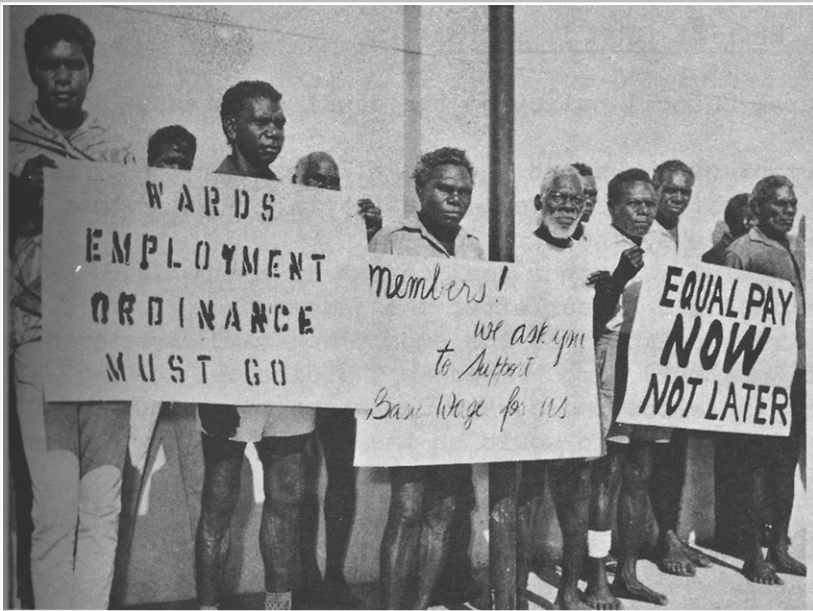
Desmond believes there is a simple solution to the housing crisis under capitalism. He advocates that the government provide housing vouchers to all low-income families to prevent them from paying a dime more than 30 percent of their incomes for rent. Under his scheme, landlords would be enjoined from raising rents but be guaranteed a “modest” profit, adjusted, of course, for inflation. In exchange for mandatory participation in the program and a ban on discriminatory practices, landlords would be spared a too stringent enforcement of building codes.

Further, Desmond sees guaranteed housing as a panacea for all of America's social ills. A home, in his mind, becomes almost a heaven on earth: “The home is the center of life. It is a refuge from the grind of work, the pressure of school, and the menace of the streets...the wellspring of personhood.” One is almost embarrassed to remind Desmond that there are elderly people who dine on pet food and die of heatstroke in their own homes.

Irrespective of his layering of schmaltz, Desmond's recommendations for reform border on the preposterous. The housing crisis is a product of a society organized on the basis of private profit, and of the ebbs and flows of employment and unemployment that are endemic to the capitalist system. Friedrich Engels vividly described that process in his 1872 pamphlet *The Housing Question*:

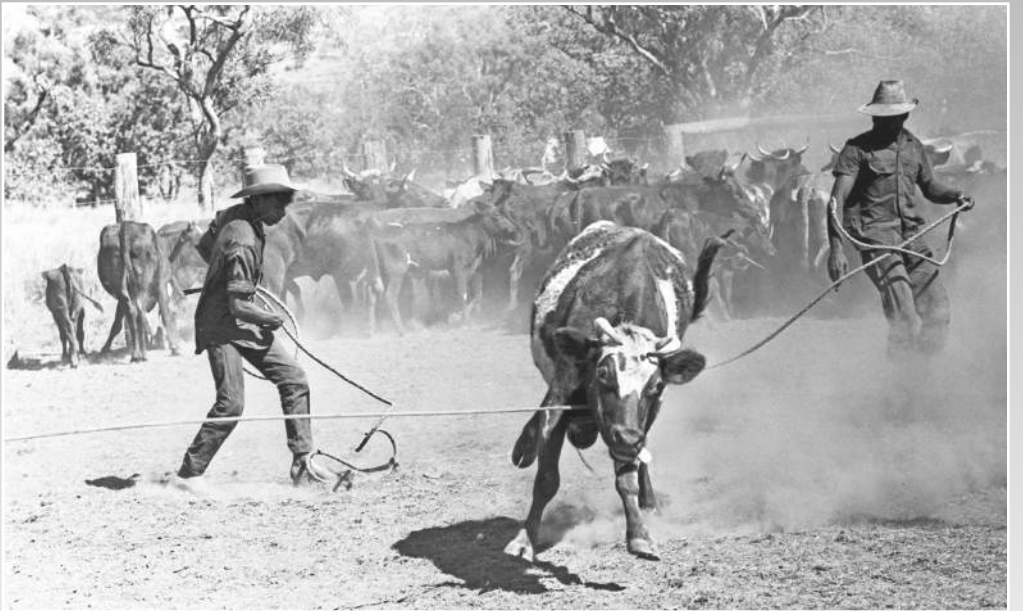
“In reality the bourgeoisie has only one method of settling the housing question after *its* fashion—that is to say, of settling it in such a way that the solution continually poses the question anew... No matter how different the reasons may be, the result is everywhere the same: the

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Northern Territory News/Fryer Library, University of Queensland

Left: Protest in Darwin, 1966, calling for unions to support Aboriginal stockmen's demand for equal pay. Right: Aboriginal stockmen were backbone of cattle industry in northern Australia.



Lipman/Fairfax

Australia: 1966 Aboriginal Stockmen's Strike

The following article is reprinted from Australasian Spartacist No. 229 (Winter 2016), newspaper of the Spartacist League of Australia.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the courageous Aboriginal stockmen's strike at the Wave Hill cattle station in the Northern Territory (NT). On 23 August 1966, head stockman Vincent Lingiari led 200 workers out on strike against the appalling conditions under which they were forced to live and work. They walked off with their families to a nearby welfare settlement and later set up camp at Daguragu (also known as Wattie Creek). This strike by Aboriginal workers for equal pay and conditions, and protesting the abusive treatment of Aboriginal women, provided an opportunity for class-struggle unity between Indigenous and white workers. Alongside the fight to extract improved conditions from the profit-bloated cattle

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companies and their government backers, this strike could have sparked broader labour struggles to draw Aboriginal workers into the organised labour movement and for full access to jobs, decent education, health and housing.

We have always referred to union support for the Wave Hill strike as a positive example of proletarian defence of Aboriginal rights. Indeed the strike prompted strong financial and other support from the ranks of powerful industrial unions across Australia. However, the struggle was derailed by the Laborite trade-union misleaders and their left-reformist Communist Party of Australia (CPA) flunkies who did not organise to shut down production and for broad-based industrial action. The CPA helped initiate the strike and had strong influence among the Aboriginal stockmen and within the labour movement. However, they were unwilling to mobilise the necessary class struggle as this would have meant a political fight against the Laborite misleaders of the workers movement. Instead of a proletarian-centred struggle that could have challenged the racist capitalist status quo, the CPA allowed the strike to dissipate and helped to divert it into a land rights campaign.

A defining feature of Australian capitalism has always been its savage repression of Aboriginal people. With their lands taken by bloody force, the Indigenous population were then shoved off to the fringes of society to suffer hideous, all-sided racist oppression and terror. The British colonisers almost obliterated the Aboriginal

For a Class-Struggle Fight for Aboriginal Rights!

people, leaving the shattered remnants of different clans who continue to be viciously oppressed today. We support any attempts by Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders to claw back some of the land stolen from them and get whatever financial compensation they can. In those locations where Aboriginal peoples have a land base, we defend whatever measure of political autonomy they are able to wrest from governments, including the right to govern their land and control its resources.

After more than two hundred years of sustained racist barbarism, today it is clear that the only "future" on offer for Aboriginal people under capitalism is a perpetuation of the crimes of the past. As we explain in our programmatic statement, *For a Workers Republic of Australia, Part of a Socialist Asia!* (1998), elementary justice for Aboriginal people demands not some limited, ultimately reversible, concessions in the bosses' courts but the expropriation of industry and agriculture through workers revolution.

There is a fundamental class divide in this society. On one side are the capitalists, the tiny layer that owns the banks, mines and industry. On the other side is the working class, which makes the wheels of industry turn. It is workers social power to stop the flow of profits that must be unleashed in defence of Aboriginal rights.

The Wave Hill stockmen's strike covered massive territory, crossed racial lines with its solidarity, and was broadly popular amongst workers. The ban by the meatworkers union on handling carcasses from the Vestey Group, who owned the Wave Hill station, points to the type of concrete industrial struggle that was necessary to win. A class-struggle leadership within the unions would have fought to bring striking Aboriginal workers into union membership and helped organise actions across the industry. It would have fought to bring out stockmen at other stations, and for bans and stoppages at meatworks and on the waterfront, to bring the racist, profit-gouging cattle barons to their knees. Such an outcome would have been a huge victory for workers in general and Aboriginal people in particular, striking a powerful blow against "White Australia" capitalism and opening up wider possibilities for struggle.

Exploitation and Protest in the North

Important historical research has uncovered much about the bloody frontier European "settlement" of Australia. This has been branded the "black armband" view of history by some right-wing defenders of the bourgeois order. They seek to deny that "White Australia" capitalism was

founded on the historic near-genocide, uprooting and dispossession of Aboriginal clans. They deny that, ever since, the ruling class has treated those who survived with racist contempt. Settlers wanting land for cattle and sheep grazing drove the Aboriginal people off their land. The 19th and early 20th centuries were marked by hideous massacres. Justifying this attempted destruction of a people, Aborigines were declared a doomed race and policies were put in place to try to make that happen. From 1937, "Assimilation" of Aborigines became the official policy of all state governments. Aboriginal people of mixed descent were to be "made the same" as white people through forced assimilation. Those considered "full bloods" were to be isolated on reserves to eventually die out.

The northern cattle export industry began to grow in the 1880s. The government encouraged pastoralists to use Aboriginal people within areas they leased as more or less free labour. On horseback, Aboriginal riders were highly skilled and could muster cattle in the rough terrain of country they knew intimately. They proved to be the backbone of the northern cattle industry. After World War II, beef exports accumulated huge profits for the pastoral companies. Vesteys, a British-based conglomerate, was one of the largest. It held leases across vast areas. Pastoralists leased land from the government at exceptionally low cost and were exempt from paying Aboriginal employees if they claimed to undertake a "duty of care" to their family dependants. Old-age pensions and maternity allowances, which Aboriginal people only became entitled to receive at the end of the 1950s, were paid to mission and sta-



Campbell/Fairfax



ABC

Racist Australian capitalism today: Aboriginal family in decrepit government housing, 2006. Torture of Aboriginal youth in juvenile detention facility, exposed on national television in July.

Australia...

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they must extend the strike to other stations. In September the strike spread to Mt. Sanford and Helen’s Springs stations. Victory would require choking off Vestey Group operations through pulling out other stations and wider union solidarity actions. Frank Hardy and CPA supporters began to mobilise for financial backing from the unions.

In October 1966, Actors Equity (now part of the Media Entertainment & Arts Alliance) officially sponsored Dexter Daniels and Lupgna Giari on a speaking tour of southern cities to address workers and the public. Workers downed tools to hear the stockmen’s first-hand accounts of extreme exploitation and degradation at the hands of the beef barons. The Water-side Workers Federation (now part of the maritime union) donated thousands of dollars to the strike fund, while building workers in Sydney, miners in Wollongong and meatworkers, seamen and wharfies in Queensland all began a levy on their pay for the striking stockmen. Numerous other unions also contributed financial aid. This impressive groundswell of solidarity and respect for the Aboriginal strikers should have been translated into solid class actions capable of forcing Vestey’s and its government backers to capitulate.

There was a hiatus from October 1966 to March 1967 during the wet season, when Aboriginal workers were usually “laid off” by the stations and expected to fend for themselves. It was considered that the conflict would resume after that. Hardy quotes Dexter Daniels during the southern speaking tour: “If the pastoralists don’t pay up before Christmas, after the wet season we will call more stations out.” Inspired by the outpouring of solidarity from unionists, Lupgna Giari declared, “If the Aborigines don’t get proper money before next muster I gotta...talk to all them stockmen. They gotta walkoff and come to camp with us at Newcastle Water. That only way.” In early 1967 some strikers accepted work on two smaller stations that made a better pay offer. The CPA-influenced NTCAR talked of bringing out all Aboriginal pastoral workers to completely paralyse the cattle industry sometime in April, but in the end nothing happened. From April to October, during the dry season, unions continued sending financial and other aid to the striking stockmen. However, in the absence of broader struggle, some demoralisation set in. There was less talk of winning equal wages and more of demanding the government return some of the lands seized from them a few generations ago.

Hardy’s account of the strike at various times points to his and, behind that, the CPA’s role in shifting the struggle into a campaign for land rights. During the cru-

cial early period of the strike, Hardy writes: “A great worrier at any time, I began to be plagued by doubt. The Gurindji [one of many Aboriginal peoples in NT] were on strike for wages—that was the basis for the support they were getting. The land tenure idea was a pipe dream in which I had no right to encourage them.” But that is what he did. Following the wet season in March-April 1967, which was a pivotal time when the CPA should have been struggling to shut down production on the stations, Hardy was helping the Gurindji draft a petition to the governor-general for the excision of 600-700 square miles at Wave Hill and Victoria River Downs. This petition was rejected. In July 1968, federal Cabinet also rejected further lobbying for the granting of a piddling eight-and-a-half square miles of land in the Daguragu area. With success of the strike becoming a dim prospect, the stockmen set about establishing their own station on the land they occupied. However, separate can never be equal under capitalism. Despite their experience in the industry, the Aboriginal stockmen did not have the equipment, contacts or especially the capital to compete with the major beef exporters and their cattle station ended in failure.

The CPA and the Aboriginal Question—Some History

In the 1930s, the CPA’s program on the Aboriginal question included the call for equal wages, ending all forms of forced labour and abolishing the Aboriginal protection boards. Over the years, they opposed both compulsory assimilation and enforced segregation. That said, their 1930s demand for independent Aboriginal republics in central, northern and northwest Australia and their subsequent 1967 program, *Full Human Rights for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders*, which included talk of “self-determination” for Aboriginal people, reflected a misconception that Aboriginal people constituted a nation.

In fact Aboriginal societies were pre-national, involving many clans and different language groups, possessing in varying degrees a common cultural heritage. For Marxists, self-determination means the right to national independence. It was the development of capitalism which drove the formation of the nation-state in its modern sense. What is decisive is contiguous mutual economic exchange continued over a period of time, which develops into a coherent political economy. The possibility of the independent development of Indigenous people into a modern nation was brutally and bloodily foreclosed by the British colonisers.

Despite their non-Marxist approach to the national question and their deep reformism, the CPA did show some semblance of a grappling with the special questions posed by Aboriginal oppression. They took up Aboriginal struggles, energetically exposing the vicious government oppression and persecution of Indigenous

people to a broad working-class audience. World War II had a big impact on Aborigines in northern Australia, who were drawn into paid work as a result of labour shortages. Wartime work brought the formerly strictly segregated Aboriginal people together with socialist-minded unionists and soldiers. Many of these encounters were eye-opening for both parties. Through their work, the CPA attracted Aboriginal members, who became capable, committed cadre. The first important strike by Aboriginal workers broke out in May 1946 on the



Australasian Spartacist Spartacists at Sydney protest against racist cop killings in the U.S., July 16.

sheep stations of the Pilbara in northwestern Australia. The workers had wanted to strike earlier, but the CPA held them back so as not to affect the Australian imperialist “war effort.” The CPA backed the wartime Labor government, helping to restrain class struggle and prevent strikes. In line with the Moscow Stalinists, the CPA threw its support behind the “Allies” in the interimperialist slaughter of World War II. Siding with the imperialist forces to the end, they published a racist anti-Japanese “cartoon” that celebrated the criminal A-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In contrast, Trotskyists opposed all the imperialist combatants while standing for the unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union. Despite its Stalinist degeneration, the USSR was still a workers state where capitalist and landlord exploitation had been overthrown.

After the Pilbara strike began, Don McLeod, a white CPA activist, and two Aboriginal leaders were thrown into jail for organising the strikers. The Aboriginal strikers marched on the jail and McLeod was freed. The CPA organised support committees for the Pilbara strike in Perth. But it was when the CPA-influenced Western Australian branch of the Seamen’s Union refused to handle wool from the struck stations in June 1949 that concessions were quickly won. This did not come easily. The leadership of the Australian Workers Union (AWU) directed members to break the seamen’s bans. But, rejecting their leaders’ treachery, AWU unionists refused to scab and solidarised with the Seamen’s Union and the Aboriginal workers. By late July, the Seamen’s Union declared that the Department of Native Affairs had agreed to improved wages and conditions for the striking workers. In October, the CPA’s *Tribune* reported that all Aboriginal men remaining in jail for “enticing natives” from stations had been released.

The CPA attracted to its ranks not only worker militants but intellectuals in a country that despised both. During the 1950s, the party was almost driven underground. As the Cold War anti-communist climate wore on, the CPA lost members but managed to remain influential in some key unions. Over time it became less and less distinguishable from the Laborite bureaucracy. In the early 1960s, it lost a substantial chunk of cadre who switched allegiance to Beijing. Activity outside the unions became focused on building myriad front groups for “peace” and civil rights. After the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968 the CPA split again. A pro-Moscow minority formed the Socialist Party in 1971. With a dwin-

dling and aging membership, the majority broke from Moscow and embraced “Euro-communism,” environmentalism and New Left identity politics.

Enter Gough Whitlam’s Labor Government

In 1972, with jackal Australian imperialism, alongside its U.S. ally, embroiled in a losing war against the Vietnamese Revolution, the Liberal/Country Party government was tossed from office and the Labor Party elected. The new prime minister, Gough Whitlam, was sharply aware that “White Australia” impeded Australian business interests, not least with Japan, the growing imperialist economic powerhouse in the region. Aiming to project a more tolerant and multiracial society to promote Australian imperialism’s interests, Whitlam helped end the ALP’s embrace of “White Australia.” The federal government assumed national responsibility for Aboriginal health, education and welfare, and the first land rights legislation was drafted. Three years later, in August 1975, Whitlam poured a symbolic “handful of sand” into the palms of Vincent Lingiari. Vestey’s had agreed to give up some of their lease to the Gurindji people. Just months later, the Labor government was sacked by the governor-general, Sir John Kerr, provoking an angry response from workers on a mass scale [see “Class Struggle and the 1975 Ouster of the Whitlam Government,” WV No. 1069, 29 May 2015]. Whitlam had seen fit to appoint Kerr as governor-general. Nine years earlier, Kerr had been lawyering for the bosses in the Arbitration Commission against equal pay for Aboriginal workers!

During the early days of the Whitlam government, many workers were euphoric, and reformists such as the CPA pumped illusions in reforming racist Australian capitalism. Brian Manning, a Darwin waterfront unionist and Communist Party organiser who was centrally involved with the Wave Hill strike, noted in 2002, “With the election of the Whitlam government major policy changes saw the introduction of consultative organisations in the NT. The NTCAR became redundant.” The “consultative organisations” referred to by Manning were government-run bodies such as the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee to which Aboriginal and other militants were co-opted by the Labor government.

Since Whitlam’s time, the Wave Hill strike and walk-off has been celebrated by liberals, reformists and many Aboriginal people as purely a land rights struggle. Today, the liberal bourgeoisie has sought to appropriate Vincent Lingiari and the Gurindji struggle. In 2001 the Lingiari Foundation was formed to promote Indigenous leadership and reconciliation. “Reconciliation” was the brainchild of former Labor prime minister Paul Keating. It aimed to cover up the ALP government’s knifing of land rights following the 1992 *Mabo* decision [High Court ruling recognizing historic Aboriginal rights to land] and the soaring Aboriginal deaths in custody under the Hawke/Keating governments. For the bourgeoisie, reconciliation means they are absolved of their past and present crimes while Aboriginal people are supposed to resign themselves to the all-sided racist oppression that comes with capitalist rule. Every social index confirms that Aboriginal people continue to suffer horrendous deprivation and face deadly state terror.

We Need a Revolutionary Workers Party

In 2006, just five years after the Lingiari Foundation was set up, one of the three surviving elders who took part in the Wave Hill strike, 78-year-old Julama Limbunya, was found dead in the outback, a victim of brutal state neglect. Limbunya had been dumped at a remote NT airstrip after being released from hospital. Still suffering from pneumonia, almost blind and barely able to walk, he was left to die in broiling heat without food or water. The Liberal/National Coalition government of John Howard began a police/military Intervention into NT Aborig-

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S.

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Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta., Los Angeles, CA 90029, (213) 380-8239
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Box 3381, Church St. Sta., New York, NY 10008, (212) 267-1025
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inal communities in 2007. This shattered any semblance of self-government remote Aboriginal communities may have enjoyed, bringing down police terror across northern Australia. As well as being a naked land grab in the service of wealthy mining magnates, the Intervention also saw the overturn of the 1975 Racial Discrimination Act in order to reimpose “special treatment” on outback Aboriginal people. Their pitifully ill-serviced homes were raided by cops searching for forbidden alcohol and “pornography.” Their welfare payments were “quarantined.” Their children, having been denied elementary medical care by the state, were peered at for evidence of sexual activity. Wholesale the menfolk were smeared as “child molesters.” Under the Intervention, thousands of Aboriginal children are once again being snatched from their parents.

The Labor “Opposition” backed Howard’s NT Intervention and continued to prosecute it after winning federal office later in 2007. Early the following year, the

new Labor prime minister, Kevin Rudd, made a hypocritical “Sorry” speech to the “Stolen Generations”—the thousands ripped away from their Aboriginal mothers by state authorities over a period of 150 years. Pointedly Rudd’s apology did not offer any compensation. Its purpose was to sugar-coat the NT Intervention while co-opting liberals and Aboriginal leaders.

The stark fact is that in this capitalist society, whether run by the Tory Liberals or their Labor rivals, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have no chance of a decent future. Indigenous people need access to jobs and union wages and massive education, health and housing programs, including provision of electricity and clean water. This is not rocket science, but the bourgeoisie will never provide such necessities. The future of Aboriginal rights lies with the class struggle. Workers struggles and those of the Indigenous peoples will either go forward together or fall back separately.

A fighting labour movement would not only use its power to champion Indige-

nous rights, but also take concrete steps such as union-run recruitment and training programs to break the cycle of chronic Aboriginal unemployment and marginalisation. It must also be mobilised against acts of racist state terror to make it clear that Aboriginal people do not stand alone in their struggles. The Spartacist League demands that whatever rights Indigenous people have extracted, and are able to extract, through agreements be respected. In some cases, Aboriginal land rights may come up against socially useful developments such as railways or oil and gas pipelines. Aboriginal peoples should receive generous compensation for any deprivation of land or disruption of activity, based on completely consensual agreement. Only a workers government, based on a centralised, planned economy that serves human need not profit, will guarantee these conditions.

The fight for Aboriginal rights is a litmus test for those aspiring to lead the working class. A party that does not emblazon defence of the most downtrod-

den on its banner can never succeed in leading the proletariat against its class enemy. We seek to build a multiracial Leninist-Trotskyist workers party that acts as a tribune of the people. Taking up the fight against all manifestations of capitalist oppression is key to mobilising the most advanced layers of the working class in the struggle for socialist revolution. To open up a future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples requires establishing an egalitarian socialist society. As we state in our programmatic statement:

“Only the destruction of capitalism can hold out the possibility of voluntary integration, on the basis of full equality, for those Aboriginal people who desire it, and the fullest possible autonomy for those who do not, and make it possible to address the special needs created by more than two centuries of injustice and oppression.”

We Marxists of the Spartacist League stand for a class-struggle fight for Aboriginal rights as part of the fight to overthrow this brutal, racist, exploitative system. For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia! ■

Evicted...

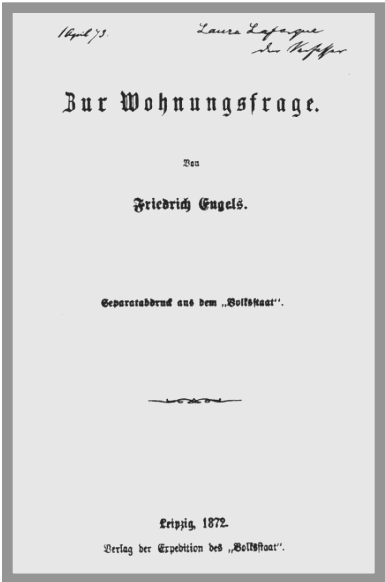
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most scandalous alleys and lanes disappear to the accompaniment of lavish self-glorification by the bourgeoisie on account of this tremendous success, but—they appear again at once somewhere else.... The same economic necessity which produced them in the first place produces them in the next place also.”

The reality is that the capitalist system cannot guarantee its wage slaves a decent living—much less those it has tossed on the scrap heap of permanent unemployment.

For decades, the capitalist order has aggressively pursued an all-sided assault on the living standards of working and poor people. In fact, the only significant reforms providing affordable housing for working people have been ceded by the capitalist rulers in response to the prospect of social upheaval. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the legions of the unemployed were often organized (usually by communists) into unemployed councils that fought on behalf of the destitute. With close ties to the working class and broad popular support, these councils were very successful in stopping evictions of the unemployed as well as in organizing rent strikes. During the Great Rent Strike of 1932 in New York, tenants in several buildings withheld their rent and demanded reductions in prices and a moratorium on evictions. Landlords fired back with massive evictions, but protesters stopped the evictions in hand-to-hand combat with police.

The 1937 Housing Act, which initiated the construction of public housing units throughout the country, was passed during the tumultuous wave of class struggle that established the CIO industrial unions. (The landlord associations at that time lobbied for a voucher system instead.) Similarly, it was the social upheavals of the civil rights movement



Above: Friedrich Engels’ *The Housing Question* (1872). Right: Illustration shows eviction of working-class family in Germany, 1875.



Dietz Verlag Berlin

that led to a series of Fair Housing Acts and a significant expansion of HUD’s voucher program.

Expropriate the Expropriators!

Today public housing has been eviscerated. The voucher system is stagnating and, in real terms, shrinking, notwithstanding the growing inability of masses of people to afford housing. The fight for quality housing—and for jobs—is no less necessary today than it was in the 1930s. But the fighting spirit of the labor movement has been sapped by a trade-union bureaucracy committed to maintaining the bosses’ profits in the face of this country’s social decay. As the depredations of capitalism impel the working class to struggle, a new, fighting leadership in the unions must be forged, committed to organizing the unorganized. Building such a leadership goes hand in hand with constructing a revolutionary

workers party that will act as the tribune of the oppressed and will stop at nothing less than abolishing capitalism. *Those who labor must rule!*

Labor militancy can forestall and, to some extent, reverse the excesses of capitalist exploitation. But without the overthrow of bourgeois class rule, when the class battles subside, the inexorable drive to increase profits will reassert itself, producing growing misery for the working masses at one pole and, at the other, obscene wealth for the owners of the means of production. As Engels wrote, “The solution lies in the abolition of the capitalist mode of production and the appropriation of all the means of subsistence and instruments of labour by the working class itself.”

Desmond’s book is representative of the same school of thought as Thomas Piketty’s much-ballyhooed *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (2014). These friendly critics of capitalism try to convince those opposed to the profit system’s savageries that drastic measures (e.g., revolution) are unnecessary. Their method is to identify and analyze a glaring injustice and then put forward a solution that is purportedly so modest and reasonable that it will win over the powers that be. For Piketty, the problem is the gargantuan inequality of wealth between the rulers

At the same time, the proletarian regime would undertake an enormous program to construct integrated residential communities designed to facilitate free and equal social relationships. Quality education and access to culture, entertainment and athletics will allow the fullest development of all, while facilities and social services will be vastly expanded to free women from the drudgery of housework and the burdens of child-rearing. Initial steps toward building such communities were taken in the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The early Soviet regime, insofar as it was able to amid poverty, backwardness and the massive destruction caused by the Civil War, established communal institutions, such as kitchens and laundries, specifically aimed at liberating women from the stultifying slavery of housework. The Bolshevik vision was that the international proletarian revolution would lay the basis for ending the domination of man by man and open the way for the full flowering of the human species. In comparison, the elaborate schemes of the would-be reformers of the imperialist order promise little and obtain nothing that can endure the brutalities of the decaying capitalist system. ■

Germany...

(continued from page 4)

by the ruling capitalist class.

This is the same state whose security service bolsters Nazi organizations and is deeply implicated in the series of murders of immigrants by the National Socialist Underground (NSU) between 2000 and 2006. The state safeguards and exonerates the Nazis and racists who carry out near-daily attacks on refugees and deadly arson attacks on refugee hostels. While the state protects the Nazis, keeping them in reserve as shock troops against the working class, the fascist attack in Munich was used as a pretext for enhancing the state’s forces. And the bourgeois media are going to a lot of trouble to play down the fact that it wasn’t an Islamic terrorist, but a fascist.

When there was a fascist attack at Oktoberfest in 1980, with 13 deaths and

211 injuries, the state presented it as the act of an “individual madman” and dismissed the connections to the Nazi “Hoffmann gun sport group.” As we wrote in *Spartakist* No. 33, November 1980: “The main priority was to keep proceeding with the normal agenda for the election campaign: the German fascist past has been ‘dealt with,’ the ‘real’ terror comes from the left—against the state.”

It is urgently necessary to get rid of the deadly illusions in the neutrality of the state; such illusions only serve to maintain the barbaric imperialist system. What we need is to establish a multiethnic revolutionary workers party that has the program to overthrow this system, in contrast to the pro-capitalist program of the Left Party and the SPD. Such a revolutionary party will imbue workers and the oppressed with the lessons of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, which explain why socialist revolution is necessary in order to end all the evils of this society. ■

Spartacus Youth Club Events

NEW YORK CITY

Meet the Marxists

Wednesday, September 7, 7 p.m.
299 Broadway, Suite 1618, Manhattan
Information: (212) 267-1025 • nysl@tiac.net

Visit the ICL website:
www.icl-fi.org

BAY AREA

Meet the Marxists

An Introduction to Revolutionary Socialism
Tuesday, September 6, 7 p.m.
San Francisco State University
(Meet outside at Malcolm X Plaza)
Information: (510) 839-0851
sycbayarea@fastmail.net

ICL Archives...

(continued from page 2)

of 1989, has not been heard from. Opposition from the factories against the ravages of capitalist assault could throw a giant wrench in the works and prevent the rapid consolidation of counterrevolution.

Soviet Stalinism has breathed its pathetic last gasp. Even up to the coup, many of the most advanced workers, who opposed Yeltsin’s plans for wholesale privatization and Gorbachev’s market reforms, looked to the so-called hardline “patriotic” wing of the bureaucracy. *There is no room anymore for such illusions.*

The coup’s collapse and the ascendancy of counterrevolution in the Soviet Union buttresses, for the present moment, Bush’s proclaimed “New World Order” militarily dominated by the U.S. Following its annihilation of Iraq, the triumphalist and vengeful American ruling class threatens to turn its wrath, unrestrained by the deterrent of a powerful USSR, against myriad peoples of the world. Cuba, in particular, is in Bush’s cross hairs, and its defense is more than ever a duty of all opponents of Yankee imperialism.

From the time of Stalin’s bureaucratic usurpation of power in 1924, Leon Trotsky and the Left Opposition waged an unrelenting fight for the internationalist program of the Bolshevik Revolution. Under the deadly blows of Stalinist terror and slander, the Trotskyists persevered as the best and only consistent defenders of the remaining revolutionary gains. Today the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) continues this struggle.

Stalinism was the political rule of a bureaucratic caste parasitically sitting atop the proletarian property forms created by the October Revolution of 1917. Whether during the bloody purges of the 1930s or the myriad “reforms” from Khrushchev and others, this system based on lies and repression of the working class not only blocked further progress toward socialism but clogged every pore of Soviet society. After decades of self-



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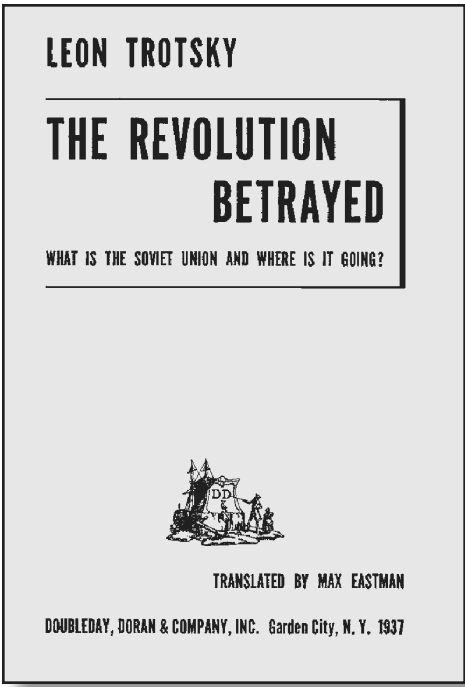
Leon Trotsky’s *The Revolution Betrayed* presented a Marxist analysis of the degeneration of the Soviet workers state under the Stalinist bureaucracy.

people that the free market will bring them prosperity, in fact it will lead to the elimination of what every Soviet worker considered a right until recently: a stable job, free health care, an education for their children—gains which all rest on the collectivized economy.

The alternatives posed before the Soviet bureaucratically degenerated workers state have always been: counterrevolution or Trotskyism. Today Stalinism is dead. The key to frustrating the bloody plans of Bush, Yeltsin and their counterrevolutionary cohorts is the early forging of a Trotskyist nucleus in the Soviet Union, regrouping those elements in the workers movement, the army and throughout society who would fight for the program of October....

Fight Capitalist Enslavement!

For decades, the Stalinists and imperialists have joined together in identifying the system of bureaucratic rule installed by Stalin and his henchmen in 1924 with Leninism. Nothing could be further from



gram of proletarian political revolution led by a Bolshevik party to re-establish Soviet democracy. The planned economy would be subordinated to the will of the workers, freeing it from the arbitrary zigzags of the faceless, grey bureaucrats. And instead of the conservative anti-revolutionary policies of Stalin’s Kremlin, the Soviet Union would again become the headquarters of international socialist revolution. He also spelled out the bleak alternative:

“If—to adopt a second hypothesis—a bourgeois party were to overthrow the ruling Soviet caste, it would find no small number of ready servants among the present bureaucrats, administrators, technicians, directors, party secretaries and privileged upper circles in general. A purgation of the state apparatus would, of course, be necessary in this case too. But a bourgeois restoration would probably have to clean out fewer people than a revolutionary party. The chief task of the new power would be to restore private property in the means of production. First of all, it would be necessary to create conditions for the development of strong farmers from the weak collective farms, and for converting the strong collectives into producers’ cooperatives of the bourgeois type—into agricultural stock companies. In the sphere of industry, denationalization would begin with the light industries and those producing food. The planning principle would be converted for the transitional period into a series of compromises between state power and individual ‘corporations’—potential proprietors, that is, among the Soviet captains of industry, the émigré former proprietors and foreign capitalists. Notwithstanding that the Soviet bureaucracy has gone far toward preparing a bourgeois restoration, the new regime would have to introduce in the matter of forms of property and methods of industry not a reform, but a social revolution.”

Every Soviet worker, collective farmer, pensioner and soldier will immediately recognize that this process of counterrevolution is well under way. The state monopoly of foreign trade has been scuttled, the planned economy abandoned. In their stead, imperialist corporations from Pepsi-Cola to Chevron oil have made encroachments on the Soviet economy. The Russian federation’s new “land reform” lays the basis for destroying the *kolkhoz* collectives, promising rural poverty for the many and riches for the new kulaks. “Cooperative” profiteers and black market speculators have grown explosively in the vacuum of the collapsed distribution system. But this is only the beginning. Yeltsin now intends to ram through capitalist restoration at breakneck pace. Yavlinsky, co-author of the Harvard-designed “grand bargain” to sell out the Soviet Union to the imperialists, is now in charge of the economy. But for the Soviet working masses, the “magic of the marketplace” holds the promise of hunger and homelessness....

We Trotskyists Have Defended the Soviet Union

Today the Soviet Union faces being dismembered and its constituent republics turned into neocolonies of Washington, Berlin and Tokyo. The present col-

lapse of the Stalinist bureaucracy has its immediate origins in the renewed Cold War offensive launched by American imperialism after its ignominious defeat in Vietnam. In every key battleground of Cold War II—Afghanistan, Poland, the German Democratic Republic (DDR)—the International Communist League (ICL, formerly the international Spartacist tendency) has stood resolutely in defense of the Soviet Union against the capitulation of the Kremlin bureaucracy.

Where the Soviet Stalinists waged a halfhearted war against CIA-armed Islamic reactionaries in Afghanistan, ultimately selling out and withdrawing, we said “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!” and called to “Extend Social Gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan Peoples!” When in late 1981 Polish Solidarność, under the guidance of Reagan and Pope John Paul Wojtyła, made a bid for power in the name of “bourgeois democracy,” we raised the call: “Stop Solidarność Counterrevolution!” General Jaruzelski’s countercoup temporarily spiked these clerical-nationalist front men for Wall Street and Washington. But the Stalinists had neither the moral authority nor the program to undercut counterrevolution, and eight years later the same Jaruzelski, with Gorbachev’s approval, abdicated political power to Walesa & Co.

When in late 1989 the Honecker regime in East Germany fell and the Berlin Wall was opened, the ICL threw its forces into the fight for the perspective of a red Germany of workers councils. We initiated the call for the giant Treptow anti-fascist demonstration of 3 January 1990, which drew 250,000 people to honor the Soviet soldiers who died liberating Germany from the Nazis. Then, as Gorbachev gave the green light to a reunified Fourth Reich of German imperialism, our comrades of the Spartacist Workers Party of Germany were the *only* party which clearly and unambiguously opposed capitalist reunification.

Within the Soviet Union representatives of the ICL have fought for a revolutionary internationalist perspective. Thus at a coal miners congress last October in Donetsk, we helped block the effort of right-wing, Yeltsinite forces advised by the American “AFL-CIA” federation to enlist Soviet miners in the international anti-Communist witchhunt against British miners leader Arthur Scargill. The imperialist rulers hate Scargill because he led the 1984-85 British miners strike—which Soviet workers generously aided. This momentous class battle gave the lie to the self-serving Stalinist myth that workers in advanced capitalist countries are incapable of hard-fought class struggle.

We urgently seek to bring the program of Trotskyism to the Soviet proletariat and socialist-minded intelligentsia with our Russian-language *Spartacist Bulletin*, containing in addition to key documents of the ICL the section on the USSR from Trotsky’s Transitional Program. ■



Stone/Life

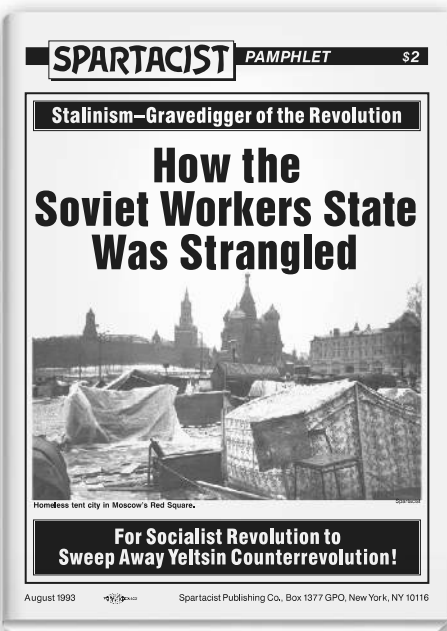
Moscow, 1991: Hardline Stalinists in May Day demonstration. Bankrupt Stalinism opened floodgates to capitalist restoration.

sacrifice extracted from the proletariat in the name of “building “socialism in one country,” Gorbachev’s perestroika was the last desperate attempt of the Stalinist bureaucracy to preserve its position by adopting capitalist measures. But like Nikolai Bukharin’s appeals to the rich peasants (kulaks) in the late 1920s to “enrich yourselves,” perestroika fueled the forces of capitalist restoration which have now reached their fruition with Yeltsin’s countercoup.

Boris Yeltsin is not a “Westernizer”—he is an extreme Russian chauvinist who intends to *sell out* the Soviet Union to the West. He is connected to a far-right, racist outfit in the U.S. called the “Free Congress Foundation” (whose East European operatives include notorious Nazi collaborators) which takes credit for “training” him and his staff on how to seize power. His laws are being drawn up by advisers supplied by the U.S. government. One of Yeltsin’s first acts as Moscow party chief in the mid ’80s was to legitimize the anti-Semitic Pamyat fascists when they emerged from their ratholes. While he promises working

the truth. The Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky carried out the October Revolution as the first step of the world socialist revolution. Backward Russia, the “weak link” of imperialist rule, was the scene of the first workers revolution, but it had to be completed by the proletariat in the advanced imperialist countries if it was to sustain itself and lead to socialism, a society of equality based on abundance. It was on the basis of the defeat of the European revolutions, centrally in Germany, in the 1918-23 postwar period, that the usurpers Stalin/Bukharin “discovered” the profoundly anti-Marxist notion that it was possible to construct “socialism in one country.” Trotsky denounced this nationalist dogma as writing off the world revolution, and predicted it would be the undoing of the Soviet Union if the bureaucracy was not swept away by the resurgent working class.

In his decisive analysis of Stalinism, *The Revolution Betrayed* (1937), Trotsky asked prophetically, “Will the bureaucrat devour the workers’ state, or will the working class clean up the bureaucrat?” In developing this, he elaborated the pro-



Pamphlet contains material on capitalist counterrevolution in USSR and ICL’s fight against it. Available for \$2 from Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Elections...

(continued from page 1)

his campaign: to back the winner of the Democratic primaries. As we wrote in “Break with the Capitalist Democrats and Republicans!” (WV No. 1092, 1 July):

“Many of those who support Sanders believe that his primary bid has launched a ‘movement’ that represents some kind of challenge to the political establishment. In fact, Sanders has done everything to reinforce this establishment by refurbishing its image and reinforcing illusions and confidence in American capitalist democracy. He brought large numbers of disaffected young people ‘into the political process’ (read: Democratic Party)....

“To put it plainly: the pseudo-socialist groups that support Sanders have done their best, within the limits of their forces, to *reinforce* the ties that bind the working class politically to its class enemies. As revolutionary Marxists, we offer no political support on principle to any party of the bosses—not only the major parties of the U.S. ruling class, the Republicans and Democrats, but also small-time capitalist parties such as the Greens.”

Having led many youth and others down the garden path with Sanders, SAlt is now trying to corral them behind Stein’s campaign as “the clear continuation of our political revolution.” Kshama Sawant, SAlt’s Seattle city council member, argues that Stein “has gone further



Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein (right) courts disappointed Sanders supporters during Democratic National Convention in late July.

openly described themselves as a party of “small business, responsible stakeholder capitalism.” Despite the Green Party’s current proclaimed rejection of the “capitalist system,” the amendment to its program doesn’t change its character as a bourgeois party and is, in fact, “balanced” by also rejecting “state socialism,” raising the all-purpose anti-communist bogeyman of totalitarianism.

The Greens’ vision is of “an economy based on large-scale green public

From Robert La Follette’s 1924 presidential bid to Henry Wallace’s 1948 Progressive Party, their purpose has been to corral discontent with the two major parties into another capitalist electoral vehicle with promises of a better deal for the “little guy.” In its call to “Fix Our Broken System,” the Green Party promotes the value of third parties to not only “lure voters to the polls” but “also help to turn one of the major parties out of office.” As an example, they point to Theodore Roosevelt’s Progressive Party, whose 1912 election campaign “helped the Democrats wrest the White House from 20 years of unchallenged Republican supremacy.” The winner was Southern Democrat Woodrow Wilson, an arch-segregationist who drove blacks out of federal civil service jobs and was an admirer of the Ku Klux Klan.

Similarly, the Green Party’s statement argues that third parties keep “Americans involved in our democratic process” by providing “an ‘emotional bridge’ for voters who are weary of supporting one major party but are not yet ready to vote for the other.” Here they grotesquely hold up the 1968 presidential campaign of George Wallace. “Segregation forever” Wallace was the former Dixiecrat governor of Alabama who revolted against civil rights legislation. According to the Greens, his American Independent Party campaign “drew support from traditional Southern Democrats who weren’t emotionally prepared to vote as Republicans.” The Southern Democrats crossed that “emotional bridge” and are now a major component of the racist yahoos rallying for Trump.

And it’s not just them. Last summer, former Green Party presidential candidate Ralph Nader heralded Trump as a “breath of fresh air.” Welcoming Trump’s then-refusal to rule out a third party challenge if he lost the GOP nomination, Nader argued: “The two party tyranny that blocks voter choices and dominates the political scene on behalf of big business

needs to be broken up and Trump is the one to do it.” Wow—the ticket to breaking the domination of big business is a billionaire real estate mogul!

To all those who bought Sanders’ phony “political revolution,” don’t get fooled again by Stein’s Green Party. The facade of bourgeois democracy is designed to obscure the fact that the capitalist state is an instrument of organized force and violence, consisting at its core of the police, army, courts and prisons. Its purpose is to maintain capitalist rule and profit through the suppression of the working class, the forcible segregation of the majority of black people at the bottom of society and by advancing the interests of U.S. imperialism abroad.

It is a myth that working people and the oppressed can elect a reformed capitalist government that will defend their interests against the robber barons of Wall Street. As communists, we champion the fight for jobs for all at good wages; for decent housing; for quality, fully government-funded health care and education. Our purpose is to link such demands to building a revolutionary working-class party that will inscribe on its banner the defense of immigrant rights and the fight for black freedom as part of the struggle to overthrow this decaying capitalist system. As the Spartacist League/U.S. Declaration of Principles, written at our founding 50 years ago, states:

“The victory of the proletariat on a world scale would place unimagined material abundance at the service of human needs, lay the basis for the elimination of social classes, and eliminate forever the drive for war inherent in the world economic system of capitalism. For the first time mankind will grasp the reins of history and control its own creation, society, resulting in an undreamed-of emancipation of human potential, the limitless expansion of freedom in every area, and a monumental forward surge of civilization. Only then will it be possible to realize the free development of each individual as the condition for the free development of all.” ■



Bethmann

Green Party cites racist demagogue George Wallace’s 1968 presidential campaign on American Independent Party ticket as positive example of third-party candidacies.

than Bernie, in particular with her rejection of key aspects of U.S. foreign policy.” That wouldn’t be hard. Sanders argues that the U.S. “should have the strongest military in the world” and has an impeccable record of support to the wars, occupations, drone strikes and other depredations of U.S. imperialism (see “Bernie Sanders: Imperialist Running Dog,” WV No. 1083, 12 February).

And what is the position of Stein’s Green Party? Her election platform calls for cutting in half the U.S. military budget, which is many times more than the combined total of all its imperialist rivals. So Stein is for fewer bombs than Bernie and Hillary but is nonetheless dedicated to preserving an arsenal to enforce the predatory and murderous interests of America’s rulers abroad.

Stein’s program calls to “restore the National Guard as the centerpiece of our defense.” You know, the National Guard that occupied Ferguson to put down protests against the cop killing of Michael Brown in 2014; the National Guard that union-busting Wisconsin governor Scott Walker had on standby to do the same against black protests in Milwaukee; the National Guard that shot dead four antiwar protesters at Kent State in 1970 after being called in from a nearby deployment against a Teamsters strike; the National Guard that, as the domestic troops enforcing the diktats of America’s capitalist rulers, has the blood of countless striking workers on its hands.

For its part, the ISO has also, and yet again, thrown its support to the Green Party. In particular, the ISO is enthused over “the passage of an amendment to the party platform making the Greens an explicitly anti-capitalist party.” Why would that make any difference to the ISO? They supported the Green Party and even ran their own members as candidates of the party when the Greens

works, municipalization, and workplace and community democracy.” Such a Shangri-La is a pipe dream conjured up by relatively well-heeled and overwhelmingly white middle-class people who live in advanced capitalist countries and have their homes in neighborhoods far removed from the industry required for a modern economy. They are the types that have access to resources for “local sustainability,” with vegetable plots, bike paths and a city council that will raise taxes on such unhealthy habits as smoking and sugary sodas, depriving the poor and working class of some of the few pleasures they have in life.

Stein also says she stands for beneficial things like free Medicare for all, a living wage, jobs for the unemployed, free education through university, etc. But these promises—which in themselves would only provide limited relief from the all-sided destitution faced by working people and the poor—are hot air. Such concessions will only be wrung from the bourgeoisie through class struggle, mobilizing the social power of the working class whose labor produces the wealth that is stolen by the capitalist exploiters.

For working people to get their hands on that wealth, the capitalists’ power has to be broken. That means a workers party that fights for a workers government to expropriate the capitalist owners and expand the productive forces in order to create an egalitarian socialist society, one devoted to providing for the needs of the many, not the profits of the few. This is counterposed to the program of the Green Party, which is devoted not to increasing but to decreasing production and consumption—purportedly to “save the earth,” not its human inhabitants.

The Third Party Fraud

There have been several third-party candidacies in the history of the U.S.



Ferguson, November 2014: National Guard deployed to suppress protests against racist cop killing of Michael Brown. Capitalist Green Party calls for Guard to be “centerpiece” of national defense.

WV Photo

WORKERS VANGUARD

Racist Crackdown in Milwaukee

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a starkly segregated Rust Belt city on the shore of Lake Michigan, has become the latest stage for horrific street executions of black people by the police, igniting bitter protests by besieged black youth that have drawn national attention. On August 13, a black cop gunned down 23-year-old Sylville Smith after a traffic stop. The police narrative is that Smith, who had a “lengthy arrest record,” fled the scene, wielding a stolen handgun. Authorities have refused to release video from the cop body cameras, and no independent video has emerged. As word of the fatal shooting spread, small crowds of protesters quickly took to the streets. A police cruiser, a bank branch and a gas station in the black neighborhood of Sherman Park went up in flames, and rocks and bricks were thrown at police.

Although the protests, which flared up over two nights, never grew much larger than 200 people, black Milwaukee County sheriff David Clarke—who starred at the Republican convention denouncing Black Lives Matter protesters while lauding racist demagogue Donald Trump—and Republican governor Scott Walker decided to activate the National Guard. But police chief Edward Flynn refused to bring the militia out of the barracks, preferring to show everyone that his cops in riot gear, with their armored vehicles and heavy weapons, were quite adequate for intimidating and repressing demonstrators. A 10 p.m. curfew for youth has been imposed, underlining once more how young people, especially if they are black, are denied the rights of free speech and free assembly that the population is supposed to have.

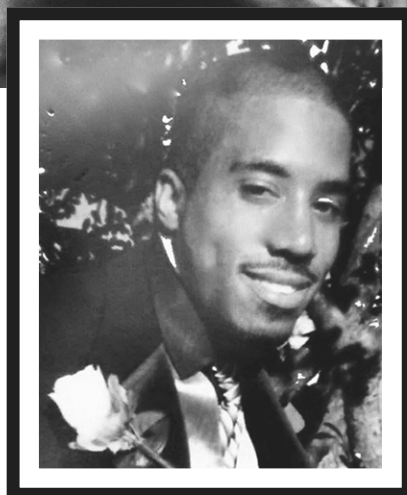
At a midnight press conference convened by Mayor Tom Barrett, a Democrat, to try to calm the city on the first night of protest, black alderman Khalif Rainey condemned Milwaukee as “the worst place to live for African-Americans in the entire country.” Rainey pointed to the hideous conditions of daily life for black people in Milwaukee for having spurred the protests, as much as the killing of Smith did. Ludicrously, after the second night of disturbances police chief Flynn announced that outsiders (supposed “communists”) from Chicago, all of 90 miles away, were the instigators, stirring up the supposedly otherwise contented local residents. This redbaiting recalls the denunciation of “outside agitators” during the civil rights movement.

The truth is that no more was required to spark protest than one more instance of a wanton cop slaughter of a black man added to the pervasive poverty and unremitting racist oppression. In June, a suburban Milwaukee cop shot dead 25-year-old Jay Anderson while he sat in his car in a park because he allegedly had a weapon in view. In 2015, 19-year-old Tony Robinson, a biracial high school graduate about to start college in Milwaukee, was shot five times and killed by a cop in the liberal university bastion of Madison because he was behaving “erratically.” Robinson had merely eaten hallucinogenic mushrooms. In 2014, protesters hit the streets to insist that “black lives matter” after Milwaukee cops killed Dontre Hamilton, an unarmed 31-year-old man with a history of mental health problems.

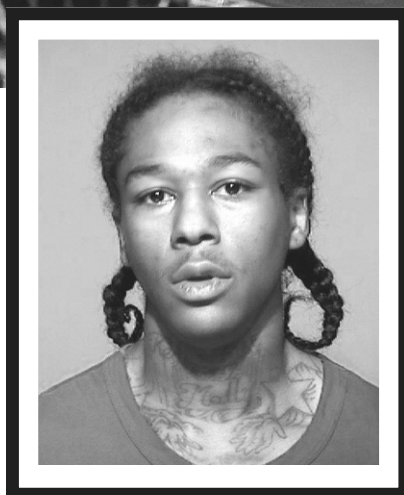
In Milwaukee, as much or more than anywhere else in the country,



AP



Hamilton family



Milwaukee County Sheriff

Milwaukee, August 14: Cops advance on demonstrators protesting police killings of black men. Below left: Dontre Hamilton, killed April 2014. Right: Sylville K. Smith, also slain by police, August 13.

every statistic says that the capitalist rulers don't give a damn about black lives. Milwaukee is the nation's second poorest major city, and Wisconsin has the highest black unemployment rate in the country. Jobs are concentrated in the lily-white suburbs, made inaccessible to black people by a long-established public policy of funding freeways and starving public transportation. Forty percent of black Milwaukeeans live below the poverty line, barely able to eat, much less pay for a car; over 30 percent live in “extreme poverty.” In the decrepit and highly segregated public schools, only 17 percent of eighth graders are proficient in math; only 15 percent in reading. Fully 43 percent of black students were suspended during the 2011-12 school year. Black men in Milwaukee are incarcerated at the highest rate in the nation—in a nation where locking up young black men is an industry and a defining feature of life.

The economy of this country was founded on the bedrock of black slavery; today, black oppression remains of inestimable value to the ruling class to divide and weaken the working masses. The cops are the enforcers for the capitalist profit system. They exist for one reason: to ensure that the brutal exploitation of labor and the forcible segregation of the mass of the black population at the bottom of society continue, unchallenged. It is this system alone that they “protect and serve.”

This was true in 1958 when Milwaukee cops pulled over 22-year-old Daniel Bell in a traffic stop eerily like the one involving Sylville Smith. After gunning down Bell, the cop who killed him shrugged it off: “He's just a damn n----r kid anyhow.” The case marked the beginning of the civil rights movement in Wisconsin. In the

South, that period of accelerating protest brought an end to formal Jim Crow segregation. But such official segregation laws were never a prerequisite for the crumbling housing, impoverished schools and cop attacks that blacks had to endure in the Northern cities, and still endure today.

It is a good thing that the shooting down of black youth by the cops continues to be met with outrage and defiance. But the activists of today need to be won to the understanding that only the overthrow of the capitalist system itself by the revolutionary action of the working class leading all of the oppressed can put an end to the racist violence of this state and its hired guns. It is because of the extreme bankruptcy of the existing leadership of the working class that such a perspective seems remote and far-fetched. The bureaucrats at the head of the trade unions today are open defenders of the profits of American industry. Refusing

to defend their own members against multi-tier contracts, health care cutbacks, non-union subcontractors and other attacks on living standards, still less do they fight against the broader social oppression of minorities and immigrants. We communists are committed to the fight within the unions for a new, class-struggle leadership.

A leadership of labor that does not take up the fight for the most oppressed layers of the working people is hamstrung in advance. Wisconsin is an appropriate example of leadership in the negative. The state is a former labor bastion whose unions are now hemorrhaging members, after Governor Walker stripped public-sector unions of the right to bargain for their members and pushed through a “right to work” law. In 2011, a huge demonstration of unionists against the law at the state Capitol was organized by the AFL-CIO as a carnival with Democratic Party politicians on the podium. The labor tops

derailed any possibility of strike action, instead urging a recall campaign against Walker and his cronies and, of course, the election of more Democrats. Now Walker himself, still in the governor's mansion, in his own way underscores the link between labor and blacks (he evidently hates both) as he threatens Milwaukee's black community with the National Guard coming in to insult and provoke people some more, and perhaps worse.

Nationally, a labor movement truly worthy of the name would mobilize its forces in demonstrations against cop terror, ensuring that at least the black youth would not stand alone. But the tremendous potential power of the working class cannot be brought to bear unless the workers are mobilized independently of all the political representatives of the capitalist class—Republicans, Democrats, Greens. In the absence of a perspective looking to the working class, the demands of today's anti-racist militants, despite good intentions, can be reduced to the idea that some other part of the capitalist government needs to restrain the cops, retrain them, investigate them, indict them, take away their excessive weapons, etc.

To weld the righteous anger of the ghetto together with the power of the working class in a fight to smash capitalism demands the leadership of a revolutionary party. Only on the basis of the active fight for black liberation can the workers of all races and nationalities be united in the fight against their common oppressor to make a socialist revolution in this country. ■

Evicted

Poverty and Profit in the American City

A Book Review..... SEE PAGE 5

