

Trump, Dems Push Anti-China Scare Campaign

U.S. Imperialists Ramp Up Trade/Tech War

What began in January 2018 with U.S. tariffs against Chinese-made solar panels has since become a wide-ranging campaign to thwart China’s economic and technological rise. In a major escalation, on May 10 President Trump declared a further 25 percent tariff on \$200 billion worth of imports from China. Five days later, he issued an executive order effectively banning the Chinese company Huawei, the world’s leader in next-generation 5G telecommunications hardware and second-largest smartphone maker, from the U.S. on the grounds of “national security.” The Commerce Department then barred American companies from selling chips and other goods to Huawei.

Capitalist financiers warn that Trump’s broad use of the tariff weapon—against purported friends as well as declared foes—threatens the supply chains that are crucial in modern manufacturing and might bring on a world recession. For the Republicans and also the Democrats, who have enthusiastically backed the White House against Beijing, this is a small price to pay for squeezing China, the most powerful of the countries in the world today where capitalist rule was overthrown. U.S. companies like shoe manufacturer Steve Madden and camera maker GoPro are shifting production away from China in order to evade import duties. Longshoremen at the Port of Los Angeles, where China represents 60 percent of trade volume, are already handling less cargo.

Chinese negotiators in the last round of trade talks refused to humiliate themselves by meeting Washington’s demands, which included that China’s laws be rewritten to American satisfaction. Trump vows to impose tariffs on another \$300 billion worth of Chinese goods if Beijing does not buckle under. Throughout the trade war, the U.S. has pushed the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime to relinquish state control of the economy. That would mean total surrender to the imperialists. As revolutionary Marxists, we say that the working class in the U.S. and internationally has a side in this conflict: with China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state, against imperialism. *Down with the anti-China tariffs!*

Washington’s diktat against Huawei was prepared by a propaganda blitz claiming that China was capable of spying on all and sundry through “backdoors” in its telecommunications equipment. Such surveillance, of course, is something the U.S. specializes in, from National Security Agency monitoring of personal communications to its hacking of Huawei’s internal network. The “Chinese spying” scare was jacked up after the arrest in December of Huawei



May 10: Containers from Asia stack up at port in Long Beach, California, as Trump imposes new tariffs. In 2018, U.S. imported \$539 billion in goods from China.

Defend, Extend Gains of 1949 Chinese Revolution!

executive Meng Wanzhou in Vancouver, Canada, on the grounds that the company had evaded U.S. sanctions against Iran. She is currently fighting extradition to the U.S., which has issued indictments against Huawei for “theft of intellectual property” and other cooked-up charges. The drive against Huawei is just one part of a plot to stop China’s technological advance, which is crucial to its military defense. The Spartacist League/U.S. joins the Trotskyist League in Quebec and Canada in demanding: *Free Meng Wanzhou! No extradition!*

The boundless American arrogance toward China has touched off a fierce reaction on the mainland, where there are

deeply entrenched memories of the “Century of Humiliation.” This was the period beginning with the 1839-42 Opium War when foreign powers carved the country into their own spheres of exploitation, which ended only with the 1949 Revolution. Chinese president Xi Jinping announced that China needs to treat the trade war as a real war. As trade talks collapsed, the state CCTV network dropped Hollywood films from prime time and played movies about China’s intervention in the 1950-53 Korean War—known to Chinese as the War Resisting America and Aiding Korea. “China already knows what it’s like to suffer under the yoke of a

colonial master. No matter what the US or anyone else tries, it won’t do so again,” declared a column in the official *China Daily* (24 May).

Beijing has hit back with tariffs on \$60 billion worth of U.S. products, although the impact of such tit-for-tat measures is limited because China imports far less from the U.S. than it exports there. China, which mines and processes a vast majority of the world’s rare earth metals, is threatening to withhold exports of these commodities, which are crucial for any number of high-tech items, from electric car motors and smartphones to missile guidance systems.

China has also reacted sharply to escalating military provocations by the U.S. and its allies. These include recent incursions into the Taiwan Strait by destroyers, as well as increased naval exercises and flyovers by B-52 bombers in the South China Sea, China’s maritime trade hub. At a military conference in Singapore this month, Chinese defense minister Wei Fenghe warned Washington: “A talk? Welcome. A fight? Ready. Bully us? No way” (*Asia Times*, 5 June).

It is crucial that the working class internationally stand for the defense of China in any military conflict with the imperialists or forces acting on their behalf. Our military defense

of the Chinese deformed workers state is unconditional. Just as workers must always defend their unions, despite their pro-capitalist misleaders, against the bosses, we defend China against the capitalist enemy despite our political opposition to its Stalinist regime and no matter what the immediate cause of the conflict.

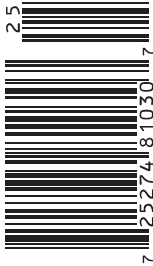
Anti-Imperialism and the Chinese Revolution

Bourgeois ideologues falsely describe the U.S.-China clash as a fight between rivals for economic and military supremacy. A commonly used catchphrase is the

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1899 cartoon depicts U.S. proclaiming its right to pillage China, which European imperialists had carved into spheres of exploitation. Right: Chinese Communist forces enter Beijing in 1949. Chinese Revolution expropriated capitalists and landlords, liberated country from imperialist domination.



The Truth About the Tiananmen Uprising

The mass protests centered in Beijing's Tiananmen Square 30 years ago are falsely presented by the bourgeois media as a student movement for Western "democracy," long an imperialist rallying cry for capitalist counter-revolution. In fact, as we stressed at the time, the entry of masses of workers into the protests marked an incipient proletarian political revolution against the ruling Chinese Communist Party bureaucracy. After the 3-4 June 1989 slaughter of working people and students by the Deng Xiaoping regime, millions of workers across China continued to wage mass strikes and protests, driven by anger over official corruption and the effects of "market reforms." This underlines that the aims and class character of the Tiananmen uprising were fundamentally different from the current protests in Hong Kong.

The brittle Stalinist caste in China censors references to the Tiananmen events, ever fearful that the working class will again push to take charge of society. We reprint below our article, "Defend Chinese Workers!" (WV No. 480, 23 June 1989), written shortly after the Tiananmen massacre.

* * *

The June 4 massacre at Beijing's Tiananmen Square brought China to the brink of civil war. The mass outpouring of defiance heralded the Chinese proletarian political revolution against the corrupt and despised Stalinist bureaucracy. For the moment the Deng regime has weathered the storm and is now cracking down, striking first and hardest at the working class. But the decrepit bureaucratic caste, which has opened the doors of China to massive capitalist encroachment and shamelessly allied itself with U.S. imperialism, can be shattered. *The central lesson of the Beijing spring and the urgent task which stands before the Chinese workers is the forging of an authentic communist party, an internationalist vanguard.*

On June 15 in Shanghai, the commercial center of China and an industrial powerhouse with four million workers, the first death sentences were handed down. The victims are three workers: Xu Guoming, Bian Hanwu and Yan Xuerong, accused of stopping and burning a train which on June 6 plowed through a Shanghai crowd protesting the Beijing massacre, killing six demonstrators. On June 16, in Beijing



Workers in Tiananmen Square during incipient proletarian political revolution against Stalinist bureaucracy led by Deng Xiaoping, 18 May 1989. Placard reads: "Workers Strike/Students Strike/Xiaoping, Step Down!"

eight more workers accused of taking part in "riots" against government troops were sentenced to die. In China judicial appeals are quickly dispatched with, and it is expected that the sentences will soon be carried out, with a bullet to the back of the neck. Families of those executed are charged for the cost of the bullet! Racist New York cops would be green with envy.

To date there have been over 1,000 arrests, including leaders of the Beijing Autonomous Student Union and the Autonomous Workers Union and their counterparts in China's other major cities. Premier Li Peng vowed that there would be many more arrests, and called for punishment "without mercy." Students are paraded on television wearing manacles. Arrested workers are marched through the streets with signs describing their "crimes" of "instigating social unrest" and "spreading rumors." Commenting on the executions, the *New York Times* (16 June) noted: "It may be significant that they were workers, rather than students, because the Government has been particularly alarmed about the prospect of workers joining the unrest and going on strike."

The Western media usually describes the oppositional forces in China as "the student movement for democracy." But it was the beginnings of a working-class revolt against Deng's program of "building socialism with capitalist methods" which

gave the protests their mass and potentially revolutionary nature. Organized workers' contingents started to participate in the marches, and it was the threat of a general strike which led Li Peng to order martial law in mid-May. Moreover, the outpouring of hundreds of thousands of working people into the streets stymied the regime's attempted crackdown then. When the troops attacked unarmed people in Beijing on June 4, thousands of workers battled them with whatever came to hand.

Justifying the massacre to his colleagues

and military commanders, Deng reportedly stated: "If we had not suppressed them, they would have brought about our collapse. I myself, and all of you commanding officers present, would have been shoved under the guillotine" (*New York Times*, 17 June). This bureaucracy, which grotesquely calls itself Communist, knows well that it rules *in place* of the proletariat. The Deng regime has more or less tolerated a "pro-democracy" student movement for the past decade. Indeed, many of the student leaders were sons and daughters of top bureaucrats.

So why the savage repression at the *very first signs* of working-class protest? Is it because these old Stalinists want to maintain "totalitarian" control over everything that happens in China? Hardly. After all, Deng & Co. have opened up the Chinese economy to foreign investors and local capitalist entrepreneurs, for which they have been lavishly praised by the Western bourgeois media.

The Stalinist bureaucracy, in both China and the Soviet bloc, is a parasitic caste resting upon a collectivized (i.e., proletarian) economy. Because the bureaucrats do not own the means of production, because they do not have the myriad threads of social control of a ruling capitalist *class*, their power stems from *monopolizing political control* of the governing apparatus. Since they claim to rule in the interests of the workers, they cannot tolerate any independent workers organization. Any real workers movement necessarily challenges

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SPARTACIST

疯狂的美帝国主义
叫嚣着核战争

停止干预朝鲜!

源自英文《工人先锋报》(Workers Vanguard)第1116号(2019年6月18日)

【2019年6月18日】八月十二日，国际共产主义者同盟美国支部，在纽约市曼哈顿区，举行了一场名为“反对帝国主义，反对核战争”的集会。集会吸引了数百名参与者，他们手持标语，高呼口号，要求美国停止在朝鲜半岛的军事冒险，并要求中国停止对美国的核讹诈。集会还要求美国停止在越南、老挝和柬埔寨的军事行动，并要求美国停止在阿富汗和伊拉克的军事行动。集会最后以一场游行结束，游行队伍穿过曼哈顿区，最终在联合国总部前结束。

【八月十二日】美国军方的媒体宣传代号是“自由战士”的大规模军事演习，成千上万的美国士兵正参与军事演习。演习的官方名称是“自由战士”演习，这是美国军方的年度例行演习。演习的官方名称是“自由战士”演习，这是美国军方的年度例行演习。演习的官方名称是“自由战士”演习，这是美国军方的年度例行演习。

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Crazed U.S. Imperialists
Threaten Nuclear War:
Hands Off North Korea!

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(2 pages)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1157

21 June 2019

On May 15, our veteran comrade Victor Granovsky died in New York City at age 66 after an eight-month struggle with ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as “Lou Gehrig’s disease”). We send heartfelt condolences to his sister, and comrade, Irene, her husband Tom and their family, and to Victor’s many comrades and friends around the globe. In the early 1990s, Victor was instrumental in the International Communist League’s Trotskyist intervention against capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. Later, drawing on his exhaustive knowledge of the October 1917 Russian Revolution, he played an important role on the *Spartacist* editorial board. A graphic designer by profession, he helped define the look of our propaganda. Victor was also known as the ICL’s funniest, most dramatic storyteller, as well as a withering satirical polemicist.

Victor was born in 1952 in Shanghai, China, the son of Russian immigrants. His father lived through the Bolshevik-led October Revolution, and both his parents were in Shanghai during the 1949 Chinese Revolution. In his youth, Victor grasped that revolutions can happen and are serious business. In the mid 1950s, the family left China and made its way to Sydney, Australia, then settled in Los Angeles in 1958.

Growing up in the 1960s, Victor was exposed to a creative milieu of young artists and musicians, and took advantage of free classes in drawing, printmaking and filmmaking to hone his artistic skills. Later, amid the radicalization spurred by the Vietnam War and the state terror unleashed against the Black Panthers, Victor joined the Hollywood High School chapter of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS).

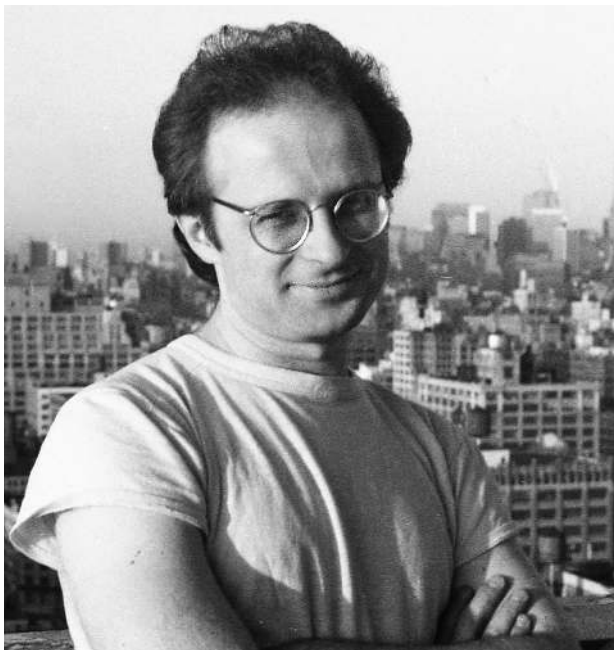
In 1969, SDS underwent a split nationwide, largely over the question of the centrality of the proletariat as an agency for revolutionary social change. Victor and most of his comrades were recruited to the Young Communist League, youth group of Nelson Peery’s hard-Stalinist California Communist League (CCL). Before long, some CCL members, along with the Hollywood High comrades, were expelled for raising criticisms of Stalin, although they continued to regard themselves as Maoists. They formed a new group, the Communist Working Collective (CWC), and eventually reviewed Leon Trotsky’s key writings. As one CWCer recalled, “After studying *The Third International After Lenin*, we were Trotskyists.” In 1971, the CWC fused with the Spartacist League. Victor co-authored the article “Communist Working Collective: From Maoism to Trotskyism” on the fusion in the first issue of *Workers Vanguard* (October 1971).

The SL’s revolutionary regroupments in this period, particularly the CWC fusion, allowed us to launch WV and expand our roots in the American working class. Victor was among those comrades who enthusiastically went into industry, taking a job in an auto plant in Detroit, which comrades dubbed “America’s Vyborg” after the industrial neighborhood in Petrograd where the Bolsheviks acquired a strong base of support. In the mid 1970s, after spending time in our Houston local, he moved to our center in New York.

There, Victor joined WV’s Composition (Comp) department. He was an extremely talented designer who thrived in the paper’s political collective, which stands in marked contrast to the petty-bourgeois publishing industry where designers are either the stars or the peons. In a presentation to younger Comp comrades last fall, Victor explained the purpose of design for a communist newspaper: “Twenty-five percent, approximately, of all ICL propaganda is graphics: hard-hitting headlines and photos, design that grabs people who may not necessarily be in the habit of reading such dense scientific material such as we publish.” He went on: “You want photos and graphics to be *windows* into the content of the propaganda that we write.”

Among his many pieces of work, Victor designed the Spartakist Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands (the ICL’s German section) poster and button for the 1990 East German elections, in which we were unique in proclaiming “Nein” to capitalist counterrevolution. The ICL threw everything we had into the incipient proletarian political revolution in the bureaucratically deformed workers state of East Germany (DDR) as part of fighting for the revolutionary reunification of Germany.

Victor Granovsky



Family photo



1952–2019

In the same period, Victor was part of our international teams making exploratory forays into the Soviet degenerated workers state. As Stalinist rule broke down, the question was posed: would the nascent bourgeoisie in Russia, with the backing of the imperialists, consolidate a capitalist state, or would the working class seize the opportunity to fight for political power? Victor, who had basic Russian-language capacity, studied hard to increase his fluency and literacy in order to help implant an outpost of Trotskyism in the homeland of the October Revolution. He served as the ICL’s main public spokesman throughout the existence of our Moscow station, until the mid 1990s.

On one of his early trips in October 1990, Victor and another comrade attended a Soviet coal miners congress in Donetsk, Ukraine, which had been the center of a nationwide strike the year before. There our comrades discovered a rogues’ gallery of “AFL-CIA” counterrevolutionary forces, centered on the anti-communist British Union of Democratic Miners (UDM). The UDM, a scab outfit, wanted to get the Soviet miners to repudiate their significant monetary support to the great 1984-85 British coal strike led by National Union of Mineworkers head Arthur Scargill, who was pro-Soviet. Victor described our intervention during a historically comprehensive and detailed presentation given in 2007: “Though there were only two of us Spartacists at this conference, we played a crucial role in the decision of the congress *not* to pursue the UDM’s appeal to denounce Scargill.” (For more, see “We Are the Party of the Russian Revolution, Part Three,” WV No. 926, 5 December 2008.)

After U.S. imperialism’s man Boris Yeltsin launched his counterrevolutionary coup in August 1991, Victor and other Moscow station comrades got out 100,000 copies of a Russian translation of the WV article “Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!” This leaflet was the first published leftist protest against Yeltsin’s U.S.-backed power grab. The ICL honored Trotsky’s insistence that “in the hour of mortal danger, [revolutionary internationalists] must remain on the last barricade.”

In the end, there was no mass resistance by the Soviet working class against capitalist counterrevolution. Decades of Stalinist misrule had left the Russian proletariat atomized and lacking any consistent and coherent socialist class consciousness. The destruction of the Soviet Union and the European deformed workers states was an unparalleled defeat for working people the world over.

After our comrade Martha Phillips was murdered at her post in Moscow in February 1992, Victor represented the ICL at a press conference, making sure she would not be a nameless, faceless victim. In July 1992, Victor appeared on the main all-Russian television station for a segment titled “Trotskyism: Next Stop Moscow?” The following year, Victor was critical in the preparation and publication by the Prometheus Research Library (PRL) of the Russian-language edition of Trotsky’s *The Third International After Lenin*, the first version to appear in the language in which it was written.

Victor never got a college degree; what he knew he learned on his own or through the party. But more powerful than a diploma, he had an insatiable curiosity. Through hard work and intense study, he developed an encyclopedic knowledge of the October Revolution. During a talk last year, Victor recalled that during his time in Moscow, even while “desperately dashing to a demo, there would always be an antiquarian bookstore on the way. And if you ducked in there, you might leave with a treasure that you would never have found anywhere else in the world.” He was able to amass hundreds of books and manuscripts for the PRL, the SL’s central reference archive, including a comprehensive collection of Bolshevik congress and conference minutes, and memoirs from Bolsheviks and Trotskyist Left Oppositionists. With his natural wit, Victor recounted that he got this material out of Russia by telling customs officers that it represented “humanitarian aid from Russia to the working people of America.”

Victor was a member of the ICL’s International Executive Committee from 2003 to 2007. His astute political understanding and his linguistic skills were an exceptional asset, which facilitated our publication of Russian-language propaganda over the years. He made many of his finest contributions as an editorial board member of the English-language edition of our international theoretical journal *Spartacist*. Victor initiated the article in *Spartacist* No. 59 (Spring 2006) defending the 1921 Bolshevik suppression of the counterrevolutionary mutiny at the Kronstadt naval base. In 1999, a two-volume set of historical documents was published in Russian on the Kronstadt uprising, long a rallying cry for anti-Communists. Victor read the entire collection and translated hundreds of pages for his ed board comrades. The article succeeded in demolishing the lies by anarchists and liberals by proving once again the counterrevolutionary nature of the Kronstadt mutiny and the forces behind it.

In another instance, when WV published Lenin’s 25 October 1917 speech to the Petrograd Soviet, Victor had the political savvy to recognize that the text quoted in WV had a Stalinist-nationalist bent, as it referred to “building a proletarian socialist state in Russia.” This conception is at odds with Lenin’s Marxist understanding that socialism—a global classless egalitarian society of material abundance—cannot be built in one country. In a letter to the editor (WV No. 861, 6 January 2006), Victor explained that the version we used from Lenin’s *Collected Works* was not in fact a verbatim transcript but an unreliable newspaper account! He noted that other newspapers reported that Lenin, as on other occasions, spoke of the Russian Revolution as a spark to ignite a Europe-wide socialist revolution.

At the end of 2013, Victor resigned from the party due to personal difficulties, but continued to work with us, vowing to rejoin as soon as he could. Last September, when he learned he was dying of ALS, his most urgent wish was to rejoin, and once he did he was a fish back in water. In his last few months as a Spartacist, Victor tried to convey to the party the wealth of his experiences, while working intensely to inventory and annotate his Russian-language collection for the PRL. During a presentation at the library in December, Victor emphasized, “Comrades can be proud that we were the ones who planted the flag of Trotskyism, defended October to the very last.” The Bolshevik Revolution pulses through the veins of all ICL comrades, but it seemed to have a special urgency for Victor. We honor this beloved comrade by following his example of passionate and rigorous study of language and the history of the Marxist movement, as well as his courage and boldness in the fight for new October Revolutions, wherever and whenever the opportunity presents itself.

British Trotskyists Say:

Brexit Now! For a Workers Europe!

The following article is reprinted from Workers Hammer (No. 245, Summer 2019), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain.

WORKERS HAMMER

In defiance of the decisive popular vote to leave the EU [European Union], *three years later*, the British ruling class still has its seat in the bankers' and bosses' cartel. With the Brexit deadline kicked back to October, the dominant sectors of the bourgeoisie, centred on the City of London, are demanding continued access to the single market and the rest of the EU spoils. Theresa May's resignation has set off a leadership contest, with a wing of the Tories, encouraged by U.S. president Donald Trump, pushing for more independence from the EU treaties in hopes of better competing against German and French imperialism (and no doubt with their own political fortunes in mind).

In contrast, the entire Labour Party leadership is carrying the banner for the City of London by supporting the EU. Momentum [a grouping inside the Labour Party], deputy leader Tom Watson and the Blairites are all furiously denouncing Corbyn for not being pro-EU enough. But Corbyn's "constructive ambiguity" over Brexit is designed to allow him to pursue a *pro-EU programme* while maintaining the support of Labour's working-class base, which is fed up with the EU's devastating impact on living standards and working conditions. The absence of an organised working-class opposition to the EU has put wind in the sails of racist, right-wing demagogues like Nigel Farage and outright fascists.

Corbyn betrayed his working-class supporters by campaigning for remain [in the EU] in the 2016 referendum; he stands for Britain staying in a permanent customs union and full alignment with the single market, i.e., no Brexit; and he has been very clear that he supports a second referendum to overturn the result of the first. **No second referendum! Britain out now!**

The EU is a set of treaties designed to maximise profits by increasing the exploitation of workers across Europe. For the European imperialists, centrally Germany and France as well as (so far) Britain, the unstable EU alliance is a means to increase their competitiveness against their imperialist rivals, the U.S. and Japan, while further subjugating the weaker countries. At the same time, the EU acts as an adjunct of NATO and is a source of great profits for the U.S. imperialist bourgeoisie. The conflicting national interests of the imperialists constantly threaten to tear the alliance asunder.

The EU's nature can be seen in the rape of Greece, which today has less national sovereignty than neocolonial Mexico; the economic devastation of Ireland after the 2008-09 financial crisis; the transformation of Poland and other East European countries into reservoirs of super-exploited labour; and the fall in living standards for working people in the imperialist centres, including Germany and Britain.

In advocating a leave vote in 2016, we noted: "Amid the growing chaos besetting the EU, a British exit would deal a real blow to this imperialist-dominated conglomerate, further destabilising it and creating more favourable conditions for working-class struggle across Europe—including against a weakened and discredited Tory government in Britain" (*Workers Hammer* No. 234, Spring 2016). The prolonged crisis of the Tory government has created an advantageous situation for working-class struggle, which could also drive Britain out of the EU. But rather than taking advantage of the opportunity to advance the interests of the oppressed and exploited, the misleaders of the proletariat in the Labour Party and the unions have instead provided an invaluable serv-



Spartacist League/Britain literature table at 2017 May Day demonstration.

ice to the British bourgeoisie by promoting illusions in the EU while isolating and demobilising strikes.

The struggle to forge a new leadership of the unions, one based on the understanding that the interests of labour and capital are fundamentally counterposed, cannot be separated from the struggle for a revolutionary party that champions all those ground under the heel of the capitalists, including immigrant and minority workers who are among the most oppressed and the most militant components of the proletariat.

Marxists oppose the EU because it is an alliance of the enemies of our class. Its breakup would be a defeat for the imperialist rulers. Our support for Brexit flows from our perspective for the liberation of humanity through a series of proletarian revolutions that sweep away the capitalist rulers in Britain and internationally. **For a Socialist United States of Europe, united on a voluntary basis!**

The City's "Socialists"

The Communist Party (CPB), Peter Taaffe's Socialist Party [affiliated with Socialist Alternative in the U.S.] and the

Socialist Workers Party all claim to be for Brexit but constantly contradict that claim in practice. These groups' nominal "left exit" stance in 2016 was carefully calibrated to avoid confrontation with Labour's remain campaign. Now they all clamour for a general election to replace the Tory government with a *pro-EU* Corbyn government. Like the traitors of the Second International who sided with their "own" ruling classes at the outbreak of World War I, these ostensible socialists are nothing but social-chauvinists "who are helping 'their own' bourgeoisie to rob other countries and enslave other nations" (V.I. Lenin, "Opportunism and the Collapse of the Second International," January 1916).

Holding elections to the EU's sham "parliament" on 23 May was an open display of ruling-class contempt for the populace. Reflecting working-class resentment over this farce, the CPB called for a "people's boycott" of the elections. But lest the "people's boycott" be mistaken for genuine opposition to the EU, in an 18 May article in the *Morning Star*, CPB general secretary Robert Griffiths insisted: "It is not a question of opposing partici-

pation in EU elections in principle." Griffiths *upheld* the party's previous campaigns for the EU "parliament," which he falsely equated with standing for election to the actual Parliament in Westminster.

The so-called EU "parliament" is not a parliament at all. It is a forum for diplomatic manoeuvring which the European imperialists use to falsely present their cartel as a democratic union transcending the nation state. Any participation in EU "parliament" elections is a betrayal of the principle of proletarian class independence. Such participation can only mean seeking to serve as a diplomatic representative of a capitalist state and promoting illusions that the imperialists' treaties reflect the interests of the population as a whole (see "Down With the EU! No Participation in Its Pseudo-Parliament!", *WV* No. 1154, 3 May).

When the CPB is not explicitly defending participation in EU bodies, their support for Brexit comes down to a defence of British sovereignty. So for example, as reported in the *Morning Star* (22 March), Griffiths groused about "the governments of Germany and France telling us when we can leave and on what terms," which he gives as an example of "the power of the EU opposed to popular sovereignty."

To state the obvious, if the British rulers wanted to, they could leave the EU tomorrow. Britain is not an oppressed country like Ireland or Greece, dominated by imperialist powers; it is an imperialist power in its own right, albeit a senile and decrepit one. Britain has remained in the EU not from any lack of national sovereignty but because the British imperialists want to keep their fingers in the pie.

It is *the bourgeoisie in this country* that tramples on the democratic aspirations of the population. As the 1919 Platform of the Communist International explains:

"The highly touted general 'will of the people' is no more real than national unity. In reality, classes confront each other with antagonistic, irreconcilable wills. But since the bourgeoisie is a small minority, it needs this fiction, this illusion of a national 'will of the people,' these high-sounding words, to consolidate its rule over the working class and impose its own class will on the proletariat."

Peter Taaffe's Brexit Crisis

The Socialist Party (SP), whose predecessor the Militant tendency spent decades buried in the Labour Party, calls for Jeremy Corbyn to implement a "socialist," "pro-worker" Brexit. This is obviously absurd, given that *Corbyn supports the EU*. At the same time, the SP echoes Corbyn's opposition to a "damaging Tory Brexit." For example, the March 2018 editorial in *Socialism Today* insists: "The workers' movement must maintain an independent class opposition to a Tory Brexit, 'soft,' 'hard' or 'no deal'." All this comes down to *opposing Brexit when it's actually posed*. To paraphrase Lewis Carroll's White Queen, it's Brexit tomorrow and Brexit yesterday—but never Brexit today. No surprise from an organisation whose Irish section served in the EU's fraudulent "parliament" for years!

The SP also does its part to bolster support for the EU by parroting the doom-mongering of the remainers over the dangers of "a chaotic 'no-deal' Brexit," for instance in the 10 April editorial in the *Socialist*. The EU treaties have meant crushing austerity for working people across Europe. Their rollback would be a *blow against* imperialist devastation. And the SP doesn't just panic-monger over the potential economic consequences of Brexit. The Taaffeites in both Britain and Ireland are busy whipping up fears that leaving the EU will result in a "hard border" on the island of Ireland, warning, for example, that "However a physical border is re-established, it would inflame sectarian tensions" (*Socialism Today*, May 2019).



Anadolu

SP's *Socialist*, SWP's *Socialist Worker* and Communist Party's *Unity*! claim to support Brexit but call to replace Tory government with one led by Labour Party head Jeremy "Vote Remain" Corbyn.

Tiananmen...

(continued from page 2)

the legitimacy of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Hence, the historic instability of China, the Soviet Union and other bureaucratically degenerated/deformed workers states.

The *Far Eastern Economic Review* (22 June) quotes one observer:

“This leadership is politically unstable and will remain unstable. Whatever arrangements are made now—once Deng dies it will come unglued. Everybody in China knows this. And everybody knows that everybody knows.”

The bureaucracy is rent, with those favoring a crackdown in the ascendancy over those who sought to co-opt the student protests. The army is divided as well. Despite the provocative repression, which pales in comparison to the bloodletting of the Cultural Revolution, not to mention the 1927 Shanghai massacre under Chiang Kai-shek’s Kuomintang, attempts to organize independent student and labor groups will no doubt continue. But the indispensable condition for workers’ victory is the construction of a Trotskyist party, raising the banner of Bolshevik internationalism against the Stalinist fraud of building “socialism in one country” or “with capitalist methods.”

For Bolshevik Internationalism!

Parallel with the death sentences meted out to workers, Deng’s regime is conducting a Big Lie campaign, the scope of which is outdone only by its cynicism. The Tiananmen Square massacre “never happened,” claims Li Peng. At the same

time, the Deng regime is trying to appeal to Chinese nationalism and xenophobia by blaming the “riots” on “bourgeois liberal” ideas imported from the West, while denouncing the U.S. in particular for “interfering” in China’s affairs.

To be sure, many of the students displayed illusions in Western-style “democracy.” At the same time, they repeatedly sang the *Internationale*, the international socialist workers anthem. But it is the Deng regime itself which has fostered illusions by its military alliance with American imperialism against the Soviet Union and its glorification of Western capitalism, while unleashing powerful internal forces toward capitalist restoration. A few years ago the president of the New York Stock Exchange visited Beijing to advise the government on setting up a stock and bond market. The head of the Bank of China greeted this personification of Wall Street with the honorific title of “elder brother.” Is it any wonder, then, that many students—who for the most part are children of the ruling bureaucracy—idealize capitalist America?

For its part, U.S. imperialism certainly did not incite the protest movement but rather was deeply embarrassed by it. The Bush White House is torn between maintaining its military alliance with the Chinese Stalinists against the USSR and exploiting the Beijing massacre for anti-Communist purposes. Thus the U.S. embassy in Beijing has harbored the pro-Western dissident Fang Lizhi while Bush merely “deplored” the June 4 massacre and temporarily restricted military cooperation with the People’s Republic. And

U.S. capitalists and financiers are not about to cut back their lucrative business dealings with Deng’s China.

Nonetheless, the events of June 4 have to some degree changed the attitude of American imperialism toward the People’s Republic of China. The U.S. ruling class believes, with some justification, that the massacre and ensuing repression will greatly increase anti-Communist sentiment in China. They dream of counterrevolution in the not-so-distant future. Thus the *New York Times* (19 June) quotes, with evident approval, a senior Communist Party leader who predicts that “it will be the reaction to Deng in his later years that ends the system of socialism in China.” Of course, the bourgeois media *always* equates Stalinism with communism, and the overthrow of Stalinist rule with capitalist restoration. Yet Chinese workers want to *preserve and defend* the social achievements of the Chinese Revolution—guaranteed employment (“the iron rice bowl”), a stable cost of living and a relatively egalitarian society.

While the working masses of China enthusiastically supported the 1949 Revolution, they have become ever more alienated from the Maoist-Stalinist bureaucracy. The bond between the people and the Communist Party created by the revolution was broken during the Cultural Revolution—the bloody factional and clique warfare launched and manipulated by Chairman Mao. While unleashing massive demonstrations of student youth, the bureaucrats feared the spectre of workers in revolt. When Shanghai workers organized a “Workers Headquarters”

at a mass rally in 1966, and 2,500 of them commandeered a train to take their demands directly to Mao in Beijing, the head of the Central Cultural Revolution Group, Ch’en Po-ta, insisted:

“As workers, their main job is to work. Joining in the Revolution is only secondary. They must therefore go back to work. They can take part in the Revolution outside working hours.” —quoted in Neale Hunter, *Shanghai Journal* (1969)

Yet there remained a deep loyalty to the People’s Republic, indicated by the universal belief that the People’s Liberation Army would never fire on the people. Thus the Tiananmen Square massacre is a truly traumatic experience for China. The present repression may restore a certain surface stability to China for awhile. The working class has been forced back but has by no means been crushed. The unemployment, inflation and gross inequality spawned by Deng’s “reforms” will continue to fuel popular discontent. As Beijing tries to pay peasants for the fall harvest with worthless IOUs, famine looms. And with an estimated 100 million excess rural laborers, many of whom wander from place to place, it could provoke a mammoth peasant revolt.

The Deng regime is doddering, brittle and now widely hated. The only road forward remains the proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy, combined with socialist revolution against capitalist rule—not least in Hong Kong, Taiwan and strategic Japan. For Lenin’s Communism! For a Chinese Trotskyist Party, section of a reformed Fourth International. ■

Ireland has been divided by a border since British imperialism partitioned the island in 1921. To talk of this border being “re-established” is reformist nonsense, promoting the myth that the EU has somehow transcended the national divisions among its member states and brought peace. The British imperialists exercise control over the border of Northern Ireland, as do the Southern Irish bourgeoisie. Dark-skinned people and Republicans are regularly subject to harassment when crossing the border. In the Brexit negotiations, it is the *German imperialists* who have been demanding that the Republic of Ireland act as the customs guard for the single market as they and the British compete over the subjugation of Ireland.

As revolutionary socialist James Connolly predicted, the partition of Ireland resulted in a “carnival of reaction.” Since its inception, Northern Ireland has been an Orange statelet based on the oppression of the Catholic minority, part of the Irish Catholic nation. Catholics still live under constant fear of violence from Loyalist thugs as well as from the RUC/PSNI [Royal Ulster Constabulary/Police Service of Northern Ireland] backed up by the British army. The 1998 Good Fri-

day Agreement, which was premised on the continued presence of British troops, copper-fastened sectarian divisions and Catholic oppression, while not doing the Protestant working class any good either.

We stand for mobilising the working class—both Protestant and Catholic—against Catholic oppression and British imperialism as part of the struggle for the proletariat to liberate itself from capitalism. At the same time, we recognise that until capitalism is overthrown, there can be no equitable solution to the conflicting aspirations of the Irish Catholic nation and the Protestant community. Our perspective is for an Irish workers republic, part of a voluntary federation of workers republics in the British Isles, leaving open where the Protestants may fall.

In contrast, the inveterate Labourites of the Socialist Party deny the threat that the repressive forces of British imperialism pose to working people, while railing against Republicans. In what could pass for a Home Office press release, an article titled “Brexit and the Irish Border: A Warning to the Workers’ Movement” on their Northern Irish affiliate’s website says: “Dissident republicans would seek to exploit any border infrastructure, tar-

geting buildings and border staff with bomb and bullet” (socialistpartyni.org, 23 November 2018). The starting point for Marxists is to *oppose* their own ruling class and its forces of state repression, including “border staff.” We demand: *All British troops and bases out of Northern Ireland!*

SWP: Apostles for “Humanitarian” Imperialism

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) falsely present the immigration agreements between countries in the EU as “anti-racist” and demand that any Brexit deal retain the “freedom of movement” supposedly enshrined in the EU. “Freedom of movement” is a myth used by promoters of the EU to imply that borders no longer exist within the EU and that the imperialist alliance is a defender of immigrants.

Contrary to the SWP, control over borders is a basic prerogative of the state. No capitalist class will voluntarily relinquish control of its own borders, and individual states in the EU have not done so. The individual bourgeoisies assert their own rule, although for the weaker countries, their rule is curtailed by the imperialists. Insofar as a great power can force a weaker state to open its borders, this allows for increased penetration of imperialist capital and eliminates the sovereignty of the weaker country, as has been the case with Greece and Eastern Europe under the EU. For the many thousands of migrants languishing in concentration camps in Greece and elsewhere set up at the behest of Germany and the other imperialist powers, the idea that the EU grants “free movement” is a macabre joke.

Marxists do not have a positive programme for immigration within the framework of capitalism, and certainly not one based on upholding aspects of the imperialist-dominated EU! To advance the unity and fighting capacity of the international proletariat, we demand full citizenship rights for everyone who has made it to this country and call for the trade unions to organise foreign-born workers on a full and equal basis. No deportations! At the same time, the communist perspective to address the poverty, unemployment and economic devastation of oppressed countries is not emigration to the rich countries, but a struggle against the imperialist oppression that ravages

their home countries. Only international proletarian revolution can lay the basis for the elimination of scarcity and for the withering away of the state, and with it borders themselves.

There is a sharp contradiction between the global market created by capitalism and the nation-state through which capitalism developed. Individual capitalist states, each ruled by a national bourgeoisie, have long been an obstacle to the expansion of the productive forces. This contradiction cannot be resolved under capitalism. Only through a series of socialist revolutions can the proletariat end capitalism and open the road to a world without exploitation and oppression. The working class in power will develop an internationally planned, collectivised economy enabling a vast increase in the productivity of labour and the end of material scarcity.

The necessary instrument to bring the working class to power is a Leninist vanguard party comprising the most dedicated and class-conscious layers of the proletariat, a section in Britain of a reformed Trotskyist Fourth International. Such a party can only be built through the most intransigent struggle against all political currents that seek to subordinate the working class to the interests of its capitalist exploiters. ■

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Trade War...

(continued from page 1)

so-called Thucydides Trap, a term popularized by Harvard academic Graham Allison. Harking back to the war between Sparta and Athens in ancient Greece, which the historian Thucydides explained was based on the latter’s rise as a new power, Allison et al. project an inevitable clash between today’s rising power (China) and the declining hegemon (the United States).

Allison’s dime-store analysis is adopted wholesale by the ostensible socialists of *Left Voice*, a U.S. publication associated with the Trotskyist Fraction-Fourth International. Describing the trade war as “a competition between two capitalist powers,” these reformists opine that “China’s explosive growth and technological development puts it on a collision course with the United States for economic, political and military hegemony” (“The U.S.-China Trade War and the Race for Global Hegemony,” 12 June). For their part, the Committee for a Workers’ International (Socialist Alternative in the U.S.) has for years labeled China as not only capitalist but a rising imperialist force. The bourgeois ideologues and their chorus on the left provide cover for the U.S. rulers’ brazen aggression and obscure the *class conflict* driving the imperialists’ economic and military campaign against China.

The strategic goal of the U.S. and other capitalist powers is to overturn the 1949 Revolution that smashed capitalist rule and liberated China from their bloody claws. After years of peasant-based guerrilla war, the CCP under Mao Zedong came to power as Chiang Kai-shek’s reactionary, U.S.-backed Guomindang forces fell apart and fled to Taiwan. The new regime distributed landlords’ holdings to peasants and went on to expropriate the capitalists and build a collectivized economy with central planning. Although marked by bureaucratic caprice, the socialization of the economy led to enormous advances for the workers and peasants in what had been a miserably poor country. Some 40 years of “market reforms” have brought substantial foreign capitalist investment, galloping official corruption and a nascent indigenous bourgeoisie, along with significant economic growth. Nevertheless, China’s economy remains centrally based on nationalized industry and banking.

The 1949 Revolution was a historic gain for the world proletariat. But the workers state that issued out of it was deformed by the rule of the parasitic CCP bureaucracy, which from the beginning has politically suppressed the working class. Modeled on Stalin’s bureaucracy in the former Soviet Union, the CCP regime from Mao’s time on has sown the illusion that China on its own can achieve socialism—a society of material abundance—if only given the time. The necessary corollary to this dogma of “socialism in one country” is “peaceful coexistence” with the capitalist world, especially the imperialist powers. The Stalinist program, a nationalist perversion of Marxism, is both utopian and reactionary, opposing the fight for workers revolution internationally in order to accommodate imperialism.

We Trotskyists of the International Communist League call for workers political revolution to oust the CCP bureaucracy and install a regime of proletarian democracy: the rule of workers and peasants councils. To defend and extend the gains of the 1949 Revolution, such a regime would strengthen central economic planning and re-establish a state monopoly of foreign trade while renegotiating the terms of foreign investment to benefit the workers. We also call to



AFP

Chinese defense minister Wei Fenghe denounces U.S. bullying at Singapore summit, June 2. Right: U.S. destroyer patrols South China Sea with allied forces, May 5.

reunify China through socialist revolution in Taiwan and political revolution on the mainland, and to expropriate the tycoons in Hong Kong, which is an integral part of China. Our perspective hinges on the struggle for workers revolution in the U.S. and other capitalist countries, which would end imperialist domination once and for all and lay the basis for a world socialist order.

The CCP Regime and the World Capitalist Market

The trade/tech war against China illuminates the contradictions of a Stalinist-ruled workers state operating in a world dominated by a handful of advanced capitalist (imperialist) countries. Take, for example, the CCP’s “Made in China 2025” program. It aims for China, which currently relies on foreign manufacturers for 90 percent of the high-speed microchips it uses in its factories, to fabricate such items itself. A good part of this development would come through foreign acquisitions as well as trade. But as the campaign against Huawei shows, the U.S. is dead set on blocking that path. In response, Beijing is reportedly strengthening state control over its tech industry, and Huawei has plans to create its own smartphone operating system to replace Google’s Android.

The imperialists have their own contradictions in dealing with China. Unlike last century’s Cold War against the Soviet Union, a degenerated workers state, what has been widely dubbed a “new cold war” is aimed at a major trading partner of the capitalist countries. This gives Beijing room to maneuver, to a point. While some U.S. allies have joined in banning Huawei, Germany as of now continues to look to the company to build out its 5G network upgrade. At the same time, as a leading producer of precision machine tools, Germany howled when in 2016 a Chinese firm purchased the German Kuka robotics company, which outfits auto plants worldwide. Meanwhile, Germany and France have moved to stop China from buying more ports and other infrastructure in Europe as part of its One Belt, One Road program, an effort to massively expand trade avenues.

More to the point is the “Chinese Dream” announced by Xi Jinping when he took office in 2012: the goal of China becoming a *xiaokang* (moderately prosperous) society in the short term and eventually reaching parity with the advanced capitalist economies, hopefully by the 100th anniversary of the 1949 Revolution. There has been enormous development in the People’s Republic of China, as seen today in everything from steel and electric car manufacturing to its extensive high-speed rail system and even medical and space technology. This progress speaks to the superiority of a collectivized economy over the capitalist boom-bust system of production for profit.

Yet there remains a *qualitative* gap between the advanced capitalist economies and China’s. As of last December, China’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 57 percent of that of the U.S., a massive rise over 20 years ago, when it barely topped 10 percent. But with four times the American population, China has a current per capita GDP that is only one-seventh of that of the U.S. That statistic is a true measure of the huge difference in labor productivity between the two countries.



Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force

This disparity has much to do with the fact that despite recent rapid urbanization, a bit under half of China’s population still lives in the countryside, with its relatively backward farming methods.

From Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels to V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, communists have understood that achieving socialism requires *surpassing* the highest productivity of labor possible under capitalism in order to eliminate scarcity and thereby all class divisions. The prerequisite to such a leap forward is to sweep away the capitalist ruling classes through workers revolutions and to harness the most modern technology in a world planned economy.

Opposed to this perspective, the CCP bureaucratic caste plays a delicate balancing act, parasitically resting atop the workers state, from which it derives its privileges, while transmitting the pressures of the capitalist world market onto China. Thus, if the Xi regime caves in to the imperialists, this could cause an eruption of anger at home. Already, the CCP faces thousands of strikes and protests annually, due mainly to the effects of “market reforms.” The bureaucracy dreads the specter of the 1989 “Beijing Spring,” when student protests in Tiananmen Square developed into a broad working-class upsurge. The key missing factor in this incipient political revolution was a Leninist-Trotskyist party that could lead the workers to power (see page 2).

Chinese in U.S. Face Racist Blowback

With the winds of economic war rising, Beijing warned Chinese citizens this month that U.S. law enforcement has been harassing Chinese nationals “through border interrogations, drop-in visits and various other means.” Chinese in the U.S. are indeed facing virulent racism stoked by the government. In February 2018, FBI director Christopher Wray lashed out at Chinese scientists, professors and students in the U.S. as potential spies for Beijing. As the White House tightened restrictions on their visas, Chinese students on American campuses have been victimized for just speaking their native tongue. A report on the harassment of Chinese speakers at Duke University posted on a website in China got millions of hits. We say: U.S. government hands off Chinese students, researchers, tourists!

The Committee of 100, an elite organization of Chinese Americans in business, government and academia, cogently compared Wray’s fearmongering to past racist campaigns, such as the World War II internment of Japanese Americans and the 1990s frame-up of Taiwanese-born scientist Wen Ho Lee. (On the latter, see “‘Chinese Spy’ Hysteria Whips Up Anti-Asian Racism,” WV No. 719, 17 September 1999.) Those atrocities were carried out under the Democratic Party administrations of Franklin D. Roosevelt and Bill Clinton.

This time around, the Democrats are eagerly helping Trump’s Republicans foment anti-Chinese hysteria. One specific target is the China Railway Rolling Stock Corporation (CRRC), a state-owned company that is producing rail cars for Boston, Chicago and other cities. CRRC is the world’s largest manufacturer of passenger rail cars, which the U.S. stopped making decades ago. After work began last year

at a CRRC plant in Springfield, Massachusetts, making subway cars for Boston’s MBTA, Sheet Metal Workers Local 63 business agent John Scavotto worried that Trump’s China-bashing would lead to the plant being closed. “There’s over 120 union workers from Springfield,” he told WGBH radio in October. “You’re going to possibly put them out of work.”

Right. But it’s not just Trump. In March, a bipartisan Senate group introduced a bill that would restrict transit agencies from using federal funds to buy rail cars or buses made by companies linked to the Chinese government. CRRC has also won a design contest for upgrading New York City subway cars. Anyone who works on or rides that decrepit system, which the capitalists have starved of funds for decades, knows it desperately needs the company’s expertise. But up jumps Democratic New York Senator Charles Schumer to demand a “top-to-bottom review” so that CRRC doesn’t implant any espionage devices! The old Cold Warriors screamed about “reds under the beds.” Now it’s spy-cams on the A train.

However laughable, Schumer’s tirades have a purpose. Tales of Chinese spying are part of an ideological offensive aimed at getting American workers and the population as a whole behind the drive for capitalist counterrevolution in China. Leading that campaign is the same U.S. capitalist class that has waged decades of war against workers at home, driven by the same purpose of increasing their obscene profits and solidifying their rule. Schumer’s fellow Democratic Senator, Chris Coons of Delaware, chortled that being hawkish on China today is “comparable to the 1950s when there was no downside, politically, to being anti-Soviet” (*Economist*, 18 May).

The anti-China crusade is backed by the labor traitors at the top of the trade-union bureaucracy, such as the United Steelworkers leadership, which early on cheered the tariffs imposed on Chinese steel. Loyal to the capitalist system and to U.S. imperialism, the American labor officialdom sees a threat in the massive expansion of industrial production in China in recent decades. The labor movement needs a leadership based on a program of class struggle, opposition to the capitalist Democratic and Republican parties and militant solidarity with workers abroad. Such a leadership would welcome the growth of Chinese industry as enhancing the potential for a planned global economy with a rational division of labor under workers rule.

Marx and Engels closed the 1848 *Communist Manifesto* with the call, “Working men of all countries, unite!” This was not some pious wish but a statement that capitalism, in extending its reach globally, was creating an international proletariat with a common interest in replacing the system of production for profit with a collectivized economy. The October 1917 Russian Revolution led by the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky was the opening shot in the fight to realize that goal, which today requires socialist revolution in the U.S. and other capitalist countries and proletarian political revolution in China and the rest of the deformed workers states. The ICL dedicates itself to reforging Trotsky’s Fourth International to carry that struggle forward. ■

NOTICE

Workers Vanguard skips alternate issues in June, July and August.

Our next issue will be dated July 26.

NYC Schools...

(continued from page 8)

more than 90 percent black and Latino, where students have higher drop-out and lower graduation rates. From kindergarten, children are tested and tracked. In addition to the elite high schools, some 200 middle and high schools screen students for admission based on grades and test scores. The citywide system of “school choice” is a fraud—those parents and students with the means have choice, while those without the means have almost none.

At a May forum on school diversity in heavily Latino Washington Heights, youth called for eliminating the divide between their prison-like schools lacking basic supplies and the plush specialized schools. On June 6, in a multiracial rally in Manhattan, hundreds of students chanted: “Hey, hey, ho, ho, segregation has got to go!” Placards read, “Integration Is an Education,” drawing on some of the slogans from the 1964 school boycott.

Demonstrating his utter contempt for desegregation, last year de Blasio declared that the 1970s attempt to integrate the Boston school system through busing “absolutely poisoned the well.” Meanwhile, NYC education chancellor Richard Carranza, who claims to be for school desegregation, said that busing students from one part of the city to another was “way, way, way far away.” Although not a panacea, as a partial step toward equality busing would at least improve the school options for black and Latino students.

The Boston busing crisis was a front line in the fight for elementary democratic rights for black people. Busing in Boston was bloodily smashed by racist mobs in the streets abetted by liberal Congressional Democrats, who designed the program to fail by busing black children to poor white neighborhoods, and vice versa, rather than to wealthier suburbs. At the time, we called to extend busing to the suburbs so poor kids, black and white, could have a shot at a better education. In the face of the howling racists, we called on the integrated union movement to mobilize labor/black defense of besieged black youth. The defeat of busing opened the floodgates to a nationwide assault on school desegregation, foreshadowing the rollback of the hard-won gains of the civil rights movement.

No reform under capitalism can fundamentally transform the social conditions that continue to imprison the impoverished black masses in the segregated ghettos and inner-city projects, where the lack of affordable, quality housing is connected to the hellish conditions of schools. Showing his true colors on school desegregation, de Blasio in 2017 cried, “We cannot change the basic reality of housing” in the city. But de Blasio has very much intensified “the basic reality of housing” segregation. Billions are dished out by the city to real estate magnates who throw up luxury skyscrapers, while slumlords hike up rents and drive working people and the poor out of gentrifying neighborhoods. As

the homeless population in NYC continues to swell, one in ten public school students is in temporary housing, including homeless shelters.

Against Capitalist Divide-and-Rule

Within the framework of the capitalist status quo, funding for education and other social services is rationed in a way that deliberately fans racial and ethnic tensions. The intense competition over the limited seats at the NYC specialized schools is a case in point. Today, nearly two-thirds of the current student body at these schools is Asian, and parental opposition to scrapping the SHSAT is strong among segments of this highly diverse population that traces its origins to the Far East or the Indian subcontinent. Last December, the Chinese American Citi-

ocratic Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan infamously blamed black oppression on a supposed lack of family values, which he contrasted to the “enlightened family life” of Asian Americans. Such pernicious stereotypes also disappear national and class differences among Asians. In NYC alone, some quarter-million Asians live in poverty.

Marxists strive to break down the racial and ethnic divisions sown by the capitalist exploiters, which weaken the working class. Unity in struggle against the common class enemy is in no way automatic but must be fought for, including by combating both anti-immigrant chauvinism and anti-black racism. Working people must be won to the recognition that the fight for black freedom is in their interests and fundamental to razing the entire edifice of American capitalism. In turn,



Young Spartacus

In midst of Boston busing crisis, Spartacist banner at rally for school integration calls for defense of Columbia Point housing project against race terror, 1974.

zens Alliance and Asian American Coalition for Education, backed by right-wing foundations, filed a lawsuit to block de Blasio’s interim plan to grant admission to black and Latino students who almost pass the SHSAT, claiming anti-Asian discrimination.

This country’s racist heritage includes the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and Japanese American internment camps during World War II. Asians, as well as Latinos and other predominantly non-white minorities, suffer oppression in capitalist America. However, as an intermediate layer, they navigate a society where the main racial divide is between black and white, and every institution is permeated by anti-black racism. The enduring color bar has proved invaluable to the capitalist masters, serving to pit workers against one another and to obscure the class line between the working class and its exploiters.

To this end, the rulers have long invoked the myth of the Asian “model minority” as a wedge against black people. As part of the Lyndon B. Johnson administration during the civil rights era, future Dem-

only the workers’ seizure of power and the establishment of their class rule can open the road to the eradication of all oppression.

For a Class-Struggle Perspective

Over the last four decades, public education has come under sustained bipartisan assault, from steep cutbacks to widespread school closures. The blame for the lack of learning and low test scores is cynically heaped on teachers and their unions. The Obama administration launched sweeping attacks on the public schools and the teachers unions packaged as education “reform,” which included a major expansion of the privately run charter industry.

Out of desperation over the deplorable state of inner-city public schools, many black parents have been manipulated into thinking that charters are some kind of answer. Notably, behind the Teens Take Charge program that organized the pro-integration rally on June 6 are alumni of Teach for America, one of the country’s largest pro-charter and anti-union forces. Opened in the poorest areas, and often on public school grounds, the overwhelmingly non-union charters are even more segregated than the public schools and notorious for vicious discipline and for excluding non-English speakers and dis-

abled students. The charter industry must be smashed through class struggle and its teachers and staff brought into the public schools and the unions; an important step in this direction would be for labor to organize the charters.

In a series of strikes across the country, beginning in West Virginia 15 months ago, teachers have shown a real appetite to fight back against the union-busters and privatizers. These walkouts over better pay and conditions found wide resonance within poor and minority communities and attracted broad support among students and parents, as well as some expressions of solidarity from other unions. By waging class struggle on behalf of both their livelihoods and their students, teachers made their cause that of the working people as a whole.

But the potential impact of these battles was largely squandered by the trade-union officialdom. The labor lieutenants of the capitalist class hitch the fortunes of the unions to the Democratic Party, thereby compromising teacher strikes. NYC’s United Federation of Teachers bureaucracy is particularly venal in its subservience to the Democrats, and is against abolishing the SHSAT. What is needed is a fight for a class-struggle leadership of the unions—one based on complete independence from the bosses and their political parties. This leadership would have as its perspective the building of a revolutionary workers party.

We Need a Workers Party!

Black and Latino workers make up a core component of organized labor across the country, including among NYC transit, sanitation and other municipal unions, whose members could shut down the center of U.S. finance capital by withholding their labor. Many of these workers attended NYC public schools and now have children enrolled there. They represent a living link between the social power of labor and the anger of the downtrodden ghetto and barrio masses.

The multiracial working class as a whole confronts the same prospect of immiseration and hopelessness that is inflicted in a more intensified form on the bulk of the black population. Workers have every interest in mobilizing to fight for quality, integrated education and housing. But it will take a leap in consciousness and organization for the proletariat to bring its power to bear in the fight for such demands, which must be linked to the struggle for its own emancipation from capitalist wage slavery.

Namely, it will take the intervention of a vanguard workers party acting as a tribune of the people. Such a party would be guided by the program of revolutionary integrationism: a proletarian-centered struggle against every manifestation of racial oppression based on the understanding that the complete integration and equality of black people can be realized only in an egalitarian socialist society. Over 150 years since the Civil War, many black people despair of integration, which the rulers cynically equate with “diversity.” The Spartacist League is dedicated to forging the workers party that is 70 percent black, Latino and other minorities to sweep away the entire system of racist capitalist oppression. *For black liberation through socialist revolution! Finish the Civil War!* ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Tear Up Racist Elite High School Admissions Test!

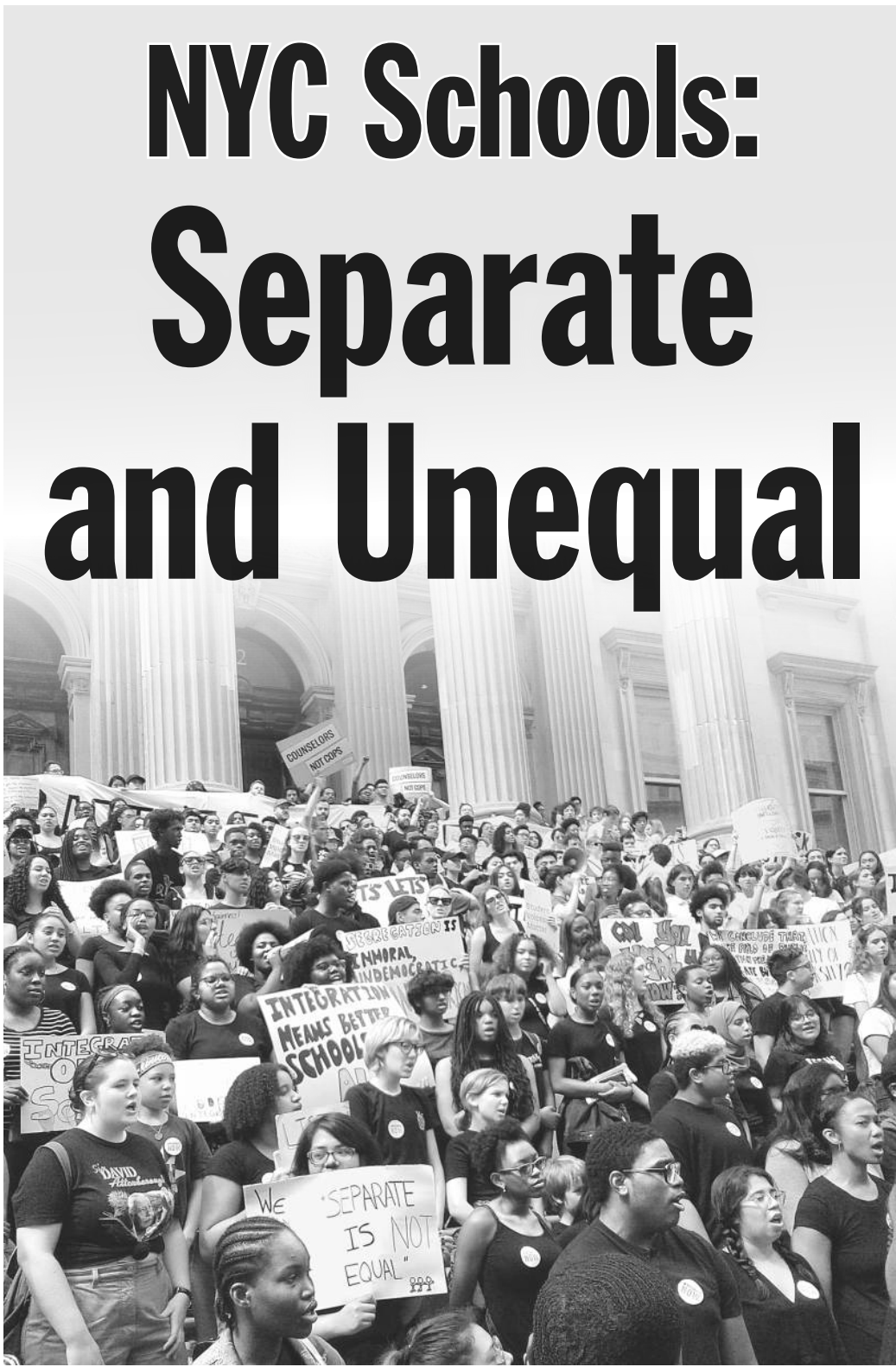
A token proposal by New York City's Democratic mayor Bill de Blasio to give a tiny fraction of black and Latino youth greater access to eight elite public high schools has touched a raw nerve in one of the country's most racially segregated school systems. Underscoring the profound racial inequality intrinsic to education in capitalist America, the student body at NYC's most prestigious public school, Stuyvesant, will this fall be less than 1 percent black. And the segregated schools are just one part of the living nightmare for black people who face daily police terror, low-wage jobs, abysmal housing, and little to no health care in a system founded on black oppression.

Wringing their hands over school segregation, liberal bourgeois politicians in the Democratic Party push diversity schemes—like a scattering of a few more black and brown faces—to sell the lie that they stand for the interests of the oppressed black and Latino masses. De Blasio has proposed phasing out the Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT), currently the only way to gain entrance to one of these elite schools, which are lavished with government funding and provide the kind of quality education and college counselor connections that offer a path to the Ivy League. Instead, seats would be given to the top 7 percent of students from each of the city's middle schools, a measure that would increase black and Latino enrollment. Any such plan that provides even a modicum of greater access to quality education for these youth should be supported. **Down with the SHSAT!**

At the same time, in a school system of over 1.1 million students that is 70 percent black and Latino, the vast majority would still be confined to decrepit schools that are little more than holding pens with metal detectors, surveillance cameras and “zero tolerance” enforced by armed NYPD officers. De Blasio is well aware that his plan is unlikely to pass the NY State legislature in Albany, where many Democratic lawmakers voted to set up the SHSAT in the 1970s to exclude black youth from the top NYC schools. Predictably, even this minimal gesture has become a lightning rod for racist reaction. Filthy rich New Yorkers like billionaire cosmetics mogul Ron Lauder and the black former chairman of Time Warner and Citigroup, Richard Parsons, have poured millions into efforts to preserve the test.

Every child in New York City and across the country, whatever their background, deserves to attend a school with the level of resources allocated to Stuyvesant. There is a crying need for a class-struggle fight for free, quality, integrated public education for all up to and including the universities! This fight must include the demand for bilingual education in every language spoken by students, which is vital for all Spanish-speaking and immigrant communities, and would benefit native English speakers as well. Competitive screening, “tracking” systems and specialized schools, set up to enforce and exacerbate the class and racial divisions in this society, should be eliminated. To provide real access to higher education,

NYC Schools: Separate and Unequal



Students rally for school integration outside NYC Department of Education, June 6. WV Photo

Labor: Fight for Quality Integrated Public Education!

we call for open admissions, no tuition and state-paid living stipends for all students, as well as the nationalization of the private universities.

There is no shortage of wealth in this country to massively fund public education. The problem is that the wealth and the reins of this society are in the hands of a tiny capitalist class, which spends on educating working-class and minority youth only what it considers necessary for maintaining the workings of the profit-driven system. With the destruction of hundreds of thousands of unionized industrial jobs in recent decades, the capitalist rulers have deemed the poor, especially black youth, an expendable population. The one force with the social power and interest

to seize the wealth of society is the multiracial working class—and that can only be done by overthrowing the rule of the bourgeoisie through socialist revolution.

The fight to create genuinely equal education must be waged by working people independently of and in opposition to the Democratic Party. The Democrats, no less than the openly labor-hating, racist Republicans, are enemies of the exploited and oppressed. De Blasio has proven, time and again, that he is the mayor of Wall Street, ruling on behalf of NYC's financial titans who lord it over the working class—white, black and immigrant. Meanwhile, liberal darling Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez couldn't even muster a pretense of opposing the SHSAT at a heated

Queens town hall meeting on public schools in March, and black NYC public advocate Jumaane Williams, who touts his “progressive” credentials, has vocally defended the test. **Break with the Democrats! For a workers party that fights for a workers government!**

Race, Class and Education

The appalling state of public education in the U.S. is the product of a social system built on the bedrock of black chattel slavery. Where it was once a crime punishable by death to teach a slave to read, the 1861-65 Civil War that smashed the Southern slaveryocracy opened the way for public education for all, including poor whites. The freed slaves and their allies made the fight for education central to their struggle for the full social emancipation of black people. But the defeat of Radical Reconstruction, the most democratic period in U.S. history, led to the consolidation of black people as a specially oppressed race-color caste, the vast majority of whom remain forcibly segregated at the bottom of U.S. society. While a thin layer of black people has achieved a degree of financial security, for the mass of the black population upward social mobility is nil.

The heroic struggles of the 1950s and '60s civil rights movement attempted to remove the formal legal inequalities imposed on black people in America. The landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court ruling struck down the doctrine of “separate but equal” for schools that had been segregated by law in the Jim Crow South. But the civil rights movement did not redress *systemic* racial oppression, not least in education, at the core of U.S. capitalism. Its liberal leadership, such as Martin Luther King Jr., sought legal reforms through pressuring the capitalist Democrats and courts, the very forces maintaining de facto segregation. In the North, the bourgeoisie kept black people out of the best jobs, housing and schools without resorting to Jim Crow laws. In 1965, black writer James Baldwin pithily remarked: “De facto segregation means Negroes are segregated, but nobody did it.”

New York City's own battle for school desegregation reached a fever pitch in 1964 amid tumultuous struggles for decent housing and jobs and against rampant cop terror. A massive school boycott that year by black and Puerto Rican parents and students was one of the largest civil rights demonstrations on record. After a racist backlash, Democratic Party politicians and black civil rights leaders caved and abandoned the battle. As we noted at the time, when the struggle for black rights develops a mass character, it poses a direct threat to the capitalist system itself but cannot go forward without a revolutionary leadership (see “Negro Struggle in the North,” *Spartacist* No. 2, July-August 1964).

Today, over six decades after the Little Rock Nine broke through the color bar in an Arkansas school, New York's school system is more segregated than those in the Deep South. Half of NYC schools are

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