

## No Illusions in Democrats! For a Workers Party!

# UAW: Fight to Win!

### No to Union Tops' "America Only" Chauvinism!

OCTOBER 15—Yesterday the United Auto Workers (UAW) leadership summoned the local officials who sit on the National GM Council to a Thursday meeting in Detroit. A tentative settlement in the month-long strike against the GM auto giant may soon be announced. Striking union members have held firm, expressing a willingness to fight for as long as it takes, despite the hardship of not receiving a paycheck. By collectively withholding their labor, auto workers have hit the profit-hungry bosses where it hurts—GM's strike-related losses are nearing \$2 billion. This crucial labor battle should end with the company capitulating. Picket lines must stay up until contract terms are approved by UAW members.

By all indications, the membership is at risk of being sold short at the negotiating table, including on two core issues of the strike: temporary workers and wage tiers. The prevailing opinion of the UAW ranks is no secret. Miserably low-paid, highly vulnerable temporary employment is unacceptable, an abuse of those workers and corrosive to the union. There should be *equal pay for equal work*. But, with the company pushing to expand the pool of temps, the union leadership has limited itself to seeking "a path for temporary employees becoming seniority members." To hell with paths to nowhere! If the automaker maintains temps, they will remain second-class union members without recourse against firing. A stand must be taken now for *an end to temporary employment and the hated tier system*.

Everyone should enjoy the best pay, benefits and job protections.

At this critical juncture, the UAW could gain a decisive upper hand by unleashing all its forces and extending the strike to Ford and Fiat Chrysler (FCA). With the future of the union *on the line*, many Ford and FCA workers have helped man the pickets at Detroit-Hamtramck and other GM plants. But the UAW leadership has extended their contracts indefinitely, keeping these fellow union members on the job under conditions of forced overtime. The two companies are just stockpiling vehicle inventory in order to withstand potential strike action. The combined struggle of Big Three auto workers would pack a serious punch and give UAW members, including the striking Aramark janitors at GM plants, more leverage to win their demands sooner. *Extend GM Strike to Ford, Fiat Chrysler!*

Three days ago, over 3,600 UAW members in three states went on strike against Mack Trucks for the first time in 35 years, seeking better pay and job protections. Using the strike weapon is how union members can defend themselves and their livelihoods, and score victories that resonate more widely. All the major gains that workers have ever won were achieved by mobilizing the ranks of labor in hard-fought struggle on the picket lines and in plant occupations.

Mass pickets that no scab dares cross outside Big Three plant gates, as well as off-site parking lots, would cut off Ford and FCA from vehicle inventory (and GM from any that remains). A fighting UAW



Jim West/ZUMA

**October 11: Striking UAW members at GM Technical Center picket in Warren, Michigan. The strike has now entered its fifth week.**

leadership would mobilize the 150,000 workers who are on layoff at parts suppliers and other sections of the industry impacted by the GM strike. This would also give momentum to organizing the legions of non-union parts plants, where the automakers dictate terms. Other trade unionists and supporters from working-class, black and Latino communities would also be encouraged to help make the picket lines impassable.

Yet the UAW bureaucrats are today doing everything to isolate and *not* win the GM strike. They have kept the picket lines largely symbolic, allowing scab truckers and others to cross at will, and have strictly abided by court orders to limit picketing and rein in union militants. By adhering to what is deemed

acceptable to the bosses and their state, the UAW tops have allowed GM to move a lot of product to dealerships. In deference to a "no strike" pledge, the union misleaders are hustling GM Subsystems workers (represented by the UAW but under separate contract) across the lines to report to work. Contracts, like treaties, can be broken. Management does it all the time. Words on paper cannot save jobs, and neither should they be an excuse to make a mockery of picket lines.

All the activity of the UAW officialdom, from diluting the picket lines to proposing a continuation of temp labor, flows from its basic political outlook: the lie that workers and their employer share a common interest in the company's profitability.

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# U.S. Imperialism Out of Syria!

OCTOBER 15—At least 160,000 people displaced; hundreds of Kurdish fighters and civilians slaughtered; whole cities besieged, bombarded by Turkish warplanes and artillery, surrounded by Turkish troops and their Arab allies. While the bloodbath currently taking place in Syrian Kurdistan (Rojava) is at the hands of the regime of Turkish strongman

Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the carnage is at bottom a consequence of U.S. imperialist intervention in the Near East. It was the U.S. that upended the region with its bloody invasion and occupation of Iraq starting in 2003 and that stoked the fires

of the devastating Syrian civil war beginning in 2011. That in turn laid the groundwork for the growth of Islamist forces in the area, including the cutthroats of the Islamic State (ISIS). Responsibility for the current situation also lies with the Kurdish nationalist leaders of the People's Protection Committees (YPG), the military arm of the Democratic Union

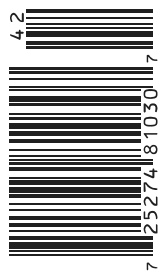
Party (PYD), which have acted as tools of the U.S. imperialists.

These Kurdish misleaders subordinated the interests of the Kurdish masses to those of U.S. imperialism, a staunch enemy of the working and oppressed peoples of the Near East and of Kurdish self-determination. In late 2014, the "leftist" PYD/YPG entered into a mili-

tary alliance with Washington, serving as ground troops for the U.S. in Syria and tying the fortunes of the Kurdish population to the American war against ISIS.

The Turkish assault began on October 9, shortly after the Trump administration gave it the nod by announcing the withdrawal of a small contingent of U.S.

*continued on page 2*



Syria...

(continued from page 1)

troops from northern Syria. The declared purpose of the Turkish offensive is to drive the YPG-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) from the region. The YPG and PYD are allied to the Turkey-based Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), labeled “terrorist” by Ankara, Washington and the European powers and a constant target of savage repression by the Turkish state. Turkey seeks to establish a 30-kilometer-deep “safe zone” across most of Rojava. The Erdogan regime’s stated aim is to use this “safe zone” to resettle most of the 3.5 million overwhelmingly Arab Syrian refugees currently in Turkey, which threatens to evict untold numbers of Kurds from their own homeland.

Trump’s decision, together with his announcement that nearly 1,000 U.S. soldiers would be redeployed out of Syria to other parts of the Near East, elicited a furious reaction from the political establishment, including the Pentagon and elements of the State Department. From “progressive” Democrat Bernie Sanders, who called the troop removal an “outrage,” to Trump loyalist, Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, a bipartisan chorus is beating the drums in support of continued U.S. military involvement in Syria.

Behind the capitalist politicians’ cynical cries against the “betrayal” of the Kurds is the *realpolitik* concern that an American pullback in Syria would work to the benefit of Russia, the object of U.S. foreign policy hysterics. Russia, which backs the regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, has called the Turkish assault “unacceptable” and has brokered a deal between the Assad regime and the YPG. As a result, Assad, supported by Russian forces, has deployed troops to the northern region where the Kurds are fighting against the Turkish incursion.

As we have repeatedly asserted in the past, we have no side in the Syrian civil war, which is reactionary on all sides. We do, however, have a side against U.S. imperialism, the greatest force for organized terror on the planet. Working people in the U.S. must demand: *All U.S. troops and bases out of Syria and the Near East now!* Having for years imposed a crippling embargo on the Syrian regime, Washington has now imposed sanctions on Turkey, including increased tariffs on steel. As Marxist opponents of American imperialist depredation, we oppose these sanctions. We also demand the immediate withdrawal from Syria of the regional powers Turkey, Russia and Iran.

In the 2016 and 2018 Turkish incursions into Syria, we did not take a side between Washington’s NATO partner, Turkey, and Washington’s proxies, the YPG. This position was based on the fact that the Kurdish nationalists subordinated themselves to the U.S. Today, the situation is fluid and uncertain. Notwithstanding declarations by the imperialists that the Turkish invasion will “revive” ISIS, the reality is that ISIS has been defeated, its “caliphate” turned to dust and its remaining supporters reduced mostly to terror cells. Under these circumstances, Trump views the pact with the YPG as a losing proposition for the U.S., while other sections of the ruling class still see it as an advantage to further American interests.

The fact that the U.S. left the Kurds in northern Syria to the mercies of the Turkish military, combined with the agreement between the YPG and the Assad regime, indicates that the U.S.-Kurdish alliance may be unraveling. As we wrote in WV No. 1127 (9 February 2018), the last time Turkey invaded Syria, “Once the imperialists decide they no longer need their Kurdish nationalist stooges, they will discard them, as they have repeatedly done before.” Nonetheless, it is still unclear, especially given the intense divi-

sion within the American ruling class, whether the U.S. has definitively ended the alliance. For example, several prominent Democrats in Congress, with some Republican support, are proposing a resolution to reverse Trump’s troop withdrawal from Syria. Thus, we do not as yet have a basis to take a position on whether we have a side with the PYD/YPG against Turkey.

What is clear is that the necessary prerequisite for Kurdish national liberation is uncompromising opposition to imperialism. The national liberation of the Kurds, who are divided among and oppressed by Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran, is a just cause. We call for a united, independent Kurdistan, and would also support Kurdish independence from individual states. The struggle for Kurdish self-determination is a crucial part of our perspective to mobilize the proletariat in the region in the revolutionary fight for a socialist federation of the Near East that would include a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan.

Today, reformists like the Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI), formerly including Socialist Alternative in the U.S., wax eloquent about how “the YPG’s ill-fated alliance with the US shows” that “reliance on imperialist powers will not bring peace, prosperity or security, let alone lead to genuine self-determination for Kurds” (socialistworld.net, 12 October). Previously, the CWI downplayed and certainly did not oppose this alliance. And neither the CWI statement nor a similar one on Socialist Alternative’s website (10 October) even hints that the U.S. should get out of Syria. This fits neatly with the stance of liberals in the U.S. and abroad who decry the American “betrayal” of the Kurds and seek to keep the alliance going.

The real betrayal of the Kurdish masses was carried out by the PYD/YPG leadership. As we warned in WV No. 1055 (31 October 2014) after they announced their unholy alliance with the U.S.: “By selling their souls to the imperialists as well as to various regional bourgeois regimes, Kurdish leaders help perpetuate the divide-and-rule stratagems that inevitably inflame communal, national and religious tensions and serve to reinforce the oppression of the Kurdish masses.” A glaring example was the 2017 U.S. military assault on Raqqa, in which Kurdish fighters took the Syrian Sunni-Arab city as American warplanes destroyed 80 percent of it, displaced over 250,000 civilians and killed nearly 2,000. With the Turkish-led bloodletting in Rojava today, the long dispossessed Kurdish people are once again being made to pay the price for

the crimes of the nationalist misleaders. In a London protest against the Turkish incursion, demonstrators told our comrades that the PYD, faced with ISIS, had no choice but to ally with the U.S. In a 13 October op-ed in *Foreign Policy*, the commander of the SDF makes it crystal clear that the Kurdish nationalists in Syria not only welcomed Washington’s “generous support” but also continue to appeal to the U.S. to achieve “a political solution for Syria.” His conclusion says it all: “Is the United States still our ally?”

In fact, the real potential allies of the Kurdish toiling masses are the working people of the Near East. The struggle for Kurdish national liberation, together with the fight against imperialist occupation, could powerfully cut against ethnic and national division and point in the direction of a proletarian perspective. By championing Kurdish self-determination, the working masses of the Near East would be taking a stand against their own capitalist exploiters and helping to undercut U.S. imperialism’s capacity to manipulate the suffering of the Kurdish masses to further its interests. The key task for Marxists is to build multiethnic and multinational revolutionary workers parties that champion the cause of all the oppressed. The perspective of the International Communist League is to win class-conscious militants to build such parties as sections of a reformed Fourth International.

In Turkey, anti-Kurdish chauvinism is a defining element of Turkish nationalism and a key prop of capitalist rule. Faced with growing discontent over the declining economy, Erdogan launched the anti-Kurdish assault to shore up his position. If the proletariat in Turkey is to ever liberate itself from capitalist exploitation, it must take up the fight for Kurdish self-determination, which includes defending the PKK against Turkish state repression.

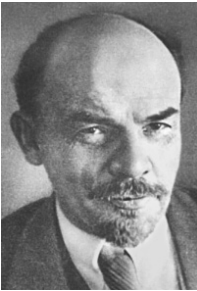
The fight for the genuine emancipation of the exploited and oppressed in the Near East also requires a perspective for socialist revolution in the imperialist centers. In Germany, Kurds and Turks represent an important component of the working class, and can constitute a bridge between the struggles of workers there and in the Near East. In the U.S., the multiracial working class has every interest in opposing the crimes of its exploiters. The capitalist rulers’ drive to assert their domination of the oil-rich Near East goes hand in hand with their insatiable drive to wrest ever-more profit out of the labor of workers at home. As the U.S. section of the ICL, the Spartacist League dedicates itself to building a multiracial workers party committed to proletarian rule. ■



TROTSKY

Workers Struggles and Revolutionary Consciousness

Writing at the end of the 19th century, following a massive strike wave in tsarist Russia, V.I. Lenin polemicized against those Russian Social Democrats, as Marxists called themselves at the time, who argued that economic struggle would spontaneously lead to workers developing revolutionary political consciousness. Lenin underlined that it is the task of the revolutionary party to intervene into class and social struggles



LENIN

to bring socialist consciousness to the proletariat and prepare it for its historic task of overthrowing capitalist rule. Lenin cites Karl Kautsky, a Marxist leader at the time who would later betray proletarian internationalism and become a bitter opponent of the October 1917 Russian Revolution.

“Every class struggle is a political struggle”—these famous words of Marx are not to be understood to mean that any struggle of workers against employers must *always* be a political struggle. They must be understood to mean that the struggle of the workers against the capitalists inevitably *becomes* a political struggle *insofar as* it becomes a *class* struggle. It is the task of the Social-Democrats, by organising the workers, by conducting propaganda and agitation among them, to *turn* their spontaneous struggle against their oppressors into the struggle of the whole class, into the struggle of a definite political *party* for definite political and socialist ideals. This is something that cannot be achieved by local activity alone....

Social-Democracy is not confined to simple service to the working-class movement: it represents “*the combination of socialism and the working-class movement*” (to use Karl Kautsky’s definition which repeats the basic ideas of the *Communist Manifesto*).

—V.I. Lenin, “Our Immediate Task” (1899)

# WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1163

18 October 2019

Tim Wohlforth: Who Was That Roadkill?

We recently learned of the death of Tim Wohlforth, once a slavish running dog for the brutal and corrupt regime of Gerry Healy’s International Committee of the Fourth International. Later Wohlforth became a sniveling anti-communist. In the early 1960s, Wohlforth, operating as Healy’s toady, was the fingerman for the expulsion of our founding cadre in the Revolutionary Tendency from the Socialist Workers Party. From this attempt to wreck the fight to defend the revolutionary heritage of Trotskyism in the U.S., Wohlforth went on to destroy dozens of potential communist cadre during his time as leader of the Workers League. Later portraying himself as a repentant ex-Leninist and saved-again sinner, he tried to cover for his crimes as the enforcer of Healy’s Stalin-style apparatus, lyngly equating Leninism with Stalinism and fervently promoting the bloody interests of U.S. imperialist “democracy.”

We aren’t going to spill a lot of ink on this revolting renegade. For those who would like to learn more about Wohlforth’s sordid history, we recommend our English-language *Spartacist* article, “Wohlforth:

Who Is This Road Kill?” (No. 52, Autumn 1995) as well as the earlier “Confessions of a ‘Renegade’: Wohlforth Terminated” (reprinted in “Healyism Implodes,” *Spartacist* No. 36-37, Winter 1985-86). ■

From January 1975

Confessions of a "Renegade": Wohlforth Terminated

REQUESTED FROM WORKERS VANGUARD

No. 36-37 Winter 1985-86

Wohlforth: Who Is This Road Kill?

No. 52 Autumn 1995

SPARTACIST

# Why Marxists Don't Use "African American"

*We print below a contribution, edited for publication, by comrade Dianna Faustine to the discussion leading up to the 15th National Conference of the Spartacist League/U.S. late last year. For more on the conference, see "In the Predominant Imperialist Power," WV No. 1158 (26 July).*

In the context of pre-conference discussion, I have been thinking about why we don't use the term "African American." For as long as I can remember, I was taught to use the term "African American," even though my mom used "Negro" sometimes (only when talking to black family members). In public, the expectation was that I, especially when interacting with someone white, was to use "African American."

The term “African American” is the antithesis of revolutionary integrationism and that’s why we don’t use it. While I did not find our use of the term in any of our press except in quotes or when referring to the name of a group or an academic department, I have not been able to find an explanation in anything we wrote. However, in a 2002 document written during a party discussion on the “N word,” a comrade explained: “Through ‘people of color’ politics, *African American* attempts to promote a kind of cultural solidarity of common heritage to replace and undermine the fact that blacks lost all familial, cultural and language ties to their ‘homeland’ when held hostage by a deathly cruel system of slavery” (emphasis in original).

Our use of “black” recognizes race as a social construct. It also recognizes black people as part of a race-color caste, who are both an integral part of American class society and forcibly segregated at the bottom, experiencing all the horrors that come along with being black in America. Our program of revolutionary integrationism calls for free quality health care, housing and education against “separate but equal.” It is the program whereby the multiracial working class, under the leadership of a revolutionary party and with black workers playing a vanguard role, will expropriate the capitalists and liberate black people and all the oppressed through the third American Revolution.

Although the term “African American” was made popular in the late ’80s/early ’90s by Jesse Jackson and his Rainbow Coalition to create an “ethnic identity,” its origin was thought to be in an abolitionist newspaper from 1835, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, which added the term in 2001. But actually, the first occurrence seems to have been in 1782 in printed sermons where the author was listed anonymously as “the African American.” According to a *New York Times* article (20 April 2015), “‘Afro-American’ has been documented as early as 1831, with ‘black American’ (1818) and ‘Afro-American’ (1788) going back even further.”

According to a 1967 article in *Ebony* by its former senior editor Lerone Bennett Jr., organizations created by free blacks in the late 18th century often contained

“African” in their names. But, in the early 19th century “when the American Colonization Society organized a movement to send free Africans ‘back’ to Africa,” the reaction was to then switch to using “colored,” which the NAACP did in 1909. He goes on to say that Philadelphia leaders (although it’s not clear who these “leaders” were) recommended using “Oppressed Americans,” which disappears the centrality of the black question; however, this was not widely adopted. Booker T. Washington pushed for using “Negro,” and it was used by W.E.B. Du Bois, although he also used “black.” Marcus Garvey, who preached that black people should go “back” to Africa, also used “Negro.” The use of an upper case “N” was pushed by the NAACP and by 1930 the *New York Times* declared it would start capitalizing the “N.”

As Phillip T. Gay, an associate professor of sociology at San Diego State University, wrote in a 1989 *Los Angeles Times* commentary entitled "A Vote Against Use of 'African-American'":

“The truth of the matter, then, is that the overwhelming majority of black Americans are, at the very least, six or seven generations culturally removed from Africa. They speak no African language.... They have no relatives in Africa, and they have never themselves been to Africa....

“A homeland is a place that one can return to. Most black Americans can’t return home to Africa, because they were never there in the first place, culturally or otherwise.... Blacks have now been in America for more than 350 years, as slaves and as workers in all occupations. They have fought in every American war.”

“African American” also does not account for current African immigrants who are truly immigrants but are considered black the minute they set foot in this country.

Amid the heightened radicalization of the 1960s, there was a backlash against the use of the word “Negro” (which had been first used in lower case by Portuguese and Spanish slave traders) as some considered it a “slavery-imposed name.” At that time “Negro” was looked down on as a derogatory word referring to “Uncle Toms,” and was associated with the non-violent strategy of Martin Luther King Jr. “Black” was popularized by the Black Panther Party in the use of “Black Power” and, of course, in James Brown’s song “Say It Loud, I’m Black and I’m Proud.” “Afro American” was also used around this time, particularly by Malcolm X. The Panthers’ use of the term “black” was supposed to imbue black people with pride and militancy, but had a black nationalist bent and was counter to our program of revolutionary integrationism.

We do not capitalize “black,” nor does the *New York Times*, albeit for different reasons. For some, capitalizing the “B” means a recognition of ethnicity and African heritage. Interestingly, the founders of the liberal Black Lives Matter organization, who claim to be influenced by both the Black Power movement and Pan-Africanism, use “Black.” For us, “black” is an identifier that denotes race-color caste oppression linked to slavery, which has resulted in the “one drop” rule.

In “Black and Red—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom” (1966), a founding document of the Spartacist League, we use “black,” “Black,” and “Negro.” We state: “Black nationalism accepts present American class society and working-class divisions as unchanging and unchangeable, and from this static vantage point separation is seen as the only solution.” Black nationalism accepts race- and class-divided society as it is, whereas our program fights to uproot that society. Likewise, liberal integrationism concedes to the status quo by pushing the illusion that capitalist society can be reformed. As we said in “Revolutionary Marxists and the Fight for Black Freedom,” WV No. 930 (13 February 2009): “Equality can be achieved only through the overthrow of capitalism and its replacement by a planned socialist economy under a multiracial workers government. This is the crux of revolutionary integrationism.” ■

## Letter

# On Hong Kong

17 September 2019

Comrades,

I would like to comment on your article  
“Hong Kong: No to Counterrevolutionary  
Rampage!” [WV No. 1160, 6 September]

The CCP's policy of one nation, two systems is at best dangerous. The dialectic of history shows us that a nation cannot sustain two opposing economic systems. This is one of the lessons of the American Civil War. Trotsky's warning in "The Revolution Betrayed" about the Soviet Union holds true for China, that, to paraphrase, would lead either to political revolution removing the Stalinists from the workers state or to capitalist counterrevolution.

Your article mentioned how the United States and its allies give Taiwan money, weapons, and other support as well as military provocations in the South China Sea. But it should also be noted that Taiwan is seeking official United Nations recognition with the backing of the United States, Britain and their allies.

This is why it is important to give unconditional support to defend the gains of the 1949 revolution while working to oust the Stalinists and establishing workers rule.

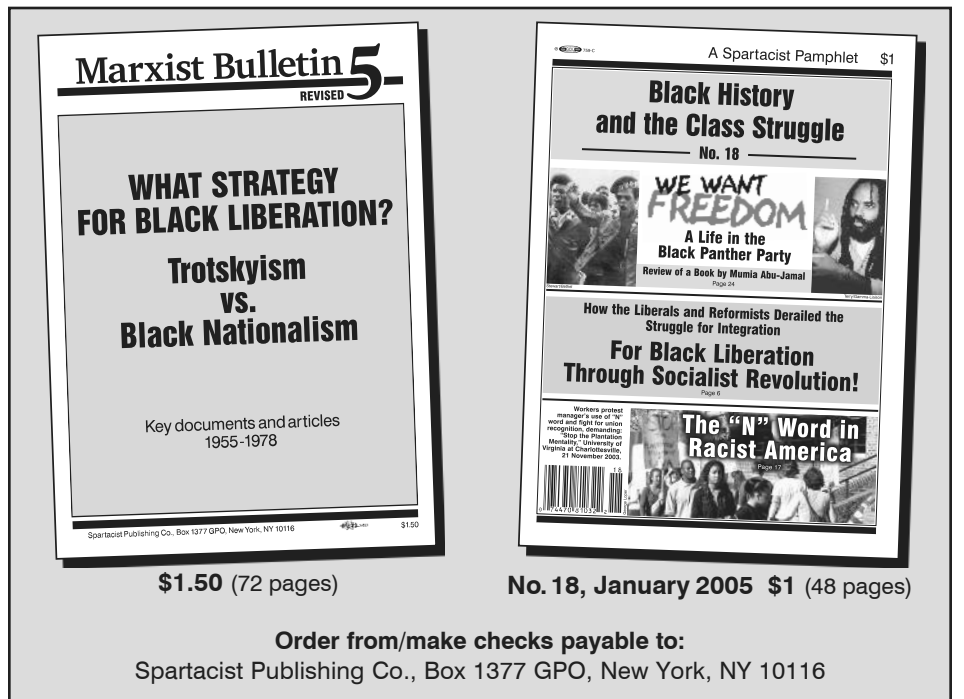
Comradely,  
Alan Nicholoplus

**WV replies:** We thank our reader for his letter. When the British handed over their Hong Kong colony to China in 1997, we welcomed it while warning that the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) policy of upholding capitalism in Hong Kong was a threat to the gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution (see article, back page). The CCP's formula of "one country, two sys-

tems" has kept the wealth in the hands of Hong Kong's tycoons and maintained Hong Kong as a breeding ground for counterrevolution and an outpost for imperialist machinations.

The American Civil War, a struggle between two distinct socioeconomic systems, culminated in the destruction of the Southern slavocracy and the victory of the Northern capitalists. The Chinese civil war in the late 1940s culminated in the destruction of the bourgeois state apparatus by the peasant-based CCP-led guerrilla forces and the creation of a bureaucratically deformed workers state. The Chinese bureaucracy's policy of maintaining Hong Kong as a capitalist enclave is treachery and part of its accommodation to the imperialists, who seek nothing less than the overturn of the workers state. The only way to eliminate the danger of capitalist counterrevolution and open the path to developing socialism is through the victory of workers revolutions, especially in the advanced industrial countries.

Unlike Hong Kong, Taiwan is an independent capitalist state. While Taiwan has forever tried to win back U.N. recognition, Washington does not pursue that particular policy, but instead focuses on arming Taiwan as part of the imperialist military threat against China. In contrast to the CCP's program of uniting with Taiwan on the basis of "one country, two systems," the ICL stands for the *revolutionary* reunification of China. In Taiwan this means overthrowing capitalism through socialist revolution; in mainland China this means ousting the Stalinist misleaders through proletarian political revolution and establishing the rule of workers, peasants and soldiers councils. ■



## Spartacist League/SYC Forum

**No Illusions in the Democratic Party!  
For Free, Quality, Integrated Public Education for All!**

# School Segregation and the Legacy of Slavery

## CHICAGO

**Saturday, October 26, 3 p.m.**

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# UAW...

(continued from page 1)

The labor bureaucrats' allegiance to capitalism is also expressed in their support to the Democratic Party, one of the two parties of the bosses. Equally, their acceptance of the system of exploitation is at the root of their poisonously blaming Mexican workers—theirself brutally exploited, and often by U.S. corporations—for job losses here.

Regardless of whether the company is in the red or the black, it will always try to force sacrifice on its workforce. The bosses acquire ever-greater profits only through increasing the exploitation of labor. The embrace of “profit sharing” by the UAW tops is just one more example of how they try to sell the fiction that workers have a stake in boosting the corporate bottom line. The “profit sharing” scheme dangles a carrot before workers to yield to speedup enforced by the management stick. More money should just be put toward base wages!

## Leadership “at the Burn Barrel”

The union bureaucrats long ago renounced the class-struggle methods that first built the unions and that are necessary to revitalize them now—mass pickets, sit-down strikes, secondary boycotts. Instead, they promote the idea that the way to defeat capitalist attacks is at the ballot box, by supporting “better” capitalist politicians, namely the Democrats. Every election cycle, millions of dollars in dues money that should be in the strike fund are thrown away to get Democrats into office, where they preside over the system of capitalist exploitation and racial oppression on behalf of the bosses. During the GM strike, more effort has been put into arranging picket-line flybys for false “friend of labor” Democrats like Bernie Sanders and Michigan governor Gretchen Whitmer than organizing a rally that mobilizes broad support from other unions and working people.

Democrats sometimes give lip service to labor's cause but, like their Republican counterparts, will not hesitate to bring the hammer down on the workers and their unions. In the post-World War II period, Democratic president Harry Truman vetoed the slave-labor Taft-Hartley Act, knowing Congress would override him, only to show his true colors by invoking it *twelve times* in order to spike union struggle. Democrat Barack Obama first rode into office having declared support for legislation to make it easier for labor to organize. He then proceeded to bail out the banks and the auto bosses at the expense of working people nationwide, and that labor reform never saw the light of day. Auto workers felt the full brunt, no thanks to the UAW brass who lent the White House a helping hand in that job massacre and transformation of the workforce into “Tier Two” new hires and temps.

Having called the strike against GM under pressure from the ranks, the UAW “labor statesmen” declare that the law must be followed to the letter, no matter the cost. But the whole purpose of labor law is to hamstring strikes and break unions. The union tops want auto workers to believe that nothing more can be

done in the face of the array of state forces backing up GM. It is true that a concerted effort to stop scabs would bring the union up against the repressive state apparatus, including the cops, courts and prisons. This reality is not an argument to lie down and roll over, but to engage in resolute militant mass action in a thought-out way, minimizing the damage in terms of fines, jail sentences and personal injury. A dozen militants alone on a picket line are sitting ducks; however, with a huge throng, it is a different ball game. All UAW members at the Big Three should be out.

The 1936-37 Flint sit-downers had to deal with arrest and physical attack, as well as court injunctions; but they fought, and won. The key difference between then and now lies not in what the bosses and their thugs today have (anti-union laws, surveillance technology and so on), but in



Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University

Detroit, 1945: UAW workers during 113-day strike against GM.

what labor doesn't, namely a leadership that conducts the battle as one of class against class. On the one side, the workers, with strength in numbers and solidarity, and on the other side, the bosses, their political parties and their state.

Just such a leadership, provided in turn by left-wing socialists, Trotskyists and Communists, steered to victory three 1934 citywide strikes—in Toledo, Minneapolis and San Francisco—paving the way for the great CIO organizing drives. These strikes were marked by pitched battles with cops, security guards and other strikebreakers. (For more, see our 2015 pamphlet, *Then and Now*.) In *The History of American Trotskyism* (1944), James P. Cannon drew the lessons from Minneapolis:

“The modern labor movement must be politically directed because it is confronted by the government at every turn....

“The policy of the class struggle guided our comrades; they couldn't be deceived and outmaneuvered, as so many strike leaders of that period were, by this mechanism of sabotage and destruction known as the National Labor Board and all its auxiliary setups. They put no reliance whatever in Roosevelt's Labor Board; they weren't fooled by any idea that Roosevelt, the liberal ‘friend of labor’ president, was going to help the truck drivers in Minneapolis win a few cents more an hour.”

The unions are in desperate need of class-struggle leaders who fight to break the chains binding labor to the Democratic Party and put no trust in capitalist state agents, like federal mediators. Workers must rely only on their own class power. Fully harnessing that power requires building a multiracial workers party committed to the overturn of capitalism and the collectivization of the economy under a workers government.

## The Fight for Jobs

The auto industry has undergone major transformations in recent decades, and is on the cusp of another. In its early years, manufacturing complexes like Ford River Rouge could turn raw materials into finished vehicles. Now it is a model of highly automated “lean production” supplied by hundreds of parts manufacturers. Over

100,000 workers were employed at Rouge at the time of the 1941 strike. Today, its hourly workforce is roughly 6,000, still Ford's largest. With the advent of electric vehicles (EVs), whose battery packs and motors contain far fewer parts than internal combustion engines, further job-gouging is on the horizon.

GM's ruthless and aggressive pursuit of greater “labor flexibility” in the current contract dispute is fed by its appetite to corner the emerging EV market. To maintain record profits in a situation where significantly less labor power goes into each vehicle, the bosses will try hard to throw out a section of the workforce and make everyone else work more, for less. Already this year, GM has closed three plants, and it has Oshawa, Canada, and Detroit-Hamtramck on the chopping block.

In response to these attacks, the non-answer of the union bureaucracy is to get Mexican jobs shipped to the U.S. Last week, UAW vice president Terry Dittes proclaimed: “We believe that the vehicles GM sells here should be built here.” This “America only” chauvinism is the exact wrong starting point to mount a defense of jobs. It throws up a wall dividing auto workers in the U.S. from their class brothers and sisters in Mexico, playing right into the hands of the employer, which wants to ratchet up the rate of exploitation of its workforce both north and south of the U.S.-Mexico border. UAW members should view their fight not as one of themselves versus Mexican auto workers but as one of *all* auto workers versus the automaker.

At a time when GM is restructuring globally, such an approach would set the stage for international labor solidarity action, especially in North America, where the automaker's production is highly integrated. Parts from manufacturers in places like the Matamoros maquiladora zone, where some 50,000 union workers waged successful wildcat strikes earlier this year, are added to vehicles in the U.S., and conversely, parts made here are destined for assembly plants in Mexico. The same is true in the case of

Canada. This interlinking makes the joint struggle of unionized GM workers in the U.S., Canada and Mexico all the more possible, and impactful. With Texas a key hub in the North American “auto alley,” Latino auto workers in that state, including at GM's massive Arlington plant, represent a potential human bridge connecting the struggles against the industry bosses in the U.S. to those in Mexico.

The notion peddled by the UAW bureaucracy that “the vehicles sold here should be built here” is a cancer on the union. In the 1970s, when Asian and German automakers first made major inroads into the U.S. market, prompting the Big Three to close obsolete plants and move production out of the Midwest, the union tops raised a hue and cry over supposedly unfair “foreign competition” rather than wage a fight for jobs against the auto giants. They made scapegoats of workers overseas, calling for protectionist legislation with harsh trade sanctions for foreign-brand vehicles not assembled in the U.S. Toyota, Volkswagen and others obliged and set up shop here, overwhelmingly in the South, opening non-union production sites since flooded with temps, a preview of GM's vision for its own plants. The proportion of auto workers who are union today is *half* what it was in 1979.

Auto is far from the only industry in which the bosses are threatening to further slash jobs. What is posed is a fight for a shorter workweek with no loss in pay. By having the available work divided evenly among everyone, workers would benefit from improvements in productivity, while unemployment would be eliminated. But such felt needs of workers and the oppressed run right up against the inability of the capitalist system to satisfy them.

Demands against the devastation of the working class, such as for a sliding scale of hours and wages, were outlined in the 1938 Transitional Program, the founding document of the Trotskyist Fourth International, which declared: “If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish. ‘Realizability’ or ‘unrealizability’ is in the given instance a question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle.” It's absolutely necessary to beat back attacks by the bosses. But the goal must be a wholly different type of society, a workers America where the factories and other productive wealth have been ripped out of the hands of the tiny group of capitalists through a socialist revolution and put at the disposal of the vast majority.

## The Truth About Reuther

This summer, the UAW tops launched an online petition urging the postmaster general to issue a stamp to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the death of Walter Reuther, UAW president from 1946-70, and his “extraordinary life and work.” The mythology surrounding Reuther aside, his main “work” was to consolidate a stable bureaucracy that could be an effective guarantor of labor discipline for the automakers. Decisive in this regard was his embrace of U.S. imperialism's Cold War against the Soviet Union and avid witch-hunting of reds. Enforcing the loyalty oaths mandated by Taft-Hartley, Reuther purged the UAW of the Communists, socialists and others who had led its formative class battles.

Reuther's climb to power was marked by rank opportunism and class collaboration. As a newly elected UAW executive board member, he maneuvered at the 1936 union convention for the overturn of a resolution that was against the Democratic administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt and was for a labor party. Amid the tumultuous class upsurge, many of the more politically conscious workers had become receptive to the task of forming a workers party in opposition to the two capitalist parties. But CIO leaders diverted this budding radicalization into the Democratic Party. The Stalinists of the Communist Party (CP) were instrumental in this regard, having turned to

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giving support to the supposed “progressive” FDR the previous year. Reuther later became a fixture in the Democratic Party.

Once the Reuther machine was en-  
sconced, the one-year contract was elim-  
inated; shop-floor methods of resolving  
grievances (for example, stopping the line)  
were replaced by arbitration; and man-  
agement gained virtually unchallenged  
control of safety conditions, like line  
speed. The widely touted 1950 auto con-  
tract, known as the “Treaty of Detroit,”  
gave union members a cost-of-living  
adjustment but tied wages to productivity.  
Summarizing the worldview of the union  
bureaucrat, Reuther subsequently pro-  
nounced: “We don’t believe in the class  
struggle. The labor movement in America  
has never believed in the class struggle.”

Reuther is sometimes hailed for his  
association with Martin Luther King  
Jr.’s pacifist liberalism in the South. But  
his much-vaunted social activism was  
nothing more than a campaign to pres-  
sure the Democrats to grant black people  
some type of formal equality and tamp  
down black militancy. At the same time,  
he was fundamentally indifferent to rac-  
ist practices in the auto plants, and in  
the UAW itself. Reuther was especially  
hostile toward the militant Local 600 at  
Ford River Rouge, the battleground of  
the 1941 strike where Communists and  
black workers were concentrated. During  
that strike, CP organizers made a special  
effort to recruit black workers en masse  
to the union, convincing both them and  
white workers that they had common  
class interests. These black workers took  
their place as rock-solid union militants,  
only to have Reuther, working in tandem  
with the House Un-American Activities  
Committee, expel many of them the next  
decade.

The “Southernization” of Labor

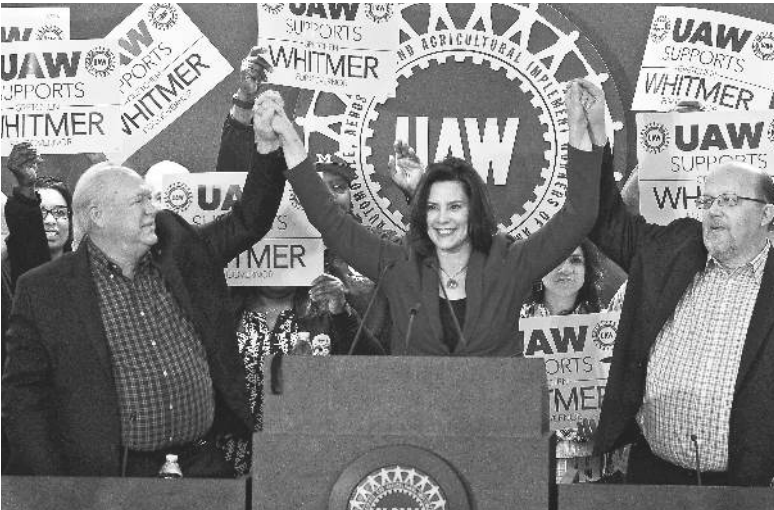
CIO leaders, fearing the same prospect  
of black workers linking up with Com-  
munist labor organizers, scuttled the last  
major attempt to organize the South, the  
grossly named 1946-53 “Operation Dixie.”  
In its first 18 months, over 400,000 new  
members had flocked to the unions. But  
those gains were soon reversed because  
the organizing drive was predicated on not  
antagonizing the Southern business elite  
and ruling Dixiecrats. Mobilizing union  
power in opposition to racial oppression,  
the bedrock of American capitalism, was  
off-limits, and black organizers and reds  
were excluded from the campaign.

The CP, despite joining Roosevelt’s  
New Deal coalition and helping head off  
the independent political organization of  
the working class, had in various locations  
across the South recruited black and white  
workers together to the unions. These suc-  
cesses were made possible by confronting  
head-on legal segregation and the perva-  
sive threat of Klan terror. Even as their  
own unionization campaign foundered,  
the anti-Communist bureaucrats moved to



AP

Left: Walter Reuther (second from right), with presidential candidate JFK in 1959, was central in tying UAW to capitalist Democratic Party. Right: Michigan Democrat Gretchen Whitmer, with former UAW head Dennis Williams (left), celebrates union endorsement for governor, March 2018.



Tabb/Detroit News

destroy these integrated union locals. One  
CIO organizer bitterly commented: “All  
this energy and all this money is being used  
that should have been out here being used  
to organize something else. It did about as  
much to prevent us from succeeding in the  
South as anything management did.”

The labor historian Michael Goldfield  
dubbed the failure of Operation Dixie “one  
of the great tragedies for American labor”  
(*The Color of Politics* [1997]). Indeed, as a  
vast low-wage, open shop region, the South  
is a weight dragging down organized labor  
as well as the cause of black freedom.

The betrayals of the trade-union tops  
have caused a “Southernization” of Amer-  
ican labor. Since 2012, so-called “right to  
work” laws have taken root in one-time  
union strongholds in the Midwest, includ-  
ing Indiana and Michigan, with the aim  
of reducing labor’s numbers to trace lev-  
els. The ten largest unions in Michigan,  
aside from the UAW, have lost one-third  
of their combined membership since the  
state went “right to work.”

Such laws banning the union shop,  
first passed in the World War II period  
to prevent the rise of integrated unions  
in the South, are a testament to the inter-  
twining of labor rights and black rights in  
the U.S. The initial push for them came  
from a Texas-based Christian evangeli-  
cal organization headed by one Vance  
Muse, a white-supremacist and virulent  
anti-Communist. Texas officially became  
a center of “right to work” reaction in  
1947, during the early stage of “Opera-  
tion Dixie.” GM’s manufacturing facility  
in Arlington opened seven years later.  
Located between Dallas and Fort Worth  
in a city named after Robert E. Lee’s Vir-  
ginia home, it was nonetheless from the  
get-go solidly union. The great struggles  
against the automakers of the two preced-  
ing decades had firmly established the  
right of the UAW, codified in its national  
contracts, to represent the workforce at  
any new Big Three plant.

In recent years, one UAW unioniza-  
tion campaign after another in the South,

including at VW in Chattanooga, Tennes-  
see, and Nissan in Canton, Mississippi,  
has gone down to defeat. The entirely  
legalistic strategy of the union tops and  
their begging for company “neutrality”  
are not about to break the resistance of  
the employers, who have victimized UAW  
activists with impunity and browbeaten  
other workers into submission. That strat-  
egy also prevents the union from deci-  
sively answering the fascist groups that  
have distributed racist flyers against the  
union campaign in Canton, where the  
plant workforce is predominantly black.  
The Nazi scum need to receive a message  
expressed in terms they will understand.

As for labor officialdom’s losing cam-  
paigns against “right to work” laws in  
Michigan and Indiana, they consisted  
entirely of trying to pass ballot measures  
and elect Democrats. On 11 December  
2012, some 12,000 trade unionists and  
their supporters converged on the Mich-  
igan Capitol in a last-ditch effort to stop  
the anti-union legislation. Chants rang  
out: “Shut it down!” Instead, workers were  
treated to empty speeches from Demo-  
cratic politicians like Gretchen Whitmer.  
In her quest to reach the governor’s man-  
sion last year, Whitmer talked up the need  
to repeal “right to work” and received the  
enthusiastic endorsement of the UAW and  
other union tops. Now that she is there,  
nothing has changed.

With the GM strikers finally flexing  
some labor muscle, non-union auto work-  
ers in the South are taking notice. When

the union shows it is strong, united and  
determined, its support among potential  
new members, and working people more  
broadly, can grow by leaps and bounds.  
The union should seize the moment and  
redouble its organizing efforts. As part of  
the class-struggle fight needed to organ-  
ize the South, the unions will have to put  
front and center the fight for black rights,  
as well as full citizenship rights for all  
immigrants. And not just in the South.  
Throughout racist capitalist America, the  
bosses consciously wield racial divisions  
within the working class to undermine  
organizing and bust unions.

The program of reliance on the Demo-  
cratic Party must be rejected and defeated.  
It is not simply an obstacle to labor strug-  
gle but also prevents the working class  
from fighting for the society it deserves.  
We in the Spartacist League/U.S. are de-  
dicated to forging the revolutionary workers  
party that can politically arm workers and  
lead them in their struggles, culminating  
in the sweeping away of the capitalist sys-  
tem of production for private profit. Such  
a party would champion the cause of all  
the exploited and oppressed, emblazoning  
on its banner the fight for black liberation,  
which is strategic to the American work-  
ers revolution. Only the expropriation of  
the capitalists and creation of a planned  
economy under workers rule can lay the  
foundation for a new social order in which  
workers of all races, ethnicities and back-  
grounds directly share in, and determine  
how to use, all that their labor creates. ■

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*We print below an article published by our comrades of the Trotskyist League in Quebec and Canada that appeared in their English-language press Workers Tribune (No. 2, Summer/Fall 2019).*

Five months into his term as premier of Ontario, in early November 2018, Doug Ford and his Conservatives attacked francophones, eliminating the office of the French Language Services Commissioner and axing plans for a French-language university. Under Liberals and Conservatives alike (or New Democrats [NDP]), francophones have always been treated as second-class citizens in Orange [monarchist, Protestant] Ontario. Belittled and scorned, labelled “Frenchie” and worse, they have had to wage constant struggles just to live in French. Cancelling plans to build the university for which they had fought for 40 years was one more bitter blow in the long drive to forcibly assimilate Franco-Ontarians.

Beginning with the defeat of the French on the Plains of Abraham in 1759, English was imposed through repression, legal writ and economic strangulation. The cornerstone of Canadian capitalist class rule today is the subjugation of the French-speaking Québécois nation, from which flows the continuing suppression of the rights of other francophones in Canada including the Acadians, Métis and French speakers in what is now Ontario. The Trotskyist League in Quebec and Canada supports the demand for a French-language university in Ontario. We oppose all privileges for English, the language of the oppressor nation, and call on the working class to mobilize in defense of Franco-Ontarians in their struggle to survive as a people. This is linked to our fight for Quebec independence, whether under capitalism or as a workers state.

Around Ontario last December 1, some 15,000 overwhelmingly francophone protesters rallied against Ford's chauvinist attacks. The TLQC was the only avowedly socialist group present at the Toronto protest. On seeing our French-language newspaper, *République ouvrière*, with its call for Quebec independence and socialism, a participant commented "I had no idea anyone in English Canada would support that." The task of a revolutionary party in English Canada is to win workers to the understanding that championing Quebec independence and defending francophone minorities are crucial to their own liberation. Our perspective is to unleash the revolutionary potential of the national liberation struggle in the fight for a workers republic of Quebec. This would be a beacon to workers and the oppressed across the country, not least the francophones of Ontario, New Brunswick and elsewhere.

Franco-Ontarians are primarily the descendants of people who were driven from Quebec by misery and oppression in the 19th and 20th centuries, drawn by the prospect of jobs in the mines, mills and later, auto factories. Thousands joined the Mine Mill union in Sudbury, for instance. Francophones remain a key component of the working class; notably CUPE's [Canadian Union of Public Employees] hospital division in Ontario has 10,000 francophone members. Intense pressure to assimilate is reinforced by—and in turn reinforces—the lack of services. Access to health care in French is scarce to non-existent. Even the current meagre right to education in French has required one fight after another. As François Boileau, the now former French Language Services Commissioner, put it in a 2012 report, lack

## A large crowd of people at a demonstration, holding various signs. Visible signs include "Respect des Franco-Ontariens", "#ApPARTenance", "Nous sommes Nous serons", and "SOS NONFOR". Some people are wearing black gloves with white handprints.

**Ottawa: Protest against cuts to French-language services last December.**

of access to higher education in French is a “slow death.”

The ruling class has a simple calculus: deny or curtail the right to an education in French and you are well on the way to getting rid of French speakers. It is not accidental that for over a century the key battles have taken place in the schools, where forced assimilation will succeed or fail. In 1912, Regulation 17 effectively outlawed French education in Ontario schools beyond the second grade. Teachers defied the ban, while mothers confronted police and blocked entrances to schools. By 1927, the regulation had become unenforceable but it was not rescinded until 1944. In cutting off an entire generation from education in their own language, Regulation 17 did incalculable harm.

Until 1968, when French schools were officially recognized in Ontario, parents had to pay for French education for their children. Today, French schools are often ill-maintained and overcrowded, including by being flooded with anglophone children because there are not enough French immersion programs to meet demand. Many are also tied to the publicly funded Catholic system. We Marxists are for the separation of church and state, for free, secular schools and quality education for francophones and anglophones alike.

## Official Bilingualism: Upholding the Dominance of English

Genuine equality of languages begins with a fight against the privileges of the oppressor language. We are against forcing the francophone minority to be educated in English. In Quebec, the federal government's official bilingualism intentionally forces English on French speakers, which we oppose. For the same reason, we defend Quebec's Law 101. After decades of being told to "speak white," i.e., English, Law 101 affirmed that the Québécois people should be able to live, work, go to school, shop, get health care and everything else—in French. Immigrants in Quebec should be educated and integrated in French just as, without controversy, immigrants elsewhere in Canada seek to integrate in English. We fight for free, quality bilingual programs that include the native languages of immigrants to facilitate their integration into society.

In Quebec the reaction to Ford's attacks was swift and furious. Not so in English Canada. As columnist Patrick Lagacé told

the English Canadian media in a barbed polemic, written in English to ensure he was understood, “you don’t give a shit” (*La Presse*, 20 November 2018). Or, as he headlined in French, “Ils s’en fichent.” Indeed, Franco-Ontarians have stood largely alone in this battle. The Ontario Federation of Labour has built one protest after another against various Ford measures, but not when he launched his chauvinist attacks. There’s no mystery in this: the pro-capitalist union leaders thoroughly share the bourgeoisie’s Anglo-chauvinism and thus help to keep the workers chained to their exploiters. In fighting to break these chains, a class-struggle leadership of the trade unions would mobilize the social power of labour in defense of all the oppressed.

Anglo arrogance went into overdrive recently when the Quebec government announced that it would transfer three half-empty English schools in Montreal to the French system in order to accommodate 3,000 francophone students. For decades, thanks to Law 101, enrolment in Quebec's English schools has declined and there are now over 10,000 empty desks in the system. Yet the gnashing of teeth from the anglophone Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) could be heard across Canada and its protests were quickly picked up by a sympathetic English Canadian media.

The QCGN, which is funded by the federal government, also found allies in the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario and the Société de l'Acadie du Nouveau Brunswick. The three groups have signed a deal to make defense of the Official Languages Act an issue in the fall federal election. This is akin to a deal with the devil; the QCGN exists to defend Anglo privilege in Quebec and as such it is flatly counterposed to the interests of all francophones.

In Quebec, anglophones are not pressured to assimilate; English is so protected that the very use of French is undermined. Francophones in other provinces can only dream of the resources available to Quebec anglophones: three publicly funded universities (McGill, Concordia and Bishop's), a first-class hospital network, fully funded schools and much else. Like Franco-Ontarians, Acadians and other francophones in New Brunswick, who make up 32 percent of the population, face constant struggles against bigotry and denial of rights and services. And last November, anti-French bigot Blaine Higgs became premier with the backing of an openly racist "English only" outfit, the People's Alliance of New Brunswick.

The Acadian and Franco-Ontarian groups allied with the QCGN because they wrongly believe that Ottawa's official bilingualism and its offspring, multiculturalism, defend French language rights. As *Le Devoir's* Robert Dutrisac put it, "the two francophone groups fall into the trap of this false symmetry which has contributed to the decline of the French fact in Canada" (15 July). Such policies have long been associated with the Liberal Party, which currently postures as a defender of French-language education in Ontario and joined some of the protests against Ford's attacks. Their purpose has always been to thwart the national aspirations of Quebec and bolster the chauvinist and racist status quo.

The TLQC fights to forge a binational revolutionary workers party—ultimately two parties in two states. Winning English Canadian workers to the defense of francophone minorities as part of the struggle for Quebec independence would mark a political break with the “national unity” chauvinism of the bourgeoisie which NDP social democrats and labour misleaders peddle to the working class. A fight against the national oppression of the Québécois will be a powerful lever in advancing the struggle of the proletariat against the capitalist rulers and toward a socialist revolution in order to shatter the entire repressive Anglo-chauvinist framework of this country. ■



## 70th Anniversary of Chinese Revolution

We print below the first part of a forum, edited for publication, given on October 5 in Vancouver by Angela Swanson, editor of Workers Tribune, English-language press of the Trotskyist League in Quebec and Canada. Forums were also held in Montreal, Toronto, Los Angeles and Oakland.

### PART ONE

Seventy years ago, a social revolution in China smashed capitalist class rule and liberated the country from subservience to Western and Japanese imperialism. The 1949 Revolution, carried out by a peasant-guerrilla army under the leadership of Mao Zedong's Chinese Communist Party (CCP), created a workers state and built an economy that to this day remains centrally based on collectivized property forms. The revolution fundamentally transformed society, lifting hundreds of millions of people out of dire poverty and laying the basis for significant advances in industry.

After years of civil war, the CCP came to power as the imperialist-backed nationalist Guomindang forces fell apart. The capitalists and large landowners fled to Taiwan, where they have been protected by U.S. imperialism, as well as to Hong Kong and elsewhere. Mainland China, which had been divided and plundered by the imperialists, was unified. In the first several years after the revolution, land was distributed to the peasants, key industries were expropriated and a significant component of state-owned industry was established.

The revolution swept away much of the age-old social backwardness. For China's hideously oppressed women, this included ending the barbaric practices of arranged marriages and the selling of peasant women into concubinage. Education levels and health care were greatly expanded and improved. All of this shows the immense advantages of an economy whose motor force is not production for profit. China has gone from a backward, overwhelmingly rural country to a majority-urban one capable of landing a lunar rover.

While the reconstruction of China as a workers state was a huge leap forward, that state was bureaucratically deformed from the outset. The proletariat played no independent role in the revolution, and the ruling CCP has politically suppressed the working class. From Mao to Xi Jinping, the bureaucracy has been fundamentally similar to the one that came to power in the Soviet Union in a political counter-revolution led by Joseph Stalin beginning in 1923-24.

Unlike the Chinese Revolution, the October 1917 Russian Revolution was based on a program of proletarian internationalism. A class-conscious proletariat took power under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky. The Bolsheviks knew that Russia's social and economic backwardness could not be decisively overcome without the extension of proletarian revolution to the advanced industrial countries. This was all the more the case for China,



1949: Victorious People's Liberation Army enters Beijing. Chinese Revolution expropriated capitalists and landlords, liberated country from imperialist domination.

### Defend China! Down With Reactionary Hong Kong Protests! For Workers Political Revolution!

which at the time of the 1949 Revolution was even poorer and more economically backward than Russia in 1917.

Following the Bolshevik Revolution and the end of World War I, there was a series of revolutionary uprisings that ended in defeat. This was in the main due to a crisis of leadership, as the working class was betrayed by the pro-capitalist social democrats. Fledgling Communist parties outside of Russia proved too weak, politically or otherwise, to provide alternative leadership. In the wake of these defeats, especially that of the German Revolution of 1923, a conservative, nationalist bureaucracy took political power in the Soviet Union. While Stalin did not restore capitalism, he betrayed the liberating and internationalist goals of the Russian Revolution.

It is crucial to understand the class nature of the Chinese state, so I will speak a bit on this. For Marxists, the state is composed of the armed bodies of men (the police, prison guards, army, courts) that are charged with defending and protecting the ruling class and its interests against the dominated classes. In Canada and the U.S., we live under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, where the rule of rich financiers and industrialists is masked by the facade of parliamentary democracy. A workers state is the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is necessary after the overthrow of capitalism to reorganize society and suppress counterrevolutionary machinations by bourgeois forces. Karl Marx explained this in his 1875 *Critique of the Gotha Program*, writing: "Between capitalist and communist society lies the

period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*."

The state administered by the CCP is based on the revolution that expelled the Chinese bourgeoisie and created a collectivized economy, a precondition for socialist development. It is on this basis that we Trotskyists have always called for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese deformed workers state against capitalist forces. At the same time, a proletarian political revolution is needed to remove the parasitic, nationalist ruling caste. Standing

as an obstacle to the achievement of socialism, the Beijing Stalinist bureaucracy defends the status quo of the imperialist-dominated world order.

### Hong Kong Counterrevolutionary Protests

The 1949 Revolution was a historic gain for the working class internationally and a huge defeat for the U.S. and other imperialist powers. Ever since, the imperialists' strategic goal has been the overthrow of the revolution and the return of China to capitalist enslavement. These bandits have wielded a combination of approaches, including military provocations and economic penetration aimed at strengthening the internal forces of counterrevolution.

The recent protests in Hong Kong are an expression of this counterrevolutionary drive. Before I get into that, let me make a few points on the nature of Hong Kong. Hong Kong was transferred to the sovereignty of the People's Republic of China in 1997 after a century and a half of British colonial rule. The CCP made a deal to maintain capitalism, under Beijing's political rule, and Hong Kong was integrated into the workers state as a Special Administrative Region.

At the time, we joined in cheering as the British Empire finally lost its last major colonial holding with the lowering of the bloody Union Jack and the raising of the red flag of the People's Republic. But we also warned that "in the hands of the venal Stalinist bureaucracy, which has pledged to maintain Hong Kong's capitalist system, the takeover of the territory is a dagger aimed at the remaining gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution" ("Beijing Stalinists Embrace Hong Kong Financiers," WV No. 671, 11 July 1997). The policies of the Stalinist misleaders have allowed Hong Kong to remain a capitalist enclave within China, a bridgehead for counter-revolutionary forces. To advance the interests of working people throughout China, we call to expropriate the filthy rich Hong Kong tycoons.

The pro-imperialist aims of the current movement were on clear display at the

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July 21: Anti-Communists rallying in Hong Kong wave flags of former colonial master, including British Union Jack.