

Independence for Catalonia! Down With the EU!

Spain Strangles Catalonia



EFE



Reuters

Left: Spanish police in Girona prevent Catalans from entering polling stations during October 1 independence referendum. Right: Demonstration in Barcelona against Madrid's imprisonment of two Catalan independence leaders, October 21.

OCTOBER 30—Three days ago, the parliament of Catalonia voted to secede from Spain and establish an independent Catalan republic. Minutes later, the Spanish senate, dominated by the Castilian chauvinists of the right-wing Popular Party (PP) and of the social-democratic Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE), voted to dissolve the Catalan parliament and depose the regional government.

Madrid is officially seizing control of Catalonia, including its finances, police force and major TV and radio stations under Article 155 of the Spanish constitution, which enables the rulers of the Spanish prison house of oppressed peoples to strip autonomous communities of their powers. It has also ordered new regional elections on December 21. Catalan pro-independence deputies, including President Carles Puigdemont (of the Partit

Demòcrata Europeu Català, PDeCAT) and his vice president Oriol Junqueras (of the Esquerra Republicana, ERC) have been threatened with arrest for “rebellion,” for which they could spend as long as 30 years in prison. Two prominent leaders of *independentiste* groups, Jordi Sànchez

pendence referendum. Over two million people cast ballots, courageously defying the thousands of vicious Guardia Civil and Policía Nacional sent by Madrid. Ninety percent voted in favor of independence. Since then, Catalonia and its largest city, Barcelona, have been rocked

in defense of the unity of monarchical, Castile-ruled capitalist Spain. It is in the interests of the working class throughout Spain and France to defend the oppressed Catalan people, whose nation straddles the Franco-Spanish border. *Policía Nacional and Guardia Civil out of Catalonia! Free Cuixart, Sànchez and all pro-independence activists! Down with the monarchy! Defend Catalan independence!*

Like Catalonia, the oppressed Basque nation in Euskal Herria (the Basque Country) stretches from Spain into France. For decades, the Basques have suffered deadly repression at the hands of both the Spanish and French governments. As proletarian revolutionary internationalists, we fight for the independence of the Basque Country and Catalonia, North and South—that is,

continued on page 2

For Workers Republics!

of the Catalan National Assembly and Jordi Cuixart of Òmnium Cultural, were imprisoned on October 16 and face trial for sedition.

The Spanish state unleashed a wave of repression in late September in an attempt to suppress the October 1 Catalan inde-

pendence referendum. Over two million people cast ballots, courageously defying the thousands of vicious Guardia Civil and Policía Nacional sent by Madrid. Ninety percent voted in favor of independence. Since then, Catalonia and its largest city, Barcelona, have been rocked

by huge protests demanding an end to the repression and freedom for the imprisoned independence leaders. Several chauvinist protests have also taken place, led by the neo-Francoist PP, the right-wing Ciudadanos and the social-democratic Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya (PSC),

Defend Anti-Fascist Protesters at Columbia!

The following October 28 leaflet, issued by the New York Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Club, was distributed to a hundreds-strong protest against right-wing provocateur Mike Cernovich at Columbia University on October 30.

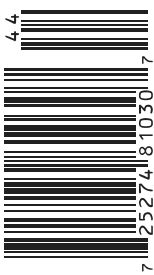
On October 10, over 250 students, activists and Harlem residents, including supporters of the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Club, came out to protest Tommy Robinson, a British fascist leader. Robinson had been invited by the Columbia University College Republicans (CUCR)

to speak via Skype as part of their “Free Speech Month.” Protesters who managed to get inside the event chanted and held up signs. The next day, Executive Vice President of University Life Suzanne Goldberg, claiming that they had violated the Rules of University Conduct, banned at least 18 students from attending future CUCR events and is threatening them with further disciplinary action, including expulsion. We say: *Defend the Columbia anti-fascist protesters! No reprisals! No bans!*

Emboldened by Trump’s election, fascists are increasingly rearing their heads, including on college campuses across the country. When these vermin make public appearances, their purpose is to organize for deadly violence. This program was written in the blood of Heather Heyer, murdered on the streets of Charlottesville in August. When would-be *führer* Richard Spencer held a rally at the University of Florida on October 19, three Nazis shot at anti-fascist protesters after the event.

Proposals to have “dialogue” with these vicious scum are suicidal. *Fascism is not about “speech;” it’s about racist terror.* The fascists are paramilitary shock troops that are held in reserve by the capitalist rulers and unleashed at times of social crisis against any prospect of revolutionary struggle by the working class. Their purpose is nothing less than the destruction of the workers movement, including unions and the left, and racial genocide. In the U.S., the fascists, from the Ku Klux Klan to “alt-right” thugs, especially have black people in their sights; they wave the Confederate flag of slavery and speak with the lynch rope. Across the Atlantic, the

continued on page 3



Catalonia...

(continued from page 1)

against the capitalist rulers of both France and Spain. We seek to build Leninist-Trotskyist parties that support the just struggles of oppressed nations, which can be a lever to advance the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat against the capitalist rulers. Our program is for proletarian revolution, the seizure of power by the working class. *For workers republics in Catalonia and the Basque Country as parts of a voluntary Socialist United States of Europe!*

For the Catalan workers and poor, the struggle for national liberation is a component part of their struggle against exploitation. The potential power of the working class was demonstrated in a small but important way by the port workers in Barcelona and Tarragona, who refused to service the ships being used to house the Policía Nacional and Guardia Civil at the time of the referendum. But Catalan workers have not been mobilized as an independent force due to their wretched reformist misleaders, who, on the whole, refuse to fight for Catalan independence. For this reason, Catalan workers are dissolved into the mass movement, and pro-independence working-class militants have nowhere to look for their liberation except to the bourgeois nationalists. It is necessary to forge a revolutionary proletarian leadership that champions the struggle for national liberation.

No Illusions in the Catalan Bourgeoisie!

Amid fears that an independent Catalonia would be kicked out of the European Union (EU), a host of Catalan companies, including two large banks, CaixaBank and Banco Sabadell, promptly seized on Madrid’s offerings and opted to register their headquarters outside Catalonia. The Catalan bourgeoisie (represented prominently by the PDeCAT and its predecessors, as well as by the ERC) has sometimes used separatism as a bargaining chip in its dealings with Madrid. But the chauvinist, vindictive humiliations inflicted by the central government, as well as pressure from the Catalan masses, have pushed the political representatives of a section of the Catalan bourgeoisie into open defiance. Puigdemont postponed declaring independence after the October 1 referendum, and even offered to hold early regional elections if PP prime minister Mariano Rajoy would guarantee that Catalonia would retain its autonomous status. But the Castilian-chauvinist Rajoy and his cohorts would have nothing less than total capitulation. Thus, the Catalan government declared independence.

Madrid has made clear that it will go to any lengths to maintain the territorial integrity of Spain, while Catalonia lacks anything resembling a state of its own—centrally, armed forces—that could resist the Spanish state. The Catalan working class, meanwhile, has given no sign of significant independent motion. Under these circumstances, there is no hope of realizing Catalan independence now. Yet Catalonia remains in turmoil. With the immediate prospect of further repression and humiliation at the hands of the



Bloomberg

October 27: Catalan president Carles Puigdemont (right) cast his vote for independence in the Catalan parliament. Shortly thereafter, Spanish prime minister Mariano Rajoy (left) invoked Article 155, annulling Catalonia’s autonomy.



ZUMA

Castilian overlords, combined with the impotence of the Catalan bourgeoisie, further struggles are likely to erupt—the Catalan masses are in dire need of allies. Such allies are to be found primarily in the proletariat of Spain and France. The Spanish and French bourgeoisies are both oppressing the Catalans and Basques and exploiting the working class as a whole. The breakup of the reactionary Spanish state would open the road for workers struggle against the capitalist rulers in Madrid. A relentless struggle must be waged against the chauvinism promoted by social democrats and the labor lieutenants of capital in the trade-union bureaucracies in order to win workers in the

and fractures,” and that the EU could not be made up of “95 different states.” The president of the European Parliament, Antonio Tajani, made it clear on October 22 that “no one is going to recognise Catalonia in Europe as an independent country.” The EU is an instrument for the imperialist powers of Europe, centrally Germany, toatchet up the exploitation of the working people throughout Europe and to further impoverish weaker countries such as Greece and Portugal.

For Proletarian Political Independence!

The Rajoy government’s repression, supported by its lapdogs in the PSOE,

workers in Catalonia and Spain have not come out as an organized force in defense of independence for Catalonia and the Basque Country.

The PSOE’s Catalan counterpart, the PSC, joined with Francoists and fascists in a reactionary demonstration in Barcelona on October 8 and October 29, under slogans such as “Catalonia is Spain.” Emboldened by Rajoy’s offensive, on October 27 fascists attacked the headquarters of Catalunya Ràdio as well as a Catalan cultural center and school in Barcelona. The fascists are a deadly danger to all workers, immigrants and oppressed minorities, and the working class must be mobilized to stop them.

With the PSOE heavily discredited among working people for having mercilessly administered EU-dictated austerity, the bourgeois Podemos party—which issued out of the 2011 petty-bourgeois Indignados movement—has taken up the task of refurbishing Spanish bourgeois democracy. Podemos has mobilized protests in opposition to Rajoy’s repression against Catalonia. But Podemos is firmly opposed to Catalan independence and merely provides brutal Castilian chauvinism with a “human face”: an October 23 letter to its membership decreed any declaration of Catalan independence as “illegitimate.” Podemos advises the Spanish bourgeoisie to “ensure that Catalonia remains a part of Spain” with the carrot of greater democracy, rather than the stick of repression. Podemos has moved to strip the leadership of its Catalan organization (Podem) of its authority for not being hard enough against independence.

A more left-appearing Catalan bourgeois-nationalist party is the Candidatura d’Unitat Popular (CUP). Although the CUP claims to be socialist, in fact it is a party based on the petty bourgeoisie. It propped up the regional capitalist government for more than a year. The affiliate of the British Socialist Workers Party in Catalonia, En Lluita, liquidated completely into the CUP last year. These opportunists had no trouble simultaneously building the pro-independence CUP in Catalonia, while

continued on page 6



NurPhoto

October 27: Celebration in Barcelona following Catalan government’s declaration of independence.

region to the fight for self-determination of the oppressed nations. The struggle of the Catalan people has resonated across the border with Basques and Catalans living in France. Protests in support of Catalan independence have taken place in both the north and south of Euskal Herria. In an act of solidarity by Catalans in France, the ballots for the October 1 referendum were printed in Catalunya Nord and transported across the border. Despite the Catalan government’s constant appeals, the rulers of the reactionary, imperialist EU have backed Madrid’s repression to the hilt, precisely because they know that a breakup of Spain portends a breakup of the EU. European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker warned that “we need to avoid splits, because we already have enough splits

has evoked memories of the dictatorship of Generalissimo Francisco Franco and its savage suppression of Basque, Catalan and Galician national rights. PP spokesman Pablo Casado didn’t hesitate to invoke this bloody history when he warned Puigdemont not to declare independence “because perhaps the person who makes the declaration will end up like the person who made the declaration 83 years ago.” This is a reference to Lluís Companys, the bourgeois-nationalist president of the Catalan Generalitat who was executed by a Francoist firing squad after the defeat of the Spanish Revolution. (See “Trotskyism vs. Popular Frontism in the Spanish Civil War,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 61, Spring 2009.)

The reality is that the repression being meted out today is fully in keeping with the legal framework of Spanish bourgeois democracy. The oppression of the Basque, Catalan and Galician nations was enshrined in the 1978 post-Franco constitution, which maintains that Spain cannot be divided. The two historic parties of the Spanish working class, the PSOE and the Communist Party (PCE), supported the formation of a monarchical state based on the denial of the right to self-determination of the oppressed nations of Spain and voted for the 1978 constitution.

The PSOE in government loyally served the king and fomented Castilian chauvinism for decades, notoriously setting up death squads to murder Basque independence fighters in the 1980s. For its own part, the PCE has also maintained its disgusting opposition to independence for the oppressed. The chauvinist misleaders of the CCOO and UGT union federations bear responsibility for the fact that

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Independència per Catalunya i el País Basc! Per unes repúbliques obreres!

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Remember 1979 Greensboro Massacre!

Emboldened by the overt racism of the Trump administration, fascists have stepped up their provocations and deadly attacks. Their murderous intent was clearly seen in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August, when hundreds of fascists mobilized in defense of the Confederacy. Heather Heyer was murdered by a Nazi-lover who drove his car at high speed into a group of anti-fascist protesters. The goal of today's fascists is no different than that of their Nazi and Klan forebears: racial genocide, of black people in particular, and the destruction of working-class organizations, including unions and the left.

Today, "Charlottesville" is a byword for fascist terror, just as "Greensboro" has been for 38 years. On 3 November 1979, Ku Klux Klan and Nazi fascists murdered five union organizers and anti-racist activists, supporters of the Communist Workers Party, in broad daylight in Greensboro, North Carolina. The fascist killers did not work alone; they were aided and abetted by the government. Dozens of Klansmen and Nazis in a nine-car caravan drove up to the black housing project of Morningside Homes, the assembly point for an anti-Klan rally. With calculated deliberation, they took their shotguns and semiautomatic weapons out of their trunks, aimed and opened fire directly at the 100 protesters. Then they calmly packed up and drove away. The whole massacre was shown live on TV and recorded by the Greensboro cops.

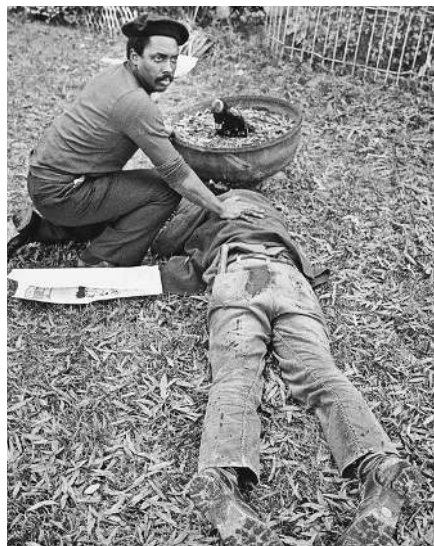
In less than 90 seconds, five demonstrators lay dead: César Cauce, Michael

Nathan, William Sampson, Sandra Smith and James Waller. Ten more were wounded, one of them paralyzed for life. As soon as the attack ended, the cops swooped in and arrested survivors. Liberals, black Democrats and the trade-union bureaucracy reacted with the same lies as the bourgeois media, implying that the dead got what they deserved. Grotesquely, the *New York Times* described the carnage in Greensboro as a "shootout" between two "fringe groups."

Many of the anti-Klan activists who survived were fired from their jobs, jailed and hounded by the FBI and local police. These courageous people—black and white, men and women—were targeted because they acted to oppose the fascists' vicious campaign against blacks, Jews, unionists and leftists. Many of them had a long and honorable history in the Southern civil rights movement and as union militants in North Carolina, where Klan terror has historically been used by the bosses to keep unions out.

The Greensboro Massacre was the product of collusion between the fascists and the capitalist state. A Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agent helped train the killers and plot the assassinations; a police/FBI informer rode shotgun in the lead car; a Greensboro cop brought up the rear. The killers literally got away with murder. They were acquitted by all-white juries, affirming once again the meaning of "justice" in this racist, capitalist system.

The fascists announced they would "celebrate" the Greensboro Massacre a



Greensboro News & Record

A wounded Nelson Johnson kneels next to the body of his dying comrade James Waller following Klan attack on anti-fascist protesters.

week later in Detroit. In response to this provocation in a black proletarian center, the Spartacist League built a labor/black mobilization at the same place and time that the Klan threatened to rally. Over 500 people, including black and white auto workers, turned out to make sure that the Klan did not ride in the Motor City. In organizing the protest, we had to overcome sabotage from the trade-union misleaders (especially UAW bureaucrats), who refused to endorse and build the rally, and from black Democratic Party mayor Coleman Young, who threatened to arrest the anti-Klan

protesters. In an exemplary way, this mobilization showed that the working class, marching at the head of all the fascists' intended victims, has the power to sweep the race-terrorists off the street.

The fascists must and can be stopped. Greensboro showed that the fascist killers can't be effectively fought by individual direct action, no matter how courageous. What is necessary is to mobilize the strength of the working class. As we wrote in the immediate aftermath of Greensboro:

"Every successful cross burning, every fascist parade through a Jewish or black neighborhood, every courtroom victory in the liberals' campaign for 'free speech for fascists' whets the murderers' appetite for more violence.... This campaign of terror must be stopped. Socialists and militants in the labor movement must call on organized labor to mobilize its tremendous social power, in alliance with black and other minority organizations and the left to stop the Klan in its tracks."

—"For Labor/Black Mass Mobilizations: Smash KKK Killers!" WV No. 243, 9 November 1979

Such mobilizations can give the working class a sense of its social power and of the class nature of the capitalist state and the Democrats. They also point to the need to forge a workers party to lead the fight for a socialist revolution. That is the only way to get rid of the fascist murderers once and for all—by doing away with the racist capitalist system that breeds them. In fighting for a workers America, we honor the memory of the Greensboro martyrs.

Columbia...

(continued from page 1)

English Defence League, which Robinson founded, is known for marching into minority neighborhoods to terrorize the population and commit violence against Muslims and immigrants. Sweeping such scum off the streets is an elementary act of self-defense for black people, immigrants, Jews, Muslims, trade unionists, leftists and all the fascists' intended victims.

Unlike Robinson, the CUCR guest speaker on October 30, Mike Cernovich, is not a fascist—he does not organize for race terror on the streets. Rather, he is an all-purpose pig, an anti-black, right-wing provocateur with repugnant views on women and immigrants. Cernovich should be protested, exposed and refuted. But stopping right-wing ideologues like Cernovich, Milo Yiannopoulos and Ann Coulter from speaking only plays into their trap, handing them the flag of "free speech" to wave like a bloody shirt. To equate such racists with fascists only serves to disarm people in the face of the Nazis and other race-terrorists, who must be crushed in the egg.

In a flyer for the October 10 event, protest organizers, including the Southern Poverty Law Center's campus chapter and Black Lives Matter of Greater New York, stated: "Our goal is to not only protest this event, but also to pressure the university into cancelling future events (including Michael Cernovich) involving these kinds of hateful and racist views."

We oppose calls on the campus administration or the capitalist state to ban "hate speech" or the fascists, who must be repulsed through mass protest. Such bans will only serve to strengthen the forces of repression. Campus authorities that are currently cracking down on anti-fascist protest will use "anti-hate" bans to stifle political dissent and silence leftists, anti-racists and minority activists. The campus administration runs Columbia University—a bastion of race and class privilege that drives black and Latino people out of Harlem—in the interest of the capitalist ruling class.



WV Photo

Spartacist supporters at protest against right-wing bigot Mike Cernovich, who spoke at Columbia University, October 30.

The filth spewed by Cernovich and like-minded provocateurs is fed by the *reality* of capitalist class rule, which is rooted in the vicious racial oppression of black people, as well as anti-immigrant racism and sexist bigotry. As communists, we understand that oppression stems from *material* conditions, like poverty, unemployment, dilapidated housing and brutal cop terror. The struggle against racial oppression must be based on a fight to get rid of the capitalist profit system itself.

This perspective is decidedly not that of the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO). Echoing the liberal lie that fascism is a question of repellent views rather than violent action, the ISO's campus chapter wrote in an op-ed in the Columbia *Spectator* (10 October): "We hope that Columbia's community will show, come October 10, that it categorically rejects such discriminatory and hateful views, ones that should have no place in a society that truly values equality and tolerance."

Capitalist America is not, has never been and will never be "a society that truly values equality and tolerance." This is a country built upon the backs of black slaves and the vicious exploitation of the working class. It is a society that is all about inequality and intolerance. To change that requires socialist revolution. But for the ISO, the height of struggle is to build a movement to pressure the capitalist

Democratic Party, which, no less than the Republicans, is committed to upholding this system of exploitation and oppression.

The outrage against the fascists needs an organized expression: a disciplined,

militant and military mobilization of the social power of the multiracial working class, which lies in its numbers, collective organization and, above all, its ability to choke off profits through strikes and other actions. The working class has the power and objective interest not only to sweep the fascists off the streets but also to overturn the whole capitalist system that spawns these vermin. *For labor! black mobilizations to stop the fascists!*

We seek to forge a revolutionary workers party that fights for a workers government. Such a party would act as the tribune of the people, championing the fight for black freedom, for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, for women's rights and for the liberation of all the oppressed. It is by joining the fight to build such a party that radical students, young workers and others will find their place in the struggle to put capitalism and its fascist thugs in the dustbin of history. ■

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S. Local Directory and Public Offices

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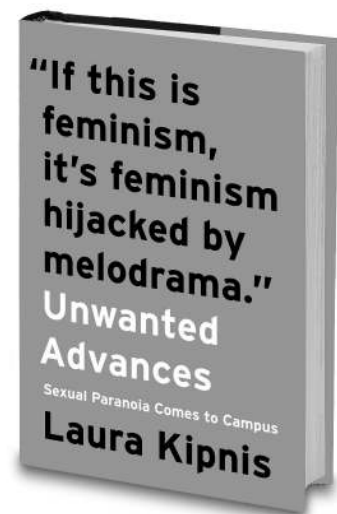
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Title IX Witchhunts, Anti-Sex Frenzy and Bourgeois Feminism



Is the specter of sex haunting the campus? Under the pretense of targeting sexual harassment and assault, university administrations have been whipping up a climate of fear and imposing neo-Victorian values. As the recent book *Unwanted Advances—Sexual Paranoia Comes to Campus* (HarperCollins Publishers, April 2017) argues, “The new campus codes aren’t *preventing* nonconsensual sex; they’re *producing* it.” Written by Northwestern University professor and self-described left-wing feminist Laura Kipnis, the book exposes the vastly expanded definitions of sexual assault, which criminalize anything from drunken hook-ups to student-professor romance and even allow for consent to be withdrawn retroactively.

Kipnis joins others who have blown the whistle on the Title IX “sexual misconduct” investigation apparatus. Title IX was originally enacted in 1972 to outlaw sex discrimination in federally financed institutions, to increase funding for women’s college sports and women’s enrollment in medical and law schools. Now it has been turned into a mammoth kangaroo court without any semblance of due process for the accused. In 2011, Obama’s administration issued a “Dear Colleague Letter” containing revised Title IX guidelines with which colleges had to comply or risk losing federal funding. Most striking of these guidelines was the adoption of the lowest standard of proof, a “preponderance of evidence,” in campus sexual assault hearings. By this standard, the accused can be convicted based on anything over a 50 percent likelihood of guilt, as opposed to “beyond a reasonable doubt” in criminal cases. Students have had their scholarships withdrawn and been expelled, and professors have had their careers destroyed based on mere speculation.

With sexual harassment vaguely defined as “unwelcome conduct,” university bureaucrats have gone after teachers and students alike for controversial comments and misguided jokes or compliments. And though one would be hard pressed to find sex on campus that doesn’t involve some level of intoxication, under the Obama-era guidelines, any sexual act under the influence is treated as nonconsensual.

Kipnis herself witnessed firsthand a process that is normally cloaked in a veil of secrecy after she became a target of a Title IX investigation for having *written an essay*. Students complained that she had created a hostile environment with her *Chronicle of Higher Education* piece, “Sexual Paranoia Strikes Academe” (February 2015), which opposed prohibitions on student-faculty relationships and other draconian campus sex codes. After documenting this sinister circus in a follow-up essay, “My Title IX Inquisition” (May 2015), Kipnis became an unintentional spokesperson for countless victims of the anti-sex bureaucracy.

To be sure, rape and sexual harassment happen, and universities are well versed in sweeping cases of criminal sexual violence under the rug to preserve their reputations. Kipnis goes out of her way to prove she’s not “soft” on rape. But it is no help to victims of real abuse for vol-

Unwanted Advances *Sexual Paranoia Comes to Campus* — A Review —



Laura Kipnis

Chicago Tribune

untary and involuntary acts to be lumped together under the umbrella-like designation of “sexual misconduct,” i.e., to make no distinction between discomfort and coercion. As we wrote following the implementation of “yes means yes” legislation in California: “The suggestion that a misunderstanding—or for that matter, bad or unpleasant sex—is equivalent to rape is not only ludicrous but dangerously trivializing of actual sexual violence” (“Sex and Consent on Campus,” WV No. 1056, 14 November 2014).

When Education Secretary Betsy DeVos announced in September that she would rescind Obama’s guidelines, feminists and Democratic Party politicians were quick to decry the move as yet another attack by an overtly racist and ultra-conservative administration. Trump and his right-wing cohorts have a sinister program to eliminate women’s right to abortion and to wage a racist war on what little remains of affirmative action. But the Democrats represent the interests of the same bourgeois ruling class as the Republicans, and also push an anti-woman agenda, including sexual repression. In fact, expanding the powers of the government and its agents in the university administration, cynically done in the name of defending the vulnerable, is a gift to the reactionary forces that aim to dismantle Title IX and go after civil rights wholesale.

The Uses and Abuses of Title IX

The current anti-sex campaign is rooted in the bipartisan rollback of the limited but real gains won through struggles in the late 1960s and early ’70s amid the radicalization during the fight for black rights and against the Vietnam War. But important concessions, such as the legal right to abortion, have since been undermined or overturned by the ruling class—see the massive erosion of *Roe v. Wade*. Reforms are always reversible when power remains in the hands of the capitalist exploiters.

In the 1980s, a right-wing “family val-

ues” offensive was joined by a liberal/feminist auxiliary that went on to promote panic over “date rape” on campuses. The Title IX apparatus has become the latest tool in the rulers’ decades-long anti-sex crusade to justify augmenting the police forces of the state and legitimize intrusion into private life—from the demented accusations of satanic ritual abuse against daycare workers in the 1980s to the permanent ostracizing of hundreds of thousands of people branded “sex offenders” today. Stirring up mass anxiety conveniently diverts discontent away from the horrors of life for the bulk of society: unemployment, plunging wages and soaring costs of housing, health care and education.

Aside from Kipnis’s own story, which she relates with impressive wit, the central case of *Unwanted Advances* is that of Peter Ludlow, a highly regarded, tenured professor of philosophy at Northwestern. Ludlow was driven out of the university by the Title IX authorities who found him guilty of sexual harassment in two cases. One involved an undergraduate who accused him of forcing her to drink alcohol and groping her; in the other, a graduate student claimed there had been a nonconsensual act during their months-long relationship. Ludlow denied all accusations. During drawn-out Star Chamber procedures, he was banned from campus and smeared in the press as a rapist. Blacklisted, Ludlow resigned and moved to Mexico, dead broke from legal fees. He handed over all his documentation to Kipnis, which confirmed her suspicion that the case was a frame-up.

In page after page of engrossing detail, Kipnis describes the sexual misconduct inquisition: the accused has no right to know the charges, nor who made them, which makes mounting an effective defense nearly impossible; hearings are conducted in secret and typically conclude with a gag order on the accused; the investigators act as judge and jury, and can raise accusations based on hearsay. Kipnis exposes the rampant bias of the Title IX officers in favor of women they call “survivors,” a term that presupposes the charges to be true (and the man to be the aggressor).

In reviewing Ludlow’s case, Kipnis discovered a backstage adviser in the affair who has played a nefarious role in many other Title IX investigations, Professor Heidi Lockwood. Defying all logic, Lockwood denies that consent is the decisive factor in determining whether sex is consensual. In her schema, widely shared in feminist academia, consent does not exist if there are “differentials in power.” The logic of Lockwood’s construct is that women are never independent beings during heterosexual sex since we live in a patriarchy.

Sex—which under bourgeois morality

is colored by shame, fear and religious dogma, not to mention class and racial inequality—is often messy and complicated. But we do not believe that someone who is simply older, has a better job or is in a position of authority inevitably turns his or her “subordinate” into a passive automaton. As long as those participating consent at the time, nobody else, least of all the state or campus administrators, has the right to tell them if or how they can do it. For Marxists, the guiding principle in sexual relations is *effective consent*: what two (or more) people agree to do, regardless of age, gender or sexual preference, is no business of the government or campus authorities.

In her recent book and essays, Kipnis challenges how female students are infantilized as helpless victims of professors with whom they’ve had sexual relations. She harks back to her own years as a college student, before sex was considered dangerous and when screwing professors “was more or less part of the curriculum.” The number of students and teachers who have fallen for each other and acted on



WV Photo

Spartacists at 1978 New York City gay rights demonstration.

it over the years is legion. To condemn these acts is a blatant attempt to control and criminalize sex (or anything hinting of it) between consenting individuals. We oppose all “age of consent” laws that prohibit consensual sexual relations in the name of “protecting” youth; we do not accord the capitalist state the right to decree an arbitrary age at which people can experiment, desire or fool around. Likewise, we oppose all laws against “crimes without victims” such as prostitution, gambling, drug use or pornography.

Anti-sex hysteria intersects the racial oppression that is central to U.S. capitalism. In a country where simply being a black man is enough for the cops to frame you up for something, blacks and minorities are particularly targeted as supposed predators. Panic over black male sexuality and interracial sex has long been used as a justification for (legal or extralegal) lynch rope terror—look at the Scottsboro Boys and Emmett Till. *Unwanted Advances* mentions in passing the story of a black

college athlete charged with sexual assault *for giving his girlfriend a hickey*. The case was that of Colorado State University student Grant Neal. Although the woman emphatically reported that no nonconsensual act had taken place, a “friend” of hers reported the hickey to the Title IX authorities. Grant was suspended, his athletic scholarship was revoked, and no other college would admit him. He later sued the university for discrimination, settling out of court.

As reported by journalist Emily Yoffe in an article, “The Question of Race in Campus Sexual-Assault Cases” (*Atlantic*, 11 September), Colgate University was recently investigated for race discrimination in its sexual assault adjudication process. On a campus where only 4 percent of students are black, during the 2013-14 academic year black male students made up *half* of those accused of sexual violations. Black and immigrant students, who more often than not lack the financial resources to mount an effective legal defense, are exceptionally vulnerable in the face of bigoted and zealous prosecutors. Title IX has also been used to railroad gay people and leftists.

The Myth of “Rape Culture”: Sex Panic as Social Control

The ideological backdrop to sexual paranoia on campus is the notion of “rape culture.” Kipnis challenges two ubiquitous claims: that one in five college women is a victim of sexual assault, and that only 2 percent of rape allegations are false. In fact, contrary to the image of universities as a hotbed for rapists and predators, students actually experience lower rates of sexual violence than their non-college counterparts. As far back as the 1990s, Princeton grad student Katie Roiphe challenged the notion of a so-called “epidemic” of date rape on campuses in her defiant book, *The Morning After: Sex, Fear, and Feminism on Campus* (see “The ‘Date Rape’ Issue: Feminist Hysteria, Anti-Sex Witchhunt,” *Women and Revolution* No. 43, Winter 1993-Spring 1994).

The false “one in five” figure originates from Susan Brownmiller’s 1975 book *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*, which infamously contended that rape or threat of rape is the main way in which *all* men control *all* women. Pervaded with racist and anti-sex filth, the book equivocated on the defense of Emmett Till, a 14-year-old black youth who was kidnapped and lynched for allegedly whistling at a white woman. Brownmiller presented the whistle by Till—whose killing was a galvanizing incident for the civil rights movement—as a “deliberate insult just short of physical assault.”

Kipnis shrewdly argues that “rape culture” has become the university counterpart of the September 11 attacks that have been used as the justification for the wholesale shredding of civil liberties under the guise of the “war on terror”:

“On campus, the term *rape culture*, like the term *terrorism*, has become the rhetoric of emergency. Fear becomes the guidelines, promulgating more fear... The failed war exacerbates the fears, which becomes the rationale for further expanding the security state: vast expenditures, increased layers of bureaucracy, surveillance, secret renditions, summary justice—like expelling a freshman for ‘emotional coercion.’”

Unwanted Advances touches on the social and economic backdrop to the regulation of sex. Today, where even a miserable \$15 an hour is out of reach for millions of workers, college-age adults see a precarious future. Decent-paying employment is far from guaranteed even with a four-year degree, which in any case leaves graduates saddled with debt, chained to their parents’ housing and health insurance. Combine that with concern that a romantic encounter could end up with one being marked a “sex criminal,” and you have a solid means for the ruling class to push social conformity.

Part of why Kipnis was able to maintain her composure during her own farcical Title IX trial was because, as a tenured professor, she felt her job was secure. Today, the bulk of professors are not so lucky. Over half of all university instruc-

tors are part-time adjuncts—low-paid contract employees with no union representation or job security. If an adjunct instructor is brought up on even the flimsiest charges of sexual misconduct, their career is immediately on the line.

Title IX “sex offender” vendettas strengthen the power of the reactionary campus administrations to strip tenured faculty and staff of the few protections they have. Students, professors and campus workers should have more defense against misconduct allegations, not less. The fight to gain and extend protections on campus, including union rights, requires a fight against the administration, which runs the university on behalf of the anti-woman, anti-black, anti-worker ruling class.

Bourgeois Feminism vs. Revolutionary Marxism

In capitalist society, the prospects of justice for actual victims of rape are bleak. Women who report rape are routinely harassed by the police and practically put on trial themselves while the courts inspect their “morality.” In the bourgeois legal system, the prosecution of sexual offenses has little to do with protecting women against violence and more to do with maintaining their subjugation within the family. The institution of the family is the main source of the oppression of women and children. For the bourgeoisie, the family is used to pass property on to the next generation. For working people, the family—in which women are consigned to running the household and rearing the next generation—inculcates and reinforces bourgeois ideology and morals and, above all, obedience to authority.

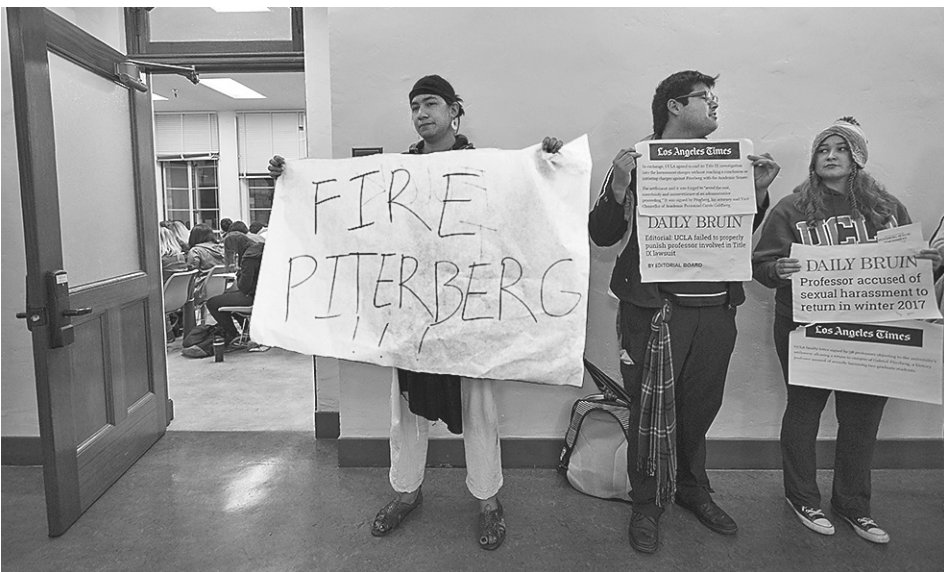


New York City, October 1979: Feminist “Women Against Pornography” demonstration included reactionary chants like “Pornography is the theory, rape is the practice.”

Anti-sex witchhunts not only bolster the family, but also provide an ideological basis for state repression. For Marxists, the capitalist state—including the cops, courts and prisons—is the instrument for the suppression of the exploited and oppressed by the exploiters. Alongside the family and organized religion, it plays a key role in enforcing the oppression of women and youth. Feminists, even radical or “socialist” ones, operate entirely within the framework of capitalist rule and reject this understanding. In fact, one form of feminism today is called “carceral feminism” because it pushes for more policing, prosecution and imprisonment as the solution to violence against women.

Kipnis denounces carceral feminism and paternalist feminism, i.e., the concept that women should be protected and men policed, and argues in favor of “grown-up feminism.” For her, the feminism from her generation has been “hijacked.” She notes that college students in the 1960s and ’70s fought to end the *in loco parentis* prerogatives of campus administrations, while her students today invite college administration snoops into their bedrooms.

Yet feminists have often lined up with some of the most virulent reactionaries, including allying with religious fundamentalists, to support the bourgeoisie’s anti-sex witchhunts—from censoring porn to criminalizing “deviant” sex. Feminism is based on the false consciousness of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois women



Students protest outside classroom of UCLA professor Gabriel Piterberg in January 2017. Piterberg was fined and suspended as part of settlement over sexual harassment charges. When he resumed teaching, the witchhunt continued.

who seek to enter the straight male club of power and privilege. Their strategy has been to rely on the capitalist Democratic Party to defend women, which serves only to demobilize fighters for women’s rights.

While Kipnis bemoans the fact that abortion rights, equal pay, childcare and maternity leave have been relegated to mere side issues, she still relies on feminism to address such concerns. In fact, the fight for things like free, quality 24-hour childcare, equal pay for equal work, and free contraception and abortion must be tied to a struggle to overthrow the economic system that is the source of women’s oppression. The liberation of women requires a socialist revolution, which will

sexual assault in order to join what they hail as a “growing” movement against sexual violence on campus. That movement plugs the inherently racist, sexist and elitist bourgeois education system as a “space” in which women, transgender people or racial minorities can be “safe” from oppression.

Socialist Alternative (SAlt) has latched onto the same movement, in particular at UCLA, where they have been active around the Title IX case of Gabriel Piterberg. An Israeli, pro-Palestinian professor of history, Piterberg was charged with sexual harassment by two grad students in 2014. While denying the charges, he made a settlement with the university, which included being fined, suspended for a quarter without pay, and removed from his position as director of the university’s Center for Near Eastern Studies. But this was not enough for SAlt and its cohorts in the feminist Bruins Against Sexual Harassment. Student protesters repeatedly shut down his classes, railing that UCLA was protecting a “sexual predator.”

Whatever happened between Piterberg and his accusers, we oppose eternal punishment, akin to being branded a sex offender for life. Piterberg is also a well-known defender of the oppressed Palestinian people who has been targeted for years by powerful Zionist forces. His treatment raises the question of whether the Title IX apparatus is being used to do the Zionists’ dirty work.

While no one can fix all the problems of sexual relations in this rotten, decaying society, we oppose all attempts to fit human sexuality into pre-ordained “norms.” To create genuinely equal relations between people in all spheres, including sex, requires nothing less than the destruction of the capitalist system through a series of socialist revolutions internationally, opening the way to the creation of a communist world. In a classless society, social and economic constraints on sexual relations will be nonexistent, and in the words of Friedrich Engels, “There is no other motive left except mutual inclination.”■

NO TO ABSTINENT SEX-DEFIED SEX

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October...

(continued from page 8)

as dispassionately as an anatomist. If the lecturer is drier because of it, the listeners will, let us hope, take it into the bargain.

Let us begin with some elementary sociological principles, which are doubtless familiar to you all, but as to which we must refresh our memory in approaching so complicated a phenomenon as the Revolution.

Human society is an historically originated collaboration in the struggle for existence and the assurance of the maintenance of the generations. The character of a society is determined by the character of its economy. The character of its economy is determined by its means of productive labor.

For every great epoch in the development of the productive forces there is a definite corresponding social regime. Every social regime until now has secured enormous advantages to the ruling class.

Out of what has been said, it is clear that social regimes are not eternal. They arise historically, and then become fetters on further progress. "All that arises deserves to be destroyed."

But no ruling class has ever voluntarily and peacefully abdicated. In questions of life and death arguments based on reason have never replaced the argument of force. This may be sad, but it is so. It is not we that have made this world. We can do nothing but take it as it is.

The Meaning of Revolution

Revolution means a change of the social order. It transfers the power from the hands of a class which has exhausted itself into those of another class, which is on the rise. The insurrection is the sharpest and most critical moment in the struggle of two classes for power. The insurrection can lead to the real victory of the revolution and to the establishment of a new order only when it is based on a progressive class, which is able to rally around it the overwhelming majority of the people.

As distinguished from the processes of nature, a revolution is made by human beings and through human beings. But in the course of revolution, too, men act under the influence of social conditions which are not freely chosen by them, but are handed down from the past and imperatively point out the road which they must follow. For this reason, and only for this reason, a revolution follows certain laws.

But human consciousness does not merely passively reflect its objective conditions. It is accustomed to react to them actively. At certain times this reaction assumes a tense, passionate, mass char-



V. Deni and M. Cheremnykh
"Comrade Lenin Cleans the World of Filth." Soviet poster from 1920 depicts Lenin sweeping away kings, capitalists and priests.

acter. The barriers of right and might are broken down. The active intervention of the masses in historical events is in fact the most indispensable element of a revolution.

But even the stormiest activity can remain in the stage of demonstration or rebellion, without rising to the height of revolution. The uprising of the masses must lead to the overthrow of the domination of one class and to the establishment of the domination of another. Only then have we a whole revolution. A mass uprising is no isolated undertaking, which can be conjured up any time one pleases. It represents an objectively conditioned element in the development of a revolution, as a revolution represents an objectively conditioned process in the development of society. But if the necessary conditions for the uprising exist, one must not simply wait passively, with open mouth: as Shakespeare says, "There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune."

To sweep away the outlived social order, the progressive class must understand that its hour has struck, and set before itself the task of conquering power. Here opens the field of conscious revolutionary action, where foresight and calculation combine with will and courage. In other words: here opens the field of action of the Party.

The revolutionary Party unites within itself the flower of the progressive class. Without a Party which is able to orientate itself in its environment, evaluate the progress and rhythm of events, and early win the confidence of the masses, the victory of the proletarian revolution is

impossible. These are the reciprocal relations of the objective and the subjective factors in insurrection and in revolution.

The Causes of October

What questions does the October revolution raise in the mind of a thinking man?

1. Why and how did this Revolution take place? More concretely, why did the proletarian revolution conquer in one of the most backward countries of Europe?

2. What have been the results of the October revolution? and finally,

3. Has the October revolution stood the test?

The first question, as to the causes, can now be answered more or less exhaustively. I have attempted to do this in great detail in my "History of the Revolution." Here I can formulate only the most important conclusions.

The fact that the proletariat reached power for the first time in such a backward country as the former Tsarist Russia seems mysterious only at first glance; in reality, it is fully in accord with historical law. It could have been predicted and it was predicted. Still more, on the basis of the prediction of this fact the revolutionary Marxists built up their strategy long before the decisive events.

The first and most general explanation is: Russia is a backward country, but only a part of world economy, only an element of the capitalist world system. In this sense Lenin exhausted the riddle of the Russian revolution with the lapidary formula, "The chain broke at its weakest link."

A crude illustration: the great war, the result of the contradictions of world imperialism, drew into its maelstrom countries of *different* stages of development, but made the *same claims* on all the participants. It is clear that the burdens of the war had to be particularly intolerable for the most backward countries. Russia was the first to be compelled to leave the field. But to tear itself away from the war, the Russian people had to overthrow the ruling classes. In this way the chain of war broke at its weakest link.

Still, war is not a catastrophe coming from outside, like an earthquake, but as old Clausewitz [19th-century Prussian general] said, the continuation of politics by other means. In the last war, the main tendencies of the imperialistic system of "peace"-time only expressed themselves more crudely. The higher the general forces of production, the tenser the competition on the world markets, the sharper the antagonisms, and the madder the race for armaments, in that measure the more difficult it became for the weaker participants. For precisely this reason the backward countries assumed the first places in the succession of collapses.

used as an example Norway, which gained independence from Sweden following a 1905 referendum:

"The close alliance between the Norwegian and Swedish workers, their complete fraternal class solidarity, *gained* from the Swedish workers' recognition of the right of the Norwegians to secede. This convinced the Norwegian workers that the Swedish workers were not infected with Swedish nationalism, and that they placed fraternity with the Norwegian proletarians above the privileges of the Swedish bourgeoisie and aristocracy. The dissolution of the ties imposed upon Norway by the monarchs of Europe and the Swedish aristocracy strengthened the ties between the Norwegian and Swedish workers."

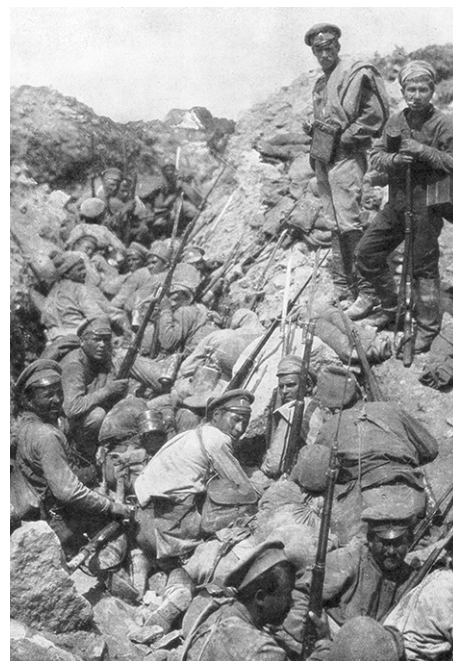
—"The Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (1914)

As explained in the current issue of our international theoretical journal, *Spartacist* (No. 65, Summer 2017), Lenin's steadfast defense of the right of self-determination and implacable opposition to Great Russian chauvinism were crucial in forging the Bolshevik Party. It was Lenin's revolutionary internationalist program that allowed the Bolsheviks to lead the working class to power 100 years ago. Today, the ICL upholds Leninism on the national question as part of our struggle for new October Revolutions. ■

The chain of world capitalism always tends to break at its weakest link.

If, as a result of exceptional or exceptionally unfavorable circumstances—let us say, a successful military intervention from the outside or irreparable mistakes on the part of the Soviet Government itself—capitalism should arise again on the immeasurably wide Soviet territory, together with it would inevitably arise also its historical inadequacy, and such capitalism would in turn soon become the victim of the same contradictions which caused its explosion in 1917. No tactical recipes could have called the October Revolution into being, if Russia had not carried it within its body. The revolutionary Party in the last analysis can claim only the role of an obstetrician, who is compelled to resort to a Caesarian operation.

One might say in answer to this: "Your general considerations may adequately explain why old Russia had to suffer shipwreck, that country where backward capitalism and an impoverished peasantry were crowned by a parasitic nobility and a rotten monarchy. But in the simile of the chain and its weakest link there is still missing the key to the real riddle: How could the *socialist* revolution conquer in a *backward*



Hulton
Russian soldiers during World War I. Revulsion at mass slaughter in inter-imperialist war was a motor force for Russian Revolution.

country? History knows of more than a few illustrations of the decay of countries and civilizations accompanied by the collapse of the old classes for which no progressive successors had been found. The breakdown of old Russia should, at first sight, rather have changed the country into a capitalist colony than into a socialist state."

This objection is very interesting. It leads us directly to the kernel of the whole problem. And yet, this objection is erroneous; I might say, it lacks internal symmetry. On the one hand, it starts from an exaggerated conception of the backwardness of Russia; on the other, from a false theoretical conception of the phenomenon of historical backwardness in general.

Living beings, including man, of course, go through similar stages of development in accordance with their ages. In a normal five-year-old child, we find a certain correspondence between the weight, and the size of the parts of the body and the internal organs. But when we deal with human consciousness, the situation is different. Contrary to anatomy and physiology, psychology, both individual and collective, is distinguished by exceptional power of absorption, flexibility and elasticity; therein consists the aristocratic advantage of man over his nearest zoological relatives, the apes. The absorptive and flexible psyche, as a necessary condition for historical progress, confers on the so-called social "organisms," as distinguished from the real, that is, biological organisms, an exceptional instability of internal structure. In the development of nations and states, particularly capitalist

Catalonia...

(continued from page 2)

building the anti-independence Podemos in other parts of Spain, i.e., capitulating to one bourgeois nationalism or another.

No such confusion afflicts the fake-Trotskyist Internationalist Group (IG), which capitulates entirely to Castilian chauvinism. In their article "Defend the Right to Self-Determination and Independence for Catalonia" (September 2017) they do anything but defend Catalan independence. The IG denigrates the Catalan people's just struggle for national liberation, sneering: "This is a nationalist movement led by the richest bourgeoisie in Spain" and "The impulse for independence comes above all from powerful sectors of the well-to-do Catalan bourgeoisie." You'd think the IG had taken a page from the Francoist newspaper *ABC*, which wrote that the "Catalanist revolt against the state is a performance of the rich, by the rich and for the rich" (4 June).

These petty-bourgeois professors in the U.S. urged Catalans to battle their way to the polling stations on October 1—defying police truncheons, rubber bullets and

tear gas—to "cast a blank ballot"! Dripping with contempt for the oppressed Catalans, the IG rants: "It's not like some national liberation movement in a semi-colonial country." The IG's counterposition between national liberation struggles in the backward and advanced countries reveals their fundamentally Third World nationalist perspective. Further, the IG argues that Catalonia's separation from Spain "could seriously undercut the potential for united struggle of the working class throughout the peninsula" ("Mass Resistance to Police Repression in Catalonia," 4 October).

It is Madrid's national oppression of Catalans, Basques and Galicians that has undercut the unity of the working classes in the artificial Spanish state. This unity can only be achieved by boldly championing the liberation of the oppressed nations—the opposite of the IG's left-talking chauvinism, which blames the oppressed Catalans for dividing the working class, rather than the Castilian bourgeoisie and its reformist lackeys.

Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin emphasized that achieving proletarian unity requires breaking the chains binding an oppressed nation to its oppressor. He

ones, there is neither similarity nor regularity. Different stages of civilization, even polar opposites, approach and intermingle with one another in the life of one and the same country.

Let us not forget, my esteemed listeners, that historical backwardness is a *relative* concept. There being both backward and progressive countries, there is also a reciprocal influencing of one by the other; there is the pressure of the progressive countries on the backward ones; there is the necessity for the backward countries to catch up with the progressive ones, to borrow their technology and science, etc. In this way arises the *combined type of development*: features of backwardness are combined with the last word in world technology and in world thinking. Finally, the historically backward countries, in order to escape from their backwardness, are often compelled to rush ahead of the others.

The flexibility of the collective consciousness makes it possible under certain conditions to achieve the result, in the social arena, which in individual psychology is called “overcoming the consciousness of inferiority.” In this sense we can say that the October revolution was an heroic means whereby the people of Russia were able to overcome their own economic and cultural inferiority.

But let us pass over from these historicophilosophic, perhaps somewhat too abstract generalizations, and put the same question in concrete form, that is, within the cross-section of living economic facts. The backwardness of Russia expressed itself most clearly at the beginning of the twentieth century in the fact that industry occupied a small place in that country in comparison with agriculture, the city in comparison with the village, the proletariat in comparison with the peasantry. Taken as a whole, this meant a low productivity of the national labor. Suffice it to say that on the eve of the war, when Tsarist Russia had reached the peak of its well-being, the national income was 8 to 10 times lower than in the United States. This is expressed in figures, the “amplitude” of its backwardness, if the word “amplitude” can be used at all in connection with backwardness.

At the same time, however, the law of combined development expresses itself in the economic field at every step, in simple as well as in complex phenomena. Almost without highways, Russia was compelled to build railroads. Without having gone through the stage of European artisanry and manufacture, Russia passed on directly to mechanized production. To jump over intermediate stages is the fate of backward countries.

While peasant agriculture often remained at the level of the 17th century, Russia’s industry, if not in scope, at least in type, stood at the level of the progressive countries and rushed ahead of them in some respects. It suffices to say that the giant enterprises, with over a thousand employees each, employed, in the United States, less than 18 percent of the total number of industrial workers, in Russia over 41 percent. This fact is hard to reconcile with the conventional conception of the economic



Petrograd, 1917: Factory workers during May Day demonstration raise Bolshevik call for Third (Communist) International.

backwardness of Russia. It does not, on the other hand, refute this backwardness, but complements it dialectically.

The same contradictory character was shown by the class structure of the country. The finance capital of Europe industrialized Russian economy at an accelerated tempo. Thereby the industrial bourgeoisie assumed a large-scale capitalistic and anti-popular character. The foreign stockholders, moreover, lived outside of the country. The workers, on the other hand, were naturally Russians. Against a numerically weak Russian bourgeoisie, which had no national roots, stood therefore a relatively strong proletariat, with strong roots in the depths of the people.

The revolutionary character of the proletariat was furthered by the fact that Russia in particular, as a backward country, under the compulsion of catching up with its opponents, had not been able to work out its own conservatism, either social or political. The most conservative country of Europe, in fact of the entire world, is considered, and correctly, to be the oldest capitalist country—England. The European country freest of conservatism would in all probability be Russia.

But the young, fresh, determined proletariat of Russia still constituted only a tiny minority of the nation. The reserves of its revolutionary power lay outside of the proletariat itself—in the peasantry, living in half-serfdom, and in the oppressed nationalities.

The Peasantry

The subsoil of the Revolution was the agrarian question. The old feudal-monarchic system became doubly intolerable under the conditions of the new capitalist exploitation. The peasant communal areas amounted to some 140 million desyatines [Russian unit of land equal to 2.7 acres]. But thirty thousand large landowners, whose average holdings were over 2,000 desyatines, owned altogether 70 million desyatines, that is, as much as some 10 million peasant families or 50 millions of peasant population. *These statistics of land tenure constituted a ready-made program of agrarian revolt.*

The nobleman, Bokorkin, wrote in 1917 to the dignitary, Rodsianko, the chairman of the last municipal Duma, “I am a landowner and I cannot get it into my head that I must lose my land, and for an unbelievable purpose to boot, for the experiment of the socialist doctrine.” But it is precisely the task of revolutions to accomplish that which the ruling classes cannot get into their heads.

In Autumn 1917 almost the whole country was the scene of peasant revolts. Of the 624 departments of old Russia, 482, that is, 77 percent, were affected by the movement! The reflection of the burning villages lit up the arena of the insurrections in the cities.

But the war of the peasants against the landowners—you will reply to me—is one of the classic elements of the bourgeois, by no means of the proletarian revolution!

Perfectly right, I reply—so it was in the past. But the inability of capitalist society to survive in an historically backward country was expressed precisely in the fact that the peasant insurrections did not drive the bourgeois classes of Russia forward, but on the contrary drove them back for good into the camp of the reaction. If the peasantry did not want to be completely ruined, there was nothing else left for it but to join the industrial proletariat. This revolutionary joining of the two oppressed classes was foreseen with genius by Lenin and prepared by him long ahead of time.

Had the bourgeoisie courageously solved the agrarian question, the proletariat of Russia would not, obviously, have been able to take the power in 1917. But the greedy and cowardly Russian bourgeoisie, too late on the scene, prematurely a victim of senility, did not dare to lift its hand against feudal property. But thereby it delivered the power to the proletariat and together with it the right to dispose of the destinies of bourgeois society.

In order for the Soviet state to come into existence, therefore, it was necessary for two factors of different historical nature to collaborate: the peasant war, that is, a movement which is characteristic of the dawn of bourgeois development, and the proletarian insurrection, that is, a move-

ment which announces the decline of the bourgeois movement. Precisely therein consists the *combined* character of the Russian Revolution.

Once the peasant bear stands up on his hind feet, he becomes terrible in his wrath. But he is unable to give conscious expression to his indignation. He needs a leader. For the first time in the history of the world, the insurrectionary peasantry found a faithful leader in the person of the proletariat.

Four million industrial and transportation workers led a hundred million peasants. That was the natural and inevitable reciprocal relation between proletariat and peasantry in the Revolution.

The National Question

The second revolutionary reserve of the proletariat was constituted by the oppressed nationalities, who moreover were also predominantly made up of peasants. Closely tied up with the historical backwardness of the country is the extensive character of the development of the state, which spread out like a grease spot from the center at Moscow to the circumference. In the East, it subjugated the still more backward peoples, basing itself upon them, in order to stifle the more developed nationalities of the West. To the 70 million Great Russians, who constituted the main mass of the population, were added gradually some 90 millions of “other races.”

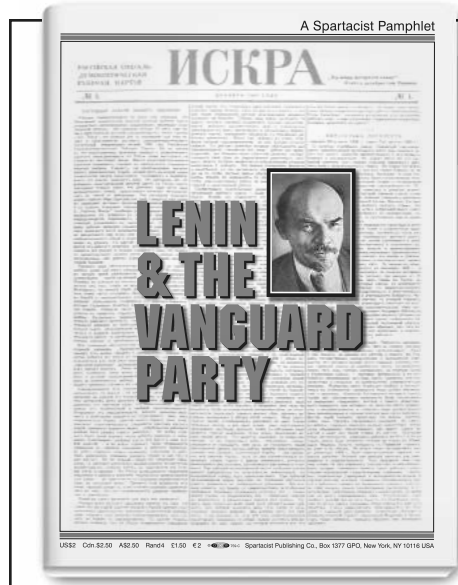
In this way arose the Empire, in whose composition the ruling nationality made up only 43 percent of the population, while the remaining 57 percent consisted of nationalities of varying degrees of civilization and legal deprivation. The national pressure was incomparably cruder in Russia than in the neighboring states, and not only those beyond the western boundary but beyond the eastern one, too. This conferred on the national problem a monstrous explosive force.

The Russian liberal bourgeoisie, in the national as well as in the agrarian question, would not go beyond certain ameliorations of the regime of oppression and violence. The “democratic” governments of Miliukov and Kerensky, which reflected the interests of the Great Russian bourgeoisie and bureaucracy, actually hastened to impress upon the discontented nationalities, in the course of the eight months of their existence, “You will obtain only what you tear away by force.”

The inevitability of the development of the centrifugal national movement had been early taken into consideration by Lenin. The Bolshevik Party struggled obstinately for years for the right of self-determination for nations, that is, for the right of full secession. Only through this courageous position on the national question could the Russian proletariat gradually win the confidence of the oppressed peoples. The national independence movement, as well as the agrarian movement, necessarily turned against the official democracy, strengthened the proletariat, and poured into the stream of the October upheaval.

In these ways the riddle of the proletarian upheaval in an historically backward country loses its veil of mystery.

[TO BE CONTINUED]



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100th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution In Defense of October



Bolshevik leaders V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky celebrate second anniversary of Russian Revolution in Red Square, Moscow, November 1919. The Militant, newspaper of the Trotskyist Communist League of America, printed Trotsky's speech marking 15th anniversary of revolution (inset).

“We shall now proceed to construct the socialist order.” With these words, V.I. Lenin, addressing the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies in Petrograd, announced that the proletariat had seized state power in Russia on 7 November 1917 (October 25 according to the old Julian calendar).

The Bolsheviks, led by Lenin and Leon Trotsky, saw the October Revolution as the opening shot in the struggle against the rule of capital internationally. But between 1918 and 1923, revolutions in Europe, most importantly in Germany, were defeated and the Soviet workers state was left isolated. Ravaged by World War I and the imperialist-backed Civil War which followed the revolution, economically backward Russia was devastated, the vanguard of its proletariat decimated. Under these conditions, a bureaucratic caste headed by J.V. Stalin carried out a *political* counterrevolution, beginning in 1923-24. The proletarian property forms remained, but political power had been usurped from the working class.

Trotsky fought implacably against the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union and the bureaucracy’s repudiation of the revolutionary internationalist program of the Bolsheviks. He was driven into exile and continued the fight for genuine revolutionary Marxism until 1940, when he was murdered by a Stalinist assassin.

As part of our struggle for international socialist revolution, we of the ICL stood for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union to the end. At the same time, we fought for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy. The Soviet workers state was finally destroyed through capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92.

Today, the ICL continues to uphold the program and principles of Lenin and Trotsky. The October Revolution remains the indispensable guide to proletarian revolution, which, extended internationally, will lay the basis to realize the liberating goals of communism. To this end, we fight

to reforge the Trotskyist Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution.

In November 1932, Trotsky, then living in exile in Prinkipo, Turkey, spoke before some 2,000 Social Democratic students in Copenhagen to mark the October Revolution’s 15th anniversary. It was to be his last public speech to a large audience. We reprint below an English translation of his talk as published in the then-Trotskyist newspaper the *Militant*.

Leon Trotsky Defends the October Revolution (The Militant, 21 January 1933)

PART ONE

My dear listeners,

Permit me to begin by expressing my sincere regrets over my inability to speak before a Copenhagen audience in the Danish tongue. Let us not ask whether the listeners lose by it. As to the speaker, his ignorance of the Danish language deprives him of the possibility of familiarizing himself with Scandinavian life and Scandinavian literature immediately, at first hand and in the original. And that is a great loss.

The German language, to which I have had to take recourse, is rich and powerful. My German, however, is fairly limited. To discuss complicated questions with the necessary freedom, moreover, is possible only in one’s own language. I must therefore beg the indulgence of the audience in advance.

The first time that I was in Copenhagen was at the international Socialist Congress, and I took away with me the kindest recollections of your city. But that was over a quarter of a century ago. Since then, the water in the Ore-Sund and in the fjords has changed over and over again. And not the water alone. The war [World War I] broke the backbone of the old European continent. The rivers and seas of Europe have washed down not a little blood. Mankind, and particularly European mankind, has gone through severe trials, has become more sombre and more brutal. Every kind of conflict has become more bitter. The world has entered into the period of the great change. Its most extreme expressions are *war* and *revolution*.

Before I pass on to the theme of my lecture, the Revolution, I consider it my duty to express my thanks to the organizers of this meeting, the Copenhagen organization of the social-democratic student body. I do

this as a political opponent. My lecture, it is true, pursues historico-scientific and not political aims. I want to emphasize this right from the beginning. But it is impossible to speak of a Revolution, out of which the Soviet Republic arose, without taking up a political position. As a lecturer I stand under the same banner as I did when I participated in the events of the Revolution.

Up to the war, the Bolshevik Party belonged to the international social-democracy. On August 4, 1914, the vote of the German social-democracy for the war credits put an end to this connection once and for all, and opened the period of uninterrupted and irreconcilable struggle of Bolshevism against social-democracy. Does this mean that the organizers of this assembly made a mistake in inviting me as a lecturer? On this point the audience will be able to judge only after my lecture. To justify my acceptance of the kind invitation to present a report on the Russian Revolution, permit me to point to the fact that during the 35 years of my political life the question of the Russian Revolution has been the practical and theoretical axis of my interests and of my actions. The four years of my stay in Turkey were principally devoted to the historical elaboration of the problems of the Russian Revolution. Perhaps this fact gives me a certain right to hope that I will succeed, in part, at least, in helping not only friends and sympathizers, but also opponents, better to understand many features of the Revolution which had escaped their attention before. At all events, the purpose of my lecture is: *to help to understand*. I do not intend to conduct propaganda for the Revolution nor to call upon you to join the Revolution. I intend to explain the Revolution.

I do not know if in the Scandinavian Olympus there was a special goddess of rebellion. Scarcely! In any case, we shall not call upon her favor today. We shall place our lecture under the sign of Snotra, the old goddess of knowledge. Despite the passionate drama of the Revolution as a living event, we shall endeavor to treat it

continued on page 6



Red Guards during proletarian seizure of power, November 1917.