

It's No Crime to Film the Cops

In 2014, cellphone video of the New York police choking Eric Garner to death sparked protests nationwide. His dying words, “I can’t breathe,” became a rallying cry for tens of thousands, symbolic of life for black people in America seeking to survive in a racist, segregated society rigged against them at every turn, and under constant threat of cop violence. The NYPD, outraged at being exposed for its killing of Garner, never forgave

Ramsey Orta, the man who caught it on video. In the years since, he has been targeted for reprisals, repeatedly arrested, harassed and threatened by the cops. On October 3, he was sentenced to four years in prison on drug and gun charges resulting from this vindictive campaign. **Free Ramsey Orta!**

Orta is not the only person who has been victimized by police for filming their atrocities. Chris LeDay, who

posted video of the killing of Alton Sterling by Baton Rouge police this July, was arrested at his workplace the next evening on accusations of assault and battery. Unable to make the bogus charges stick, the police then jailed him overnight for unpaid traffic fines. Abdullah Muflahi, the owner of the convenience store outside which Sterling was shot, also filmed the killing on his cellphone. He was detained for six

hours—four in the back of a hot police car—and his store’s CCTV system, including camera and video footage, as well as his cellphone were all confiscated. Kevin Moore—who filmed Baltimore cops tackling Freddie Gray and throwing him into the police van in which he was given his fatal “rough ride” in 2015—was also arrested and then released without charge. He has *continued on page 7*

Racist Bigot vs. Imperialist Hawk

Elections 2016



Reuters



Siner/Charlotte Observer



U.S. Army

Presidential candidates vie to oversee racist repression at home and imperialist war abroad. Police riot against anti-racist protesters in Charlotte, North Carolina, September 21 (left). U.S. troops fire artillery during campaign against ISIS in Iraq, August 7 (right).

We Need a Revolutionary Workers Party!

We print below the talk given by Mónica Mora at a public forum in the Bay Area on October 16. It has been edited for publication.

One of the key points in my talk was captured in a statement by a young black woman from Ohio who was interviewed in August about her voting preferences. She said: “What am I supposed to do if I don’t like him and I don’t trust her? Choose between being stabbed and being shot?” Well, that is precisely what we face in the upcoming presidential elections: no

choice for the workers and the oppressed. The situation underlines the need to build a multiracial workers vanguard party, part of a reformed Fourth International.

The Republicans have nominated a vile presidential candidate, Donald Trump. Trump is articulating, in its most explicit terms, the racist bigotry at the core of American capitalism, its ruling class’s values. Also, we have Hillary Clinton, someone with a blood-drenched résumé. Beloved by an ex-CIA director, various neocons, former Reaganites and some in the Republican leadership, she is no lesser evil but, as we put it recently in our press, “a proven, gold-plated war hawk.” It was nauseating to watch her speech at the Democratic National Convention; it was essentially a military recruitment video.

Clinton is proud to embrace Ronald

Reagan’s legacy. She asks Trump: What would Reagan think of you? Well, I don’t want that anti-communist Cold Warrior to come out of his grave, I tell you. He’s somebody who, in 1985, laid a wreath on the grave of Nazi SS murderers at the Bitburg cemetery in West Germany.

James P. Cannon, one of the founders of American Communism and American Trotskyism, once remarked that as capitalism decays it loses the power to think for itself. You can see that clearly in this election. Trump is a dangerous racist demagogue. Although not a fascist, he has emboldened fascist groups around the country. Trump seeks to tap into the fears of white working people who face an increasingly bleak future. He blames immigrants and blacks for the worsening conditions created by the capitalist class’s

anarchic, irrational profit system. These conditions are part of the Obama administration’s rotten legacy, carried out with the help of the so-called friends of labor in the Democratic Party.

Bourgeois elections allow the population to decide every few years which representatives of the ruling class will oppress working people and the oppressed. Fundamental change will never be won at the ballot box. The capitalist profit system must be swept away and replaced with a planned, collectivized economy under a workers government. For that, we need a party modeled on the Bolshevik Party under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, which made the only successful workers revolution in history in Russia in November 1917.

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“Theses on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat”

by V.I. Lenin

We reprint below Theses by Lenin that counterpose the soviet system of workers democracy established by the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia to the fraud of capitalist democracy. Lenin presented the Theses to the First Congress of the Third (Communist) International in March 1919, while Europe was being shaken by revolutionary working-class upheavals. In January of that year a workers uprising in Berlin was crushed and Communist leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were assassinated.

The Communist International was founded in opposition to the Second (Socialist) International. Most of the parties of the Second International had betrayed the working class by supporting their own imperialist ruling classes in the slaughter of World War I. The Communist International won substantial numbers of workers from the old Socialist (Social Democratic) parties to revolutionary communism.

This translation of the Theses is taken from Lenin's *Collected Works*. The Berne International Conference that Lenin references sought to re-establish the Second International, which had collapsed at the start of WWI.

* * *

1. Faced with the growth of the revolutionary workers' movement in every country, the bourgeoisie and their agents in the workers' organisations are making desperate attempts to find ideological and political arguments in defence of the rule of the exploiters. Condemnation of dictatorship and defence of democracy are particularly prominent among these arguments. The falsity and hypocrisy of this argument, repeated in a thousand strains by the capitalist press and at the Berne yellow International Conference in February 1919, are obvious to all who refuse to betray the fundamental principles of socialism.

2. Firstly, this argument employs the concepts of “democracy in general” and “dictatorship in general,” without posing the question of the class concerned. This non-class or above-class presentation, which supposedly is popular, is an outright travesty of the basic tenet of socialism, namely, its theory of class struggle, which socialists who have sided with the bourgeoisie recognise in words but disregard in practice. For in no civilised capitalist country does “democracy in general” exist; all that exists is bourgeois



M.S. Nappelbaum

V.I. Lenin with other members of the presidium of the First Congress of the Communist International, March 1919.

democracy, and it is not a question of “dictatorship in general,” but of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, i.e., the proletariat, over its oppressors and exploiters, i.e., the bourgeoisie, in order to overcome the resistance offered by the exploiters in their fight to maintain their domination.

3. History teaches us that no oppressed class ever did, or could, achieve power without going through a period of dictatorship, i.e., the conquest of political power and forcible suppression of the resistance always offered by the exploiters—a resistance that is most desperate, most furious, and that stops at nothing. The bourgeoisie, whose domination is now defended by the socialists who denounce “dictatorship in general” and extol “democracy in general,” won power in the advanced countries through a series of insurrections, civil wars, and the forcible suppression of kings, feudal lords, slaveowners and their attempts at restoration. In books, pamphlets, congress resolutions and propaganda speeches socialists everywhere have thousands and millions of times explained to the people the class nature of these bourgeois revolutions and this bourgeois dictatorship. That is why the present defence of bourgeois democracy under cover of talk about “democracy in general” and the present howls and shouts against proletarian dictatorship under cover of shouts about “dictatorship in general” are an outright betrayal of socialism. They are, in fact, desertion to the bourgeoisie, denial of the proletariat's right to its own, proletarian, revolution, and defence of bourgeois reformism at

the very historical juncture when bourgeois reformism throughout the world has collapsed and the war has created a revolutionary situation.

4. In explaining the class nature of bourgeois civilisation, bourgeois democracy and the bourgeois parliamentary system, all socialists have expressed the idea formulated with the greatest scientific precision by Marx and Engels, namely, that the most democratic bourgeois republic is no more than a machine for the suppression of the working class by the bourgeoisie, for the suppression of the working people by a handful of capitalists. There is not a single revolutionary, not a single Marxist among those now shouting against dictatorship and for democracy who has not sworn and vowed to the workers that he accepts this basic truth of socialism. But now, when the revolutionary proletariat is in a fighting mood and taking action to destroy this machine of oppression and to establish proletarian dictatorship, these traitors to socialism claim that the bourgeoisie have granted the working people “pure democracy,” have abandoned resistance and are prepared to yield to the majority of the working people. They assert that in a democratic republic there is not, and never has been, any such thing as a state machine for the oppression of labour by capital.

5. The Paris Commune [of 1871, when the Parisian working class briefly seized power]—to which all who parade as socialists pay lip service, for they know that the workers ardently and sincerely sympathise with the Commune—showed very clearly the historically conventional nature and limited value of the bourgeois parliamentary system and bourgeois democracy—institutions which, though highly progressive compared with medieval times, inevitably require a radical

alteration in the era of proletarian revolution. It was Marx who best appraised the historical significance of the Commune. In his analysis, he revealed the exploiting nature of bourgeois democracy and the bourgeois parliamentary system under which the oppressed classes enjoy the right to decide once in several years which representative of the propertied classes shall “represent and suppress” (*ver- und zertreten*) the people in parliament. And it is now, when the Soviet movement is embracing the entire world and continuing the work of the Commune for all to see, that the traitors to socialism are forgetting the concrete experience and concrete lessons of the Paris Commune and repeating the old bourgeois rubbish about “democracy in general.” The Commune was not a parliamentary institution.

6. The significance of the Commune, furthermore, lies in the fact that it endeavoured to crush, to smash to its very foundations, the bourgeois state apparatus, the bureaucratic, judicial, military and police machine, and to replace it by a self-governing, mass workers' organisation in which there was no division between legislative and executive power. All contemporary bourgeois-democratic republics, including the German republic, which the traitors to socialism, in mockery of the truth, describe as a proletarian republic, retain this state apparatus. We therefore again get quite clear confirmation of the point that shouting in defence of “democracy in general” is actually defence of the bourgeoisie and their privileges as exploiters.

7. “Freedom of assembly” can be taken as a sample of the requisites of “pure democracy.” Every class-conscious worker who has not broken with his class will readily appreciate the absurdity of promising freedom of assembly to the exploiters at a time and in a situation when the exploiters are resisting the overthrow of their rule and are fighting to retain their privileges. When the bourgeoisie were revolutionary, they did not, either in England in 1649 or in France in 1793, grant “freedom of assembly” to the monarchists and nobles, who summoned foreign troops and “assembled” to organise attempts at restoration. If the present-day bourgeoisie, who have long since become reactionary, demand from the proletariat advance guarantees of “freedom of assembly” for the exploiters, whatever the resistance offered by the capitalists to being expropriated, the workers will only laugh at their hypocrisy.

The workers know perfectly well, too, that even in the most democratic bourgeois republic “freedom of assembly” is a hollow phrase, for the rich have the best public and private buildings at their disposal, and enough leisure to assemble at meetings, which are protected by the bourgeois machine of power. The rural and urban workers and the small peasants—the overwhelming majority of the

WORKERS VANGUARD



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

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The Spartacist League is the U.S. section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Workers Vanguard (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and skipping the last issue in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 1618, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116. Email address: vanguard@tiac.net. Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/22 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

The closing date for news in this issue is October 18.

No. 1098

21 October 2016

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The 1916 Irish Rebellion and the British Workers Movement

The following article, reprinted from Workers Hammer No. 235 (Summer 2016), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, is based on a presentation by comrade Eibhlin McDonald at a 23 April public meeting in London.

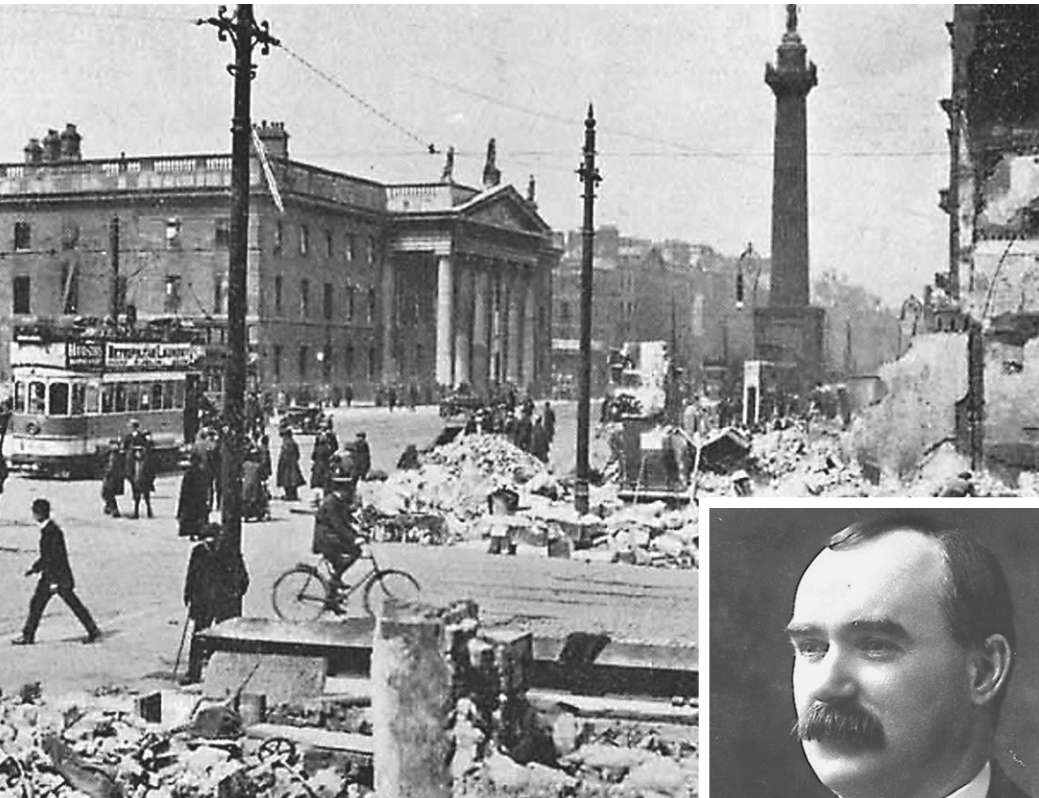
WORKERS HAMMER

One hundred years ago tomorrow, the Easter Rising broke out in Dublin. The armed insurrection against British rule was organised by some 1,000-1,500 militant nationalists, the Volunteers, together with the Irish Citizen Army (ICA). The leadership included James Connolly, a revolutionary socialist. Yet this was a nationalist uprising for an independent Ireland, despite the participation of Connolly and his ICA, a workers militia that had been formed during the Dublin Lock-out of 1913, when the city's employers tried to smash the trade unions.

It began when the rebels seized a number of positions across Dublin and proclaimed an Irish Republic from the General Post Office. But the majority of the Volunteers were demobilised by the nationalist leaders on the eve of the Rising, leaving the Dublin rebels isolated. Moreover, the arms and ammunition from Germany that were expected by the insurgents did not arrive. A few days before the Rising, Roger Casement, who had been in Germany trying to organise support for an Irish insurrection, was arrested after landing in Ireland on a German submarine.

The British ruling class responded with ferocity to this armed uprising, especially as it came in the midst of World War I, when all of the subject peoples in the British Empire—which in 1916 included India and much of Africa—were expected to be loyal, indeed to fight and die for the “Mother country.”

With overwhelming military force, the British shelled Dublin, destroying much of the city centre. The rebels were forced to surrender after five days. At first, the Rising did not have much popular support, but there was mass public outrage when the leaders were court-martialled and sentenced to death. Fourteen were shot, including Connolly who was executed tied



Shell of Dublin General Post Office, headquarters of 1916 rebellion, after bombardment of city by British imperialists. Inset: James Connolly.

to a chair because he had been wounded in battle and was unable to stand.

The British imperialists launched wave after wave of repression in the years to follow. But even in defeat, the Easter Rising marked the beginning of the end of British rule in Ireland. They were forced to grant independence in 1921-22, but these masters of divide-and-rule engineered the partition of Ireland by inflaming tensions between Protestants and Catholics. The partition was the result of a defeat of the working class in struggle and was accompanied by bloody pogroms against Catholics, as we shall see.

We Marxists honour the Easter Rising as a just struggle for independence of Ireland from British colonial rule. But we are politically opposed to the programme and ideology of nationalism, which lines up the working class behind its “own” capitalist rulers. Unlike nationalists, we’re certainly not advocates of the doomed but heroic “blood sacrifice.” But once the Rising happened, revolutionaries were duty bound to defend it, in contrast to those on the left who regard the capitalist state as inviolable and disavow any attempt to overthrow it.

Karl Marx on Ireland

For British revolutionaries, the question of Ireland, Britain’s oldest colony, has long been a test of their commitment to the overthrow of their “own” capitalist ruling class. Karl Marx insisted: “It is in the direct and absolute interests of the English working class to get rid of their present connexion with Ireland.... The English working class will *never accomplish anything* before it has got rid of Ireland” (Letter to Engels, 10 December 1869). The crucial importance of internationalist unity between workers in Ireland and Britain becomes obvious from studying the history of working-class struggles. Any revolutionary perspective requires resolute opposition to the politics of the Labour leaders—the left as well as the right wing—as we shall see.

Following on from Marx, Lenin formulated a general policy on the attitude of the revolutionary party to national oppression in the epoch of imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism that developed towards

the end of the 19th century. With the advent of imperialism, Lenin stressed, the division of nations into oppressor and oppressed was accentuated. Correspondingly, the tasks of revolutionaries in each country are different: the proletariat of the oppressor nation, as Lenin put it, “must demand freedom of political separation for the colonies and nations oppressed by ‘their own’ nation. Otherwise the internationalism of the proletariat would be nothing but empty words.” He insisted that British socialists who do not demand freedom to separate for the colonies and for Ireland “act as chauvinists and lackeys of bloodstained and filthy imperialist monarchies and the imperialist bourgeoisie” (“The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination,” 1916). Socialists of the oppressed nations, on the other hand, must fight for the fullest unity of the workers of the oppressed nation with those of the oppressor nation.

The attitude of socialists in Britain towards the Easter Rising flowed from their attitude to World War I. The outbreak of the first interimperialist war saw the collapse of the Second International into mutually hostile camps as most parties supported their “own” capitalist rulers. On 4 August 1914, the parliamentary fraction of the German Social Democratic Party, the largest section of the international, voted in favour of war credits. The British Labour Party and trade union leaders, for their part, supported Britain and declared an end to working-class struggle for the duration of the war. The Bolsheviks insisted that revolutionaries must stand for the defeat, above all, of their own bourgeois state. For Lenin, the task of socialists was to seek to turn the imperialist war into a civil war, that is, into proletarian revolution. Further, Lenin saw that the Second International had been destroyed, and that a new revolutionary international must be built through a complete break with the opportunists and social chauvinists.

For Lenin, the attitude of revolutionaries to the Easter Rising was a measure of their commitment to the right of self-determination, and to proletarian internationalism. He argued against other revolutionaries, including Trotsky,

who trenchantly opposed the social chauvinists but were dismissive of the Rising. Trotsky claimed that the Irish peasantry, whose struggle for land had been the motor force for previous national revolts, had been pacified by land reform, and thus he argued that the “historical basis for a national revolution has disappeared even in backward Ireland” (“Lessons of the Events in Dublin,” *Nashe Slovo*, 4 July 1916).

Lenin countered that revolutionaries must take advantage of every outbreak of struggle against imperialism. A national revolt in Europe could be the spark for broader revolutionary struggle, Lenin argued. Indeed, “a blow delivered against the power of the English imperialist bourgeoisie by a rebellion in Ireland is a hundred times more significant politically than a blow of equal force delivered in Asia or in Africa.” “It is the misfortune of the Irish,” Lenin wrote, “that they rose prematurely before the European revolt of the proletariat had *had time* to mature” (“The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up,” 1916).

The Labour Party had passed ump-tween “anti-war” resolutions—right up to a few days *before* the war broke out. For example, on 1 August 1914, prominent British Labour Party leaders signed a resolution calling for demonstrations against war and proclaiming: “Down with class rule” and “Down with war.” Among its signatories was one Arthur Henderson.

Three days later, Henderson signed a document issued by the trade union leaders, calling for support to Britain against Germany, on the grounds that Britain’s imperialist rival was “seeking to become the dominant power in Europe, with the Kaiser the dictator over all.” The Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress (TUC) declared an end to working-class struggle for the duration of the war. In May 1915 Arthur Henderson, then leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, became a member of the wartime coalition government. He was a member of the cabinet when the 1916 Easter Rising broke out.

Henderson was accused of having led the cheering in Parliament when news of the executions of the leaders of the Rising was received. Henderson denied it, but said he would not “violate Ministerial confidences” in order to reveal what he had said about the executions. It hardly matters whether he cheered or not. He was in the cabinet that ordered the repression in Ireland.

The Dublin Lockout of 1913

Another Labour MP [Member of Parliament] and leader of the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR), J.H. Thomas, has been aptly described as a “fervid imperialist” in relation to Ireland. Thomas’s hostility to James Connolly was already evident during the Dublin Lockout of 1913. The capitalists of Dublin came together and locked out their workers in opposition to the efforts of [union leader] Jim Larkin and Connolly to unionise the workforce. Larkin, aided by Connolly, led the workers of Dublin in some five months of bitter class war, in a seminal battle for the trade union movement in Ireland and in Britain.

At a time when the trade unions consisted overwhelmingly of skilled craft workers, Larkin and Connolly worked wonders on both sides of the Irish Sea by organising the unskilled workers into the unions. In Belfast, this meant recruiting Catholic workers as well as Protestants,

WORKERS HAMMER

Out with the Blairite plotters!
Let Jeremy Corbyn run the Labour Party

SEPTEMBER 1916: The Irish rebels fought the Easter Rising in Dublin. The British shelled the city, destroying much of the city centre. The rebels were forced to surrender after five days. At first, the Rising did not have much popular support, but there was mass public outrage when the leaders were court-martialled and sentenced to death. Fourteen were shot, including Connolly who was executed tied to a chair because he had been wounded in battle and was unable to stand.

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US\$10/1 year

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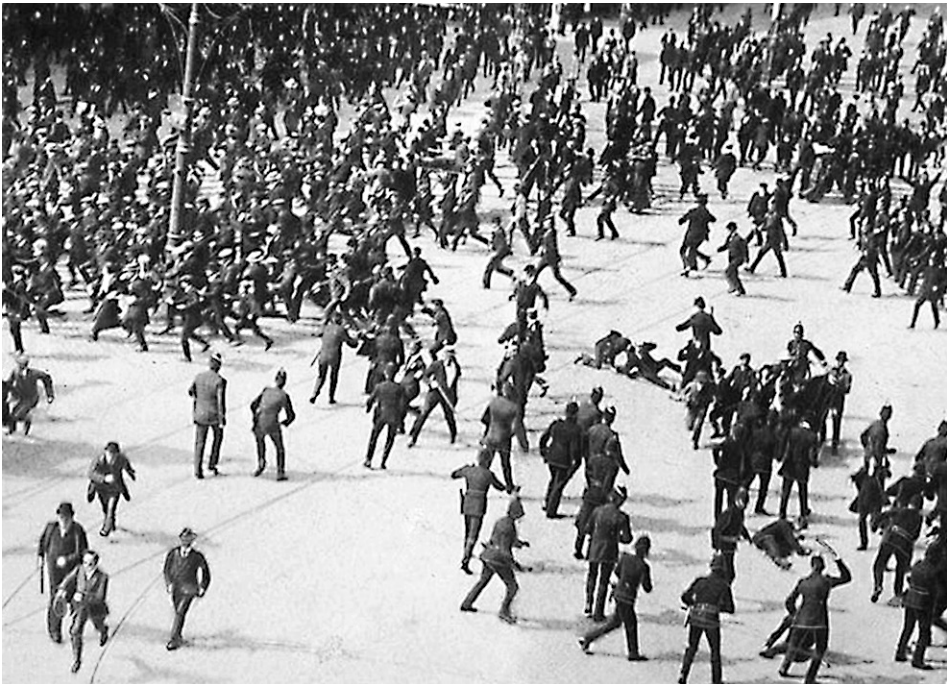
WORKERS VANGUARD

and also women textile workers into the unions. In Britain, drawing the huge layer of unskilled workers into the unions injected tremendous vitality into the trade union movement and contributed to a wave of class struggle known as the Great Unrest during the period 1910-1914.

During the Lockout, Connolly and Larkin appealed for support from the British trade unions. The working class had tremendous sympathy with the Dublin workers. But the solidarity that was sorely needed was sabotaged by the TUC and Labour leaders, including the left-talking dockers' leader, Ben Tillett. The British dockers and railway workers were key to defeating the Dublin bosses: had they blockaded goods destined for Dublin by boat and train they would have shut down the city. At one stage, two train drivers in South Wales, who were members of ASLEF rail union, were sacked for refusing to carry goods destined for Dublin. Some 30,000 railway workers went on strike in their support. NUR leader Thomas was instrumental in smashing the strike, getting his members back to work and actually ordering them to replace the two victimised ASLEF members, whom he described as "a disgrace" to trade unionism. Jim Larkin caustically described Thomas as "a double-eyed traitor to his class."

It comes as no surprise then that Thomas condemned the Easter Rising and declared that "there was no Labour leader in this country who did not deplore the recent rebellion in Ireland." Labour "left" MP George Lansbury published the most popular anti-war newspaper in England. But as a pacifist, Lansbury condemned the Easter Rising, saying: "No lover of peace can do anything but deplore the outbreak in Dublin" (quoted in Geoffrey Bell, *Hesitant Comrades*, 2016).

As I mentioned, the executions of the leaders of the Rising caused outrage in Ireland. Even among those in Britain who condemned the Rising, some thought the executions were a step too far. But Will



Club-wielding police attack workers and passers-by on Sackville Street (today O'Connell Street) during 1913 Dublin Lockout.

after his death, giving rise to much doubt about their authenticity. When Casement was charged with high treason, and the public were being fed lurid allegations of his homosexuality, many of his liberal friends, including the novelist Joseph Conrad, shamefully refused to petition for clemency. He was hanged in London's Pentonville prison in August 1916.

On the Question of Obtaining German Arms

From the point of view of the working class, obtaining military support, including from an imperialist power, is not a problem in and of itself—if it is for a just war. It would have been a different matter had the Irish nationalists placed their forces under the command of the German military, which they did not. However, nationalists frequently do place themselves under the military command of an imperialist power, becoming their

itself." Pankhurst had few illusions in parliamentary reform—the struggle for votes for women met with violent resistance from the British state and suffrage was grudgingly granted only after the Russian October Revolution of 1917. Pankhurst, to her credit, had clearly taken the side of the working class by supporting Larkin and Connolly in the Dublin Lockout. She broke from her bourgeois-feminist family and went on to become a socialist and later, briefly, a communist.

The British Socialist Party had been formed in 1912 as a fusion of H.M. Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation with other socialists. The BSP underwent a split during the war, at its Easter 1916 conference, when the left wing took over and adopted an anti-war position. The split led to the departure of Hyndman, an anti-Jewish bigot and all-round social chauvinist. The BSP's newspaper, the *Call* (4 May 1916), described the Easter

explain why the SLP's monthly newspaper, the *Socialist*, said next to nothing on the Easter Rising, or on the execution of Connolly, their former comrade. Moreover it didn't carry an obituary for Connolly until three years after his death, and during that time the paper carried very little coverage of Ireland. While the SLP led valiant strikes and the party press opposed the war, they maintained a strict separation between their political line on the war and their trade union activity. In an extreme example, when John Muir was in court for his role in organising the munitions strikes, he cravenly swore that the strike was purely over economic issues and that he was for the war and war production. This shameful performance contrasts with John Maclean who used his trial as an opportunity to indict the capitalist system and the war.

Muir should have been expelled for dragging the SLP's record on the war through the mud, but the SLP kept him in their ranks. Had they fought for their anti-war line in the CWC, it would have split the leadership. Undoubtedly, had the SLP defended the Easter Rising and opposed Connolly's execution, it would also have required combating anti-Catholic prejudices among Protestant workers in Glasgow, which had its own version of the Catholic-Protestant division that was prevalent in Belfast. Even such momentous trade union struggle as that which was waged on the Clyde [river in Glasgow] during World War I could not, in and of itself, overcome the divisions that existed, and thus could not arrive at the level of consciousness needed to overthrow the capitalist ruling class through socialist revolution. That requires a different kind of party.

Among the avowedly revolutionary parties of the time, Lenin's party was unique. By 1912 the Bolsheviks had carried out a complete break with the opportunists in Russia. As early as 1902, in his pamphlet *What Is to Be Done?*, Lenin insisted that the revolutionary should aspire not to be "the trade union secretary, but *the tribune of the people*, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects" in order to "clarify for *all* and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat." Above all, Lenin insisted on the party's responsibility to bring the working class to revolutionary consciousness. The principles and programme that Lenin hammered out for the Bolsheviks, which he then generalised following the collapse of the Second International into social chauvinism in 1914, were central to the forging of the party into the instrument that would lead the proletariat to victory in the 1917 October Revolution.

From the Easter Rising to Partition

The years after Connolly's execution saw a resurgence of anti-British sentiment in Ireland, led by Sinn Féin. There was also a renewed wave of working-class struggles that continued through the war of independence of 1919-21. In the South, for example, as well as the Limerick Soviet, in which striking workers took over and ran the city, there were land seizures and workers protests. In 1919, Belfast saw a tremendous strike throughout the city. The majority of the strikers were Protestant, and the head of the strike committee, Charles MacKay, was a socialist of Catholic origin. The strike provided an opening for the sectarian divide to be transcended and could have given a tremendous impetus to the struggle for an Irish workers republic. But the Protestant bosses in Belfast played on Protestant fears that they would become an oppressed minority in an independent Ireland ruled by the Sinn Féin nationalists. Meanwhile the British Lord Lieutenant in Dublin released some of the Sinn Féin leaders who had been imprisoned, calculating that their Irish nationalism would incite Protestant workers' hostility towards their Catholic counterparts and undermine proletarian unity.

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Sir John Lavery

Painting of trial of Roger Casement for attempting to procure German military support for the Irish rebellion. Found guilty of high treason, Casement (right) was hanged on 3 August 1916.



National Library of Ireland

Thorne, a London Labour MP, demanded in Parliament to know when Roger Casement would be tried, pointing out that he was "the forerunner of this movement," i.e., of the rebels who led the Rising (quoted in *Hesitant Comrades*). Casement was a courageous figure: from an Irish Protestant background, he grew up believing the Empire was bringing progress to Africa. But he was disgusted by the atrocities perpetrated on the native peoples at the behest of the imperialists in the Belgian Congo (and in the Putumayo region of Peru) and became an opponent of British imperialist rule, including in his native Ireland.

At the time of his arrest for attempting to secure German military aid for the Easter Rising, Casement had much popular sympathy. Faced with growing demands for clemency in his case, the British authorities released excerpts from what they claimed were Casement's diaries indicating he was homosexual. The British kept the diaries secret for decades

proxies in unjust wars. For example, today in Syria and Iraq, the Kurdish nationalists are the "boots on the ground" for the U.S. imperialists. We have no side in Syria's squalid civil war between the Assad military and the rebel forces dominated by different Islamists. But we do have a side against the U.S. and other imperialist powers. And while we are implacable opponents of everything ISIS stands for, we take a military side with ISIS when it aims its fire against the imperialist armed forces and their proxies in the region, including the Kurdish nationalist forces.

The British Left and the Easter Rising

Among the opponents of the war and of social chauvinism in the British Labour movement, a prominent voice was that of Sylvia Pankhurst, at the time a leader in the struggle for women's suffrage. Pankhurst said there is only "one reply to the Irish Rebellion and that is the demand that Ireland should be allowed to govern

Rising as "this latest phase of the war for liberation" and had no hesitation "in fixing full responsibility for the antecedents of the affair on the shoulders of successive British governments."

Perhaps the most surprising response to the Easter Rising and the executions came from the Socialist Labour Party (SLP). The SLP, based primarily in Scotland, had been formed on the model of the party of the same name in the U.S. founded by Daniel DeLeon. Connolly was a former leader of the Scottish party. At the time of the Easter Rising, the SLP in Scotland was facing severe state repression for its role in organising militant strikes in strategic munitions industries in Glasgow, in the midst of war. The SLP's main leaders—including Arthur MacManus, John Muir, Thomas Clark—had been arrested. John Maclean, who was a leader of the Clyde Workers Committee (CWC) but not a member of the SLP, was also arrested and imprisoned.

However, state repression alone doesn't

Elections...

(continued from page 1)

Because the Republicans are viewed as the party of big business and white racism, the Democrats can mobilize wider support for war and repression, particularly among workers and black people. There is a *very long* list of bloody atrocities carried out by U.S. imperialism under Democratic Party presidents. The bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Vietnam War. Bill Clinton launched the 1999 NATO bombing of Serbia. Now we have Nobel Peace Prize winner Barack Obama and his drone presidency. Under Obama, millions of people have fled their devastated home countries—Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, Libya, Yemen and Somalia—thanks to the savagery of the American imperialist masters.

It is in the interest of the working class, particularly in the U.S., to oppose all the wars, occupations and depredations of the imperialist bloodsuckers. Any force, however unsavory, that attacks, repels or otherwise impedes U.S. forces strikes a blow in the interests of the working and oppressed masses of the world. For that reason, in the U.S. war against the Islamic State (ISIS) in Iraq and Syria, we have a military side with ISIS against the U.S. and its proxies—including the Syrian Kurdish nationalists—despite the fact that we abhor and reject everything that the ISIS cutthroats stand for. (The anti-woman reactionaries of the Taliban, Al Qaeda and ISIS are all first- or second-generation offspring of the U.S.-sponsored “holy war” against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the ’80s.) We say: *U.S. out of the Near East now!*

The Myth of the 1 Percent

This summer I went with my comrades to intervene with our communist press at the People’s Convention in Philadelphia, one of the events around the Democratic National Convention. We met a lot of disappointed supporters of Bernie Sanders who were “feeling the Bern.” Sanders passed himself off as a socialist for however long he was around in the race for president. In fact, he is a capitalist politician, an imperialist running dog—and I guess now he’s a lapdog for Hillary. With the population so disgusted by the elections, Sanders has been especially useful for the bourgeoisie in luring some workers and youth back into the Democratic Party.

There were reformist socialists at the People’s Convention too, for example, Socialist Alternative. They pimped for Sanders in the primary campaign, rallying behind his calls for a “political revolution against the billionaire class.” Well, we went to Philly to open eyes and tell the truth: for the past 25 years Sanders has been a member of the Senate Democratic Caucus. He’s supported U.S. military



Detroit Federation of Teachers

Buckets catch water leaking from ceiling in decrepit Detroit elementary school classroom.

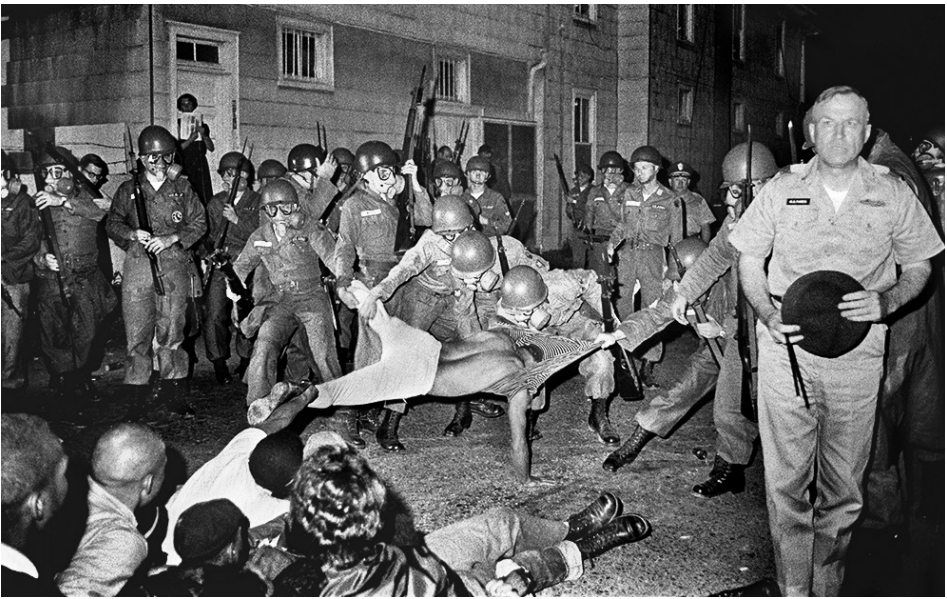
adventures abroad as well as the police at home—who he thinks have a “hard job.” (Those were his actual words after the killing of Michael Brown.)

The Nation magazine put out a special convention issue called “We Still Need a Future to Believe in: How to Build the Political Revolution.” It includes all kinds of vapid liberal ideas and appeals, in the spirit of Sanders, “to hold the Democratic Party accountable for its epic failure to address the needs of the majority of people in this country.” The Democrats are a capitalist party that represents the interests of the oppressor, not the oppressed. And “the people” is a classless term that blurs the nature of capitalist society. “The people” do not share common interests; they are divided into contending social classes. There are two fundamental groups: the bourgeoisie or capitalist class, owners of the means of production and exploiters of wage labor; and the proletariat or working class, the class of wage-laborers, who have only their labor power to sell. There is also the petty bourgeoisie, a diverse and highly stratified social layer that includes students, professionals and small businessmen. Although numerically large, the petty bourgeoisie lacks social power and its own class perspective; it thus cannot offer an alternative to capitalism.

The conversations in Philly reminded me of the ones I had back during Occupy Wall Street. The heterogeneous Occupy protests claimed to speak for the 99 percent and against the 1 percent. This bourgeois-populist outlook obscures the fact that ownership of the means of production is in the hands of the tiny capitalist class (more like the 1 percent of the 1 percent). It liquidates the working class into a sea of have-nots, mixed in with cops, priests and bourgeois politicians. At best, activists saw the workers as *just one*

more sector of the oppressed.

When we say that the workers are the only revolutionary class in capitalist society, this is not a moral question. The working class is powerful not only because of its numbers—its power comes from the strategic place it has in the production process. Think about the L.A. and New York/New Jersey ports, the NYC subway system, the auto plants. And the working



Danny Lyon

National Guard brutalizes civil rights activist during desegregation struggle in Maryland, 1964. Green Party calls for Guard to be centerpiece of national defense.

class has the objective interest to end a system based on its own exploitation. But the proletariat needs the leadership of a vanguard party to become conscious of its historical task and interests. It takes a revolutionary party to lead the workers’ fight to smash capitalist rule and establish their own state power.

Many youth are looking for a way to reform the system and view socialism as a form of capitalism with better social services. Well, no. The capitalist system, which breeds poverty, oppression and war, is fundamentally not reformable. Socialism, an egalitarian society based on material abundance, requires the overthrow of the bourgeoisie on an international scale.

So, what happened to Occupy Wall Street? Well, in 2012 it liquidated into the campaign to re-elect Obama. In Philly, sad faces disappointed that Sanders was no longer running started looking to the Green Party.

The Green Party is a small-time capitalist party with a thoroughly bourgeois program. Green presidential candidate Jill Stein’s program calls to “restore the National Guard as the centerpiece of our defense.” The same National Guard that occupied Ferguson to put down protests against racist police killings! Just like they occupied the ghettos in the ’60s to murderously crush black rebellions, and shot and killed anti-Vietnam War protesters at Kent State. The National Guard exists to carry out violent repression against the working class and the oppressed. In no way do the Greens want to change the fundamentals of the private property system.

The Green Party argues that third par-

ties provide “an ‘emotional bridge’ for voters who are weary of supporting one major party but are not yet ready to vote for the other.” In the context of the current electoral circus, where both ruling-class candidates are very unpopular, especially among people under 30, the Greens keep people chained to illusions in bourgeois democracy. And reformist socialists are helping them. The International Socialist Organization calls for a vote for the Green Party, calling it “an independent left alternative in the 2016 election” (socialistworker.org, 10 December 2015).

For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

The fraud of bourgeois democracy is especially evident in the experience of black people in the U.S. After the cops killed Keith Scott last month, I watched an interview with a 24-year-old black man. “My people are tired,” he told the camera. “We need answers, man. It’s no reason that I should wake up every morning scared for my life because I am black.”

The videos of the ongoing killings by the cops have led blacks, whites and others to march in the streets, despite intense police repression. But the petty-bourgeois politics that dominate those protests don’t provide any answers. Alicia Garza, co-founder of Black Lives Matter, argues that “the first and primary task is to ensure that the country is not

run by a fickle fascist”—i.e., vote Hillary Clinton, Mrs. Mass Black Incarceration.

Going along with illusions in the Democrats, there are also hopes that the capitalist state can be reformed. It’s common to hear calls for federal investigations to clean up the racist cops, for community control of the police, for civilian review boards. Only a Marxist understanding of the state provides the answer to why none of these schemes have made a dent in the brutal, racist police terror in the streets.

The state is a machine for maintaining the rule of one class over another. It consists of special bodies of armed men committed to the defense of the dictatorship of the ruling class—the bourgeoisie—against the exploited and oppressed. In racist capitalist America, a country founded on chattel slavery, this means perpetuating the forcible segregation of the black population at the bottom of society. Cops are the thugs in blue whose job is to terrorize the ghettos and barrios, and the working class when it struggles. When Verizon workers were on strike earlier this year, the NYPD was there to ensure that scabs could cross the picket lines.

To address the special oppression of black people, the Spartacist League advances the program of *revolutionary integrationism* developed in the 1950s by veteran Trotskyist Richard S. Fraser. This Marxist perspective is counterposed to both liberal integrationism, which holds that black equality can be achieved within the confines of American capitalism, and black nationalism, which despairs of the possibility of overcoming racial divisions. Marxists seek to mobilize the proletariat

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Cops...

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described his experience of cop harassment: “They ride past me taunting me with their phones up.”

The thugs in blue not only engage in reprisals against those filming them, but also seek to confiscate the videos before they can be circulated. Diamond Reynolds heroically filmed and streamed the aftermath of the cop shooting of her boyfriend Philando Castile. She was then handcuffed and detained until 5 a.m. The police have even collaborated with social media companies to shut down livestreaming of their deadly actions. In August, Baltimore County police attempted to serve a warrant on Korryn Gaines, a 23-year-old black woman, at her home. Seeking to document their treatment of her, she livestreamed the ensuing stand-off to Facebook. At the cops’ request, Facebook shut off her account and deactivated the stream. Having ensured there would be no video evidence, the cops then shot Gaines dead, while she was holding her five-year-old son.

Repression against those who film the police is an expression of the cops’ desire to cover up their crimes and intimidate any who would seek to document them. Every video of police brutality and

harassment gives lie to the myth that they “serve and protect” anything but the property and domination of America’s racist capitalist ruling class. More broadly, state forces seek to hide the evidence of their repressive role.

While most courts have ruled that people have a First Amendment right to film the police, a federal court in Pennsylvania ruled in February that, in general, there is no right to do so; the ACLU is appealing this decision. But, court rulings favorable to the oppressed are no guarantee that the cops won’t violate people’s democratic rights. Moreover, they do not alter the fundamental role of the police—violent repression of workers, black people and immigrants.

State murder across the U.S., especially of black people, is nothing new. It is an extreme expression of the forcible segregation of the mass of black people at the bottom of society, a legacy of slavery. What is new is merely the degree to which, with the proliferation of smartphones, everyone can now document the harsh realities of this barbaric system. Years of protests, years of videos, years of preachers and prayers and pious promises by cynical Democratic Party hacks have not dented these harsh realities one bit. A week doesn’t go by without the racist police executing another person, whose life is memorialized by another hashtag.



Marino/NY Daily News

Ramsey Orta (above) captured on video the 2014 NYPD killing of Eric Garner (right).



NY Daily News

The righteous anger against the thugish police must be transformed into a struggle against the social order they defend, a struggle to make the working class the rulers of a new society. What is necessary is to uproot entirely the capitalist state and the system it defends—one where the capitalist exploiters idle in

luxury while the mass of society is condemned to a life of toil, should they be lucky enough to find a job at all. The fight for a socialist future begins with unlocking the power of the integrated working class. The key is forging a multiracial revolutionary workers party committed to the fight for a workers government. ■

against every manifestation of black oppression to open the road to black equality through the construction of an egalitarian socialist society. (I encourage anyone interested in deepening their understanding of this question to read our pamphlet *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 (Revised), “What Strategy for Black Liberation? Trotskyism vs. Black Nationalism.”)

The program of revolutionary integrationism flows from the understanding that the American black population is neither a separate nation nor a separate class but rather is an oppressed race-color caste. Black workers are not merely victims, but constitute a strategic component of the U.S. working class, unionized at higher rates than whites and represented in key occupations such as long-shore, manufacturing and transit. They form a living link between the potential power of the proletariat and the anger of the masses in the ghettos.

The American ruling class is a master at sowing poisonous racism to divide the working class and cripple its struggles. But the objective basis exists to break down racial divisions in the course of joint struggle. In order to emancipate itself, the working class must take up the fight for black freedom. Moreover, there is no other road to eliminating the special oppression of black people than the victorious conquest of power by the U.S. proletariat.

Some youth today embrace the false belief that black oppression is the result of “white skin privilege.” They are being told that all white people benefit from racism. This framework—including such ridiculous things as privilege checklists—encourages navel-gazing and fosters white liberal guilt, while dismissing the possibility of integrated struggle. White workers *do not* benefit from black oppression. Racial oppression drives down wages and living conditions for working people of all races—you can see this clearly in the low-wage, open-shop South. The theory of white skin privilege is *an alibi for the capitalist rulers*, the real beneficiaries of black oppression.

In the protests against racist cop terror, we oppose the policy of “white allies” marching at the back of demonstrations. Our integrated contingents and sales teams often face race-baiting, which serves the purpose of eliminating political debate. For instance at the DNC protests in Philly, when my white comrade spoke against illusions in Sanders, one of the local activists told my comrade she didn’t have enough melanin in her skin to tell people what to do. This is pure demagogic race-baiting. *We have a revolutionary program and revolutionary politics in our blood.*



AP

Immigrants being bused to Illinois airport for deportation, May 2010.

It took a revolutionary war to end slavery. And it will take a socialist revolution to shatter the chains of wage slavery. There will never be justice under capitalism for black people, the oppressed or workers. There is no justice for Sandra Bland, Michael Brown, Freddie Gray, Eric Garner, Oscar Grant, Tamir Rice, Antonio Zambrano-Montes, Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, Keith Scott or the many other victims of racist cop terror. *We say: Finish the Civil War! Forward to a workers state!* Our aim is to construct a revolutionary workers party that can unite the working class across racial and ethnic backgrounds on a program for its own emancipation—a party that will stop at nothing less than abolishing capitalism. *Those who labor must rule!*

For a Fighting Labor Movement!

When rampant financial speculation in the housing market triggered the economic crisis in 2008, the capitalists made working people pay. Trillions of dollars went to bail out the banks, insurance companies and auto bosses. White workers and a huge number of Latinos and black people lost their homes through foreclosures and many were left without jobs. The cheap talk now about a so-called recovery means that the bourgeoisie’s profits have recovered.

Another consequence of the economic crash was a drop in demand for labor, which had serious consequences for immigrants. The Obama government has deported over 2.5 million people, more than the sum of all the presidents who governed

the United States during the 20th century. Undocumented immigrants have been swept into overcrowded detention centers where denial of medical care is routine. It’s common to hear that immigrants die in *la migra*’s custody. Many detention centers are privately owned by huge corporations that make a killing on human misery.

The bourgeoisie’s anti-immigrant repression is used to maintain immigrant workers as a brutally exploited, low-wage workforce when needed, and deport them when the work dries up. Much has been said about Trump building a wall on the border with Mexico, but the bricks have already been laid down by the current administration. Last year, Obama poured more than \$12 billion into Customs and Border Protection. His Priority Enforcement Program feeds records from local police arrests into a federal immigration database, creating a fast track for deportation. And Hillary intends to continue this nightmare for undocumented immigrants.

The cruelty inflicted on the victims of fast-track deportations has been highlighted in the British paper the *Guardian*. For instance, there is the story of Carmen Ortega. She was charged with possession of a controlled substance. She is a 62-year-old grandmother with Alzheimer’s who was ordered deported to the Dominican Republic, a country where she has no remaining family, after living in the U.S. for 40 years.

Fighting for the rights of immigrants is an elementary component of warding off attacks on everyone’s rights, and of the

defense of the workers movement as a whole against capitalist divide-and-rule. Immigrant workers are not just victims. They form bridges to workers around the world and many bring with them traditions of militant struggle from their home countries. The Spartacist League calls for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations!* Latinos, the largest minority in the U.S., can and will play an important role in helping to build a revolutionary workers party. Just as black workers must be broken from anti-immigrant, anti-Latino chauvinism, Latino workers and youth must be broken from anti-black racism.

The pro-capitalist union bureaucracy is responsible for tying the working class in this country to dead-end Democratic Party politics and for promoting “America first” chauvinism. Pushing “American jobs for American workers,” the bureaucrats poison workers’ consciousness. Protectionism scapegoats foreign workers for the loss of jobs while promoting the lie that workers in the U.S. have a common interest with their American capitalist exploiters.

We base ourselves on the lessons of past class battles. Industrial unions such as the Teamsters were formed through convulsive strikes in the 1930s—and it was Reds that led many of these strikes. They gave a taste of what workers can do to fight and win. A class-struggle leadership that relied on the mobilization of the working class, not the political agencies of the bourgeoisie, made a difference. We need to study those lessons today to lay

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Elections...

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the basis for a successful working-class offensive against the exploiters.

Writing in 1921, James P. Cannon, who would go on to play a leading role in the 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strikes, explained:

“Let the labor unions put aside their illusions; let them face the issue squarely and fight it out on the basis of the class struggle. Instead of seeking peace when there is no peace, and ‘understanding’ with those who do not want to understand, let them declare war on the whole capitalist regime. That is the way to save the unions and to make them grow in the face of adversity and become powerful war engines for the destruction of capitalism and reorganization of society on the foundation of working class control in industry and government.”

—“Who Can Save the Unions?”, reprinted in *James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism* (1992)

Capitalism Means War Abroad, Misery and Repression at Home

There are more than 43 million Americans who live in poverty today. That is over 13 percent of the population—the



Mark Allen Johnson

Prisoner shackled to hospital bed feeds her newborn child for last time before being sent back to cell, California, 2005.



WV Photo

Oakland, February 2002: Labor-centered, Partisan Defense Committee-initiated united-front mobilization against government’s “war on terror” and in defense of immigrant rights.

highest percentage in the developed world. They are found from the hills of Kentucky to the streets of Detroit, from Louisiana in the Deep South to the heartland of Oklahoma. Their percentage of the population is up sharply since 2000. In 2013, more than half of U.S. public school students lived in poverty.

As a reflection of the terrible health care system in the U.S., the rate of women who die in childbirth is the highest among advanced countries—more than three times the rate in Britain, for example. Things are even worse for black women, whose maternal death rate is over twice the national average. The infant mortality rate in this country puts it at the bottom of the list of 27 developed countries. Underlining the oppression of black people is the fact that, if Alabama were a country, its rate of almost nine infant deaths per 1,000 would place it behind Lebanon, while Mississippi, with 9.6 deaths per 1,000, would be behind Botswana.

It’s been stated over and over again that the U.S. has the largest prison population in the world, both in terms of the actual number of inmates and as a percentage of the population. A 13-year-old black student, who was convicted of battery after bumping into a teacher while playing in the hallway captured the feeling of many like him who try to build a

life while having a criminal record: “You feel like you’re drowning and you’re trying to get some air, but people are just pouring more water into the pool.” A lot of poor and working people feel the same way and are fed up.

Since 1980, the number of incarcerated people in the U.S. has more than quadrupled. Today, women are the fastest-growing demographic in America’s jails. Eighty percent of them have children, most are single mothers convicted for property and drug crimes and “public order” offences, which include prostitution. About 18 percent of New York residents are black, but black women constitute more than 40 percent of the women incarcerated in that state. Only in 2009 did the state finally ban the use of shackles on women when they give birth. This law is rarely followed by the sadistic prison guards, who, despite requests from doctors, still make women endure the pain and humiliation of wearing handcuffs during labor.

The conditions of women prisoners are so horrendous that even accessing basic sanitary products such as pads, tampons and toilet paper is a struggle. With the economic crisis, voices among the bourgeoisie have increasingly complained that the maintenance of the country’s vast complex of prisons is too expensive.

Mexico...

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pro-capitalist bureaucrats of the AFL-CIO, tailing the Democratic Party. The capitalists will always go where the cost of production is cheapest in order to maximize their profits. To make foreign workers the scapegoats for the loss of jobs in the U.S. is a reactionary response that undermines the perspective of struggle by poisoning the consciousness of the working class and preventing solidarity with its class brothers in China, Mexico, Central America and elsewhere. Down with NAFTA and CAFTA! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

For its part, the Mexican bourgeoisie, notwithstanding the ideological differences between the technocrats of the PRI, right-wing clericalists of the PAN [National Action Party] or populists of the PRD [Party of the Democratic Revolution] or Morena [Movement for National Regeneration], is too weak to put an end to its own subordination to the imperialists. It is necessary to break with the bourgeois nationalism of [Morena leader] Andrés Manuel López Obrador. The main potential ally of the Mexican toilers is the multiracial working class in the U.S. No combination of Democrat or Republican in the White House and neoliberal or nationalist-populist in [the Mexican presidential residence] Los Pinos will fulfill the hopes of the Mexican workers and peas-

Despite the hopes of many that life under Obama would be different because he is a black man, the reality is that he committed even more money and resources to drug law enforcement. We call for the decriminalization of drugs, just as we call for abolishing all laws against “crimes without victims”—prostitution, gambling, pornography, etc.

The condition of women behind bars is just one raw example of women’s oppression in capitalist America. Abortion rights are under sustained attack and quality, affordable childcare barely exists. Despite legal equality, women remain oppressed. Women’s oppression is rooted in the institution of the family, and can only be overcome through building a socialist society that will replace the family by making child rearing and other domestic labor the responsibility of society as a whole. The struggle for women’s liberation is inseparable from the fight for international workers revolution.

Marx said there is only one way of breaking the resistance of the ruling classes. That is to find, in the society that surrounds us, the force that can by its social position form a new power capable of sweeping away the old. The working class is the force that can form a new power, but it needs the leadership of a revolutionary vanguard party, built through the fusion of advanced workers and revolutionary intellectuals, that fights for all of the oppressed.

Now the old is even older. Still, in these elections, we have a task that is as relevant as ever. To raise the consciousness of the workers and those who want to take a side with them, we must explain that communism is not only possible, but what it means and how to get there. We want to build an entirely different society, where class divisions are eliminated and the wealth created by those who labor is no longer enjoyed by a few, but by the working people as a whole.

I want to finish by reading a short quote by Cannon:

“Power is on their [the workers’] side. All they need is will, the confidence, the consciousness, the leadership—and the party which believes in the revolutionary victory, and consciously and deliberately prepares for it in advance by theoretical study and serious organization. Will the workers find these things when they need them in the showdown, when the struggle for power will be decided? That is the question.” —“The Coming Struggle for Power,” *America’s Road to Socialism* (1953) ■

Ireland 1916...

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Not long after the defeat of the Belfast strikes, in the summer of 1920 a wave of bloody attacks swept through the shipyards and spread to other workplaces, targeting mainly Catholics. Some 10,000 Catholic men and 1,000 Catholic women were driven out of their jobs. Many Catholic homes and shops were burned in “five weeks of ruthless persecution by boycott, fire, plunder and assault” in a wave of terror that was compared to the pogroms against Jews in tsarist Russia (quoted in *Hesitant Comrades*). Several hundred of the expelled workers were members of the carpenters union.

At the same time, 1920 was also the year of the “Hands Off Russia” campaign, in which workers in Britain mobilised in the thousands and forced the British government to stop shipments of arms to capitalist armies fighting against Soviet Russia. Among others, the carpenters union had also passed “Hands Off Ireland” motions. In Belfast, carpenters union members went on strike when a group of Protestant shipyard workers produced revolvers declaring they would drive out every Sinn Feiner—meaning every Catholic, every trade union militant and socialist—from their jobs. Only 600 out of 2,000 obeyed the strike call. But the Loyalist scabs were expelled from the union. The carpenters union leaders appealed for other unions

to prevent goods and raw materials from going into Belfast, arguing that the trade union movement had a role to play in ending the sectarian strife—by standing up for its own principles.

The anti-Catholic pogroms in Belfast paved the way for Partition, a major defeat for the perspective of a workers republic. In opposition to Irish independence, the British backed the Ulster Loyalists and engineered the setting up of the Orange statelet in the North, a police state which institutionalised discrimination against the Catholic minority. Independence in the South led to the creation of a repressive Catholic state, which was rooted in the oppression of women. The poisonous legacy of Partition was to create an oppressed Catholic minority in the North, interpenetrated with a distinct Protestant community, which in turn harbours legitimate fears that they would become an oppressed minority in a Catholic-dominated united Ireland.

The only just resolution to these national antagonisms lies in the overthrow of capitalism on both islands. Our perspective is for an Irish workers republic within a voluntary federation of workers republics in these Isles. It is important to know that the situation that emerged from Partition was not the only possible outcome. Above all it was a result of defeats and betrayals of workers in struggle. And it is rich in lessons for the many struggles that we will face in the course of building a revolutionary party. ■

ants for their national and social emancipation, which requires socialist revolution and its extension to the imperialist beast. The SL/U.S. and the GEM, as sections of the International Communist League, fight hand in hand to reforge the Trotskyist Fourth International, the essential instrument to carry out this perspective. ■



Publication of the Grupo Espartaquista de México
No. 46, October 2016, \$5.00 (24 pages)
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Archives...

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by the vast majority of the population, namely, the working people. In contrast, proletarian dictatorship is the forcible suppression of the resistance of the exploiters, i.e., an insignificant minority of the population, the landowners and capitalists.

It follows that proletarian dictatorship must inevitably entail not only a change in democratic forms and institutions, generally speaking, but precisely such a change as provides an unparalleled extension of the actual enjoyment of democracy by those oppressed by capitalism—the toiling classes.

And indeed, the form of proletarian dictatorship that has already taken shape, i.e., Soviet power in Russia, the Räte [council]-System in Germany, the Shop Stewards Committees in Britain and similar Soviet institutions in other countries, all this implies and presents to the toiling classes, i.e., the vast majority of the population, greater practical opportunities for enjoying democratic rights and liberties than ever existed before, even

workers and the semi-proletarians (peasants who do not exploit the labour of others and regularly resort to the sale of at least a part of their own labour power). It is the people, who even in the most democratic bourgeois republics, while possessing equal rights by law, have in fact been debarred by thousands of devices and subterfuges from participation in political life and enjoyment of democratic rights and liberties, that are now drawn into constant and unfailing, moreover, decisive, participation in the democratic administration of the state.

15. The equality of citizens, irrespective of sex, religion, race, or nationality, which bourgeois democracy everywhere has always promised but never effected, and never could effect because of the domination of capital, is given immediately and full effect by the Soviet system, or dictatorship of the proletariat. The fact is that this can only be done by a government of the workers, who are not interested in the means of production being privately owned and in the fight for their division and redivision.

16. The old, i.e., bourgeois, democracy and the parliamentary system were so



Dietz Verlag Berlin photos

German Communist leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, murdered by counterrevolutionaries at behest of Social Democratic government in January 1919.

the purpose of combining the legislative and executive authority under the Soviet organisation of the state and of replacing territorial constituencies by production units—the factory.

17. The army was a machine of oppression not only under the monarchy. It remains as such in all bourgeois republics, even the most democratic ones. Only the Soviets, the permanent organisations of government authority of the classes that were oppressed by capitalism, are in a position to destroy the army’s subordination to bourgeois commanders and really merge the proletariat with the army; only the Soviets can effectively arm the proletariat and disarm the bourgeoisie. Unless this is done, the victory of socialism is impossible.

18. The Soviet organisation of the state is suited to the leading role of the proletariat as a class most concentrated and enlightened by capitalism. The experience of all revolutions and all movements of the oppressed classes, the experience of the world socialist movement teaches us that only the proletariat is in a position to unite and lead the scattered and backward sections of the working and exploited population.

19. Only the Soviet organisation of the state can really effect the immediate break-up and total destruction of the old, i.e., bourgeois, bureaucratic and judicial machinery, which has been, and has inevitably had to be, retained under capitalism even in the most democratic republics, and which is, in actual fact, the greatest obstacle to the practical implementation of democracy for the workers and working people generally. The Paris Commune took the first epoch-making step along this path. The Soviet system has taken the second.

20. Destruction of state power is the aim set by all socialists, including Marx above all. Genuine democracy, i.e., liberty and equality, is unrealisable unless this aim is achieved. But its practical achievement is possible only through Soviet, or proletarian, democracy, for by enlisting the mass organisations of the working people in constant and unfailing participation in the administration of the state, it immediately begins to prepare the complete withering away of any state.

21. The complete bankruptcy of the socialists who assembled in Berne, their complete failure to understand the new, i.e., proletarian, democracy, is especially apparent from the following. On February 10, 1919, [Swedish Social-Democratic leader Hjalmar] Branting delivered the concluding speech at the international Conference of the yellow International in Berne. In Berlin, on February 11, 1919, *Die Freiheit*, the paper of the International’s affiliates, published an appeal from the Party of “Independence” to the proletariat. The appeal acknowledged the bourgeois character of the [German Social Democrat Philipp] Scheidemann government, rebuked it for wanting to abolish the Soviets, which it described as *Träger und Schützer der Revolution*—vehicles and guardians of the revolution—and proposed that the Soviets be legalised, invested with government authority and

given the right to suspend the operation of National Assembly decisions pending a popular referendum.

That proposal indicates the complete ideological bankruptcy of the theorists who defended democracy and failed to see its bourgeois character. This ludicrous attempt to combine the Soviet system, i.e., proletarian dictatorship, with the National Assembly, i.e., bourgeois dictatorship, utterly exposes the paucity of thought of the yellow socialists and Social-Democrats, their reactionary petty-bourgeois political outlook, and their cowardly concessions to the irresistibly growing strength of the new, proletarian democracy.

22. From the class standpoint, the Berne yellow International majority, which did not dare to adopt a formal resolution out of fear of the mass of workers, was right in condemning Bolshevism. This majority is in full agreement with the Russian Mensheviks [social democrats] and [peasant-based] Socialist-Revolutionaries, and the Scheidemanns in Germany. In complaining of persecution by the Bolsheviks, the Russian Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries try to conceal the fact that they are persecuted for participating in the Civil War on the side of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. Similarly, the Scheidemanns and their party have already demonstrated in Germany that they, too, are participating in the civil war on the side of the bourgeoisie against the workers.

It is therefore quite natural that the Berne yellow International majority should be in favour of condemning the Bolsheviks. This was not an expression of the defence of “pure democracy,” but of the self-defence of people who know and feel that in the civil war they stand with the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.

That is why, from the class point of view, the decision of the yellow International majority must be considered correct. The proletariat must not fear the truth, it must face it squarely and draw all the necessary political conclusions. ■



Basil Blackwell, Inc.

Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky rallies Soviet Red Army troops, 1920.

approximately, in the best and the most democratic bourgeois republics.

The substance of Soviet government is that the permanent and only foundation of state power, the entire machinery of state, is the mass-scale organisation of the classes oppressed by capitalism, i.e., the

organised that it was the mass of working people who were kept farthest away from the machinery of government. Soviet power, i.e., the dictatorship of the proletariat, on the other hand, is so organised as to bring the working people close to the machinery of government. That, too, is

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

1. Publication title: *Workers Vanguard*.

2. Publication no.: 09-8770.

3. Filing date: 26 September 2016.

4. Issue frequency: Bi-weekly, except skipping 3 alternate issues in June, July, August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and skipping the last issue in December.

5. No. of issues published annually: 22.

6. Annual subscription price: \$10.00.

7. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 1618, New York, NY 10007-4104.

8. Complete mailing address of headquarters or general business office of publisher: Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 1618, New York, NY 10007-4104.

9. Full names and complete mailing addresses of publisher, editor, and managing editor: Publisher—Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 1618, New York, NY 10007-4104; Editor—John Blake, 299 Broadway, Suite 1618, New York, NY 10007-4104; Managing Editor—Elizabeth Johnson, 299 Broadway, Suite 1618, New York, NY 10007-4104.

10. Owner: Spartacist Publishing Co. (Unincorporated Association), 299 Broadway, Suite 1618, New York, NY 10007-4104.

11. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities: None.

12. Tax status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates): Not applicable.

13. Publication title: *Workers Vanguard*.

14. Issue date for circulation data below: 23 September 2016.

15. Extent and nature of circulation: Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: a. Total number of copies (Net press run): 7,705; b. Paid circulation (by mail and outside the mail): (1) Mailed outside-county paid subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541: 1,171; (2) Mailed in-county paid subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541: 0; (3) Paid distribution outside the mails including sales through dealers and carriers,

street vendors, counter sales, and other outside USPS: 4,136; (4) Paid distribution by other classes of mail through the USPS: 209; c. Total paid distribution [Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3) and (4)]: 5,515; d. Free or nominal rate distribution: (1) Outside-county copies included on PS Form 3541: 109; (2) In-county copies included on PS Form 3541: 0; (3) Copies mailed at other classes through the USPS: 115; (4) Distribution outside the mail: 0; e. Total free or nominal rate distribution [Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3) and (4)]: 224; f. Total distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e): 5,739; g. Copies not distributed: 1,966; h. Total (Sum of 15f and 15g): 7,705; i. Percent paid (15c divided by 15f times 100): 96.10%.

No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: a. Total number of copies (Net press run): 8,000; b. Paid circulation (by mail and outside the mail): (1) Mailed outside-county paid subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541: 1,159; (2) Mailed in-county paid subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541: 0; (3) Paid distribution outside the mails including sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other outside USPS: 4,548; (4) Paid distribution by other classes of mail through the USPS: 204; c. Total paid distribution [Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3) and (4)]: 5,911; d. Free or nominal rate distribution: (1) Outside-county copies included on PS Form 3541: 102; (2) In-county copies included on PS Form 3541: 0; (3) Copies mailed at other classes through the USPS: 114; (4) Distribution outside the mail: 0; e. Total free or nominal rate distribution [Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3) and (4)]: 216; f. Total distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e): 6,127; g. Copies not distributed: 1,873; h. Total (Sum of 15f and 15g): 8,000; i. Percent paid (15c divided by 15f times 100): 96.47%.

16. Total circulation includes electronic copies. Report circulation on PS Form 3526-X worksheet: 0.

17. This statement of ownership will be printed in the 21 October 2016 issue of this publication.

18. Signature and title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner: (Signed) John Blake (Editor), 26 September 2016. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

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No. 63, Winter 2012-13

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New York, NY 10116

Chinese Steel...

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the U.S., protectionism also serves to foment bigotry against Asian and Latino workers here and to poison the possibility of international labor solidarity.

What the steel barons are “protecting” above all is their monopolist rate of profit. The imperialists’ anti-China campaign has wider political goals as well. First of all, it aims to scapegoat China for the continued stagnation and decline of the capitalist world economy. We debunked such claims a year ago in an article titled “China and the World Economy: Fact vs. Fiction” (WV No. 1076, 16 October 2015).

The burgeoning trade war with China is but one part of a broader offensive, centered on military pressure combined with capitalist economic penetration, that aims ultimately to restore capitalism in China and reopen that country to untrammelled imperialist exploitation. The peasant-based 1949 Revolution overthrew capitalist-landlord rule in China and led to the establishment of the economic foundations of workers rule—collectivized ownership of the productive forces and economic planning. However, the workers state that emerged was deformed from birth by the rule of a parasitic bureaucratic caste that excluded the working class from political power. Nevertheless, the collectivized economy made it possible to free China from imperialist domination, lift hundreds of millions out of poverty, bring about mass literacy and provide unprecedented opportunities for Chinese women, who, in prerevolutionary times, were barely recognized as humans.

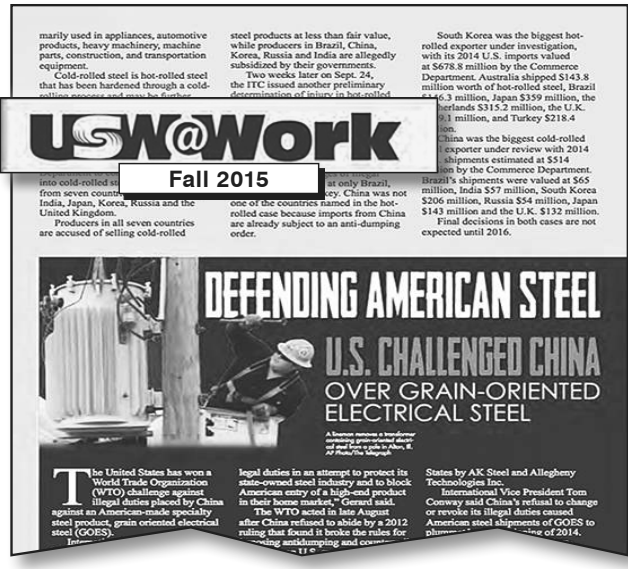
Proletarian democracy is essential for the rational operation of a collectivized economy. But that is incompatible with the bureaucratic regime of the Chinese Stalinists. Instead, the Beijing Stalinists have, for the last several decades, sought to correct the waste and inefficiency of bureaucratic central planning through the discipline of the market. By encouraging the growth of a domestic capitalist class and relying heavily on foreign capital investment, the market “reforms” have greatly increased the threat of internal counterrevolution. Alongside the economic expansion that has increased living standards for a large portion of the population, the market reforms have brought about an enormous increase in social inequality. Nonetheless, the core elements of the Chinese economy remain collectivized.

Just as workers in capitalist countries must defend their unions against the bosses despite the present sellout labor leadership, so they must defend the Chinese workers state against capitalist counterrevolution despite the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy. The U.S. trade-union bureaucrats are devoted to the capitalist profit system and politically tie workers to the class enemy



Reuters

Trade-union tops push anti-China protectionism. Left: European steel workers join protest against Chinese steel, Brussels, February 2016. Right: United Steelworkers magazine pushes lie that U.S. workers, bosses have common interest.



through allegiance to the Democratic Party. They must be tossed out of their positions at the head of the unions through political struggle and replaced by a class-struggle leadership committed to the overthrow of the capitalist order. In China, the bureaucratic caste must be ousted by a proletarian political revolution to preserve and extend the working-class property forms established by the 1949 Revolution.

Steel: Lies and Realities

Steel production is essential for a modern industrial economy, and is critical for military defense. China has a right to protect its industry from capitalist competition and to export steel for the world market, including to charge less than the cost of production. The demand by the imperialists that China abandon “state subsidies” to its steel industry is in fact a demand for complete privatization, i.e., the overthrow of collectivized property forms.

The China-bashers conjure an image of steel pouring from Chinese mills “glutting” the world market, driving down prices and driving other producers out of business. The *Wall Street Journal* (25 April) spoke of “the flood of Chinese steel weighing on the American industry,” while Dave Hulse, national officer of the British GMB union, declared: “This dumping has to stop otherwise UK jobs in the steel industry will simply melt away.” China is getting blamed for “Why the world has too much steel,” in the words of the *Economist* (4 May).

In fact, the world needs plenty more steel, as a glance at the decaying infrastructure in the U.S. or the enforced economic backwardness of the neocolonial world shows. There is a “glut” of steel on the world market only relative to the stagnation and decline of the capitalist economies following the 2008 global financial crisis.

That meltdown and the recession that followed were the result of the anarchic capitalist profit system, as are the layoffs

and plant closings in the steel industry today. By one measure (so-called true steel use), the consumption of steel in the U.S. dropped 3 percent between 2007 and 2014. It fell 11 percent in Japan and a whopping 30 percent in the EU. As a Chinese commerce ministry spokesman said in April, “Steel is the food of industry, the food of economic development. At present, the major problem is that countries that need food have a poor appetite so it looks like there’s too much food.”

During that same period, true steel use in China *rose 175 percent* as Beijing launched an ambitious infrastructure expansion. Today, China produces about half the world’s steel, up from 15 percent in 2000. The Chinese economy is now growing at an annual rate of over 6 percent, while advanced capitalist countries struggle to do better than 2 percent and remain under constant threat of crisis and contraction. Replying to demands by the U.S. commerce secretary that China drastically cut its steel capacity, at a June 6 press conference, Chinese finance minister Lou Jiwei pointed out that China’s excess capacity is a result of infrastructure investment during the global economic crisis of 2009-11, when China was responsible for over half of the world’s economic growth. He went on to note, “At that time, the world applauded for China and thanked China, but now they say China’s production overcapacity has encumbered the world. What did they say at that time?” (cctvplus.tv).

Until recently, almost all Chinese-produced steel was used in China itself. For the past few years, Beijing has been attempting to reorient the economy toward the domestic consumer market. This has entailed a cutback in exports and in infrastructure projects, which means less domestic demand for steel. If China were a capitalist country, the solution would be straightforward and brutal: mass layoffs of steel workers. However, while the Chinese government has announced plans to reduce steelmaking capacity and eliminate some coal mines, it fears mass workers’ protests and strikes sparked by major firings. Hence, the government is hesitant to cut back production too precipitously, and is selling surplus steel on the world market. So-called “zombie factories,” largely state-owned enterprises in steel and other affected industries like cement, keep workers on the payroll while continuing to run up losses and debt—something inconceivable in the capitalist world.

Those who argue for “anti-dumping” tariffs often claim that foreign producers are selling below cost—whether it’s true or not. The basis on which the imperialists estimate China’s cost of production of steel is a so-called “proxy method”: they calculate the production cost in a country with a similar average level of income (like Poland, Thailand or South Africa) and simply declare that cost to be equivalent to China’s. Even an imperialist mouthpiece like the *New York Times* (3 May) conceded: “The proxy countries often have higher costs than China, which has greater economies of scale.”

Given its huge production volume, China now exports about as much steel in a year as the total output of the world’s

second-largest producer, Japan. However, China’s steel exports account for only about 12 percent of its total production. That is a substantially smaller fraction than Japan and South Korea (each of which exports around 40 percent of its output), or even Brazil, Turkey and Russia.

The supposed “flood” of Chinese steel into the U.S. and Europe is actually a relatively modest stream. The main exporter of steel to the U.S. is Canada (accounting for 19 percent of the total), followed by Brazil, South Korea, Mexico, Turkey and Japan. China contributes less than 3 percent of U.S. steel imports, representing less than 1 percent of the total U.S. steel market. As for the EU, imports of Chinese steel, while greater than in the U.S., still amount to only some 4 percent of total demand. Nevertheless, since August the EU has hit a variety of Chinese steel products with tariffs as high as 73 percent.

It is particularly absurd to blame the decline of British steel on Chinese imports. When the British Steel Corporation was formed through the nationalization of the industry by the Labour government in 1967, it employed 268,500 workers. Two years after Margaret Thatcher became prime minister in 1979, the workforce was slashed to only 88,200. Thatcher proceeded to sell off the company in 1988 and the workforce continued to shrink. As steel demand has been driven down by the austerity pushed by successive governments, Tata Steel, owner of remnants of British Steel, has threatened to shut down much of its British operations.

In Germany, the steel workforce was slashed beginning in the 1980s and productivity soared, resulting in an overall increase in output. In the west, the industrial Ruhr area was devastated by plant closings and restructuring. Those job losses took place without any serious fight by the trade-union misleaders. When the East German deformed workers state fell to counterrevolution in 1990, the new capitalist masters enforced mass layoffs and plant closures in the east as well. Far from China causing German economic problems, general exports to China have been a substantial factor underlying Germany’s economic success compared to rival capitalist powers. With many firms also reliant on Chinese suppliers, a considerable section of the German bourgeoisie—as well as the working class—has much to lose from a trade war with China.

The lion’s share of Chinese steel exports are going to Asia. This results largely from the policy of the Chinese government to build up infrastructure in the region as part of its “One Belt, One Road” project. Aiming to counter U.S. (and Japanese) imperialism’s efforts at containment, China says it will invest \$4 trillion in this project (also known as the New Silk Road), which comprises multiple trading networks linking Asia and West Europe, including pipelines, railroads and highways.

Dumping and Monopoly Capital

The Chinese steel industry, like the Chinese economy as a whole, operates in a way that is fundamentally different from capitalism. The main purpose of production in China is not to maximize

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profit or seize a larger share of the world market. The “unfair trade practices” of which China is accused actually typify the monopoly practices of the trusts and cartels that dominate industry in the capitalist countries. Robber barons like U.S. steel magnate Andrew Carnegie were masters of such techniques as selling below cost to drive out their competition—which they deployed at the same time that they massacred striking workers. Today’s steel barons are cast from the same mold. When they hope to seize a bigger market share by selling cheaply abroad, they demand “free trade.” When they find themselves undercut by lower-priced competitors, they enlist the strong arm of their government to give them an edge with trade barriers and subsidies.

The days when free competition prevailed have been gone since at least the beginning of the 20th century, when capitalism entered its epoch of imperialist decay. Decades earlier, Karl Marx showed that free competition gives rise to the concentration of production, which, in turn, at a certain stage of development, leads to monopoly. A handful of giant firms become able to manipulate production and prices in order to maximize profits over the capitalist boom-bust business cycle. In his 1916 book *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin demonstrated that by the early 1900s, monopoly finance capital had become dominant in the most advanced capitalist countries.

The big corporations compete with each other to dominate the market. Those that cannot compete are ruthlessly driven out of business. As Lenin observed, “Monopoly hews a path for itself everywhere without scruple as to the means, from paying a ‘modest’ sum to buy off competitors, to the American device of employing dynamite against them.” It is the same today. In 2014, U.S. Steel, ArcelorMittal and other steel firms were compelled to settle a lawsuit for collaborating to cut production in order to drive up prices, in fine robber-baron tradition.

With the advent of imperialism, money capital became concentrated in the hands of a few giant banks, which exercise immense leverage over the economy. Global finance capital is dominated by the most advanced capitalist countries, which seek to control natural resources, markets and sources of cheap labor around the world. This leads to the relentless cycle of neocolonial wars as well as constant efforts to restore capitalism to China and the other deformed workers states: Cuba, Laos, North Korea and Vietnam. Ultimately, when economic competition between the imperialist powers can no longer be mediated by peaceful means, the world is thrown into inter-imperialist war, as happened twice in the last century.

There is no more apt example of imperialist monopoly capitalism than the steel industry. The United States Steel Corporation was formed in 1901 when banking magnate J.P. Morgan bought out Carnegie Steel in the culmination of a drive to



Shuttered steel plant in Cleveland, Ohio, 1980.



Victorious Communist troops march through Beijing, 1949. Chinese Revolution expropriated capitalists, landlords.

establish a nationwide steel trust, encompassing the whole production process from mines to finished products. At its outset, this monopoly produced two-thirds of the country’s steel. German steel was then dominated by the Krupp and Thyssen empires, which have since become ThyssenKrupp. Japan’s steel industry was intertwined with the *zaibatsu*, huge state-sponsored monopolies whose modern descendants are known as *keiretsu*. Recent consolidation has reduced big Japanese steel producers to three, the largest being Nippon Steel, third-largest in the world in 2015. ArcelorMittal, the world’s largest steel company, is the result of a series of mergers of companies with operations across North America, Europe and Asia.

The U.S. made half the world’s steel in the 1920s, and emerged from the carnage of World War II as the overwhelmingly dominant imperialist power. In the 1950s, its defeated adversaries, Germany and Japan, rebuilt their devastated industries using new, more productive technologies such as continuous casting and the basic oxygen process. Meanwhile, the U.S. steel cartel invested little in modernization. Out-competed on the world market by the 1970s, the top U.S. firms could no longer generate sufficient profits to satisfy their capitalist investors. Abandoned steel mills began to dot the Midwest Rust Belt. Today the U.S. share of global steel production is less than 5 percent.

Much U.S. steel production moved to smaller, heavily non-union, low-cost mini-mills that use more efficient electric arc furnaces to make steel, mostly from scrap. By 2005, the industry produced as much steel as it did in the early 1960s, but with *one-fifth* the workforce. The huge profits extracted from steel workers went into the pockets of wealthy capitalist stockholders, as retirees’ pensions were slashed and real wages and benefits stagnated or declined. Meanwhile, the USW tops have made no serious effort to organize the non-union plants. Today, several economic downturns later, the industry has once again become concentrated through bankruptcies and mergers. The five top firms—the largest of which is the virulently anti-union mini-mill operator Nucor—now produce more than two-thirds of national steel output.

The destruction of steel workers’ livelihoods is rooted in the capitalist system of production for profit. In the face of the constant immiseration of the proletariat, labor’s power must be mobilized in a class-struggle fight for a series of transitional demands that challenges the property rights of the capitalist rulers. Such demands include a *sliding scale of wages and hours*—reducing the workweek with no loss in pay to end layoffs; a *massive program of public works* to restore and expand decaying infrastructure and provide jobs for all at union wages; and, where necessary, *retraining workers at full wages and capitalist expense*. This fight poses the need for the working class to seize industry and transport from the capitalists and establish a workers government that

will rebuild society on the foundation of a socialist, planned economy.

For Proletarian Internationalism!

The Chinese steel industry encompasses both the massive, relatively advanced state-owned enterprises (SOEs) controlled by the central government and a plethora



Hebei province, China: Steel workers protest job losses outside head office of Guofeng Steel Company, April 2016.

of dispersed, small-scale, generally more backward private or local government-owned plants. Companies that are nominally privately owned produce more than half of China’s steel—up from 5 percent in 2003. Beijing exercises effective control over the steel industry, not only through big state-owned “national champions” like Baosteel and Hebei Steel (both among the world’s top five producers), but also indirectly through control of the financial system and other levers of central government power. Both the small firms that sprang up to cash in on Beijing’s infrastructure push and the market-based operations of the big SOEs have exacerbated China’s excess steel capacity as infrastructure spending has tapered off.

Beijing has announced plans to cut at least 10 percent of steel and coal capacity over the next few years, which would eliminate at least 1.8 million jobs. Many private companies have simply shut down, often after failing to pay their workers for months. These actions, as well as cutbacks by SOEs, have led to an upsurge in strikes and other workers’ protests, which reportedly more than doubled in 2015 compared to the previous year. In Hebei province alone, where one-fourth of Chinese steel is made, there were 300 strikes between January 2015 and March 2016. While frequently repressing protests, the Xi Jinping regime has pledged 100 billion yuan over two years (more than \$4,000 per worker per year) to aid displaced workers. It has also set aside billions of dollars for welfare payments and retraining.

Despite its spectacular economic gains over the past generation, on average China remains poor relative to the imperialist

powers. The perspective of China’s bureaucracy to move from an economy based on export-driven manufacturing to one focused on domestic demand for consumer goods and services would ultimately require transforming China’s vast rural population into modern consumers. Such a plan underscores the fundamental long-term challenge of closing the economic gap between urban China and the more backward and impoverished countryside.

To narrow that gap will require a massive redistribution and reallocation of economic resources. China’s farms, consisting of more than 200 million small peasant holdings averaging less than one acre, scarcely provide a livable income, let alone savings that could be invested in agricultural modernization. Social and economic modernization requires that China move from peasant smallholding to large-scale mechanized farming, including the voluntary recollectivization of agriculture.

The introduction of modern technology in the countryside requires a qualitatively higher industrial base than now exists. In turn, an increase in agricultural productivity would raise the need for a huge expansion of industrial jobs in urban areas to absorb the vast surplus of labor no longer needed in the countryside. The ultimate realization of that perspective necessarily hinges on the aid that China would receive from a socialist Japan or a socialist America.

That reality underscores the need for international proletarian revolution. The leaders of the ruling Communist Party falsely believe that they can modernize China and transform it into a great world power—indeed, the global superpower of the 21st century—in the face of the imperialists’ more powerful armies and advanced technology. This policy is an expression of the Stalinist, nationalist dogma of “socialism in one country” that goes together with the vain quest for “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism. That anti-Marxist fantasy has constantly undermined the defense of the workers states, not least through the betrayal of proletarian revolutions internationally.

The rise of imperialism at the dawn of the 20th century ushered in the epoch of capitalist decay, wars and revolutions in which we still live. That decadent system must be swept away through international socialist revolution. Only the establishment of an international planned economy can unleash the productive forces necessary to abolish want worldwide and lay the foundation for a socialist society in which class division and exploitation will be a thing of the past.

To bring that consciousness to the proletariat and provide leadership in struggle requires an international revolutionary party, with sections in countries throughout the world. Such a party must be based on the lessons of the victorious 1917 Russian Revolution, led by Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks. The International Communist League, of which the Spartacist League is the U.S. section, is dedicated to the struggle to reforge the Fourth International, worldwide party of socialist revolution. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Defend China Against Imperialism, Counterrevolution!

Chauvinist Uproar over Chinese Steel

As layoffs and plant closings stalk the steel industry internationally, an ugly chauvinist furor against imports of Chinese steel is being whipped up by governments, media, steel companies and union officials in the U.S. and Europe. In the presidential election campaign, Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton (and earlier, Bernie Sanders) have pushed for an anti-China trade war, with the steel industry serving as poster child. In May, the Obama administration slapped astronomical tariffs of over 500 percent on imports of Chinese cold-rolled flat steel (used for car bodies, appliances and construction) and 451 percent on Chinese stainless steel. Shortly afterward, the U.S. International Trade Commission agreed to consider U.S. Steel's call for a total ban on steel imports from China, with a decision expected early in the next president's term.

Allied with the steel bosses are the trade-union misleaders, who have long waved the flag of "America first" protectionism. Under that banner, the labor fakers have continually surrendered gains won through the militant battles of the working class—black, white and immigrant. Leo Gerard, International president of the United Steelworkers Union (USW), called last spring for Washington to "outlaw" Chinese steel. Meanwhile, the USW tops settled for new contracts with major steel firms containing wage freezes, benefit cuts and a no-strike pledge, while plants closed and hundreds were laid off.

In Europe, several unions joined a Feb-



Reuters

Steel factory in Dalian, China.

ruary 15 rally of some 5,000 in Brussels called by the steel bosses' federation Eurofer to demand that the European Union (EU) enact its own protectionist measures.

On April 11, the German IG Metall union and German steel bosses joined forces to bring out tens of thousands of steel workers in similar chauvinist, anti-China protests.

The capitalist owners of steel giants like ArcelorMittal, U.S. Steel, Nucor, Thyssen-Krupp, Nippon Steel, Tata Steel, Posco, etc., have wrung enormous profits from steel workers over the decades at the expense of jobs, wages and benefits. To this end they have broken strikes and locked out workers.

Just as the American labor bureaucracy has presided over the massive shrinking of unions in the U.S., their European counterparts have undercut the fight against austerity. It is obscene that the heads of potentially powerful unions such as the USW, IG Metall, British UNITE and GMB, and the French union confederations (CGT, CFDT, FO) join with the class enemy in demanding that the capitalist state take economic measures against China. In the global economy that capitalism has brought about, the proletariat is an international class. What's needed is workers' unity against the capitalist rulers, both within each country and internationally.

The trade-union bureaucrats calling for a reactionary trade war with China claim to be protecting the livelihoods of workers against "unfair competition" and "dumping." The "save American jobs" chauvinism of the bureaucrats in this country promotes the lie that workers in the U.S. have a common "national interest" with their exploiters. Such class collaboration undercuts the prospect of waging the class-struggle fight that is needed to preserve and increase jobs, pay and benefits. By blaming workers abroad for jobs lost in

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Mexican Trotskyists on Trump and Protectionism

We reprint below an article translated from Espartaco No. 46 (October 2016), newspaper of the Grupo Espartaquista de México (GEM).

ESPARTACO

On August 31, the U.S. Republican presidential contender visited Mexico on the invitation of President Enrique Peña Nieto of the PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party]. In a joint press conference, Trump set out the "shared objective" (!) of building a border wall to stop the "illegal movement of people." Peña Nieto didn't say anything in response—except to promise that he would reinforce Mexico's southern border! The pathetic performance by Peña Nieto even allowed other outright imperialist lackeys, like former regional president of Coca-Cola (and of Mexico) Vicente Fox, to come off as defenders of national honor. In the process, the entire bourgeois media—from the right-wing pro-government [TV sta-

tion] Televisa to the populist [newspaper] *La Jornada*—have been burnishing the credentials of Hillary Clinton.

The Democrats and the Republicans

are twin parties of U.S. imperialism. Supporting bourgeois candidates will never serve the interests of the working class, which needs its own party. Clinton



WV Photo

San Francisco, 1993: Spartacists denounce NAFTA free-trade rape of Mexico at immigrant rights rally.

is a rabid warmonger who has established herself as the candidate of a real hall of shame of war criminals and mass murderers, including many Republicans who don't trust Trump. Clinton was secretary of state under Obama, the "Deporter in Chief" who, as president, has carried out a record number of deportations: more than two million. While Trump unabashedly promotes chauvinist protectionism with the nonsense that NAFTA "has benefited Mexico more," Clinton tries to balance between the same protectionism and defending the "free trade" rape of Mexico—implemented under the presidency of her husband Bill—explaining how she wants to make it *even more* beneficial for the U.S. NAFTA and its Central American equivalent, CAFTA, are agreements to pillage the semicolonial countries and strengthen the North American imperialists against their European and Japanese rivals. In a joint statement by the Spartacist League/U.S., the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste of Canada and the GEM in 1991 we explained that "the fight against the FTA [NAFTA] is a battle against American imperialist domination of Mexico" and said, "we call on Mexican, U.S. and Canadian workers to join in opposing this anti-labor pact" ("Stop U.S. 'Free Trade' Rape of Mexico," WV No. 530, 5 July 1991).

Our internationalist opposition to NAFTA is counterposed to the protectionism that is also embraced by the

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