

U.S. Troops, Bases Out of Africa!



ZUMA

Left: U.S. Marine trains Mauritanian soldiers in 2015. Mauritania is one of the 53 African countries where U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) troops are deployed. Right: Victims of attack by Somali government forces backed by U.S. troops in August.



Reuters

The deaths of four U.S. Special Forces troops in Niger in early October put a spotlight on American imperialism's shadowy wars in Africa. After President Trump responded with insulting treatment toward two black women, the widow of Sgt. La David T. Johnson and her friend, Florida Congresswoman Frederica Wilson, the bourgeois media did its bit for national unity by focusing attention on "Gold Star families." But most people were wondering what the troops were doing in Niger in the first place.

Leading Senators, Republican Lindsey Graham and Democrat Chuck Schumer, feigned ignorance about the U.S. mission in Niger. Writing in *CounterPunch* (27 October), Jeffrey St. Clair observed that "both political parties would much rather keep the focus on Trump's malicious Tweets and far away from the true scope of America's vicious intrusions in Africa, where if you admit nothing, you can get away with almost anything." The fact is that the U.S. imperialists, self-appointed cops of the world, have for the past decade steadily extended their military reach in Africa. This includes Niger, one of the 53 African countries where U.S. forces operate under the purview of AFRICOM—the U.S. Africa Command.

Established under George W. Bush, AFRICOM is headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany. Fully operational in 2008, AFRICOM's programs and missions mushroomed under the Obama administration. A pivotal point was the U.S.-led bombing of Libya in 2011 and the assassination of bourgeois strongman Muammar el-Qaddafi. The imperialists' destruction of Libya's state and social fabric set loose an array of tribalist and Islamic fundamentalist forces there and in neighboring countries, while also energizing Boko Haram in Nigeria.

By the time Obama left office, AFRICOM's lethal tempo had escalated to 3,500 military operations a year. Many

of these are meant to train the imperialists' local henchmen to do the dirty work of repression and slaughter, with Washington handing out tens of millions in military aid to Mali, Niger, Chad and Mauritania, to name a few. For his part, Trump has demanded that Congress grant



ZUMA

AFRICOM commander, four-star General Thomas Waldhauser, at Pentagon press conference, March 24.

\$5.2 billion in additional funding for military operations in Africa. The U.S. is also the main financial contributor to the deployment of 20,000 UN troops in the mineral-rich Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire)—the largest UN "peacekeeping mission" ever.

Layer upon layer of secrecy and deceit keep the vast majority of U.S. military operations in Africa from the public eye. Officially, the U.S. maintains exactly one base on African soil: Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti, a French colony until 1977. (The U.S. fittingly built the base on the site of a former French Foreign Legion outpost.) Located across the Gulf of Aden from the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, Djibouti has strategic importance. The Obama administration expanded drone bases there for operations in Yemen, as it did in Ethiopia in order to launch attacks against al-

Shabab in Somalia. But there is much more to the U.S. military presence in Africa.

Breaking through the wall of official silence and disinformation, journalist Nick Turse has documented AFRICOM's ever-widening reach in his 2015 book, *Tomorrow's Battlefield: US Proxy Wars and Secret Ops in Africa* (Dispatch Books), and in articles in The Nation Institute's TomDispatch.com and elsewhere. Turse describes an entire network of U.S. bases across Africa, which in Pentagon double-talk are dubbed "cooperative security locations," "contingency locations" and the like. Many U.S. military actions in Africa are conducted under the Special Operations Command, whose deployments are almost always classified. The proportion of global U.S. special forces deployed by AFRICOM soared from just 1 percent in 2006 to more than 17 percent ten years later.

The U.S. admits to having some 6,000 troops in Africa. But as Jeffrey St. Clair noted in his *CounterPunch* article, "this number is almost certainly low, since it doesn't include special forces, SEAL teams, defense contractors, mercenaries, CIA operatives or drone operators in their Nevada cubicles." Meanwhile, dozens of U.S. warships patrol the Indian Ocean off Africa's east coast. The imperialist purpose behind the whole buildup was made clear by an AFRICOM officer cited by Turse, who described the "new normal" of "a world filled with 'a lot of rapidly moving crises,' requiring military interventions and likened it to the Marine Corps deployments in the so-called Banana Wars in Central America and the Caribbean in the early twentieth century."

One thing is clear about the U.S. military presence: It will only sow further instability, violence and desperation throughout Africa. It is in the interest of the multiracial American proletariat to demand all U.S. troops and bases out of Africa. While we as communists oppose everything that Islamist reactionaries like al-Shabab stand for, we recognize that every military setback to the imperialists aids the cause of the workers and oppressed peoples of the planet. The U.S. rulers' predatory wars overseas go hand in hand with their attacks on labor, black people and all the oppressed at home. Opposition to all imperialist wars and occupations is a necessary part of the fight to sweep away the capitalist-imperialist order through workers socialist revolution.

U.S. Machinations in Africa

During the Cold War, the central pre-occupation of the imperialists in Africa was to curtail the influence of the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state. To counter Soviet economic and military aid to bourgeois-nationalist regimes like Ahmed Sékou Touré's Guinea and Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana, the U.S. propped up a host of brutal despots such as Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire and Haile Selassie in Ethiopia and relied heavily on apartheid South Africa as a regional gendarme. CIA agents subverted governments and organized coups throughout Africa in the decades after World War II. Conversely, anti-colonialist leaders like Patrice Lumumba, the first prime minister of the Republic of Congo

continued on page 2

FROM THE ARCHIVES OF MARXISM

100th Anniversary of the
Russian Revolution
In Defense of
October

PART TWO ★ SEE PAGE 3



Africa...

(continued from page 1)

following independence from Belgium, who was assassinated in 1961 with the help of the CIA, became heroes to militants fighting against black oppression in the U.S.

The Soviet Union’s collapse in 1991-92 removed what had been the only real military counterweight to the imperialists. While the U.S. rulers threw around their military might unchallenged in what they proclaimed was a “one-superpower world,” they had little interest in Africa. This was particularly the case after the humiliating defeat of U.S. troops in Somalia in 1993, centrally the incident that became known as “Black Hawk Down.” The launch and development of AFRICOM show that Washington has a new focus on Africa.

What accounts for this change was laid bare in a 2012 Congressional report, “Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa.” The report emphasized the “increasing importance of Africa’s natural resources, particularly energy resources” and expressed “mounting concern over violent extremist activities.” The report cited, in particular, oil production in Nigeria—Africa’s largest oil exporter and a large supplier to the U.S.—and the potential for deep-water drilling in the west African Gulf of Guinea.



WV Map

Among the imperialists’ main concerns is the influence of the Chinese deformed workers state, which in the last decade has become Africa’s biggest trading partner (see “Hue and Cry over China’s Role in Africa,” WV No. 987, 30 September 2011). The most powerful of the remaining countries where capitalist rule has been overthrown, China is the central target of the imperialists’ global counterrevolutionary machinations. The construction of China’s first overseas military base in Djibouti, near Camp Lemonnier, points to both its growing presence in Africa and the potential for military conflict with the U.S. In any such conflict, we Trotskyists stand for the unconditional defense of China, which, despite Stalinist bureaucratic rule, is a workers state based on collectivized property.



Xinhua

June 2011 NATO terror bombing of Libya’s capital, Tripoli, in advance of overthrow and lynching of Libyan leader Muammar el-Qaddafi.

At the same time that it seeks to counter China, Washington is mired in an ever-growing number of “anti-terror” operations in Africa. As in Afghanistan and Iraq, U.S. intervention in Africa in the name of fighting terror has caused a rapid growth of Islamist forces, and of generalized chaos. In “America’s War-Fighting Footprint in Africa” (TomDispatch.com, 27 April), Nick Turse lists several major AFRICOM campaigns, including the “shadow war” against al-Shabab, which has more recently also targeted ISIS in Somalia; “neutralizing” insurgent forces

war, heavily overlaid by tribal and regional divisions, between the Qaddafi regime and imperialist-backed opposition forces, in which workers had no side. But with the imperialist attack, the civil war became “subordinated to the fight of a neocolonial country against imperialism.” The statement continued: “Every step taken by the workers of the imperialist countries to halt the depredations and military adventures of their rulers is a step toward their own liberation from capitalist exploitation, impoverishment and oppression.”

Once again, imperialist war created bedlam, with Islamist and tribal factions competing for control of Libya’s oil wealth. Among their first acts as they seized areas formerly held by Qaddafi’s forces was to unleash lynch mob terror against black Africans. The Qaddafi regime had for years controlled the spigot of emigration in league with the imperialists. But now there was a desperate exodus of black people trying to reach Europe. NATO dispatched warships to the coast of Libya, ostensibly to deter “people smugglers.” The real purpose was to prevent refugees from reaching racist “Fortress Europe.”

The devastation didn’t stop there. At the end of his second term as Commander-in-Chief, Barack Obama oversaw a renewed American air war in Libya, “Operation Odyssey Lightning.” The U.S. carried out nearly 500 air strikes against ISIS in the last five months of 2016, supplementing drone and special ops attacks. For their part, Libyan tribal forces claiming adherence to ISIS have carried out such atrocities as the February 2015 beheading of 21 Egyptian Coptic Christian migrant laborers in the city of Surt and a subsequent massacre of Ethiopian Christians.

The destruction of Libya led directly to the 2012 intervention in Mali by some 2,000 French troops. In the “Juniper Micron” operation, which included airstrikes, troops from France and several of its African neocolonies sought to “stabilize” the former French colony following a coup led by a U.S.-trained officer. The coup was intended to smash a rebel movement of the semi-nomadic Tuareg people. Armed with weapons seized from the collapsed Libyan state, the Tuaregs had taken control of much of northern Mali in league with Islamist forces, who subsequently turned on them.

Calling for all French troops out of Africa, our comrades of the Ligue trotskyste de France issued a leaflet that noted the real purpose of the imperialist intervention: “to maintain French imperialist

domination in the entire region—and especially to protect the profits of the Areva company, which exploits enormous uranium deposits in neighboring Niger” (see WV No. 1016, 25 January 2013). Still smarting from the attack on the U.S. Mission in Benghazi, Libya, Obama supported the French intervention in Mali but refused to contribute troops. He felt no such compunction the following year, when the U.S. and France sent troops to the Central African Republic (CAR).

Niger, site of the recent killings of the Special Forces troops, is a key strategic location for predatory U.S. interests in the region. Landlocked and dirt-poor, despite its mineral wealth, Niger borders seven countries, from Algeria and Libya in the north to Nigeria in the south. Having operated in Niger for years, the U.S. military currently stations 800 troops in the capital, Niamey. A \$100 million drone base is under construction on the outskirts of the city of Agadez.

The expanding American footprint in the region harks back to the “scramble for Africa”—the carving up of the continent by the European powers at the 1884-85 Berlin Conference. Rival European capitalist states shaped the current borders in Africa, while tearing apart tribal structures and agrarian societies. From King Leopold’s killing fields of the Belgian Congo to Britain’s concentration camps in Kenya and France’s bloodbaths in Algeria, the record of the Western imperialists is one of mass murder, slave-like labor and brutal repression of both independence movements and workers’ struggles. The precursor to such barbarism was the kidnapping of millions of Africans who were shipped across the Atlantic to the slave plantations of the U.S. and elsewhere.

Poverty, famine and religious and ethnic bloodletting—in Africa and elsewhere—are hallmarks of the capitalist system in its epoch of imperialist decay. That system is dominated by a handful of advanced capitalist states that wage wars of plunder and compete against each other to control the world’s resources, markets and labor forces. What is needed is revolutionary proletarian opposition to both imperialism and local capitalist rulers. The way forward is shown by the program of permanent revolution, developed by Leon Trotsky and verified by the Russian October Revolution. Trotsky recognized that in backward, semicolonial countries, the achievement of modernization and liberation from the imperialist yoke requires smashing capitalist rule, which would open the way to socialist development.

As underdeveloped as Africa remains under imperialist domination, the continent is home to crucial proletarian concentrations: in Egypt and other North African countries and in South Africa with its combative workers movement; in the oil fields in Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea, in the ports of Kenya and in mining operations in many countries. The task of Marxists is to forge Trotskyist vanguard workers parties—sections of a reformed Fourth International—that would link the struggle for workers revolutions in Africa to the fight for proletarian revolution in the U.S., France and other imperialist centers. With the proletariat in power on a global scale, technology and industrial development will be tapped to lift the world’s masses out of want and misery on the road to building a classless communist society. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

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

DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Liz Gordon
EDITOR: Alan Wilde
CIRCULATION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

EDITORIAL BOARD: Laura Zamora (managing editor), François Donau (production manager), Edie Goldberg (letters editor), Bruce André, Ray Bishop, John Blake, Bonnie Brodie, Jon Brule, Paul Cone, Michael Davisson, George Foster, Blandine Hauser, Walter Jennings, Elizabeth Johnson, Michael Joyce, Jane Kerrigan, James Robertson, Joseph Seymour

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 November 14.

No. 1122

17 November 2017

Spartacist South Africa

Newspaper of the South African section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

Issue No. 14 (32 pages) **US\$1 R2**
Subscription (4 issues) **US\$4 R10**

Make checks payable/mail to:
Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

In South Africa:
Spartacist, P.O. Box 61574
Marshalltown, Johannesburg 2107
South Africa

For Free, Quality Education for All!
Working-Class Power Must be Mobilised!

Below are some of the articles in this issue:

- Down with State Repression Against Student Protestants.....4
- Blade's Black Consciousness: A Liberal Nationalist Programme.....6
- On Coloured Marginalisation and the Fight for a Black-Centred Workers Government.....11
- Josef Castro: 1926-2016: Defiant the Gains of the Cuban Revolution.....21
- "Communism and the Family" by Alexandra Kollontai.....32

Printed by South African Press at the printers of Labour & Capital

100th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution In Defense of October



N. Alexeyev



Mass meeting in Petrograd railroad station calling for formation of Red Guard detachments, 1917. Left: V.I. Lenin in Red Square, Moscow, 1919. Right: Leon Trotsky rallies Soviet Red Army troops, 1918.



Basil Blackwell, Inc.

On November 7, communists celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution, when the working class under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party and supported by the broad masses of the peasantry took state power into its own hands. The revolution (which, according to the Julian calendar used in Russia at the time, took place on October 25) opened up the possibility of a socialist future for all mankind. In honor of this event, we publish below the second part of the 1932 Copenhagen speech presented by Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V. I. Lenin of the Bolshevik Revolution, before an audience of Danish Social-Democratic youth. In the first part of his presentation (see WV No. 1121, 3 November), Trotsky gave an account of the revolution and its class nature, as well as the indispensable role of the revolutionary vanguard party. He also addressed why the proletariat could conquer state power in Russia first rather than in the more developed capitalist countries.

Exiled from the Soviet Union by Stalin, Trotsky was speaking during the depths of the Great Depression, a brutal display of capitalist irrationality that pushed millions of workers and youth to the left. Required by the Danish authorities to limit his remarks to a historical-scientific elaboration of the revolution, Trotsky did not explicitly criticize the Stalinist bureaucracy, which had usurped political power from the Soviet working class beginning in 1923-24. However, the socialized property forms created after the destruction of capitalist class rule remained. In his speech, Trotsky did defend his theory of permanent revolution, which for the Stalinists was his original sin.

In his writings on the rise of Stalinism, most famously *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), Trotsky uncompromisingly defended the Soviet Union against imperialism and counterrevolution. At the same time, he insisted that the Soviet working class needed to oust the nationalist bureaucracy through a political revolution to liberate the collectivized economy from Stalinist mismanagement and to re-establish the Leninist program of international workers revolution. Otherwise, the workers state would ultimately be strangled. Socialism can only be constructed on a global basis. The Stalinists made their peace with imperialism and used the anti-Marxist dogma of “socialism in one country” to justify betraying revolutionary opportunities internationally. The ultimate

abdication of Stalin’s heirs demonstrated the fallacy of “socialism in one country.”

The Social Democrats and their reformist hangers-on all over the world hailed the destruction of the Soviet Union and the restoration of capitalism in 1991-92. They share some responsibility for the consequences. The ex-USSR was racked by mass immiseration and fratricidal ethnic cleansing. The capitalist rulers in North America, Europe and elsewhere, no longer fearing the “specter of communism,” stepped up attacks on the gains of past working-class struggles. The neocolonial masses suffered in the “one-superpower world” as the emboldened U.S. imperialists ran rampant.

We of the ICL fought to the best of our ability to defend the USSR so long as it existed, through opposing our “own” imperialism in all its cold and hot wars against the homeland of October and through fighting to oust the sellout Stalinists. The banner of authentic Trotskyism remains ours as we continue to fight for new October Revolutions.

Leon Trotsky Defends the October Revolution

(The Militant, 21 January 1933)

PART TWO

The Permanent Revolution

Marxist revolutionaries predicted, long before the events, the march of the Revolution and the historical role of the young Russian proletariat. I may be permitted to repeat here a passage from a work of my own in 1905:

“In an economically backward country the proletariat can arrive at power earlier than in a capitalistically advanced one.... “The Russian Revolution creates the conditions under which the power can (and in the event of a successful revolution must) be transferred to the proletariat, even before the policy of bourgeois liberalism receives the opportunity of unfolding its

genius for government to its full extent. “The destiny of the most elementary revolutionary interests of the peasantry...is bound up with the destiny of the whole revolution, that is, with the destiny of the proletariat. The proletariat, once arrived at power, will appear before the peasantry as the liberating class.

“The proletariat enters into the government as the revolutionary representative of the nation, as the acknowledged leader of the people in the struggle with absolutism and the barbarism of serfdom. “The proletarian regime will have to stand from the very beginning for the solution of the agrarian question, with which the question of the destiny of tremendous masses of the population of Russia is bound up.”

I have taken the liberty of quoting these passages as evidence that the theory of the October Revolution which I am presenting today is no casual improvisation, and was not constructed ex post facto under the pressure of events. No, in the form of a political prognosis it preceded the October upheaval by a long time. You will agree that a theory is in general valuable only insofar as it helps to foresee the course of development and influences it purposively. Therein, in general terms, is the invaluable importance of Marxism as a weapon of social and historical orientation. I am sorry that the narrow limits of the lecture do not permit me to enlarge the above quotation materially. I will therefore content myself with a brief résumé of the whole work which dates from 1905.

In accordance with its immediate tasks, the Russian Revolution is a bourgeois revolution. But the Russian bourgeoisie is anti-revolutionary. The victory of the Revolution is therefore possible only as a victory of the proletariat. But the victorious proletariat will not stop at the program of bourgeois democracy; it will go on to the program of Socialism. The Russian Revolution will become the first stage of the Socialist world revolution.

This was the theory of the *permanent revolution* formulated by me in 1905 and since then exposed to the severest criti-

cism under the name of “Trotskyism.”

To be more exact, it is only a part of this theory. The other part, which is particularly timely now, states:

The present productive forces have long outgrown their national limits. A Socialist society is not feasible within national boundaries. Significant as the economic successes of an isolated workers’ state may be, the program of “Socialism in one country” is a petty-bourgeois Utopia. Only a European and then a world federation of Socialist republics can be the real arena for a harmonious Socialist society.

Today, after the test of events, I see less reason than ever to dissociate myself from this theory.

The Bolshevik Party

After all that has been said above, is it still worthwhile to recall the Fascist writer, [Curzio] Malaparte, who ascribes to me tactics which are independent of strategy and amount to a series of technical recipes for insurrection, applicable in all latitudes and longitudes? It is a good thing that the name of the luckless theoretician of the coup d’Etat makes it easy to distinguish him from the victorious practitioner of the coup d’Etat; no one therefore runs the risk of confusing Malaparte with Bonaparte.

Without the armed insurrection of November 7, 1917, the Soviet state would not be in existence. But the insurrection itself did not drop from Heaven. A series of historical prerequisites was necessary for the October revolution.

1. The rotting away of the old ruling classes—the nobility, the monarchy, the bureaucracy.

2. The political weakness of the bourgeoisie, which had no roots in the masses of the people.

3. The revolutionary character of the peasant question.

4. The revolutionary character of the problem of the oppressed nations.

5. The significant social weight of the proletariat.

To these organic pre-conditions we must add certain conjunctural conditions of the highest importance:

6. The Revolution of 1905 was the great school, or in Lenin’s words, the “dress rehearsal” of the Revolution of 1917. The Soviets, as the irreplaceable organizational form of the proletarian united front in the revolution, were created for the first time in the year 1905.

continued on page 4

October...

(continued from page 3)

7. The imperialist war sharpened all the contradictions, tore the backward masses out of their immobility and thereby prepared the grandiose scale of the catastrophe.

But all these conditions, which fully sufficed for the *outbreak of the Revolution*, were insufficient to assure the *victory of the proletariat* in the Revolution. For this victory one condition more was needed:

8. The Bolshevik Party.

When I enumerate this condition as the last in the series, I do it only because it follows the necessities of the logical order, and not because I assign the Party the last place in the order of importance.

No, I am far from such a thought. The liberal bourgeoisie—yes, it can seize the power and has seized it more than once as the result of struggles in which it took no part; it possesses organs of seizure which are admirably adapted to the purpose. But the working masses are in a different position; they have long been accustomed to give, and not to take. They work, are patient as long as they can be, hope, lose their patience, rise up and struggle, die, bring victory to the others, are betrayed, fall into despondency, again bow their necks, again work. This is the history of the masses of the people under all regimes. In order to take the power firmly and surely into its hands the proletariat needs a Party, which far surpasses the other parties in the clarity of its thought and in its revolutionary determination.

The Party of the Bolsheviks, which has been described more than once and with complete justification as the most revolutionary Party in the history of mankind, was the living condensation of the modern history of Russia, of all that was dynamic in it. The overthrow of Tsarism had long since become the necessary condition for the development of economy and culture. But for the solution of this task, the forces were insufficient. The bourgeoisie feared the revolution. The intelligentsia tried to bring the peasant to his feet. The muzhik, incapable of generalizing his own miseries and his aims, left this appeal unanswered. The intelligentsia armed itself with dynamite. A whole generation was burned up in this struggle.

On March 1, 1887, Alexander Ulianov carried out the last of the great terrorist plots. The attempted assassination of Alexander III failed. Ulianov and the other participants were executed. The attempt to substitute a chemical preparation for the revolutionary class suffered shipwreck. Even the most heroic intelligentsia is nothing without the masses. Under the immediate impression of these facts and conclusions grew up Ulianov's younger brother Vladimir, the later Lenin, the greatest figure of Russian history. Even in his early youth he placed himself on the foundations of Marxism, and turned his face toward the proletariat. Without losing sight of the vil-

lage for a moment, he sought the way to the peasantry through the workers. Having inherited from his revolutionary predecessors their determination, their capacity for self-sacrifice, and their willingness to go to the limit, Lenin at an early age became the teacher of the new generation of the intelligentsia and of the advanced workers. In strikes and street fights, in prisons and in exile, the workers received the necessary tempering. They needed the searchlight of



October 1917: Banner of "Red Putilov" factory workers being presented to army regiment reads "Long Live All-Russian Revolution as Prologue to Social Revolution in Europe!"

Marxism to light up their historical road in the darkness of absolutism.

In the year 1883 there arose among the émigrés the first Marxist group. In the year 1898, at a secret meeting, the foundation of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party was proclaimed (we all called ourselves Social-Democrats in those days). In the year 1903 occurred the split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. In the year 1912 the Bolshevik fraction finally became an independent Party.

It learned to recognize the class mechanics of society in struggle, in the grandiose events of twelve years (1905–1917). It educated cadres equally capable of initiative and of subordination. The discipline of its revolutionary action was based on the unity of its doctrine, on the tradition of common struggles and on confidence in its tested leadership.

Thus stood the Party in the year 1917. Despised by the official "public opinion" and the paper thunder of the intelligentsia press, it adapted itself to the movement of the masses. Firmly it kept in hand the control of factories and regiments. More and more the peasant masses turned toward it. If we understand by "nation," not the privileged heads, but the majority of the people, that is, the workers and peasants, then Bolshevism became in the course of the year 1917 a truly national Russian Party.

In September 1917, Lenin, who was compelled to keep in hiding, gave the signal, "The crisis is ripe, the hour of the insurrection has approached." He was right. The ruling classes had landed in a blind alley before the problems of the war, the land and national liberation. The bourgeoisie finally lost its head. The democratic parties, the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries wasted the remains of the confidence of the masses in them by their support of the imperialist war, by their policy of ineffectual compromise and concession to the bourgeois and feudal property-owners. The awakened army no longer wanted to fight for the alien aims of imperialism. Disregarding democratic advice, the peasantry smoked the landowners out of their estates. The oppressed nationalities at the periphery rose up against the bureaucracy of Petrograd. In the most important workers' and soldiers' Soviets the Bolsheviks were dominant. The workers and soldiers demanded action. The ulcer was ripe. It needed a cut of the lancet.

Only under these social and political conditions was the insurrection possible. And thus it also became inevitable. But there is no playing around with the insurrection. Woe to the surgeon who is careless in the use of the lancet! Insurrection is an art. It has its laws and its rules.

The Party carried through the October insurrection with cold calculation and with flaming determination. Thanks to this, it conquered almost without victims.

Through the victorious Soviets the Bolsheviks placed themselves at the head of a country which occupies one-sixth of the surface of the globe.

The majority of my present listeners, it is to be presumed, did not occupy themselves at all with politics in the year 1917. So much the better. Before the young generation lies much that is interesting, if not always easy. But the representatives of the older generation in this hall will surely well remember how the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks was received: as a curiosity, as a misunderstanding, as a scandal; most often as a nightmare which was bound to disappear with the first rays of dawn. The Bolsheviks would last twenty-four hours, a week, a month, a year. The period had to be constantly lengthened.... The rulers of the whole world armed themselves against the first workers' state: civil war was stirred up, interventions again and again, blockade. So passed year after year. Meantime history has recorded fifteen years of existence of the Soviet power.

15 Years of the Soviet Regime

"Yes," some opponent will say, "the adventure of October has shown itself to be much more substantial than many of us thought. Perhaps it was not even quite an 'adventure.' Nevertheless, the question retains its full force: What was achieved at this high cost? Were then those dazzling tasks fulfilled which the Bolsheviks proclaimed on the eve of the Revolution?"

Before we answer the hypothetical opponent, let us note that the question in and of itself is not new. On the contrary, it followed right at the heels of the October Revolution, since the day of its birth.

The French journalist, Claude Anet, who was in Petrograd during the Revolution, wrote as early as October 27, 1917:

"Les maximalistes ont pris le pouvoir et le grand jour est arrivé. Enfin, me dis-je, je vais voir se réaliser l'Eden socialiste qu'on nous promet depuis tant d'années.... Admirable adventure! Position privilégiée!"

"The maximalists (which was what the French called the Bolsheviks at that time)

have seized the power and the great day has come. At last, I say to myself, I shall behold the realization of the socialist Eden which has been promised us for so many years.... Admirable adventure! A privileged position!" And so on and so forth. What sincere hatred behind the ironical salutation! The very morning after the capture of the Winter Palace, the reactionary journalist hurried to register his claim for a ticket of admission to Eden. Fifteen years have passed since the Revolution. With all the greater absence of ceremony our enemies reveal their malicious joy over the fact that the land of the Soviets, even today, bears but little resemblance to a realm of general well-being. Why then the Revolution and why the sacrifices?

Worthy listeners—permit me to think that the contradictions, difficulties, mistakes and want of the Soviet regime are no less familiar to me than to anyone else. I personally have never concealed them, whether in speech or in writing. I have believed and I still believe that revolutionary politics, as distinguished from conservative, cannot be built up on concealment. "To speak out that which is" must be the highest principle of the workers' state.

But in criticism, as well as in creative activity, perspective is necessary. Subjectivism is a poor adviser, particularly in great questions. Periods of time must be commensurate with the tasks, and not with individual caprices. Fifteen years! How much that is in the life of one man! Within that period not a few of our generation were borne to their graves and those who remain have added innumerable gray hairs. But these same fifteen years—what an insignificant period in the life of a people! Only a minute on the clock of history.

Capitalism required centuries to maintain itself in the struggle against the Middle Ages, to raise the level of science and technology, to build railroads, to stretch electric wires. And then? Then humanity was thrust by capitalism into the hell of wars and crises! But Socialism is allowed by its enemies, that is, by the adherents of capitalism, only a decade and a half to install Paradise on earth with all modern improvements. No, such obligations were never assumed by us. Such periods of time were never set forth. The processes of great changes must be measured by scales which are commensurate with them. I do not know if the Socialist society will resemble the biblical Paradise. I doubt it. But in the Soviet Union there is no Socialism as yet. The situation that prevails there is one of transition, full of contradictions, burdened with the heavy inheritance of the past, and in addition under the hostile pressure of the capitalistic states. The October Revolution has proclaimed the principle of the new society. The Soviet Republic has shown only the first stage of its realization. Edison's first lamp was very bad. We must

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

Website: www.icl-fi.org • Email address: vanguard@tiac.net

National Office: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, (212) 732-7860

Chicago Box 6441, Main PO, Chicago, IL 60680
chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: by appointment, call (312) 563-0441

Los Angeles Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta., Los Angeles, CA 90029
slsycla@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: by appointment, call (213) 380-8239

New York Box 3381, Church St. Sta., New York, NY 10008
nysl@tiac.net
Public Office: by appointment, call (212) 267-1025

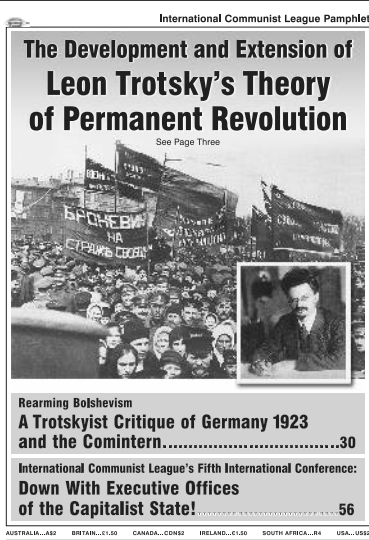
Oakland Box 29497, Oakland, CA 94604
slbayarea@fastmail.net
Public Office: by appointment, call (510) 839-0851

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE IN QUEBEC AND CANADA

Montréal CP 83 Succ. Place-d'Armes, Montréal, QC H2Y 3E9, (514) 728-7578
trotskyste.montreal@gmail.com

Toronto Box 7198, Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X8, (416) 593-4138
spartacan@on.aibn.com

Vancouver Box 2717, Main P.O., Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2, (604) 687-0353
tl.vancouver.bc@gmail.com



\$2 (56 pages)

Make checks payable/mail to:
Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

know how to distinguish the future from among the mistakes and faults of the first Socialist construction.

But the unhappiness that rains on living men? Do the results of the Revolution justify the sacrifice which it has caused? A fruitless question, rhetorical through and through; as if the processes of history admitted of an accounting balance sheet! We might just as well ask, in view of the difficulties and miseries of human existence, “Does it pay to be born altogether?” To which [German poet Heinrich] Heine wrote, “And the fool waits for answer.”... Such melancholy reflections have not hindered mankind from being born and from giving birth. Suicides, even in these days of unexampled world crisis, fortunately constitute an unimportant percentage. But peoples never resort to suicide. When their burdens are intolerable, they seek a way out through revolution.

Besides, who becomes indignant over the victims of the socialist upheaval? Most often those who have paved the way for the victims of the imperialist war, and have glorified or, at least, easily accommodated themselves to it. It is now our turn to ask, “Has the war justified itself? What has it given us? What has it taught?”

The reactionary historian, Hippolyte Taine, in his eleven-volume pamphlet against the great French Revolution describes, not without malicious joy, the sufferings of the French people in the years



Adolf Strakhov

1926 Soviet poster proclaims: “Emancipated Woman—Build Socialism!”

of the dictatorship of the Jacobins and afterward. The worst off were the lower classes of the cities, the plebeians, who as “sansculottes” had given up the best of their souls for the revolution. Now they or their wives stood in line throughout cold nights to return empty-handed to the extinguished family hearth. In the tenth year of the revolution Paris was poorer than before it began. Carefully selected, artificially pieced-out facts serve Taine as justification for his annihilating verdict against the revolution. Look, the plebeians wanted to be dictators and have precipitated themselves into misery!

It is hard to conceive of a more uninspired piece of moralizing. First of all, if the revolution precipitated the country into misery, the blame lay principally on the ruling classes who drove the people to revolution. Second, the great French Revolution did not exhaust itself in hungry lines before bakeries. The whole of modern France, in many respects the whole of modern civilization, arose out of the bath of the French Revolution!

In the course of the Civil War in the United States in the '60's of the past century, 500,000 men were killed. Can these sacrifices be justified?

From the standpoint of the American slaveholder and the ruling classes of Great Britain who marched with them—no! From the standpoint of the Negro or of the British workingman—absolutely! And from the standpoint of the development



Harlingue-Viollet

Adult literacy class in Soviet Union, early 1920s. Bolshevik Revolution opened the road to unprecedented social progress.

of humanity as a whole—there can be no doubt whatever. Out of the Civil War of the '60's came the present United States with its unbounded practical initiative, its rationalized technology, its economic élan. On these achievements of Americanism humanity will build the new society.

The October Revolution penetrated deeper than any of its predecessors into the Holy of Holies of society—into its property relations. So much the longer time is necessary to reveal the creative consequences of the Revolution in all the domains of life. But the general direction of the upheaval is already clear: the Soviet Republic has no reason whatever to hang its head before its capitalist accusers and speak the language of apology.

To evaluate the new regime from the standpoint of human development, one must first answer the question, “How does social progress express itself and how can it be measured?”

Balance Sheet of October

The deepest, the most objective and the most indisputable criterion says—progress can be measured by the growth of the productivity of social labor. The evaluation of the October Revolution from this point of view is already given by experience. The principle of socialistic organization has for the first time in history shown its ability to record unheard-of results in production in a short space of time.

The curve of the industrial development of Russia, expressed in crude index numbers, is as follows, taking 1913, the last year before the war, as 100. The year 1920, the highest point of the civil war, is also the lowest point in industry—only 25, that is to say, a quarter of the pre-war production. In 1925 it rose to 75, that is, three-quarters of the pre-war production; in 1929 about 200, in 1932, 300, that is to say, three times as much as on the eve of the war.

The picture becomes even more striking in the light of the international index. From 1925 to 1932 the industrial production of Germany has declined one and a half times, in America twice; in the Soviet Union it has increased fourfold. These figures speak for themselves.

I have no intention of denying or concealing the seamy side of Soviet economy. The results of the industrial index are extraordinarily influenced by the unfavorable development of agriculture, that is to say, of that field which has essentially not yet risen to Socialist methods, but at the same time has been led on the road to collectivization with insufficient preparation, bureaucratically rather than technically and economically. This is a great question, which however goes beyond the limits of my lecture.

The index numbers cited require another important reservation. The indisputable and, in their way, splendid results of Soviet industrialization demand a further economic checking-up from the standpoint of the mutual adaptation of the various elements of economy, their dynamic equilibrium and consequently their productive capacity. Here great difficulties and even setbacks are inevitable. Socialism does not

arise in its perfected form from the Five-Year Plan, like Minerva from the head of Jupiter, or Venus from the foam of the sea. Before it are decades of persistent work, of mistakes, corrections and reorganization. Moreover, let us not forget that Socialist construction in accordance with its very nature can only reach perfection on the international arena. But even the most unfavorable economic balance sheet of the results obtained so far could reveal only the incorrectness of the preliminary calculations, the errors of the plan and the mistakes of the leadership, but could in no way refute the empirically firmly established fact—the possibility, with the aid of Socialist methods, of raising the productivity of collective labor to an unheard-of height. This conquest, of world-historical importance, cannot be taken away from us by anybody or anything.

After what has been said, it is scarcely worthwhile to spend time on the complaints, that the October revolution has brought Russia to the downfall of its civilization. That is the voice of the disquieted ruling houses and the salons. The feudal-bourgeois “civilization” overthrown by the proletarian upheaval was only barbarism with decorations à la Talmi [costume jewelry]. While it remained inaccessible to the Russian people, it brought little that was new to the treasury of mankind.

But even with respect to this civilization, which is so bemoaned by the white [Russian counterrevolutionaries] émigrés, we must put the question more precisely—in what sense is it ruined? Only in one sense; the monopoly of a small minority in the treasures of civilization has been destroyed. But everything of cultural value in the old Russian civilization has remained untouched. The Huns of Bolshevism have shattered neither the conquests of the mind nor the creations of art. On the contrary, they carefully collected the monuments of human creativeness and arranged them in model order. The culture of the monarchy, the nobility and the bourgeoisie has now become the culture of the museums.

The people visits these museums eagerly. But it does not live in them. It learns. It builds. The fact alone that the October Revolution taught the Russian people, the dozens of peoples of Tsarist Russia,

to read and write, stands immeasurably higher than the whole former hot-house Russian civilization.

The October Revolution has laid the foundations for a new civilization, which is designed, not for a select few, but for all. This is felt by the masses of the whole world. Hence their sympathy for the Soviet Union, which is as passionate as once was their hatred for Tsarist Russia.

Worthy listeners—you know that human language is an irreplaceable tool, not only for giving names to events but also for evaluating them. By filtering out that which is accidental, episodic, artificial, it absorbs that which is essential, characteristic, of full weight. Notice with what nicety the languages of civilized nations have distinguished two epochs in the development of Russia. The culture of the nobility brought into world currency such barbarisms as *Tsar*, *Cossack*, *pogrom*, *nagaika* [whip used by Cossacks]. You know these words and what they mean. The October Revolution introduced into the language of the world such words as *Bolshevik*, *Soviet*, *kolkhoz* [collective farm], *Gosplan*, *Piatiletka* [Five-Year Plan]. Here practical linguistics holds its historical supreme court!

The profoundest significance, but the hardest to submit to immediate measurement, of that great Revolution consists in the fact that it forms and tempers the character of the people. The conception of the Russian people as slow, passive, melancholy-mystical, is widely spread and not accidental. It has its roots in the past. But in Western countries up to the present time those far-reaching changes have not been sufficiently considered which have been introduced into the character of the people by the Revolution. Could it have been otherwise?

Every man with experience of life can recall the picture of some youth, that he has known, receptive, lyrical, all too susceptible, who later, all at once, under the influence of a powerful moral impetus, became hardened and unrecognizable. In the development of a whole nation, such moral transformations are wrought by the revolution.

The February insurrection against the autocracy, the struggle against the nobility, against the imperialist war, for peace, for land, for national equality, the October insurrection, the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, and of those parties which sought agreements with the bourgeoisie, three years of civil war on a front of 5,000 miles, the years of blockade, hunger, misery and epidemics, the years of tense economic reconstruction, of new difficulties and renunciations—these make a hard but a good school. A heavy hammer smashes glass, but forges steel. The hammer of the Revolution forged the steel of the people's character.

“Who will believe,” wrote a Tsarist general, Zalewski, with indignation, shortly after the upheaval, “that a porter or a watchman suddenly becomes a chief justice, a hospital attendant—the director of a hospital, a barber—an officeholder, a corporal—a commander-in-chief, a day

continued on page 6

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

- ☐ \$10/22 issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist* and *Black History and the Class Struggle*) international rates: \$25/22 issues—Airmail \$10/22 issues—Seamail
- ☐ \$2/6 introductory issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist*)
- ☐ \$2/4 issues of *Espartaco* (en español) (includes Spanish-language *Spartacist*)
- ☐ I would like to contribute \$_____ to the production of *Workers Vanguard*.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Apt. # _____

Phone (_____) _____ Email _____

1122

Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

October...

(continued from page 5)

worker—a mayor, a locksmith—the director of a factory?”

“Who will believe it?” They had to believe it. They could do nothing else but believe it, when the corporals defeated generals, when the mayor—the former day worker—broke the resistance of the old bureaucracy, the wagon-greaser put the transportation system in order, the locksmith as director put the industrial equipment into working condition. “Who will believe it?” Let them only try and not believe it.

For an explanation of the extraordinary persistence which the masses of the people of the Soviet Union are showing throughout the years of the Revolution, many foreign observers rely, in accord with ancient habit, on the “passivity” of the Russian character. The revolutionary masses endure their privations patiently but not passively. With their own hands they are creating a better future and they want to create it, at any cost. Let the class enemy only attempt to impose his will from the outside on these patient masses! No, he would do better not to try it!

The Revolution and Its Place in History

Let us now in closing attempt to ascertain the place of the October Revolution, not only in the history of Russia but in the history of the world. During the year 1917, in a period of eight months, two historical curves intersect. The February upheaval—that belated echo of the great struggles which had been carried out in past centuries on the territories of Holland, England, France, almost all of Continental Europe—takes its place in the series of bourgeois revolutions. The October Revolution proclaims and opens the domination of the proletariat. It was world capitalism that suffered its first great defeat on the territory of Russia. The chain broke at its weakest link. But it was the chain that broke, and not only the link.

Capitalism has outlived itself as a world system. It has ceased to fulfill its essential mission, the increase of human power and human wealth. Humanity cannot stand still at the level which it has reached. Only a powerful increase in productive force and a sound, planned, that is, Socialist organization of production and distribution can assure humanity—all humanity—of a decent standard of life and at the

same time give it the precious feeling of freedom with respect to its own economy. Freedom in two senses—first of all, man will no longer be compelled to devote the greater part of his life to physical labor. Second, he will no longer be dependent on the laws of the market, that is, on the blind and dark forces which have grown up behind his back. He will build up his economy freely, that is, according to a plan, with compass in hand. This time it is a question of subjecting the anatomy of society to the X-ray through and through, of disclosing all its secrets and subject-

approached the problems of human society. He began with religion, and passed on to politics. The Reformation represented the first victory of bourgeois individualism and rationalism in a domain which had been ruled by dead tradition. From the church, critical thought went on to the state. Born in the struggle with absolutism and the medieval estates, the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people and of the rights of man and the citizen grew stronger. Thus arose the system of parliamentarism. Critical thought penetrated into the domain of government administration. The political rationalism of

the needs of mankind. Only on this new social basis will man be able to stretch his weary limbs and—every man and every woman, not only a selected few—become a full citizen in the realm of thought.

But this is not yet the end of the road. No, it is only the beginning. Man calls himself the crown of creation. He has a certain right to that claim. But who has asserted that present-day man is the last and highest representative of the species *Homo sapiens*? No, physically as well as spiritually he is very far from perfection, prematurely born biologically, sick in mind and without new organic equilibrium.

It is true that humanity has more than once brought forth giants of thought and action, who tower over their contemporaries like summits in a chain of mountains. The human race has a right to be proud of its Aristotle, Shakespeare, Darwin, Beethoven, Goethe, Marx, Edison, and Lenin. But why are they so rare? Above all because, almost without exception, they came out of the upper and middle classes. Apart from rare exceptions, the sparks of genius in the suppressed depths of the people are choked before they can burst into flame. But also because the processes of creating, developing and educating a human being have been and remain essentially a matter of chance, not illuminated by theory and practice, not subjected to consciousness and will.

Anthropology, biology, physiology and psychology have accumulated mountains of material to raise up before mankind in their full scope the tasks of perfecting and developing body and spirit. Psychoanalysis, with the inspired hand of Sigmund Freud, has lifted the cover of the well which is poetically called the “soul.” And what has been revealed? Our conscious thought is only a small part of the work of the dark psychic forces. Learned divers descend to the bottom of the ocean and there take photographs of mysterious fishes. Human thought, descending to the bottom of its own psychic sources, must shed light on the most mysterious driving forces of the soul and subject them to reason and to will.

Once he has done with the anarchic forces of his own society, man will set to work on himself, in the pestle and the retort of the chemist. For the first time mankind will regard itself as raw material, or at best as a physical and psychic semi-finished product. Socialism will mean a leap from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom in that other sense too, that the present-day contradictory and disharmonious man will pave the way for a new and happier race. ■



Spartacist

ICL banner outside January 1992 Soviet officers conference in Moscow: “No to Capitalist Restoration! Yes to Gains of October!”

ing all its functions to the reason and the will of collective humanity. In this sense, Socialism must become a new step in the historical advance of mankind. Before our ancestor, who first armed himself with a stone axe, the whole of *nature* represented a conspiracy of secret and hostile forces. Since then, the natural sciences, hand in hand with practical technology, have illuminated nature down to its most secret depths. By means of electrical energy, the physicist passes judgment on the nucleus of the atom. The hour is not far when science will easily solve the task of the alchemists, and turn manure into gold and gold into manure. Where the demons and furies of nature once raged, now rules ever more courageously the industrial will of man.

But while he wrestled victoriously with nature, man built up his relations to other men blindly, almost like the bee or the ant. Belatedly and most undecidedly he

democracy was the highest achievement of the revolutionary bourgeoisie.

But between nature and the state stands economic life. Technology liberated man from the tyranny of the old elements—earth, water, fire and air—only to subject him to its own tyranny. Man ceased to be a slave to nature, to become a slave to the machine, and, still worse, a slave to supply and demand. The present world crisis testifies in especially tragic fashion how man, who dives to the bottom of the ocean, who rises up to the stratosphere, who converses on invisible waves with the Antipodes, how this proud and daring ruler of nature remains a slave to the blind forces of his own economy. The historical task of our epoch consists in replacing the uncontrolled play of the market by reasonable planning, in disciplining the forces of production, compelling them to work together in harmony and obediently serve

Democrats...

(continued from page 8)

Last month, the investigation into Russian collusion, headed by former FBI chief Robert Mueller, indicted Trump’s former campaign manager Paul Manafort and his underling Rick Gates on charges of money laundering, tax evasion and serving as unregistered agents of a foreign government. That government is the former Ukrainian regime of Viktor Yanukovich, which was overthrown in a fascist-spearheaded coup in February 2014. The coup was engineered by Obama’s White House, assisted by the European Union, with the aim of establishing a loyal client state on the border of Putin’s Russia. There is currently much salivating by the Democrats over Manafort’s indictment as evidence of Trump’s Russia connections. But none other than the brother of John Podesta, Hillary Clinton’s campaign manager, similarly lobbied on behalf of the Yanukovich government. Fearing further exposure, this Democratic Party “fixer” resigned his position as the head of the Podesta Group.

The Fraud of Bourgeois Democracy

The notion that the Oval Office is presently occupied by Putin’s puppet is little more than mudslinging by sore losers. At the same time, the current anti-Russia hys-

teria provides a glimpse of the workings of bourgeois democracy, which Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin succinctly described as “a paradise for the rich and a snare and deception for the exploited, for the poor.” Russia’s supposed impieties toward American “democracy” should be of no concern to the U.S. working class. Deceit, manipulation and hypocrisy are used by the capitalist rulers—represented by Democrats and Republicans alike—to maintain their system of wage slavery, black oppression and world domination. The ruled are meant to live in ignorance of the true workings of capitalist society; bourgeois democracy demands that the rulers have control of information, from education to the mass media. Above all, the capitalist exploiters have the armed forces of the capitalist state—its cops, prisons and military—to enforce their rule.

During the campaign, Clinton had the support of many generals, spies and other operatives of U.S. imperialism who didn’t like Trump’s isolationist rhetoric and worried about America’s image abroad under a bedlamite with a Twitter account. More recently, something called the “Alliance for Securing Democracy” was credited by the *New York Times* (27 September) for exposing Russian internet trolls who have used social media to plant “fake pages and ads, designed to look like the work of American activists” in order to “spread inflammatory messages during and since the presidential campaign.”



Simon Glenn-Gregg

Washington, D.C., bus shelter ad for Russian TV network RT.

In fact, this “Alliance” consists of former Democratic Party national security officials and Republican neocons whose lies paved the way for the invasion and devastation of Iraq. Today, they are concocting tales of Putin’s minions fomenting discontent in the U.S., particularly among

black people who are being shot down every day by U.S. imperialism’s army at home, the racist cops.

Witchhunters Take Aim at Black Lives Matter

According to the “intelligence-community witnesses,” Russia has “tried to sow unrest in the U.S. by inflaming protests such as Occupy Wall Street and the Black Lives Matter movement.” As the *Nation* (6 October) put it, “The evidence presented for this claim was that both movements were covered by the Russian state-owned television network RT.” (Of course, they were also covered by, among others, the British state-owned television network, the BBC.) To be “Russian-linked,” you just need to have a Russian IP address. To produce a “Russian-linked” ad about Black Lives Matter supposedly shows that Russia is sowing “political discord” and “creating chaos” in the U.S., as one CNN reporter claimed.

There is nothing like the specter of stirring up unrest on the plantation of racist American capitalism to get the rulers and their hired pens up in arms. In a country built on the backs of black slaves, and where the majority of black people remain subjugated at the bottom of society, it doesn’t take “Russian influence” for black people to know they’re in the gun sights of the killer cops. The allegations against RT are as ridiculous as they are sinister. From Occupy to Black Lives Matter and

Ruling-Class Vendetta Against Chelsea Manning Continues

In May, the courageous truth-teller Chelsea Manning was released from prison after being tortured by the Obama regime for seven years for exposing U.S. imperialist war crimes. We have defended Manning since the start of her ordeal and welcomed her release. For Obama, commuting her sentence in the dying days of his presidency was a cheap and cynical move to burnish his “legacy.” Half a year later, the vindictive American ruling class has made clear that it’s not done with her yet.

In September, Harvard University invited Manning to be a visiting fellow at its Kennedy School of Government and then rescinded the invitation the very next day. Manning was disinvited after CIA director Mike Pompeo, calling her an “American traitor,” cancelled an appearance on campus and former deputy CIA director Michael Morrell resigned his own fellowship in protest. Manning responded on Twitter: “This is what a military/police/intel state looks like the @cia determines what is and is not taught at Harvard.”

Indeed, the CIA, NSA, FBI and military are deeply intertwined with Harvard, the most prestigious think tank for U.S. imperialism and training ground for the children and trusted agents of the bourgeoisie. Harvard, like most of the country’s top universities, has a long history of educating, hiring and honoring Washington’s torturers and war criminals. When Harvard’s Institute of Politics at the Kennedy School opened its doors in 1966, its first honorary associate was Robert McNamara, secretary of defense under presidents Kennedy and Johnson. Other Harvard luminaries include Professor Louis Fieser (the inventor of napalm), Henry Kissinger (like McNamara, an architect of mass murder in Vietnam) and Professor Richard Herrnstein (co-author with Charles Murray of the racist tract *The Bell Curve*). The surprise about Manning’s brief fellowship was not that it was cancelled but that it was offered in the first place! *CIA, military off campus!*

Manning’s crime in the eyes of the capitalist rulers? In 2010, she leaked files that cast a spotlight on the war crimes of U.S. imperialism in Iraq and Afghanistan. The most well known of these is the graphic



Chelsea Manning at 2017 *New Yorker* festival.

aerial video, dubbed “Collateral Murder,” that shows a U.S. Apache helicopter gunship massacring at least twelve civilians in Baghdad in 2007, including two Reuters staffers, while the pilots gloated over the carnage.

Soon after Harvard disinvited Manning, the government of Canada, Washington’s junior imperialist partner to the north, barred her from entering that country, stating, “If committed in Canada, [Manning’s] offence would equate to...Treason.” On October 8, the liberal *New Yorker* magazine joined the post-prison vendetta against Manning during its annual festival in New York City. Manning’s fight for transgender people’s rights has earned her a huge following. She featured prominently in the festival program and the venue was filled with admirers.

New Yorker staff writer Larissa MacFarquhar, who conducted an interview with Manning, was tolerant of her as a transgender activist, but sought to reduce her exposures of U.S. imperialist barbarity to a question of “transparency in government.” The gloves really came off when MacFarquhar began channeling the military prosecutors at Manning’s kangaroo

court. She badgered Manning with implications that she had supposedly endangered lives by leaking a trove of war logs and diplomatic cables to Julian Assange.

Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, is still trapped in the Ecuadorean Embassy in London, where he sought asylum in 2012 after Swedish prosecutors demanded his extradition on bogus accusations of “rape”—in fact allegations of unprotected sex in what were by all accounts consensual relations. Despite the Swedish authorities dropping the case in May, London police have said they will arrest Assange for violating his bail if he leaves the embassy. The risk is high that Britain would extradite him to the U.S.

Liberals like MacFarquhar have long considered Assange dangerous because, unlike “legitimate” bourgeois mouthpieces like the *New York Times*, he refuses to redact the material WikiLeaks publishes. Democrats have come to despise Assange even more after WikiLeaks released a trove of emails last year—hacked by “the Russians,” so the story goes—from the Hillary Clinton presidential campaign, which supposedly helped Trump win the presidency.

Manning batted back the verbal barrage from MacFarquhar and gave as good as she got. When the journalist accused the former military intelligence analyst of releasing government files without knowing what was in them, Manning angrily objected: “I *did* know what was in them. I worked with this information every day.” Her interrogator persisted: “But the 250,000 documents, did you not fear that it might hurt someone?” Manning shot back: “Absolutely not.” Signaling to the audience that MacFarquhar was retailing the government frame-up against her, Manning retorted that the leaked files show “people dying and people getting killed and people suffering, and on a massive, incredible scale.”

Manning’s path to her courageous act of self-sacrifice was a long and winding one. Before joining the Army, Manning explained, she struggled with being transgender and even thought that joining the military might make her “not Trans.” Seeing the violence in Iraq on television, she decided to join up, hoping to “make a difference.” It was wishful thinking, she said,

but she was only 18. Manning was trained to do statistical data analysis, but the data became real people when she deployed to Iraq. She graphically described the horror, and the normality, of it all: “It was like drinking from a firehose,” a firehose of “death and destruction and mayhem just every single day.”

Elements of Manning’s personal history parallel those of former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden, who is in exile in Russia. Inspired by Manning, in 2013 Snowden released documents exposing the sweep and scope of the global electronic spying activities of the U.S. and its allies. Both Manning and Snowden started out as my-country-right-or-wrong patriots. Over time, each was compelled by conscience to risk everything by taking a stand to expose crimes routinely committed by the U.S. government. By unmasking the bourgeoisie’s everyday lies, intrigues and wanton slaughter, brave individuals like Manning, Snowden and Assange, while far from being revolutionaries, have done a great service to workers and the oppressed throughout the world. ***Hands off Assange! Drop all charges against Snowden!***

Manning has a keen appreciation of the stark social inequalities in the U.S. As MacFarquhar warmed her up with softballs before pressing her to admit to treason, Manning revealed that she is not enamored of the fact that nowadays there is so much focus on marriage equality. She asked rhetorically: how is marriage equality going to help homeless gay and transgender people? How was it supposed to help Manning herself when she was homeless on the streets of Chicago? A puzzled MacFarquhar asked: “What would have helped you in that situation?” Manning shot back: “***Housing!***”

Chelsea Manning is a fighter and a hero. Working people and the oppressed internationally are in her debt for revealing details of imperialist machinations. But, despite the revelations by Manning, Assange and Snowden, U.S. imperialism by its nature will continue to commit atrocities on a daily basis. The whole system of capitalist exploitation and war must be swept away through workers socialist revolution. ■

others, those protesters are being painted as dupes of a malicious Russian plot. The aim is to stifle dissent.

The Democrats play on the very real fears of the Trump administration’s unbridled racism, vicious reaction and cut-throat plundering of what meager social programs remain for workers and the poor. The liberals join the chorus, bleating, “this is not who we are.” But this *is* what America’s rulers are, whether represented by the Republicans or Democrats. The only difference is that the Democrats sometimes try to put some lipstick on the pig of racist U.S. capitalism. Now, in the name of the anti-Trump “resistance,” the billionaires of Silicon Valley are urged to censor any suspicious views; RT is being made to register as a “foreign agent.” The intelligence agencies who manufacture the lies for war abroad and against any perceived rebellion at home are promoted as the guardians of “democracy.” “Orwellian” doesn’t begin to capture it.

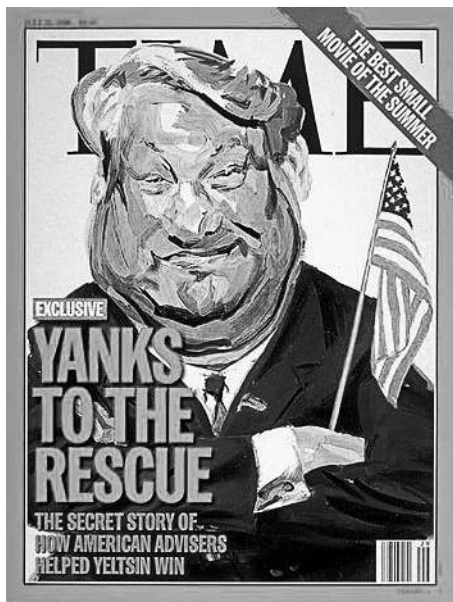
Liberal Neo-McCarthyism

Many of those who promote the claims of “Russia did it” portray capitalist Russia as a continuation of the former Soviet Union. The Democrats are reviving the battle cries of Cold War McCarthyism. Today, however, the purported threat is not “reds under the bed” but anyone with a Russian accent. Left unsaid is that Putin’s Russia is the product of the U.S.-backed-

and-bankrolled capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92 that destroyed the Soviet workers state. Counterrevolution had been the central aim of America’s rulers since the Bolshevik Party led the working class of the former tsarist empire to power in the 1917 Russian October Revolution. Despite the subsequent Stalinist betrayals of the revolutionary internationalism that animated the Bolsheviks, the Soviet Union remained a workers state, albeit bureaucratically degenerated. The existence of such a society not only meant great advances for its masses; it also acted as a counterweight to the ambitions of U.S. imperialism for world domination.

Following the destruction of the Soviet workers state, U.S. capitalists joined Russian oligarchs in stripping the assets of formerly collectivized industries and vast natural resources. Under the “shock therapy” prescriptions of the likes of then Harvard professor Jeffrey Sachs, much of the population was reduced to abject poverty. In 1996, Bill Clinton’s Democratic administration pulled out all the stops to secure the re-election of U.S. imperialism’s puppet Boris Yeltsin, including supplying advisers, disseminating “negative ads” against Yeltsin’s opponents and floating a large loan by the International Monetary Fund.

U.S. imperialism presently has no such cozy relationship with Putin, who has sought to carve out something of a more independent course than his sodden pre-



Election tampering anyone? July 1996 *Time* magazine highlights U.S. role in helping elect Boris Yeltsin.

decessor and has on occasion been a thorn in the side of the U.S. Russia is not imperialist but rather a regional power that inherited the nuclear arsenal of the Soviet Union. That Putin has a particular animus toward Hillary Clinton is hardly a secret. As Obama’s secretary of state, she went out of her way to threaten Russian interests. Insofar as Russia has had a hostile posture toward the U.S., it has largely

been a defensive one, in response to U.S. encroachments on its “sphere of influence.”

For his part, Trump has repeatedly expressed admiration for Putin as a strongman who lords it over the proletariat and oppressed peoples of Russia, and who brutally suppresses dissent. At the same time, as we wrote in “Anti-Russia Hysteria and Democrats’ Sour Grapes” (WV No. 1103, 13 January): “Trump is no less committed than the Cold Warriors and neocons—from Hillary Clinton to John McCain—to expanding, prosecuting and enforcing the dominance of U.S. imperialism. That is the real content of Trump’s promise to make America great again.” During Trump’s time in office the U.S. and its NATO allies carried out the biggest military exercises in East Europe since the Cold War.

The presidential elections revealed widespread contempt of the populace toward the Washington establishment. But, absent a working-class alternative, such sentiment can go in multiple directions, including reactionary ones. We fight to forge a multiracial, revolutionary workers party that can direct the frustrations of working people against the capitalist exploiters and imperialist plunderers. The purpose of the Spartacist League and the International Communist League is to build parties that uphold the traditions and intent of Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks to overthrow the imperialist order through a series of international socialist revolutions. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Putin on the Potomac?



Democrats Push Anti-Russia Hysteria

Democratic Senators and tech industry lawyers at Congressional hearing on internet ads, which Dems hold up as examples of Russia's supposedly diabolical influence.

Hillary Clinton's bid to be Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism was supposed to be a virtual coronation. Ever since she lost to the flagrantly racist, sexist real estate mogul Donald Trump, the Democratic Party and its media mouthpieces have been screaming foul. They have explained Clinton's defeat as the work of an army of Russian hackers and internet trolls whose aim is "to subvert democracy in the United States." Lurid tales of Kremlin gremlins began in July 2016 when WikiLeaks released tens of thousands of Democratic National Committee (DNC) emails exposing some of the wheeling, dealing and cor-

ruption of Clinton's presidential campaign. Amid the hoopla that the emails had supposedly been hacked by agents of capitalist Russia's president, Vladimir Putin, no one ever raised any doubts over their accuracy or authenticity for the simple reason that they were genuine.

Now, the machinations of Clinton and her campaign staff have been confirmed by no less an authority than longtime top Democratic Party operative Donna Brazile, who just published a book titled *Hacks: The Inside Story of the Break-ins and Breakdowns That Put Donald Trump in the White House*. Brazile was brought in

to head the DNC after the emails exposed her predecessor for plotting to get rid of Clinton's challenger, Bernie Sanders. In a *Politico* article (2 November) titled "Inside Hillary Clinton's Secret Takeover of the DNC," Brazile attests that Clinton effectively bought the DNC by paying off \$10 million of its debts and then proceeded to use "the party as a fund-raising clearinghouse."

Far from a shocking revelation, such financial chicanery is merely grease for the wheels of "American democracy," which is a fig leaf for the dictatorship of the capitalist exploiters. Brazile herself

was fired from CNN for feeding some of the network's planned questions to Clinton to prepare her for a primary debate with Sanders. As for Sanders, after being kicked to the curb by agents of the Clinton dynasty, this self-proclaimed leader of a supposed "political revolution against the billionaire class" abandoned his own supporters and campaigned for Clinton, Wall Street's candidate. Nonetheless, even as Brazile continues her cries against Russian hackers, both she and Sanders have been targeted as possible Kremlin stooges by the liberal cabal of witchhunters.

For all the claims of Russian "influence," there has been zilch in terms of proof. The same people who brought you the "weapons of mass destruction" lies are today telling you to take their word for it. In fact, if there's one thing that without doubt robbed Clinton of her crown, it's the U.S. Constitution. Although she won the popular vote, she lost the Electoral College—that deeply anti-democratic institution designed to protect against the "unwashed masses," which ensured the dominance of the slavocracy in the early decades of the republic.

Spying, sowing disinformation, hacking and other "dirty tricks" are the stock in trade of all capitalist governments against their rivals. But when it comes to intervening in other countries' internal affairs—not just "influencing" elections but carrying out bloody coups, outright invasions and "regime change"—none can hold a candle to America's rulers. Behind the Democratic Party's dark tales of Russian operatives stand the very intelligence agencies that have concocted the lies and provided the murderous services to overthrow foreign governments. These include, among others, Iran (1953), Guatemala (1954), Chile (1973) and, more recently, the attempted coup against the late Hugo Chávez in Venezuela (2002) and the invasion of Iraq (2003). In January, a report by the CIA, FBI and NSA was seized on as the gold standard of proof of Russian interference in the 2016 elections. Yet by the admission of its authors, the report offered not one shred of evidence; or as they put it in "intelligence" speak: "Judgments are not intended to imply that we have proof that shows something to be a fact!"

continued on page 6

Victory to the Henkel Strike!

NOVEMBER 10—For nearly four weeks, more than 80 members of the International Association of Machinists Local 1584 have been on strike in Bay Point against the Henkel Corporation, a subsidiary of a Germany-based conglomerate, which makes adhesives chiefly for the aerospace industry. The production workers walked out on October 16 when contract negotiations broke down over a key union demand—an end to the criminally unsafe conditions at the plant.

In 2013, David Eleidjian, a temporary contract worker, was crushed to death at the plant after being pulled into a chemical mixing machine with an exposed shaft spinning at high speed. The company knew the machine was unsafe. It catches workers so often that employees refer to getting caught in it as "taking a ride." This horrific industrial murder helped spur the organization of Local 1584. A slap-on-the-wrist \$200,000 fine by government regulators did little to improve safety; Henkel was fined for ten more violations in 2016-17.

A number of workers were injured on the job in the months before the strike, including one who suffered third-degree

Bay Point, California

burns over a third of his body. The bosses' disregard for workers' lives is in the nature of the capitalist system of production for profit. What is needed is a union safety committee with the power to shut down unsafe production.

Picketers told WV supporters of a pattern of racist harassment at the plant, a vicious attempt to divide the multiracial workforce. One white supervisor is notorious for harassing and firing black workers. On November 1, Henkel vindictively terminated the strikers' health care benefits. Management didn't even show up on November 5 for a meeting with a federal mediator, an agent of the capitalist state in whom workers should place no trust. Henkel is out to bust the union.

The strikers remain solid. However, workers in other departments, who are not unionized, have been crossing the picket lines. Using supervisors and scabs, the company is getting some product out, although it is a month behind on orders. Scab products should be "hot-cargoed"—not handled by union workers. The key

to victory is shutting the plant down tight to stop the flow of profits. Unions across the Bay Area must support the strike by helping to build mass picket lines that no one crosses!

Workers at the nearby Richmond and Martinez refineries, organized in Local 5 of the United Steelworkers (incorporating the former Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union), have themselves fought for years against notoriously hazardous conditions. Next door in Pittsburg is the unionized USS-POSCO steel plant. The Steelworkers, together with Teamster truckers and International Longshore and Warehouse Union dockworkers at the Port of Oakland, have strategic power. A victory for Local 1584 could set the stage for the unionization of the entire Henkel workforce, and strengthen every union in the area.

The top union leaders in this country have long rejected the class-struggle methods that built the industrial unions in the organizing battles of the 1930s and '40s. Instead, they put their faith in one or the other of the Wall Street parties—the Democrats and Republicans—that represent the interests of the



WV Photo

October 25: Striking Henkel workers on picket line.

owners of the factories, transportation, banks, etc. The union bureaucracy's class-collaborationist program has led to decades of defeats. The labor movement must rely on its own strength, independent of the political representatives of the bosses.