

No Support to Democrats! For a Workers Party!

Down With Racist Anti-Immigrant Drive!



Reuters

Above: Democratic Senator Dick Durbin meets with Trump at White House to negotiate “immigration reform,” January 9. Right: Homeland Security agent arrests 7-Eleven worker in New York City, January 10, part of nationwide anti-immigrant raids.



ZUMA

At a recent horse trading session on U.S. immigration policy, Donald Trump, referring to El Salvador, Haiti and Africa, told a small group of Democratic and Republican Senators: “Why are we having all these people from shithole countries come here?” Trump’s racist diatribes are no surprise. Contrary to what Democratic politicians have argued, they are simply an unvarnished expression of the “values” of American capitalism and what this country metes out to workers and the oppressed around the globe: economic subjugation, imperialist war and occupation.

Notwithstanding their denunciations, Democrats offered to give Trump funding for his racist border wall with Mexico in exchange for extending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA). Trump’s repeal of DACA, which granted a temporary reprieve to some 800,000 undocumented immigrants brought into this country as children, threatens “Dreamers” with deportation and loss of their livelihoods and those of the extended families they financially support. Under pressure from anti-immigrant hardliners and eager to play to his racist, nativist base, which includes outright fascists, Trump blew up the deal with the Democrats. What started out as haggling over DACA led to the spectacle of a government shutdown.

The Trump administration had already revoked Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for hundreds of thousands of refugees with provisional visas to live and work in the U.S. In addition to about 1,000 Sudanese, 5,000 Nicaraguans and 60,000 Haitians who lost their TPS at the end of last year, some 250,000 people

from El Salvador had their TPS revoked earlier this month. Many of these immigrants have built their lives and worked in the U.S. for years, if not decades. Now they could lose everything, including being separated from their U.S.-born children.

The government’s declaration of war on those not born in the U.S. has stoked fear and terror among immigrant communities across the country. Many undocumented people avoid visiting a hospital

inatory immigration laws and regulations, we say: **No deportations! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!**

The attacks on immigrants are also a threat aimed at black people. Trump’s unleashing of I.C.E. and border patrol agents is part of a general “law and order” drive to further embolden the police. As many black people know all too well, this means more deadly terror directed at them. American capitalism, founded

families. While the rate of arrests has gone up under Trump by 40 percent, he still has a long way to go to break Obama’s record of more than 2.5 million deportations. It was Obama who in September 2016 closed the border to Haitians initially allowed to enter the country in the aftermath of the devastating 2010 earthquake. Obama’s DACA program, which had no path to citizenship, laid the basis for potentially hundreds of thousands of deportations. Applicants had to give all their information to the government: fingerprints, photographs, bank accounts, etc. Today, the Trump administration has all the data it needs to round them up.

Immigrants are not just victims but form a key and vibrant component of the U.S. working class. The foreign-born often bring with them a keen understanding of the depredations of U.S. imperialism in their homelands, as well as experience in hard-fought class battles. Indeed, the tiny handful of union victories over the last couple of decades was in the main delivered by predominantly immigrant labor in the service and meatpacking industries. The SEIU service workers and other unions with heavily immigrant membership have joined in protests against Trump’s anti-immigrant crusade. They have even succeeded in halting the immediate deportation of some union members or their families (see, for example, “NYC: Union Defends Worker Against Deportation,” WV No. 1109, 7 April 2017).

The bosses use anti-immigrant chauvinism and anti-black racism to divide and rule their wage slaves. The aim is to drive down wages and benefits and degrade working conditions for **all** workers—black and white, native-born and immigrant. The integrated unions should be in the forefront of the defense of immigrant workers. However, the American labor movement is crippled by a union misleadership committed to the defense

continued on page 2



Pacific Press

Immigrant rights protesters at NYC’s Times Square denounce Trump administration’s decision to end protected status for Haitians and other immigrants, January 15.

for fear of being deported. Others have been victims of workplace raids, such as the ones carried out by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) on dozens of 7-Eleven stores across the country. In several cities, I.C.E. agents have also targeted outspoken immigrant-rights activists, such as Trinidad-born Ravi Ragbir, who was detained for deportation in New York City on January 11. As Marxists who oppose all racist, nationally discrim-

on chattel slavery, is rooted in the forcible segregation of the majority of the black population at the bottom of society. Trump’s racist “shithole” comments were directed as much at black people as they were at immigrants.

The president’s open bigotry gives the Democratic Party a cheap opportunity to grandstand. In fact, Trump inherited a well-oiled machine and a set of **bipartisan** laws to crack down on immigrants and their



7 25274 81030 17

Immigration...

(continued from page 1)

of American capitalism. The “American jobs for American workers” protectionism pushed by the AFL-CIO tops helps fan the flames of anti-immigrant bigotry.

The support of the trade-union bureaucracy to the Democratic Party serves to shackle working people, including union activists seeking to fight Trump reaction, to this other party of racist U.S. capitalism. The result of this class collaboration has been to accelerate a race to the bottom that has decimated the labor movement. To get the unions back on their feet will take some hard labor battles based on the understanding that the interests of the American workers are *counterposed* to those of their bosses. The unions need new, class-struggle leadership, which will be forged as part of the struggle to build a multiracial workers party committed to the fight for socialist revolution. Such a party would link defense of immigrants to the struggle for black freedom, which is central to the struggle for the emancipation of labor in this country.

Imperialism Devastates the World

The driving force behind the desperate efforts of so many people to get into the U.S. is the imperialist subjugation of the neoco-



Reuters

Port-au-Prince: Occupying U.S. troops brutalize Haitian man, enforce racist “law and order” in wake of devastating January 2010 earthquake.

lonial world. The miserable conditions of Haiti, countries in Africa and Latin America, and all the other places on Trump’s “shithole” list are the direct product of colonialism and capitalist imperialism. In this epoch of capitalist decay, marked by the dominance of finance capital, the imperialist powers in North America, West Europe and Japan compete to redivide the globe in a race for markets, raw materials and cheap labor. The scramble to leech the greatest profits possible through the exploitation of working people is the root cause of wars of imperialist plunder and of

the miserable conditions in which the mass of the world’s population lives.

The poverty and religious and ethnic bloodletting in Africa are a direct legacy of the colonial carve-up of that continent by the European powers. As for Haiti, ever since it was founded as a black republic in 1804—following a great slave rebellion that defeated the French colonial masters—it has been bled dry by the U.S. and France’s rulers, who extracted millions in “reparations” as retribution for its freedom. Shortly after the emergence of American imperialism at the end of the 19th century, U.S. troops invaded the country, occupying it from 1915 to 1934. Since then, Haiti has been repeatedly invaded by the U.S. and starved through embargoes.

El Salvador is another victim of the U.S. rulers, who have long considered all of Latin America their “backyard.” In the 1980s, the U.S. financed, trained and armed murderous death squad regimes in Central America, which targeted leftists, trade-union and peasant leaders and others. These dirty wars were part of the imperialist Cold War II drive for the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state and for rolling back the gains of the Cuban Revolution, with Washington viewing leftist insurgents as Soviet and Cuban proxies. From these wars to increased militarization in the name of the “war on drugs” and the economic ruination brought about by U.S.-imposed “free trade” agreements, the social fabric of El Salvador and other Central American countries has been ripped apart.

For a Workers America!

The current “debate” on immigration expresses a division within the U.S. ruling class. On one side are outright ideological anti-immigrant bigots, represented by Trump and many right-wing Republicans. On the other are those capitalists who rely on immigrant labor. These include the

agribusiness bosses, who brutally exploit immigrants from Mexico and Central America. Similarly, technology companies like Apple and Google need highly skilled programmers and engineers from India and elsewhere. It is their bottom line, not benevolence, that has Silicon Valley and major corporations rallying behind programs like DACA, whose recipients represent a wide range of social backgrounds—from college students and low-wage service workers to those in relatively well-paying tech jobs.

Writ large, capitalist immigration policy is driven by the ebbs and flows of the economy—i.e., the need for labor at any given time. In the U.S., these policies have always been stamped with raw racism and bigotry, including the anti-Irish discrimination of the mid 19th century; the violence against Chinese people brought in to build the railroads; the hostility toward émigrés from eastern and southern Europe, including Jews. The Immigration Act of 1924 established a numerical quota system that allowed greater numbers of immigrants from northern Europe while restricting immigration from southern and eastern Europe and all but barring people from Africa and Asia.

It was only in the 1960s that immigration was (inadvertently) expanded to include people from these regions. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, signed into law by Democrat Lyndon B. Johnson, gave priority to those immigrants who had familial ties in the U.S. The purpose of the emphasis on family unification was to preserve the influx of whites into the U.S., as most immigrants at the time were from Europe. In fact, the opposite took place. Fewer Europeans moved to the U.S., while non-Europeans were able to bring in family members from their home countries. By 2010, nine out of every ten immigrants were from outside Europe. The Democrats’ recent proposal to save DACA included curbs on family-based migration, in line with Trump’s racist rant about “horrible chain migration.”

Defense of immigrant rights is vital for the unity and integrity of the multiracial working class against its capitalist exploiters. Our aim is to win the working class to the understanding that it must oppose the whole capitalist system, including U.S. imperialist depredations abroad. It is only by seizing the productive wealth of society and building a new order of material abundance and social equality that the working class can lay the basis to put an end to poverty, joblessness and other miseries produced by the capitalist profit system. The Spartacist League is committed to building a revolutionary workers party—one that is 70 percent black, Latino and other minorities—that will champion all the exploited and oppressed in the fight for a workers America. ■



TROTSKY

On the Need for a Workers Party

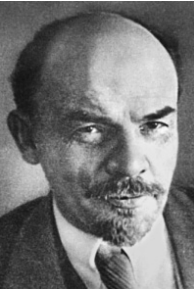
This January marks the anniversary of the 1938 founding conference of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), which was the U.S. section of Leon Trotsky’s Fourth International. We reprint below excerpts from the SWP’s Declaration of Principles on the need for a Leninist vanguard party to lead the proletariat in the fight for socialist revolution. In the early 1960s, the founding cadres of the Spartacist League fought within the SWP to uphold this understanding. They were bureau-

cratically expelled for opposing the SWP’s deepening capitulation to non-working-class political forces—from Fidel Castro’s petty-bourgeois guerrilla fighters in Cuba to the misleaders of the black struggle in the U.S., particularly black nationalists. Today, the program of the International Communist League, including the fight to reforge the Fourth International, represents the Marxist continuity of the revolutionary SWP.

The working class, under capitalism and in the initial stages of the socialist revolution, is neither economically nor socially nor ideologically homogeneous. It is united in terms of fundamental historical class interest, and by the urgent needs of the daily class struggle. However, it still remains divided by different income levels and working conditions, by religion, nationality, culture, sex, age. Through the perverting influence of capitalist oppression and propaganda, it is further divided by conflicting ideologies, and weakened by the low cultural and educational level of many of its members. There are, moreover, the divisions between various sections of the working class and its potential allies in the revolutionary struggle. For these reasons, the working class cannot, as a whole or spontaneously, directly plan and guide its own struggle for power. For this, a directing staff, a conscious vanguard, arising out of the ranks of the proletariat and based upon it, participating actively in the day-by-day struggles of the workers and in all progressive struggles, and planning clear-sightedly the broader strategy of the longer-term struggle for state power and socialism, is indispensable. This staff and vanguard constitutes the revolutionary party....

The program of the revolutionary party rests upon the great principles of revolutionary Marxism expounded by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky, and representing the summation of experience of the working class in its struggle for power. These principles have been verified in particular in the experiences of the last world war and by the victory of the Russian proletarian revolution. They have been concretized in the basic documents of the first four congresses of the Communist International and the fundamental programmatic documents put forward by the movement for the Fourth International in the past fourteen years. The SWP stands upon the main line of principle developed in these documents.

—“Declaration of Principles,” printed in *The Founding of the Socialist Workers Party* (Monad Press, 1982)



LENIN

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, Jon Brule, Paul Cone, Michael Davissou, 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 January 23.

No. 1126

26 January 2018

32nd Annual PDC Holiday Appeal Fundraisers

Free All Class-War Prisoners! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

NEW YORK CITY

Saturday, January 27

3 to 6 p.m.

St. Mark’s Church in the Bowery Parish Hall, 131 E. 10th St. (entrance on 11th St., near 2nd Ave.)

Information: (212) 406-4252

Tickets: \$10 • students/unemployed \$5

(212) 406-4252 • partisandefense@earthlink.net • partisandefense.org

CHICAGO

Sunday, January 28

3 to 7 p.m.

U.E. Hall, 37 S. Ashland (at Monroe)

Information: (312) 563-0442

Tickets: \$5 in advance • \$10 at the door

Catalonia: Neo-Francoist Offensive

National Liberation Struggle at Impasse

We print below a translation of a January supplement issued by our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México.

“The desire of a ruling nation to maintain the *status quo* frequently dresses up as a superiority to ‘nationalism,’ just as the desire of a victorious nation to hang on to its booty easily takes the form of pacifism.”

—Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution* (1932)

The chauvinists who rule from Madrid and their hacks spare no ink condemning Catalan nationalism as “anachronistic,” “reactionary” and “xenophobic.” At the same time, they humiliate the oppressed Catalan nation and stomp on its rights

ESPARTACO

in the name of the unity of Spain—that is, the supremacy of Castile in its small prison house of peoples.

Since the end of last October the central Spanish government, applying Article 155 of the Constitution through an occupation force of thousands of police, has taken control of Catalonia, dissolved the Generalitat (the Catalan legislature and executive council), and ordered that elections be held in Catalonia (which took place on December 21). The government also imprisoned several Catalan officials—including Vice President Oriol Junqueras and other pro-independence deputies and activists (some for the “crime” of “hatred”...of the police!). One Guardia Civil unit—led by a colonel who is a convicted torturer of Basque nationalists, pardoned by then-president José María Aznar at the end of the 1990s—is still searching “door-to-door” for Catalans who might have “assaulted” Spanish police on October 1 [the day of the Catalan independence referendum]. Catalan president Carles Puigdemont, who has an arrest warrant hanging over him, had to go into exile in Belgium. Spanish [Castilian] has, in practice, been reimposed as the only official language of the local government. Francisco Franco must be smiling from hell.

In this offensive, the ruling Popular Party (PP) had the support not only of its appendage Ciudadanos [right-wing Citizens party], but also the social democrats of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) and the Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya (PSC). This coup was the Spanish rulers’ response to the independence referendum last October 1 and the subsequent unilateral declaration of independence by the Catalan Generalitat. The Spanish nationalist onslaught also sends a message to Basques and Galicians of what they can expect if they fight for their liberation.

As irreconcilable opponents of all forms of exploitation and oppression and as fighters for workers power, we Spartacists are for the independence of Catalonia and Euskal Herria (the Basque Country), nations that extend to the north of the Pyrenees and are oppressed by Spain as well as France. We are for the right of independence for Galicia and against the continuation of the artificial and monarchist Spanish state: *For class struggle against the Spanish prison house of peoples! Down with the monarchy! For workers republics!* We call for the immediate release of all *independentistes* and for dropping all charges against them, as well as for freedom for all the Basque nationalists locked up in the dungeons of Spain and France. We are also for the unconditional withdrawal of Spain from its enclaves in Morocco, Ceuta and Mel-



Barcelona rally calls for release of jailed Catalan independence leaders Jordi Sánchez and Jordi Cuixart, January 16.

illa, relics of the now very distant colonial “glory” of Spain.

For a Class-Struggle Road to Independence!

Through these elections, [Spanish prime minister Mariano] Rajoy and his henchmen hoped to rid themselves of the *independentistes* and impose a Spanish-nationalist government in Catalonia. The elections backfired on them: the Catalan pro-independence parties got more than 47 percent of the vote and again achieved an absolute majority in the *Parlament*. The PP got little more than 4 percent and three deputies. But, as we recently explained, the Spanish state repression has made it clear that there is no hope of making Catalan independence a reality in the near future (see “Spain Strangles Catalonia,” WV No. 1121, 3 November). Independence won’t come from parliamentary agreements among the bourgeois *independentistes*. Madrid is using every judicial and other means to prevent even the formation of an autonomous government within the Spanish framework that isn’t made up of openly

Spanish-nationalist parties. Catalonia has nothing resembling its own state, most of all armed forces that can resist the Castilian onslaught. The Catalan bourgeoisie has more than demonstrated its powerlessness, and now seeks a pact with Madrid to return to some version of the status quo.

Madrid won’t hold back on the use of brute force to prevent the independence of Catalonia, which would furthermore give a great impulse to the fight for national liberation in Euskal Herria and Galicia. And the Spanish rulers have the firm support of France as well as the imperialist European Union (EU), given that the dismemberment of Spain would threaten the implosion of this conglomerate. One of the principal functions of the EU is precisely to trample the national sovereignty of the poorest European countries for the benefit of the imperialists, mainly Germany and France.

There is a force capable of making national liberation a reality, defeating all these enemies of Catalonia’s freedom: it is the working class, through the mobilization of its enormous social power.



Barcelona: Spanish police mobilize to suppress Catalan independence referendum, terrorize voters, October 1.

However, the Catalan proletariat has not shown meaningful signs of independent struggle, and is instead divided between the [Spanish] chauvinists and the [Catalan] bourgeois nationalists.

Ciutadans: Neo-Francoist Spare Tire

Although the antiquated heirs of El Generalísimo suffered a sound electoral defeat, their apprentices [Ciutadanos], known in Catalonia as Ciutadans (C’s), received the most votes, getting 25 percent, mainly from Barcelona and its working-class suburbs, formerly dominated by the PSC. The fact that a significant part of the Catalan working class supports the bourgeois-chauvinist C’s is testimony to the betrayals of the PSOE-PSC, pillars of the Spanish capitalist order and loyal subjects of the king (on the throne thanks to the work and grace of Franco).

The working-class vote for C’s does not change in the slightest our position for independence of Catalonia. On the one hand, this vote reflects the fear, propagated by Madrid, that independence would bring with it massive closings of companies in Catalonia. On the other hand, it reflects that a good part of the Catalan working class has historically been formed by immigrants from other parts of Spain, where—in large part thanks to decades of efforts by the treacherous social democrats and Stalinists—anti-Catalan chauvinism is very entrenched in the proletariat.

Lenin forged the Bolshevik Party in the struggle against Great Russian chauvinism and for national liberation struggles in the tsarist prison house of peoples as motor forces for socialist revolution. In Ukraine, the cities—where the working class was concentrated—were majority Russian-speaking, small islands in a Ukrainian sea. After the October Revolution, in the midst of the Civil War, many Russian-speaking workers and even Bolsheviks were opposed to independence for Soviet Ukraine. Lenin wrote:

“We Great-Russian Communists must repress with the utmost severity the slightest manifestation in our midst of Great-Russian nationalism, for such manifestations, which are a betrayal of communism in general, cause the gravest harm by dividing us from our Ukrainian comrades and thus playing into the hands of [counterrevolutionary general] Denikin and his regime.”

—“Letter to the Workers and Peasants of the Ukraine Apropos of the Victories Over Denikin,” December 1919

What C’s rise in Catalonia underlines is the need for an uncompromising struggle against the oppression of national minorities in the entire Spanish state, an oppression that keeps the proletariat divided. Castilian chauvinism acts as an ideological glue to bind the working class to its capitalist rulers: it’s in the interest of the proletariat of all of Spain to fight for the independence of Catalonia and Euskal Herria and for the right of self-determination for Galicia, as an integral part of the struggle for its own social emancipation.

No Support to the Catalan Bourgeoisie!

Our revolutionary program is based on the political independence of the workers movement. We were for a “yes” vote in the October 1 referendum, an elementary application of our line for Catalan independence, but we didn’t support any of the competing forces in the recent elections.

continued on page 7

The Bankruptcy of Liberal Economists

This part concludes the article, Part One of which appeared in WV No. 1125 (12 January).

Economist Marc Levinson in *An Extraordinary Time* and his more liberal counterpart Robert J. Gordon in *The Rise and Fall of American Growth* both address the slowdown in the U.S. growth rate since the 1970s. Levinson at least recognizes that the slowdown was rooted in a decline in investment, although he provides no explanation for that decline. Gordon provides an explanation that is more apologetic for the capitalist system and even more pessimistic regarding future prospects.

Gordon's implicit premise is that all progressive technological innovations—in the spheres of both production and consumer goods—have been and will be transformed

PART TWO

into new, widely marketed (that is, generally affordable) commodities, although in some cases with a lengthy time lag. To paraphrase Voltaire's parody of the German philosopher Gottfried Leibniz, with regard to technological innovation Gordon views American capitalism as the best of all possible worlds. If the possibilities for growth have diminished in recent decades, it is because the intrinsic character of technological innovations has changed in a way that diminishes their effect on productivity.

The structure of Gordon's historical study of U.S. economic growth is based on the concept of three successive industrial revolutions. The first industrial revolution (IR #1) derived from inventions developed between 1770 and 1820, primarily the steam engine and its offshoots—railroads, steamships and the shift from wood to iron and steel. The second industrial revolution (IR #2) derived from technology developed in the late 19th century, particularly electricity and the internal combustion engine. The third industrial revolution (IR #3), beginning in the 1960s, was centered on new information and communication technology (ICT), such as computers and smartphones.

According to Gordon, the root cause of the slowdown in U.S. economic growth in recent decades was the diminishing effects of the second industrial revolution and the insufficient potency of the third:

"This decline in productivity growth by almost half reflects the ebbing tide of the

By Joseph Seymour and Bruce André



Reuters

GM's long-abandoned Fisher Body plant in Detroit. Motor City was looted and abandoned in the service of the capitalists' profit drive.

productivity stimulus provided by the great inventions of IR #2. Its successor, the ICT-oriented IR #3, was sufficiently potent to cause a revival in the productivity growth trend to an average of 2.05 percent during the decade 1995-2004. But the power of ICT-related innovations to boost productivity growth petered out after 2004."

Gordon never considers the possibility that some progressive technological innovations might not be transformed into widely marketed commodities because it is *not profitable* to do so. Later we will address his insistence that computerization and new digital technologies in general cannot significantly increase labor productivity in the future. In fact, he maintains that these technologies have pretty much exhausted their potential.

Here we will consider Gordon's implicit assumption that all new, widely marketed commodities were more efficient than those

they replaced and improved the living standards of the populace. In particular, let's consider the partial replacement of electrified streetcars and subway and elevated trains by the automobile, which began between 1910 and 1930. Gordon analyzes the transition from one means of personal transportation to another in some detail. However, he does not attempt to measure their comparative techno-economic efficiency. Did electrified subways and elevated trains expend greater or lesser economic resources per passenger mile than Model T Fords? And if lesser, wherein lay the advantages of the automobile?

Gordon does acknowledge that the ascendancy of the automobile was not just the result of the workings of "free market" capitalism. Government policy was a very important causal factor:

"Government policies encouraged urban sprawl and undermined the financial viability of urban transit and passenger railroads. Even before World War II, public policy was skewed in favor of the automobile by building streets and highways with public funds while leaving urban transit and interurban electric railways to operate as self-sufficient private companies. Many of the early roads were built by issuing bonds on which the interest was paid by local property taxes, so the automobile owner and transit rider paid equally to build a road system that made the automobile ever more attractive than transit."

However, Gordon offers no judgment on whether government policies that favored automobile travel at the expense of public mass transit were economically rational and socially beneficial. Nor does he address *why* state and local governments pursued auto-friendly policies. The answer, of course, is primarily rooted in the capitalist drive for profits: The bourgeois politicians involved were beholden to the owners of the big car companies, like

Henry Ford and Alfred P. Sloan of General Motors, and also the rubber and oil companies that provided tires and gasoline.

Class Struggle and a Shorter Workweek

Gordon states: "This book is about not just the standard of living from the viewpoint of the consumer, but also the quality of working conditions both outside and inside the home." In keeping with his main theme, that the American people experienced a qualitative improvement in everyday conditions of life during the first half of the 20th century, Gordon cites the reduction in the average workweek from 60 hours at the turn of the century to 41 hours by 1950. But his liberal worldview blinds him to both the fundamental cause of that important change in the lives of working people and the inherent limitation of its impact on their quality of life.

According to Gordon, the decrease in the average workweek resulted from an interest shared by business owners and their workers in having a rested and healthy workforce:

"Interpretations of the movement for shorter hours center on the widespread belief on the part of both firms and labor leaders that a reduction in hours would improve work performance and increase production. Higher productivity and higher real wages made possible a gradual reduction of hours of work, for the onerous demands of sixty- and seventy-two-hour work weeks had created an exhausted male working class."

To back up his view, Gordon cites legislation passed during the Progressive Era in the early 20th century and the New Deal in the 1930s.

In fact, the 40-hour workweek was won through decades of hard-fought and often bloody class battles by the workers movement. Agitation by the nascent industrial working class for the eight-hour day and for unions led to the Great Rail Strike of 1877, which was brutally suppressed by the Army. In the 1886 Haymarket massacre, Chicago police attacked workers rallying for the eight-hour day and arrested eight anarchist labor organizers who were subsequently framed up and imprisoned or executed. In the 1937 "Little Steel" strike, whose demands included a 40-hour week, police killed ten workers near the gates of Republic Steel in South Chicago in what became known as the "Memorial Day Massacre."

Today, after decades of one-sided class warfare by the bourgeoisie and givebacks by the hidebound trade-union bureaucracy, the 40-hour workweek has been substantially eroded. The average workweek for full-time U.S. workers has risen to about 47 hours, nearly a full extra eight-hour day per week. About one in five full-time workers toil 60 or more hours a week, while millions are unemployed or forced to work part-time.

Workers need to fight for a shorter workweek with no loss in pay, linking the fight for decent working conditions to the struggle for jobs for all. A 30-hour workweek at 40 hours' pay, with the available work divided among everyone, would go a long way toward addressing both unemployment and the serious safety problems resulting from fatigue and understaffing.

The capitalists would, of course, reply that such demands are not practical—at least, not if they are to maintain their



Ullstein

"Memorial Day Massacre": Cops attack "Little Steel" strikers, killing ten in Chicago, 1937. Steel workers were demanding higher wages and a 40-hour week.

obscene wealth. Indeed, the felt needs of the working class run right up against the inability of the capitalist system to satisfy them. The solution will not be found in the struggle, however necessary, by workers for a slightly bigger share of society’s wealth against a capitalist ruling class determined to maximize its profits. The goal must be a wholly different type of society, a workers America where the productive wealth has been ripped out of the hands of the tiny capitalist elite and put at the disposal of the vast majority. Such a society can be achieved only when the working class, led by a revolutionary party, overthrows capitalist class rule through a socialist revolution and establishes a workers government.

On Labor and the Quality of Life

Like the class battles that won the 40-hour week, the steady erosion of this historic gain for labor since the late 1970s is for Gordon a closed book. Yet even if we accept his focus on the first half of the 20th century, when the workweek was reduced from 60 to 40 hours, this gain actually constituted something less than a qualitative change in the lives of American working people. While deploring growing income inequality in the U.S. in recent decades, Gordon does not address or even recognize a more fundamental inequality in all capitalist societies in all times: between the vast majority who have to perform what Marx called “alienated labor” to secure the means of subsistence for themselves and their families and the privileged few who can engage in creative, satisfying work.

In the preface to *The Rise and Fall of American Growth*, Gordon recounts that his interest in the changing rates of economic growth and labor productivity over the course of U.S. history goes back to his days as a graduate student in economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the mid 1960s. The research for this book was undertaken to satisfy his intellectual curiosity, not because he had to do so to earn a living. But very few people have the luxury of working to satisfy their intellectual curiosity or express their creative impulses.

Consider, for example, the employees of Princeton University Press, who transformed Gordon’s manuscript into the printed pages of a book. True, they use technology that is radically different from that used by their predecessors in the 1920s, who set type for books by prominent academic economists of the time like Irving Fisher and Wesley C. Mitchell. And they work in more comfortable facilities. Nonetheless, they do the same kind of work for the same personal reason, to earn a livelihood.

Reading Gordon’s book, one would conclude that the 40-hour workweek and 11-plus-month work year, as in the U.S., is the highest possible level of organized society with regard to the necessary labor time expended by its members. However, in a planned socialist economy it would be possible, through a progressive, self-reinforcing increase in labor productivity, to radically reduce the total labor time necessary to produce both the means of production and articles of consump-

Ford’s Willow Run bomber plant in Michigan, built during Second World War. Government financing of wartime production propelled boom in industrial growth.



tion. Within no more than a few generations, people would only be working, say, 20 hours a week and six months a year. Everyone would then have both the available time and access to material and cultural resources to acquire the scientific and technological knowledge that is now the province of a privileged elite. Projecting a future communist society, Marx wrote more than a century and a half ago:

“Free time—which is both leisure and time for higher activity—has naturally transformed its possessor into another subject; and it is then as this other subject that he enters into the immediate production process. This process is simultaneously discipline, with respect to the developing human being, and application, experimental science, material creative and self-objectifying science, with respect to the developed man, whose mind is the repository of the accumulated knowledge of society.”
—“Outlines of the Critique of Political Economy” (1857-58)

In a future communist society, there would be a vast expansion of the number of people capable of developing technological innovations on the order of Gordon’s heroes of the past, like Thomas Edison, Karl Benz (inventor of the automobile) and Guglielmo Marconi (a developer of the radio).

World War II: An Instance of State Capitalism

For Marxists, the most valuable part of Gordon’s book is his analysis of the “great leap forward” in labor productivity that occurred during the Second World War (1939-45) and carried into the first few decades of the postwar era. Gordon concludes: “World War II saved the U.S. economy from secular stagnation, and a hypothetical scenario of economic growth after 1939 that does not include the war looks dismal at best.” This was the one moment in modern American history when the expansion of productive facilities embodying new, more advanced technologies was *not* determined by the profit-making calculations of corporate executives and Wall Street financiers. In order to defeat its capitalist-imperialist enemies, the U.S. government—the executive agency of the American ruling class as a whole—directed and financed the unprecedented construction of industrial plant and equipment.

A standard economic history of the Second World War states:

“The period 1940 to 1944 saw a greater expansion of industrial production in the United States than any previous period.... Between 1940 and 1944 the total output of manufactured goods increased 300 per cent and that of raw materials by about 60 per cent. Investment in new plant and equipment, much of it direct investment by the government, is estimated to have increased the productive capacity of the economy by as much as 50 per cent.”
—Alan S. Milward, *War, Economy and Society 1939-1945* (1977)

Government-funded factories and other productive facilities were turned over free of charge to corporate capitalists, thereby greatly increasing their profits both during and after the war. Gordon comments in this regard: “Though private capital input stagnated during 1930-45, the amount of capital input financed by the government surged ahead throughout that fifteen-year interval. Of particular interest was the creation of new plant facilities paid for by the government but operated by private firms to

produce military equipment and supplies.”

Franklin D. Roosevelt and the other political directors of the U.S. imperialist state (for example, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson and Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau) were intimately familiar with the workings of industrial corporations and banks. They knew from firsthand experience that they could not depend on the normal mechanisms of the capitalist market to maximize the output of armaments in the shortest possible time. Big industrialists like Henry Ford and Henry Kaiser were therefore *guaranteed profits* through the cost-plus method of setting procurement prices. Their firms were paid whatever they claimed it cost them to build battleships, bombers, tanks, etc., with an additional markup for profit. Over the course of the war, the after-tax profits of industrial firms increased by 120 percent.

Far more important in its long-term economic effects was direct government financing of the construction of factories and other industrial infrastructure. Gordon emphasizes that the number of machine tools—the core component of an industrial economy—*doubled* from 1940 to 1945, and “almost all of these new machine tools were paid for by the government rather than by private firms.” Ford’s gigantic bomber-building plant in Willow Run, Michigan, was government-financed. Likewise were major pipelines, still in use today, conveying petroleum from the Texas oil fields to the Northeast. Moreover, the basic technology underlying what Gordon termed the “third industrial revolution,” beginning in the 1960s, also originated in the U.S. military during the Second World War. The prototype of the mainframe computer, ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer), was developed by scientists and engineers, employed by the war department, at the University of Pennsylvania.

When the American capitalist-imperialist state maximized production, labor productivity and technological innovation, it was in order to bring death and destruction to other peoples. Arguably the most important scientific and technological break-

through in the 20th century, the unleashing of nuclear energy, was used to incinerate the civilian populations of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Gordon Versus the “Techno-Optimists”

Gordon’s main foil in his book is an intellectual current he deems “techno-optimists,” who foresee new technologies such as robotics and artificial intelligence placing the American economy on the cusp of a wave of economic growth. Like Gordon, these techno-optimists (including Joel Mokyr, Gordon’s colleague at Northwestern University, as well as Andrew McAfee and Erik Brynjolfsson at MIT, among others) believe that it is technological innovation above all else that determines the course of society. The dispute involves two very different questions. One concerns the sphere of consumption in the present, the other the sphere of production in the future.

Gordon argues that the effect of the new information and communications technologies on the quality of everyday life has been relatively meager compared to the major innovations and inventions in the century between 1870 and 1970. Those ranged from indoor plumbing, electric lighting and central heating to automobiles, airplanes and television. Gordon writes:

“Though there has been continuous innovation since 1970, it has been less broad in its scope than before, focused on entertainment and information and communication technology (ICT), and advances in several dimensions of the standard of living related to food, clothing, appliances, housing, transportation, health, and working conditions have advanced at a slower pace than before 1970.”

At another level, the dispute between Gordon and the techno-optimists is over the “futurology” of the likelihood of dramatically transformative new technologies developing and being put into widespread use in the near future. Both sides implicitly treat capitalism as a system that best fosters technological innovation. Both, of course, write off the perspective of a collectivized planned economy as not meriting serious consideration.

In a 2014 essay titled “The Next Age of Invention: Technology’s Future Is Brighter than Pessimists Allow,” Mokyr rhapsodizes about supercomputers, 3-D printing, genetic engineering and the like. There is, however, no mention of wages, production costs, markets or profits. These basic categories determining capitalist production and investment in new technologies are likewise absent from his brief polemical response to Gordon’s recent book, “Is Our Economic Future Behind Us?” (29 November 2016). In the unlikely event that Mokyr becomes CEO of Apple or General Electric, these companies would likely face bankruptcy. If he followed his own prescriptions, Mokyr would use the most advanced and therefore most expensive equipment, irrespective of whether this elevated production costs above those of competing firms.

In his 2014 essay, Mokyr does advance

continued on page 6

A Spartacist Pamphlet

1934 Strikes

Class-Struggle Leadership Made a Key Difference

Then and Now

MINNEAPOLIS, MAY 1934: At the Battle of Dupuite Run, thousands of strikers and supporters routed cops and infrastructure special deputies.

AUSTRALIA..._AS1 BRITAIN..._75p CANADA..._CDN\$1 EUROPE..._€1 SOUTH AFRICA..._R2 USA..._US\$1

\$1 (24 pages)

Order from: Spartacist Pub. Co.

Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

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 AngelesBox 29574, Los Feliz Sta., Los Angeles, CA 90029
slsycla@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: by appointment, call (213) 380-8239
- New YorkBox 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
- TorontoBox 7198, Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X8, (416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com
- Vancouver.....Box 2717, Main P.O., Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2, (604) 687-0353
tl.vancouver.bc@gmail.com

Sex...

(continued from page 8)

especially the unconventional (anything kinkier than *When Harry Met Sally*). Defining inappropriate behavior is as subjective as defining “immoral” behavior. To the extent that codes of decency exist, they are prescribed by religion and regulated by the racist guardians of old-time virtue, the bourgeois rulers.

On the university level, decades-long campaigns against a purported date rape epidemic have increased the *in loco parentis* powers of the campus administration to enforce “acceptable” conduct. Virtually any encounter, from a drunken hookup to a regrettable romance, can be classified as nonconsensual, leading to punitive consequences according to the campus initiatives implemented under the Obama administration. (For more, see the review of Laura Kipnis’s book *Unwanted Advances* in “Title IX Witchhunts, Anti-Sex Frenzy and Bourgeois Feminism,” WV No. 1121, 3 November).

Such is the degree of #MeToo mania that feminist author Laura Kipnis, who opposes anti-sex regimentation on the campuses, is now celebrating the fact that the “floodgates have opened” (*New York Review of Books*, 21 December). That innocent people will be “caught in the crossfire” is treated as simply irrelevant. Kipnis echoes the view that if a couple of unfortunate schmucks get chased by the mob, they’re collateral damage in the war against patriarchy.

Mass vengeance is no doubt propelled by the fact that most of the falling stars are powerful, rich, white men...so, feminists say, good riddance. But in racist American society, those who will be “caught in the crossfire” have a greater dose of melanin and a lesser dose of prestige, i.e., black and brown people. To say that sex panics, which foment an inflated collective fear against the imaginary predator, have a tendency to legitimize punishment and rip up the presumption of innocence would be a vast understatement. This is potentially a dire threat to the rights of the entire populace.



AFP

Mercedes-Benz plant in Vance, Alabama. Black working women suffer triple oppression.

The cops and courts have regularly used sex to go after any perceived enemies. Comedian Dave Chappelle noted in his recent stand-up “The Bird Revelation” how the FBI’s COINTELPRO spied on the sexual affairs of Martin Luther King to undermine his authority. The toll of the war on sexual “deviants” today has added to the earlier “war on crime” and ongoing “war on drugs”—code words for racist legal persecution that has increased the prison population by 500 percent to some 2.2 million people today, nearly 40 percent of them black. A 2016 University at Albany study found that one in about every 120 black men is a registered sex offender (twice the rate of white men), a branded outcast for life.

Lynchings brought on by rape accusations have a gruesome history in this country built on slave labor. The Tulsa, Oklahoma, race riot in 1921 and the Rosewood, Florida, massacre in 1923 were precipitated by lying rumors of black men assaulting white women. In 1955, young Emmett Till was murdered for an alleged wolf whistle.

In his article, “A City on a Hill (or the Weinstein Effect)” (counterpunch.org,

1 December), playwright John Stepping comments on how race lurks behind the scenes:

“There is something curious and unsettling in not seeing the dangers of a mass enjoyment of punishment. For that is what disturbs me the most. The pleasure of the mob.... Lynchings had vendors and souvenirs. This is not the same, and yet there are similarities. And the manufacturing of the survivor identity (which originated with the Pre School cases) is handed out even if all that was survived was an unwelcome advance. What will be the effect down the road on sexual choices that may be seen as non-mainstream? The public narrative so far is linked with Hollywood. That should provide a moment of cautious hesitation for everyone.”

Stepping recalls the mob hysteria of the 1987-90 McMartin preschool trial—the longest trial in history—in which child witnesses told fantastical tales of animal sacrifices, orgies, satanic ritual abuse occurring in day-care centers. The crusade was part of the reactionary “family values” campaign of the Reagan years, which, among other things, sought to drive women back into the home. As satanic abuse cases swept the country, hundreds of people were wrong-

Economists...

(continued from page 5)

an economic argument in the service of techno-optimism: “A second reason technological progress will continue unabated has to do with the emergence of a competitive global marketplace, which will encourage the spread of new technology from its originating locations to other users who do not wish to be left behind.” In fact, the extension of international trade and capital export hardly represents an unambiguous encouragement to the development of technology. In the imperialist epoch, the international economy runs up against the very nation-states upon which the imperialists base their power, constituting an obstacle to the further development of humanity’s productive forces. Production in Europe, Japan

and some spots in Asia may use modern methods. However, the vast pool of cheap labor available in South and East Asia and Latin America tends to *inhibit* investment in laborsaving technology in both the Third World and the imperialist centers.

When U.S. and European industrial firms shift manufacturing operations to poor countries, they often tend to use *less* capital-intensive methods of production. Consider clothing manufacture. While the technology exists to perform this in capital-intensive, highly automated plants, it remains cheaper for companies to pay workers in oppressed neocolonies like Bangladesh pennies on the dollar to sew clothing in conditions that are closer to those of the 19th century than the 21st.

In First World countries, too, current scientific and technological knowledge is not used in a rational and socially bene-

ficial way, and in many cases is willfully misused. Consider the field of medical research, where major efforts are made to treat baldness and erectile dysfunction while only a pittance is invested in new drugs and vaccines for potentially fatal tropical diseases.

In the U.S. alone, some 23,000 people die every year of infections from antibiotic-resistant bacteria. A study commissioned by the British government reported that by midcentury as many as ten million people a year globally could die from drug-resistant bacteria if new treatments are not discovered. Yet despite the critical social need, most of the world’s largest pharmaceutical companies long ago stopped developing new antibiotics, citing low returns on investment.

Likewise, some 25 million people in the U.S. suffer from so-called rare diseases, such as Lou Gehrig’s disease and cystic fibrosis as well as sickle cell anemia, which overwhelmingly affects black people. Yet investment in research on treatments and cures for such diseases is notoriously meager, even though rare-disease research has often uncovered fruitful pathways for treating and curing some of the most prevalent ailments. The Center for Health Journalism at the University of Southern California explained the reluctance of pharmaceutical companies: “Most say investing in treatments for rare diseases—ones that affect tens of thousands of people—does not make for good business sense.”

Disregarding the laws governing the capitalist mode of production, Mokyr, McAfee, Brynjolfsson & Co. project a quantum leap in productivity in the near future through the use of “brilliant technologies.” Gordon implicitly accepts the limitations of the capitalist system in denying the very possibility of such a development. With regard to robotics, he writes: “The exponential increase in computer speed and memory has apparently raced far ahead of the capability of robots

fully convicted, losing their freedom, families and reputations. Thirty years ago, the refrain was Believe the Children; today, that catchphrase is being applied to all women.

Working-Class Servitude and Women’s Oppression

If the mob aids the government in deciding what’s acceptable in the bedroom, the consequences will be bad for men *and* women. As Marxists, we oppose any and all efforts of the state to regulate the manifold consensual expressions of human sexuality. Consensual relations between individuals are purely their own concern, and no one has any business interfering (including when it comes to those in Hollywood who lead very exposed lives). We do not support rules dictating “affirmative consent,” which decree that partners engaging in any sexual contact must get explicit verbal permission for each caress. The guiding principle in any sexual encounter should be effective consent, that is, nothing more than mutual agreement and understanding, regardless of age, gender or sexual preference.

Of course, determining what is truly consensual in this viciously class-divided, racist, sexist, not to mention religious, society is complicated. The attitudes and institutions of the capitalist society in which we live sway interpersonal relationships, and there are often ambiguities. Relationships can also be exploitative and unequal, including marriage. Rape, however, is not on the spectrum of sex. It is a degrading, brutal and horrific act of violence. To treat any bad encounter as rape means to demand legal retribution, or else some form of vigilante justice.

Sexual harassment and discrimination are rife in this anti-woman society, from quid pro quo come-ons to pay inequality. Under pressure to be pretty and pliant for their male superiors, women are subjected to humiliation and intimidation. But the Hollywood of well-heeled entertainers who seek to advance their careers is worlds apart from the situation for working-class women, who are desperate to make ends meet and far more subject to the whims of their bosses.

to duplicate human movements.” Gordon offers no argument for why this gap could not be greatly reduced by future advances in scientific and technological knowledge. He makes no assessment of the resources currently expended on robotics research.

Most of the vast amount of scientific research conducted by universities is directly funded by the federal government, and the biggest chunk of federal funding is directed toward military ends. The U.S. budget last year directed \$6.5 billion in R&D to the National Science Foundation, while the R&D budget of the Air Force alone totaled almost \$27 billion. Research in the physical sciences, including robotics, even if at some layers of remove, tends toward the ultimate end of building better drones and other machinery to blow up things and kill people in the interests of capitalist imperialism. Mathematics funding tends toward algorithms for securing state secrets and operations while hacking into the secrets of others. The National Security Agency is widely thought to be the largest employer of mathematicians in the U.S.

At every turn, despite its thirst for technological innovation, capitalism is not the ally of scientific advance but its opponent. From intellectual property laws and the perverse incentives of the market to the tens of billions spent on more effective weaponry, capitalism directs research in the interests of the ruling class and its state apparatus. If those same resources were directed toward advancing human knowledge, furthering human happiness and putting mankind in control of its destiny, what could be accomplished is nearly unimaginable. This requires overturning the capitalist-imperialist system through a series of proletarian revolutions, laying the basis for a globally planned socialist economy. It is to lead the proletariat in that fight that the International Communist League seeks to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution.■

Spartacist

Black History Month Forums

John Brown

Revolutionary Abolitionist Fighter for Black Freedom

Finish the Civil War!

For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

LOS ANGELES

Saturday, February 24 4 p.m.

Immanuel Presbyterian Church,* 3300 Wilshire Blvd. (At Berendo St., 2 blocks west of Wilshire/Vermont stop on Red/Purple Line. Entrance on Berendo.)

For info: (213) 380-8239 • slsycla@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Saturday, February 24 3 p.m.

322 West 48th Street, First Floor, Manhattan (Between 8th and 9th Avenues—Take A, C or E to 42nd Street)

For info: (212) 267-1025 • nysl@tiac.net

*The views expressed by the participants are not necessarily those of the Immanuel Presbyterian Church.

The capitalist class, with the acquiescence of the union misleaders, has waged a one-sided war on organized labor in order to create a cheaper workforce, with part-time, non-union workers often filling what were once full-time, unionized jobs. The all-too-frequent indifference by union bureaucrats to harassment on the job gives yet another opening to liberal anti-union forces to encourage government policing of the unions in the name of defending women. The unions must champion women's rights, including free, 24-hour childcare, paid family leave and free abortion on demand as part of quality health care for all. To revitalize labor, the union movement needs a class-struggle leadership that would fight for organizing the unorganized, for equal pay for equal work and for union control of hiring and upgrading, which together would go a long way toward addressing the precarious economic position that makes working-class women vulnerable.

The #MeToo and #TimesUp movements recently started paying lip service to the women at the bottom. Before the Golden Globes, an open letter signed by over a thousand in television, theater and film expressed solidarity with agricultural and factory workers, housekeepers, waitresses and domestic workers. In a patronizing display at the awards ceremony, swanky stars in black Gucci gowns brought activist guests to prove how “woke” they are. Given Hollywood’s long-running romance with the Democratic Party, the political virtue of this sisterhood spectacle is obvious.

Bourgeois women face sexual oppression but not class oppression. For feminists, the most important division in society is that of men against women, not capitalist exploiters against exploited workers. Feminism as an ideology reflects the concerns of professional and petty-bourgeois women who aim to break the glass ceiling and integrate themselves into the upper layers of the American capitalist power structure. The current era of “Lean In” feminism, which promotes success in the realm of corporate and political leadership, speaks directly to white, university-educated and upper-class women.




***Thérèse Dreaming*, 1938 painting by Balthus, targeted for removal from NYC's Metropolitan Museum of Art by puritanical anti-sex feminists.**

And these are the same women the ruling class considers to be the “credible” victims of sexual assault. Other women—poor, black, single mothers and immigrants—more often than not find themselves vilified or subjected to greater abuse when they call on the state to protect them. They’re also at risk for defending themselves. See the case of Marissa Alexander, a black woman from Florida who fired a warning shot near her abusive and estranged husband who was threatening her. Though no one was injured, she was sentenced in 2012 to 20 years in prison for aggravated assault. After almost six years of hell, Alexander was finally released from prison one year ago.

Bourgeois Feminism and Anti-Sex Repression

American feminism has always reflected the racist, conservative, puritanical values of this country. (The largest and most influential organization at the turn of the 20th century was the Woman's Christian



Temperance Union, which rallied against alcohol and lust.) Decades ago, feminists made an unholy alliance with the religious right in declaring porn to be the cause of violence against women. In the course of this, they played a role supporting the government censorship drive spurring busts of X-rated video stores and attacks on erotic art. Looking to the state to regulate personal behavior and mete out punishment runs in the blood of feminism—particularly what is dubbed carceral feminism, which demands more policing, prosecution and imprisonment to curb violence against women.

 Balthus, Metropolitan artists.

Last December, two New York City feminists petitioned the Metropolitan Museum of Art to either remove or “contextualize” a 1938 work by the Polish-French artist Balthus. The painting, *Thérèse Dreaming*, depicts a pensive young clothed model sitting with her underwear slightly exposed. The petition, which has gathered over 11,000 additional signatures, refers to the current climate around “sexual assault” and accuses the Met of “supporting voyeurism and the objectification of children.” By that reasoning, every advertisement for young girls’ toys or clothing should be banned. Might as well throw out masterpieces like *Alice in Wonderland*, which was inspired by the love that author Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) had for a prepubescent girl.

Feminist vehicles like *Ms.* magazine were big players in the witchhunting of day-school teachers as deranged pedophiles, and the subsequent morphing of child abuse into anything that smacks of sexuality involving a person under legal voting age. Not only does this play down the real abuse of children (which occurs mainly inside families), but it criminalizes young people having sex in general.

Thus, the hounding of director Roman Polanski, who fled the country to escape criminal charges in 1978 for consensual sex with an experienced 13-year-old girl, has been revived in the wake of the Weinstein scandals. (Deneuve is hated not least for her defense of Polanski.)

There is also a renewed inquisition against Woody Allen over unfounded allegations of abuse of his adopted daughter Dylan Farrow, accusations spearheaded by his vengeful ex-partner, Mia Farrow. Allen has always denied Farrow's claims, and no legal charges were ever brought against him. As Allen said in 1992, "In the end, the one thing I have been guilty of is falling in love with Mia Farrow's adult daughter [Soon-Yi Previn] at the end of our years together." In the minds of maniacal accusers, he must be guilty—because he went on to marry Soon-Yi, who is 35 years younger than he. She was a young adult at the start of her relationship with Allen, and they have been married now since 1997. One might note that Mia Farrow was 21 and Frank Sinatra was 50 when they married. (See "Woody Allen Crucified on 'Family Values,'" *WV* No. 558, 4 September 1992.)

The laws defining “sex crimes” today are fundamentally aimed at strengthening the repressive arm of the state and propping up the prison of the family. The struggle for the emancipation of women, including in the workplace, cannot be separated from the struggle for the emancipation of women from the family. The material basis for women’s liberation can only be laid through the victory of workers revolution, which requires the forging of a Leninist vanguard party that will act as the tribune of all the oppressed, mobilizing to combat all social backwardness. As part of constructing an egalitarian socialist society, the family as an institution will be replaced by the socializing of childcare and housework, freeing women to play a full and equal role in social and political life. In a global communist future, anti-woman violence and bigotry, the reactionary constraints of family and religion will be barbaric memories of the past. ■

Catalonia...

(continued from page 3)

The PSOE and the PSC—bourgeois workers parties based on the working class but whose program and leadership are pro-bourgeois—are united with both neo-Francoist variants [PP and C's] in their anti-Catalan chauvinism, including in regard to the application of Article 155. Voting for the social democrats would have been a betrayal of the working class and of the fight for the emancipation of the Catalan nation. On the other hand, as genuine Marxists we *never* give an iota of political support to non-proletarian forces, as a matter of principle. The pro-independence parties like Puigdemont's rightist Partit Demòcrata Europeu Català (PDeCAT) and Junqueras' Esquerra Republicana belong to the bourgeoisie, i.e.,

the class enemy. Candidatura d'Unitat Popular (CUP) is also a bourgeois formation in the tow of its older brothers, committed to maintaining capitalism (despite its deceptive "anticapitalist" nickname).

The bourgeois populists of Catalunya en Comú-Podem (which includes Podemos), Catalan coalition [Podem] are vulgar Spanish chauvinists with pro-democracy rhetoric: Podemos recently equated the independence referendum and the application of Article 155 as equally anti-democratic; at the same time that they denounce any unilateral declaration of independence as “illegitimate.”

In counterposition to all these forces, we Spartacists fight to forge Leninist-Trotskyist parties, tribunes of the people. Such parties would instill in the working class irreconcilable hostility to *all* the capitalist exploiters, and the consciousness of its historic mission at the head of all the oppressed.

Pseudo-Trotskyists Cross the Class Line

The self-proclaimed Trotskyists of Izquierda Revolucionaria (IR), section of the Committee for a Workers' International, based in Great Britain, called to “defeat PP, Ciudadanos and PSC-PSOE” in the elections. This is a call to vote for any of the other forces, which are all capitalist (izquierdarevolucionaria.net, 30 November). IR crosses the class line with the greatest of ease; what it finds more difficult is leaving behind its chauvinism. Up until a few months ago, it denounced the fight for independence for Catalonia and Euskal Herria as counterposed to “socialism,” which would be achieved through the good services of Podemos (see “For Class Struggle Against Spanish Prison House of Peoples!” WV No. 1112, 19 May 2017). Pressured by the Catalan masses in the streets, it wasn’t until literally the eve of the October 1 referendum

that IR finally called for a “yes” vote, a call that was simply lip service.

The maximum program of IR is expressed in the slogan for *a Spanish* “federal socialist republic,” in which, *a priori*, they would like to keep Catalans, Basques and Galicians penned; and their supposed “socialist republic” will come from the hand of bourgeois chauvinists: IR still promotes “a united front of the left that fights against the regime of ’78” in Spain, in which they include Podem; in France they’re buried in the party of the anti-Catalan Jean-Luc Mélenchon.

Similarly—with one foot in each camp and no adherence to Marxist principles—there is the *Corriente Revolucionaria de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras* (CRT), section of the Trotskyist Fraction-Fourth International based in Argentina. The CRT called for abstention in the October referendum, clarifying that “we are neither independentistas nor do we share the republican and constitutional process proposed by Junts pel Si [former ruling coalition between PDeCAT and Esquerra]

and the CUP” (izquierdadiario.es, September 2017). But none of this, not even the bourgeois class character of the CUP, stopped the CRT three months later from calling for a vote...for the very same CUP! (izquierdadiario.es, December 2017).

The CRT's response to the CUP's capitalist "republican project and constitutional process" is: "The struggle for the republic can't be separated from the struggle for its social content, that is, which class holds political power. For that, we fight for a truly free and sovereign constitutional process" (December 2017). Old poison in a new bottle: the slogan for a constituent assembly is a call for a *capitalist* government. The working class won't hold political power through the institutions of bourgeois democracy, but rather through socialist revolution led by a revolutionary workers party. Such a revolution would destroy the entire capitalist state apparatus as well as the democratic institutions for the rich, replacing them with workers soviets. We genuine Trotskyists work towards the realization of this perspective. ■

[illegible]

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

☐ New ☐ Renewal

☐ \$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 _____ Apt. # _____

Phone (_____) _____ Zip _____

1126

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

WORKERS VANGUARD

No to Trial by Media!

Sex, Scandals and Power

Since Harvey Weinstein's serial sexual assault exposé rocked Hollywood last fall, the net for alleged predators has been cast far and wide. What began as the Hollywood casting couch on steroids rapidly metastasized into an array of sexual misconduct allegations which are bringing down male types of all stripes—from *Prairie Home Companion*'s Garrison Keillor to talk-show hosts Charlie Rose and Tavis Smiley, from black Democrat John Conyers to bible-thumping racist Roy Moore, from comedian Louis C.K. to music mogul Russell Simmons. A wide range of behavior—including flirtation and innuendo, a vulgar text or a crude joke, not to mention unpleasant sex—is being lumped together with real crimes of coercion and assault. Those called out for sexual impropriety, no matter how trivial, how unproven or how long ago, run the media gantlet, are declared guilty and their careers ruined.

Backers of the liberal #MeToo and #TimesUp movements present this as a reckoning and cathartic response to sexual inequality. There are indeed pervasive crimes against women, but most are not being splashed across Twitter and the press in America today. In factories, the military and prisons, assault and rape are routinely covered up. Poor, black and immigrant women, as well as sex workers, have little recourse against sexual predation. Meanwhile, mum's the word on urgent questions such as the assault on abortion rights, which have been whittled down to a formality that is inaccessible for the majority, rising costs of health care, and lack of access to childcare. The hype over "inappropriate" peccadilloes minimizes the terror of rape and trivializes sexual abuse, like that suffered by numerous female Olympic gymnasts for decades under their doctor Larry Nassar. Such hype also does nothing to address women's subordination and oppression, which are built into capitalist society.

The #MeToo campaign is about sex, but it is just as much about power and politics. The Democratic Party is scrambling to cohere the so-called resistance to Donald J. Trump, who is accused of harassment by over a dozen women. To make the whole campaign go down easier, leading Democrats Nancy Pelosi and Kirsten Gillibrand had to wash the party's hands of its own sexual misconduct gaffe and dump Minnesota Senator Al Franken. It was a political calculation that cost them little, allowing them to posture as defenders of women, a lie the Democrats love to milk for their electoral fortunes.

The fight against the president's "pussey grabbing" is on the top of the Democratic Party agenda. The biggest demonstrations during last year's inauguration focused on how Trump's piggish sexual follies made him "unfit" to rule the bloody American empire. The battle cry of those Women's Marches, dominated by white petty-bourgeois and bourgeois women in pink pussy hats, was over the fact that a qualified imperialist hawk and Wall Street-backed *woman* lost to an unabashed misogynist. This year's Women's Marches continued to hail Hillary Clinton as their shepherdess with the slogan: "Power to the Polls."

In good old American puritanical tradition, an anti-sex frenzy has been unleashed that serves to divert attention from the



Georges/Washington Post

#MeToo Mania and the Democrats' "Resistance"

Bourgeois media embraces #MeToo, with *Time* declaring "silence breakers" Person of the Year. Right: January 20 "Women's March" in D.C. dominated by pro-Democratic Party politics.

staggering brutalities carried out by the ruling class against working people: anti-immigrant roundups, the sanctioning of white-supremacists, attacks on unions, threats of unleashing the U.S. nuclear arsenal. In a cutting commentary, "The Great American Sex Panic of 2017" (counterpunch.org, 22 November), William Kaufman aptly calls this a "moral panic," which is "ironically, immoral at its core: repressive and diversionary, an identity-

the patriarchal family, propped up by religious conservatism and state repression, and enshrined in virtually every social institution. Both ruling-class parties, the Democrats and the Republicans, represent this profit-driven system based on class exploitation and push a reactionary social agenda—even if their rhetoric differs based on their constituencies. Eradicating entrenched sexual stereotypes and discrimination requires a socialist revolu-



Reuters

October 2011: Then-secretary of state Hillary Clinton celebrates "victory" in Libya, where U.S./NATO airstrikes led to overthrow of Qaddafi regime and widespread devastation. Bourgeois feminists embrace this imperialist hawk.

politics orgy of misdirected moral energies that breeds a chilling conformity of word and deed." He also notes a "bizarre inversion of values." As imperialist Commander-in-Chief, the male Clinton slaughtered hundreds of thousands abroad and tossed millions of women and children off welfare at home, but he is stigmatized for a blow job. As Secretary of State, the female Clinton helped turn Libya to rubble and grooved on the torture and murder of Qaddafi (which included being sodomized with a weapon), but she is lauded as a symbol of diversity.

As Marxists, we know that anti-woman bigotry and oppression have a material basis in capitalist society, flowing from

tion to overturn capitalism, an economic system that breeds degradation, repression and violence in everyday life.

Fear, Sexual Loathing and Racist Repression

Founded by black activist Tarana Burke over a decade ago, #MeToo went viral on Twitter post-Weinstein after it was taken up by actress Alyssa Milano. Shortly after, *Time* magazine declared the "silence breakers" Person of the Year. The Golden Globes were dominated by big money personalities preaching "Time's Up," including a much-lauded speech by billionaire Oprah Winfrey, whose name has been

bandied about as a potential Democratic presidential nominee.

Shocking as it may be to some, not all women think alike. Fissures are now erupting in the #MeToo milieu. Early on, mainstream feminists like *Nation* writer Katha Pollitt expressed concern about a conservative backlash, especially as most of the ousted harassers were Democrats. In a January 5 *New York Times* op-ed piece, "Publicly, We Say #MeToo. Privately, We Have Misgivings," Daphne Merkin, an avid Hillary supporter, worried that the career-ending condemnations and the automatic presumption of guilt could be an entrée to "torching people for the content of their fantasies." (Too late: people are thrown behind bars for possessing kiddie porn.) Esteemed author Margaret Atwood was virtually tied to a stake for defending due process in her article, "Am I a Bad Feminist?" More recently, a debate is raging over whether a bad date with comedian Aziz Ansari makes him a "sexual predator."

An open letter signed by actress Catherine Deneuve and a group of 100 French intellectuals and professionals denouncing the wave of purges provoked a full-frontal feminist uproar. The letter objects to neo-Victorianism, which paints women as frail children: "Just like in the good old witch-hunt days, what we are once again witnessing here is puritanism in the name of a so-called greater good, claiming to promote the liberation and protection of women, only to enslave them to a status of eternal victim and reduce them to defenseless preys of male chauvinist demons." Within hours, supporters of #MeToo condemned the French signatories as "apologists for rape." No critic is granted immunity. Actor Matt Damon faced a ferocious reaction for his patently obvious statement that rape is distinct from a pat on the butt.

If penalties are deamed and draconian against anything deemed offensive, the net effect will be to police all behavior,

continued on page 6