

Labor Needs a Class-Struggle Leadership

UAW Holds Off GM Bosses, But Strikers Sold Short

After staying out solid for more than 40 days, United Auto Workers (UAW) members last week ratified a contract with General Motors by a margin of 57 to 43 percent. The four-year contract wasn't a victory, but it wasn't a defeat either. Many workers are embittered, believing, as one worker told us, "We could've won so much more." But UAW members can walk back into their plants knowing that they held the line against the vicious auto giant. The strikers, through their organization and discipline, gave a taste of the unique social

power of labor, bringing production to a halt and inflicting nearly \$3 billion in losses on the company. But they were crippled by a union misleadership committed to abiding by the rules of the bosses and their state and politicians.

GM, which is sitting on some \$35 billion in profits over the last three years, wanted to squeeze more out of the workers, including by saddling them with higher health care costs. The attacks on health care were beaten back; in fact, this was the first contract in many years where the UAW made no major givebacks.

Above all, strikers wanted to immediately bring in the temporary workers as full employees and to put an end to the two-tier system, which was introduced with the 2007 contract like "a cancer into the union," as one striker put it. A popular slogan on the picket lines was: "Everyone Tier One!" While the contract cuts from eight to four years the time for Tier Two workers to reach Tier One, it leaves the second tier intact for new hires. Meanwhile, GM parts and warehouse workers remain grossly underpaid. As for temp workers, who

together with lower-tier workers make up some 40 percent of the workforce—they are shafted.

While some temps will be brought in as regular employees, the new contract requires that temps work three *continuous* years to reach Tier Two (reduced to two years in 2021). As numerous workers pointed out, the "continuous" provision gives GM the option to lay off temp workers for 31 days or more, which would reset the clock and keep the hated category of "perma-temps."

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Free All Imprisoned Catalan *Independentistes* Now!

Independence for Catalonia! For a Workers Republic!

The following article is a translation of a supplement issued on October 19 by our comrades of the Ligue trotskyste de France and published in French, Spanish and Catalan. The Catalan version was distributed at a protest of at least 350,000 on October 26 in Barcelona against the jailing of Catalan nationalist leaders.

Massive demonstrations that erupted on October 14 in Catalonia expressed anger over the sentencing of Catalan politicians and activists to prison terms ranging from nine to 13 years. In a show trial that triggered a wave of Castilian chauvinism against the Catalans, leaders of Catalan nationalist parties, including Oriol Junqueras, former vice president of the Generalitat of Catalonia (the autonomous government), and Carme Forcadell, former president of the *Parlament*, were convicted for having organized the October 2017 referendum on independence [when 90 percent voted for an independent republic]. The charges are outrageous: "sedition," "disobedience," "embezzlement." Not only were nine of the 12 defendants sentenced to prison, but the Supreme Court renewed a European

arrest warrant against Carles Puigdemont, the former president of the Generalitat, who fled to Belgium in October 2017. These convictions and the persecution of prominent Catalan bourgeois politicians are an ominous warning to the oppressed Catalan, Basque and Galician nations that the "indissoluble unity" of the Spanish prison house of peoples is not negotiable.

In the hours following the convictions, tens of thousands of people took to the streets in Barcelona and other cities in Catalonia, including Perpinyà (Perpignan) [in France]. Solidarity demonstrations also took place in Donostia (Basque Country), Corsica and Brittany. A huge rally aiming to block the Barcelona airport was brutally attacked by joint units of the Spanish national police and the Mossos d'Esquadra, the Catalan autonomous police. Dozens of protesters were injured; a 22-year-old lost an eye when he was hit by a flash-ball fired by the cops. The pro-independence demonstrations culminated in a general strike—the fourth in two years—with a demonstration on October 18 of more than 500,000 people in Barcelona. It was also attacked by the cops; nearly 200 people had to be hospitalized. Half of all public transportation was blocked by the strike, which was particularly strong at the university and in the public services. Notably, the dockers struck and demonstrated.



Le Bolchévik

Barcelona, October 26: Over 350,000 pro-independence demonstrators protest jailing of Catalan independence leaders.

In the spirit of proletarian internationalism, the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) demands the immediate release of all those who have been imprisoned and arrested because they support the just cause of independence for Catalonia. **Free all Basque and Catalan nationalist prisoners imprisoned in Spain and France! Hands off Carles Puigdemont!** There is a single Basque nation and a single Catalan nation, which are divided and oppressed by the Spanish and French states. The movement for the

independence of Catalonia in the "Spanish" part also threatens the "one and indivisible Republic" of French imperialism. Thus, the French bourgeoisie is no less hostile to the independence of these two nations than the Spanish bourgeoisie. In October 2017 [French president Emmanuel] Macron declared: "The rule of law exists in Spain, with constitutional statutes. He [the Spanish prime minister] wants to enforce them and he has my full support" (*Libération*, 14 October).

continued on page 2



Hong Kong Is Part of China

25 October 2019

Dear Workers Vanguard,

I applaud your recent articles on China.

While the capitalist media depicts the rioters in Hong Kong as fighting for “freedom” and “democracy,” the facts say otherwise: we’re witnessing a reactionary uprising in the service of capitalism. Apologists for the protestors can claim that the literal flag waving for U.S. and British imperialism is coming from a minority of participants, but one of the most common slogans seen at the protests has been “Hong Kong is not China,” which is no mere “localism,” but an expression of both anti-communism and anti-Chinese chauvinism.

Hong Kong is not a nation. It’s ethnically, linguistically, and culturally a part of the Cantonese region of southern China that includes Shenzhen and Guangdong. But the border between Hong Kong and the mainland is also a class line, and it’s

the elites in Hong Kong that have tried to cultivate a separate identity, to make permanent the special status of Hong Kong as a capitalist enclave.

In October 2016, two newly-elected members of Hong Kong’s Legislative Council used their swearing in ceremony to pledge allegiance to “the Hong Kong nation” and referred to China as “Chee-na,” (支那), which is a vile slur associated with the Japanese imperialist occupation. During the recent protests in Hong Kong, the “C-word” has appeared again in graffiti vandalism of stores and government offices, such as the attack on the PRC [People’s Republic of China] Liaison Office back in July. This is the true face of the “pro-democracy” uprising.

Opponents of capitalism should want these protests suppressed because they threaten what remains of the social progress produced by the 1949 revolution. I can share a personal perspective on this.

My mother-in-law has lived through all these seventy years of the revolution, and her life represents just what millions of workers and peasants have gained. Born at the end of the civil war, mom grew up in a rural village near Putian, Fujian, to a small-scale merchant family. Her life was much better than that of her peasant neighbors, and yet her own mother was illiterate, and her family home had no plumbing. Fast forward 70 years and she has just used her significant savings to help her son, a postal worker, buy a fully modern apartment in the city. Mom can afford to spend this money because her husband’s pension as an electrician for the state-run rail road is substantial enough to pay all her regular expenses.

This progress was made possible by eliminating private property in the major sectors of the economy. The planned economy and the state that defends it are not the same thing as the government lording over them. The Chinese state is the equivalent of a labor union with a criminal leadership. Supporters of the working class oppose such a leadership, of course, but

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still defend the union. Despite the stupidity and numerous crimes of the Stalinist government, the Chinese state and its planned economy are still worth fighting for. Hong Kong is currently a front line in that fight.

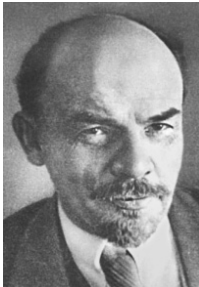
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TROTSKY

Break the Chains of Capitalist Exploitation!

In the excerpt below, Friedrich Engels explains that the exploitation of labor is intrinsic to capitalist production. The capitalist bosses derive their profit from surplus value, i.e., the difference between the value produced by workers' labor and what workers receive back in wages. Only when the system of wage slavery is swept away through a working-class revolution that expropriates the capitalist class and establishes a planned,



LENIN

collectivized economy will society's wealth be used to serve the interests and needs of all.

Value is only another expression for labour, that expression whereby in our present-day capitalist society is designated the amount of socially necessary labour contained in a particular commodity. These values produced by the workers do not, however, belong to the workers. They belong to the owners of the raw materials, machines, tools and the reserve funds which allow these owners to buy the labour power of the working class. From the whole mass of products produced by it, the working class, therefore, receives back only a part for itself. And as we have just seen, the other part, which the capitalist class keeps for itself and at most has to divide with the class of landowners, becomes larger with every new discovery and invention, while the part falling to the share of the working class (reckoned per head) either increases only very slowly and inconsiderably or not at all, and under certain circumstances may even fall.

But these discoveries and inventions which supersede each other at an ever-increasing rate, this productivity of human labour which rises day by day to an extent previously unheard of, finally give rise to a conflict in which the present-day capitalist economy must perish. On the one hand are immeasurable riches and a superfluity of products which the purchasers cannot cope with; on the other hand, the great mass of society proletarianised, turned into wage-workers, and precisely for that reason made incapable of appropriating for themselves this superfluity of products. The division of society into a small, excessively rich class and a large, propertyless class of wage-workers results in a society suffocating from its own superfluity, while the great majority of its members is scarcely, or even not at all, protected from extreme want. This state of affairs becomes daily more absurd and—more unnecessary. It *must* be abolished, it *can* be abolished. A new social order is possible in which the present class differences will have disappeared and in which—perhaps after a short transitional period involving some privation, but at any rate of great value morally—through the planned utilisation and extension of the already existing enormous productive forces of all members of society, and with uniform obligation to work, the means for existence, for enjoying life, for the development and employment of all bodily and mental faculties will be available in an equal measure and in ever-increasing fulness.

—Friedrich Engels, Introduction to Karl Marx’s *Wage Labour and Capital* (1891)

Catalonia...

(continued from page 1)

Independence for Catalonia and Euskal Herria [the Basque Country], in the North and South! For the right to independence of Galicia!

The Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE), led by Pedro Sánchez, who is currently the head of the Spanish state, is the main orchestrator of the repression. In recent weeks, he has carried out preventive arrests under the absurd pretext of fighting terrorism. The Audiencia Nacional (organ of the Ministry of Justice) has brought charges of “terrorism” against the group Tsunami Democràtic, whose only “crime” is to have played a major role in the recent demonstrations. Sánchez is threatening to invoke Article 155 of the Constitution to suppress any trace of Catalan autonomy, as his predecessor of the neo-Francoist Popular Party, Mariano Rajoy, had done in 2017. The social democrats, faithful unto death to the Spanish monarchy, have consistently played a central role in fanning anti-Catalan chauvinism among workers and the oppressed throughout the Spanish state. *Down with the monarchy!* The Spanish misleaders of the CCOO and UGT union federations also play a central role in spreading Castilian chauvinism. They refused to support the general strike in Catalonia!

For Political Independence of the Workers Movement!

Catalan bourgeois politicians have full confidence in the European Union [EU], but workers must have no illusions that it might support Catalonia against the repression of the Spanish state. The EU is not a supranational state, but a consortium of bankers and bosses dominated by German (and secondarily French) imperialism. It serves to maximize capitalist profits by maximizing the exploitation of workers throughout Europe. The imperialists are also determined to trample on the national sovereignty of the weaker member countries. The EU is inherently deeply hostile to the struggles of oppressed nations for their emancipation. In response to the sentencing of the Catalan leaders, the European Commission declared that it fully respects the Spanish constitutional order, “including Spanish judicial decisions” (euobserver.com, 15 October). *Down with the EU! For a Socialist United States of Europe, united on a voluntary basis!*

Catalonia has none of the attributes of a state—essentially, armed forces—that would enable it to resist the Spanish state. The cause of Catalan independence cannot be entrusted to the Catalan bourgeoisie, which advocates for “dialogue” with the Spanish government. The successive Catalan governments, led by the right-wing bourgeois party PDeCAT (Catalan European Democratic Party) and its predecessor, the CiU, have acted in concert with Madrid and occasionally in collusion with the Esquerra Republicana (Republican Left party) and the CUP (Popular Unity Candidacy), to implement anti-labor austerity and ruthlessly attack unions. These attacks included unleashing the Mossos against striking workers and pro-independence activists.

We fight to make the struggle for national emancipation a motor force for proletarian revolution. The working class, by mobilizing its enormous social power at the head of all the oppressed, can make independence a reality. We seek to imbue the workers throughout both Spain and France with the understanding that the fight for Catalan independence and Basque independence is crucial for their own emancipation from capitalist wage slavery. This battle must be waged against the current misleadership of the working class, as part of the struggle to forge Leninist-Trotskyist parties, sections of a reformed Fourth International, the necessary instrument to lead the working class to power. ■



19 October 2019

(Available in Catalan, French and Spanish on the ICL website)

Other articles in Catalan at:
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WORKERS VANGUARD

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1 November 2019

UAW...

(continued from page 1)

Meanwhile, part-time temps got nothing. Several strikers told *Workers Vanguard* that the UAW should have fought to bring back the old system, in which workers were made full employees after 90 days of probation. By agreeing to GM’s demands to keep the temp system, the union leadership gave the bosses the nod to hire many thousands more as temps. While performing the same work as regular employees, these workers receive paltry benefits, virtually no job protection and make meager wages, now frozen at \$16.67 per hour for new hires, slightly above the proposed \$15 per hour national minimum wage.

The contract also codifies plant closures in Lordstown, Ohio; Warren, Michigan; and outside Baltimore, Maryland. Thousands will be unemployed or forced to move or commute hundreds of miles, and others now worry that they’ll be next. While GM has “promised” to keep open the Detroit-Hamtramck plant, the auto bosses always strive to shut down what is no longer profitable. The previous contract stipulated that Lordstown was to have a product line until 2023, but it was shuttered earlier this year. The bosses will seek to violate a contract when it suits their interests. For their part, the unions must never give up the right to strike. *Down with the no-strike clause!*

With the strike over, the UAW has now turned to negotiations with Ford. It is vital for workers in the auto industry and beyond to draw the lessons of the class battle with GM, the longest company-wide auto strike in the U.S. since the early 1970s. Doubtless, Ford and Fiat Chrysler workers have noticed that the only way the UAW was able to hold back the GM bosses was by striking. Still laboring under an extended contract, these workers themselves must prepare to mobilize in strike action.

There was no shortage of determination on the part of the striking GM workers. The fact that 43 percent voted “no” gives a measure of the workers’ resolve to continue the strike, even as the union tops threatened to abandon them by stopping GM negotiations if the “no” vote carried. Older white male strikers repeatedly told us they wanted to stay out in defense of the temp workers, many of whom are women, black and other minorities, recognizing that the division of the workforce into temps and lower tiers is corrosive to the union and its fighting capacity. This solidarity shows that class struggle can begin to break down the racial and other divisions promoted by the capitalists to keep the wage slaves divided.

At least 10 percent of the workforce didn’t vote at all, and many who voted in favor did so despite having strong objections to the contract, but they worried that they could not get anything better under the current union leadership. They had

good reason to worry. GM’s handsome ratification bonus of \$11,000 for full employees and \$4,500 for temps had the quality of a bribe; as one striker put it, “When it’s so big, you know they want to screw us big.”

Those Who Labor Must Rule

If there is one lesson to be drawn from the GM strike, it is the need for a class-struggle leadership of labor, one based on the understanding that the capitalist bosses and the workers share no common interests. Such a leadership would have mobilized all workers at the Big Three in a common front against the automakers. Against the capitalists’ courts, injunctions and cops, it would have built mass picket lines, drawing in allies from working-class, black and Latino communities. A fighting union leadership would have given it organization and direction.

Instead, the workers are saddled with pro-capitalist union tops whose strategy is not hard class struggle, but pushes

on the job despite their contract expiring on the same day as GM. They kept the picket lines small and let GM move 70 days’ worth of inventory from the plants and storage lots to the dealerships. This left militant workers who tried to defend their picket lines vulnerable to arrest by the cops, the thugs of the capitalist state, which exists to defend the rule and profits of the bosses. Now, at least three Flint workers have been fired for alleged threats of “violence” during the strike. The union must fight for their immediate rehiring. *No reprisals!*

There is a lot of justified bitterness at the UAW leadership, currently led by Gary Jones. Amid the government’s ongoing corruption investigation of UAW officials, which has resulted in nearly a dozen arrests, several angry workers expressed an attitude of “lock ‘em up” after learning the contract had passed. A couple told us that they might stop paying their dues. *No!* When the capitalist government intervenes into labor, it is not to clean up



WV Photo

UAW workers on picket line at GM Fort Wayne plant, October 25.

illusions in false “friends of labor” like Bernie Sanders in the Democratic Party. Sanders and other capitalist politicians may express support for this or that strike, but they represent the capitalist order, which is based on profit derived through the exploitation of labor. Where this strategy gets you was revealed a decade ago when the UAW tops worked with their “friends” in the Obama administration to bail out the auto bosses by taking it out of the hides of the workers, who were forced into “sacrifices” from which the union has yet to recover. For his part, Sanders supported the bailout at the time.

In this GM strike, the UAW tops worked overtime to restrain the fighting spirit of the workers. They made a mockery of the old union principle of “no contract, no work” and “one out, all out,” including by keeping Ford and Fiat Chrysler workers

financial chicanery but to *weaken* the unions. UAW members should demand that the Feds get their hands off the union and should pay their dues. Labor must clean its own house!

The union tops’ real corruption is political. Their defeatist approach directly flows from their support to the capitalist system and its agencies and representatives. They see the bosses as the workers’ prospective partners. They blame job losses not on American capitalists but on foreign workers, all the while peddling the lie that U.S. capitalist profitability will somehow “trickle down” and benefit workers in the U.S.

The great black abolitionist Frederick Douglass wrote, “If there is no struggle there is no progress,” adding, “Power concedes nothing without a demand.” With workers having been ground down by a decades-long one-sided class war, there has been an uptick in strikes in the last two years, beginning with the 2018 West Virginia school strike. As GM workers geared up to walk out, UAW-organized janitors at GM plants went on strike, and the UAW also struck Mack Trucks this month (both have since returned to work); seven unions jointly shut down parts of the Asarco copper mines in Arizona and Texas; and teachers and school staff walked out in Chicago.

The labor movement needs a leadership forged in opposition to the pro-capitalist, pro-Democratic Party politics of the UAW and other union misleaders. The struggle for a union leadership worthy of the name cannot be separated from the need to build a workers party that fights for a workers government. Such a party would not be a reformist organization like the British Labour Party or other European social-democratic parties, which merely seek to administer and reform the capitalist system. Rather, its aim would be to further the class struggle, to mobilize workers in the U.S. in solidarity with their class brothers and sisters abroad, to champion the fight for black rights, women’s equal-

ity and for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. The purpose of such a party is not just to get a bigger piece of the pie, but the whole damn pie—a socialist revolution that expropriates the capitalist class and establishes a society where those who labor rule, where production is not for the profit of the tiny class of capitalist parasites but to serve the needs of all.

Only this perspective can provide an answer to the hemorrhaging of jobs. Capitalists will always look to minimize labor costs, including through the use of technology and by moving production to where labor is cheapest. The “answer” of the UAW and other union tops is to promote chauvinist protectionism—a program supported particularly by the Democrats—by calling to shut down plants in Mexico and to move that production to the U.S. This pits U.S. workers against their class brothers and sisters in other countries, playing right into the hands of the employers. The union tops have promoted protectionist poison for decades. The result? The decimation of the union movement and the proliferation of non-union jobs throughout the U.S.

Toyota, Volkswagen and other foreign-owned corporations have opened plants in this country, especially in the South. These non-union plants are flooded with temps, a preview of the Big Three’s vision for their own plants. On top of that, tens of thousands of workers toil in non-union parts plants and warehouses throughout the U.S. What is long overdue is a concerted struggle by the UAW to organize these workers. This requires a concerted fight against the bosses’ divide-and-rule strategy. Above all, it is necessary to combat black oppression, which has long been wielded by the capitalist rulers to weaken labor as a whole and obscure the class line between capitalist and worker.

The growing disappearance of decent-paying union jobs and the growth of perma-temp and low-paying work has hit black people hardest. The poverty rate in Detroit, which is nearly 80 percent black, is 35 percent, three times the national average, and for children it stands at more than 50 percent. At one time the capital of the UAW and a center of working-class black America, areas of Detroit resemble New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina—both disasters the products of racist America’s capitalist order.

Capitalism is anarchic and irrational, as exemplified by the boom-bust cycle that leaves workers at the mercy of the market. To stem the devastation of America’s working people, it is essential to fight for good, quality jobs: this means calling for an end to layoffs by shortening the workweek at no loss in pay and a sliding scale of wages to keep up with the cost of living. By necessity, the struggle for such demands raises the question: which class shall rule? It is out of the inevitable class battles that capitalist contradictions produce and through the intervention of Marxists into these and other struggles that a revolutionary multiracial workers party can be built, one committed to a society with a new ruling class—the workers. ■

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A Spartacist Pamphlet

1934 Strikes

Class-Struggle Leadership Made a Key Difference

Then and Now

Minneapolis, May 1934: At the Battle of Dupont Run, thousands of strikers and supporters routed cops and overwhelming special deputies.

AUSTRALIA...A1 BRITAIN...710 CANADA...C001 EUROPE...E1 SOUTH AFRICA...R2 USA...J051

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70th Anniversary of Chinese Revolution

We print below the conclusion 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. Part One appeared in WV No. 1163 (18 October).

Today, a lot of bourgeois ideologues and most leftists claim that China has become capitalist. This is completely false. The “market reforms” introduced in 1978 by Deng Xiaoping were a bureaucratic response to economic stagnation and an attempt to use the whip of the market to spur modernization and growth. Deng and his followers argued

PART TWO

that such reforms were necessary to carry out the “four modernizations” of industry, agriculture, science and technology, and military defense.

Under the market-oriented measures, China privatized many non-strategic state-owned companies and replaced the state monopoly of foreign trade with a hodgepodge of ad hoc state controls. A key goal of the reforms was obtaining foreign investment, including in the form of joint ventures with state-owned enterprises (SOEs). This led to a more rapid and broad development of the economy relative to the earlier period under Mao, when bureaucratic commandism defined the operation of the planned economy. Under conditions of material scarcity, when a Stalinist bureaucracy administers a planned economy, there are necessarily imbalances and much incompetence. With the workers excluded from control over the functioning of the economy, the only means the bureaucracy has to correct for imbalances and incompetence is the introduction of market forces.

It is clearly evident that the market reforms have resulted in economic growth, including by bringing hundreds of millions of former peasants into the proletariat—which represents historical progress from our Marxist vantage point. But this rapid growth has created huge contradictions. Daily life for many millions of Chinese has improved, but the gap between rich and poor, between city and countryside, has widened. In the early period of the reforms, there was an enormous increase in productivity, but the real wages of Chinese workers hardly increased at all. The productivity gains were largely a result of the transfer of laborers from rural farms to urban factories.

The policies of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) have led to the development of an indigenous capitalist class, tied to the imperialists by economic interest and to many CCP leaders through family ties. However, these capitalists remain politically atomized as the CCP retains a tight grip on political power. There are even capitalist entrepreneurs inside the party, but this has not changed the overall social composition of the bureaucracy or its functional ideology. According to an official survey conducted in 2002, some 600,000 of China’s two million private business owners were party members and had been for some time. The overwhelming majority were longtime CCP managerial cadre who took over the small state-owned enterprises they were running when these were privatized.

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

A result of the market reforms is that there are enclaves of capitalism within the workers state, the Special Economic Zones. However, the core of the economy remains collectivized, with state-owned industry maintaining exclusive ownership or absolute control in strategic sectors such as heavy industry (power generation and distribution, civil aviation, shipping), the bulk of the high-tech sector, telecom-

navigate through them more effectively than have capitalist countries. This was true in the 1997-98 East Asian financial/economic crisis and then again during the global financial crisis of 2008-09, when state-driven investment kept the Chinese economy growing while the capitalist world was staggering.

Especially since the 2008 crisis, there has been a concerted push by Beijing

has kept China insulated from the financial volatility that periodically wreaks havoc on neocolonial capitalist countries.

It is precisely these core collectivized elements of China’s economy that the forces of world imperialism want to eliminate. Their ultimate goal is to reduce China to a giant sweatshop under neocolonial subjugation. We are not indifferent to the need for China to have economic relations with and foreign investment from imperialist countries. Any isolated workers state would need such agreements. Under revolutionary leadership, they would be worked out under the democratic control of the working class organized in soviets (councils), supported in countries like China by peasants councils.

A revolutionary workers and peasants government in China would renegotiate the terms of foreign investment in the interests of working people. The domestic capitalists, on the other hand, would simply be expropriated and their property used in the interests of society as a whole. Such a regime would strengthen central economic planning and re-establish a state monopoly of foreign trade. This perspective is linked directly to the struggle for socialist revolution in the imperialist heartlands, particularly the U.S., Japan and Germany (as well as in the lesser imperialist countries like Canada), which would end global imperialist domination and lay the basis for a world socialist order.

Imperialism, China and the Trade/Tech War

The political crisis in Hong Kong comes in the context of ramped-up provocations against China, in particular by the U.S. Under the Trump administration, the U.S. has waged a wide-ranging anti-China offensive centered on an aggressive trade and tech war combined with military provocations. These policies are broadly in line with the previous Democratic Party administration of Barack Obama, and many so-called “progressive” Democrats, including Bernie Sanders, have long demanded more stringent tariffs against China. The tariffs now imposed on Chinese exports have been paired with U.S. demands that the CCP government relinquish state control of the economy. (For more, see “U.S. Imperialists Ramp Up Trade/Tech War,” WV No. 1157, 21 June.)

Advanced computer and communications technologies are critical to China’s defense against imperialism. The “Made in China 2025” program, adopted by the Xi Jinping regime four years ago, aims to make China a global leader in cutting-edge technology through state-sponsored development. China’s rapid development of these industries has raised the ire of the imperialists, who are intent on stopping such advances. This is seen in the drive against Huawei, spearheaded by the U.S. and assisted by its Canadian junior partner. Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou is still fighting extradition to the U.S. while under house arrest in Vancouver. We say: Free Meng Wanzhou! No extradition!

The trumped-up charges against Huawei include “theft of intellectual property,” which is a central pillar in the hysteria over “Chinese spying.” The anti-Communist dragnet by the U.S. and Canadian governments has also spread to university



China News Service

Ma'anshan, China: Production line at Irixi Photonics for high-speed optical modules for 5G wireless networks. The U.S. has been trying to block China from becoming the dominant player in 5G.

munications and the defense industry. It is state-owned industry that has enabled China to build an arsenal of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles to ward off the imperialists’ military threats.

China’s economy continues to grow by 6 to 7 percent a year, a level that no advanced capitalist country today could even hope to attain. A large part of this has come from government investment in infrastructure. While China is not immune to the effects of downturns in the global economy, it has been able to

to reinforce the SOEs and reassert state dominance over the economy. SOEs are increasingly taking over private companies or forcing them into joint ventures. More broadly, the Chinese Communist Party has made it clear that it expects to exert control over private companies as well as joint ventures with foreign partners. A key component in the expansion of the state sector is government control of the financial system. The vast bulk of major banks in China is state-owned, and the restricted convertibility of the yuan



U.S. Navy

Nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan patrols South China Sea, October 9, as part of Washington’s regular military provocations against China.

Aggressive military operations in the South China Sea and elsewhere near China's east coast, which started under Obama's "pivot to Asia," have escalated under Trump. U.S. destroyers have repeatedly entered the waters around the Spratly Islands, as have British, French and Canadian warships at times. U.S. B-52 long-range bombers have conducted overflights of the region, including joint drills with Japanese fighter jets. U.S. Navy and Marine forces have staged "live-fire" drills in the area.

We seek to win the working class in the U.S., Canada and internationally to the understanding that they have a side in this conflict—with China against imperialism. Thus, it is crucial that the working class stand for the defense of China in any military conflict with the imperialists or forces acting on their behalf. The trade-union bureaucracy, which acts as a transmission belt for anti-Communist poison, promotes the lie that the workers in the U.S. and Canada have a common interest with their own capitalist ruling classes. In pushing for more protectionism against China, the labor bureaucrats serve as foot soldiers in the imperialist drive to restore capitalist rule in China.

In their drive to destroy the Soviet Union and the bureaucratically deformed workers states of East and Central Europe, the imperialists promoted all manner of reactionary forces, including those who waved the banner of “democracy” against Stalinist “totalitarianism.” Similarly, the question posed by the crisis in Hong Kong today is not “dictatorship or democracy?” but “which class will rule?” A key demand of the Hong Kong protesters is for free elections. This is their way to unseat Beijing’s rule in Hong Kong. It is a call for *bourgeois* democracy, which is a call for counterrevolution. We are for *proletarian* democracy: a government of elected workers, peasants and soldiers’ councils that would make decisions about the development of the economy and the organization of society.

The image shows the front cover of a book. At the top, there is a black horizontal bar. On the left of this bar, the text '斯巴达克斯' (Spartacist) is written in white. To its right, the word 'SPARTACIST' is written in large, bold, black capital letters. Further right is a logo consisting of a stylized 'Z' or 'S' shape. To the right of the logo, the text '2001年4月' (April 2001) is printed. Below the black bar, the cover has a light gray background. In the center, there is a large white rectangular area. Inside this white area, the title is written in large, bold, black Chinese characters: '德国' (Germany) at the top, followed by '1989-90:', then '革命与反革命' (Revolution and Counterrevolution), and finally '的对立' (Confrontation). Below the white area, there is a thin black horizontal line, followed by the text '—— 昆恩·瓦 ——' (—— Quenn·Wa ——). Below this, the subtitle is written in bold black Chinese characters: '中国矿工暴动反对' (Chinese Miners Revolt Against) and '“市场改革”' ("Market Reforms"). At the bottom of the cover, there is a black horizontal bar. Below this bar, the English title is printed in bold black text: 'Revolution vs. Counterrevolution in Germany, 1989-90'. Below the English title, the subtitle is printed in bold black text: 'Chinese Miners Revolt Against "Market Reforms"'. Below the subtitle, the date and price are printed: 'April 2001 \$1 (24 pages)'. At the very bottom, there is a black horizontal bar. Below this bar, the text 'Make checks' is printed in bold black text. Below 'Make checks', the publisher's name is printed: 'Spartacist Publishing Co., Ltd.'.



“The working people are *barred* from participation in bourgeois parliaments (they *never decide* important questions under bourgeois democracy, which are decided by the stock exchange and the banks) by thousands of obstacles, and the workers know and feel, see and realise perfectly well that the bourgeois parliaments are institutions *alien* to them, *instruments for the oppression* of the workers by the bourgeoisie, institutions of a hostile class, of the exploiting minority.”

On 17 April 1989, a group of students laid a wreath in the square in honor of the recently deceased Hu Yaobang, whom they regarded as one of the rare CCP officials not to be corrupt. By the time of Hu's funeral a week later, a mass student protest had assembled. Organized workers' contingents started to participate in the marches, and the threat of a general strike led to an order of martial law in mid May. This was met with an outpouring of hundreds of thousands of working people into the streets, stymieing the attempted crackdown. Residents of working-class neighborhoods effectively blocked the initial military units that were converging on Tiananmen.

斯巴达克斯

SPARTACUS

1999年1月 第1009期 总第27期

第1号

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Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

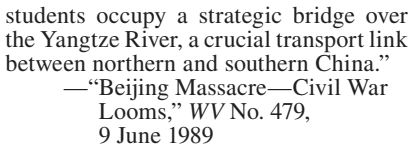
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“While pro-regime military forces still occupy the center of Beijing, the rest of the city is in the hands of insurgent workers and students.... In the great industrial metropolis of Shanghai, student activists and militant workers have set up barricades using buses, trucks and cars. And a de facto general strike has brought economic activity to a standstill. In the central industrial city of Wuhan workers and



The working masses of China were driven by anger against the corrupt and despised Stalinist bureaucracy and the effects of its market reforms, like rising inequalities and inflation. They were not looking to overturn the 1949 Revolution. If anything, they wanted a return to the “iron rice bowl” of guaranteed jobs and benefits, not a return to capitalist slavery. Even while many of the students in 1989 displayed illusions in Western-style “democracy,” they repeatedly sang the “Internationale,” the historic anthem of the socialist working class. This underlines that the aims and class character of the Tiananmen uprising were fundamentally different from the current protests in Hong Kong.

The events of May-June 1989 also decisively demonstrated that the Stalinist bureaucracy was not a new type of possessing class but rather a brittle and contradictory caste parasitically resting atop the collectivized economy. While a capitalist ruling class faced with a proletarian challenge to its rule inevitably unites around a program of counterrevolution, the Stalinist bureaucracy, including the

The central lesson of the Beijing spring was the need for an authentic communist party in China, an internationalist vanguard rooted in the working class. Such a party would have the task of winning the toiling masses to a program and understanding of the need to form workers, soldiers and peasants soviets (or similar organs) that could become the basis for political power in the workers state. It would seek to coordinate and lead the spontaneous and localized workers struggles, linking the fight against the bureaucracy's corruption and privileges to the struggle of comrades in capitalist countries fighting for socialist revolutions. This requires political combat against the Stalinist fraud of building socialism "in one country" or "with capitalist methods," and the dangerous illusions in "peaceful coexistence" with the imperialist countries. As Trotsky wrote in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), the question is: "Will the bureaucrat devour the workers' state, or will the working class clean up the bureaucrat?"

As I mentioned, our Marxist stance in defense of China against counterrevolution despite the betrayals of the CCP bureaucracy flows directly from Trotsky's stance regarding Stalin's Soviet Union. I'd like to briefly contrast this to the positions of our reformist political opponents, starting with the group known as Socialist Alternative (SAIt). These people are on the wrong side of the political barricades.

China...

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This is an utterly scandalous position for self-styled “socialists.”

Another reformist outfit, the Fightback group in Canada and its cothinkers in the International Marxist Tendency, has also cheered on the Hong Kong protests. In several articles over the summer, they chided protest leaders for being too timid, calling, like SAlt’s Hong Kong cothinkers, for the protests to be extended to a general strike and onto the Chinese mainland. But following the huge pro-U.S. rally on September 8, Fightback is engaging in a shoddy cover-up. Their latest article, titled “The USA Is No Friend of Hong Kong” (marxist.com, 12 September), warns that the protests are going in the wrong direction. But this cynical whitewash hasn’t changed their fundamental line. They, too, claim that China has become capitalist, even writing that it is “behaving like an imperialist power.”

The stance of these groups toward China is squarely in line with their history of supporting imperialist campaigns against the Soviet degenerated workers state. Back in 1991, they were in a common political tendency, the Committee for a Workers’ International. In this capacity, they literally joined the capitalist-restorationist rabble on

Boris Yeltsin’s barricades in Moscow. In contrast, our Trotskyist international tendency fought in defense of the Soviet workers state. Our comrades in Moscow mass distributed a leaflet titled “Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!”

Earlier, starting in late 1989, a political crisis had developed in East Germany. Amid the disintegration of the ruling Stalinist party, we mobilized the forces of our international organization to intervene. The potential for a workers political revolution was shown on 3 January 1990 in the pro-socialist united-front rally against the fascist desecration of a Soviet war memorial in Berlin’s Treptow Park and in defense of the East German and Soviet workers states, a rally that we initiated and that was taken up by the Stalinist SED-PDS (Socialist Unity Party-Party of Democratic Socialism).

In front of more than 250,000 demonstrators, our speaker called for proletarian political power based on the formation of workers and soldiers councils, and warned against the social-democratic West German SPD as the Trojan horse for counterrevolution. Against illusions that the SED-PDS could be reformed, we fought to build a new, egalitarian Leninist party. Our call for the revolutionary reunification of Germany was a call for political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy in the East and social revolution in

West Germany to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie—for a red Germany of workers councils. Our comrade’s speech showed concretely the clash, marked by a disproportion of forces, between the ICL’s revolutionary program and the Stalinist program of capitulation and bolstering the forces of counterrevolution. Thanks in no small part to the Stalinists’ treachery, the counterrevolutionary forces prevailed.

Over a quarter century after capitalist counterrevolution in East Germany, the Soviet Union and East Europe, China is the largest of the remaining countries where capitalist rule has been overthrown (the others are Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam and Laos). If the 1949 Revolution were to be overturned, China’s toiling masses would face even worse conditions than those seen today in the former Soviet bloc, where living standards have been massively thrown back and such “democracy” as exists is merely a veneer for brutal capitalist rule. Counterrevolution in China would be a further massive victory for world imperialism and a defeat for the workers and the oppressed across the globe.

There is an enormous divide within China today. On the one side are corrupt government officials, capitalist entrepreneurs and privileged petty bourgeois; on the other, hundreds of millions of proletarians in both state-owned and private

enterprises, along with poor peasants. The consequences of bureaucratic misrule have led to a high level of strikes and social protest. This ferment points to the potential to sweep away the Stalinist regime and replace it with a revolutionary workers and peasants government.

There is a need for a worldwide party based on the program of Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks. Forging such a party is a daunting and difficult task, but the workings of the capitalist world order compel it. To defend and extend the gains of the Chinese Revolution, it is imperative to link the fight against the Stalinist bureaucracy with the class struggles of militant workers throughout Asia and beyond against their capitalist rulers, including in Japan, the U.S. and other imperialist centers. Only through socialist revolutions in these countries will the threat of capitalist re-enslavement of China be eliminated once and for all and the basis laid for its all-sided development in a socialist Asia.

The working class in the capitalist countries must be won to defense of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state against all imperialist threats. Only by understanding the historic significance of the gains of the Chinese Revolution will workers understand the importance of making a revolution against their own exploiters and oppressors. ■

Chicago...

(continued from page 8)

and anti-union Republicans. For nearly a century, the city’s Democratic Party administrations have perfected the art of war against the unions, and enforced the segregated conditions of the ghettos and barrios. The much-hated Rahm Emanuel, a protégé of Barack Obama, systematically gutted the Chicago public education system through school closures, teacher layoffs and funding cuts. Notwithstanding Lightfoot’s self-declared “progressive” credentials as a black lesbian, this former federal prosecutor, who enforced racist “law and order,” is a fitting heir to every past strikebreaking mayor.

Labor officialdom’s loyalty to the Democratic Party has only weakened the fighting strength of the unions. Some union bureaucrats, such as American Federation of Teachers head Randi Weingarten, are themselves Democratic Party hacks. CTU president Jesse Sharkey and the Caucus of Rank and File Educators (CORE), while presenting themselves as a different kind of leadership, preach the same faith in representatives of the class enemy. Over the years, CORE has endorsed hundreds of Democrats and funneled millions of dollars to their campaigns. CTU leaders have celebrated recent visits by Democratic Party candidates Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren.

For all their anti-establishment posturing, these “progressives” just want the votes in order to run American capitalism. All wings of the Democratic Party work to ensure the smooth operation of that system based on exploitation and oppression. Working people need their own party, a multiracial revolutionary workers party,



Union tops push losing strategy of reliance on capitalist Democratic Party. Elizabeth Warren at rally for Chicago school strike, alongside AFT head Randi Weingarten (far left bottom) and CTU president Jesse Sharkey (second from left), October 22.

to fight for their own class interests and for a society where workers rule. Such a party would champion the cause of black freedom, as well as women’s rights and full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

In 2016, the subservience of Sharkey and CORE to the Democratic Party led to the squandering of a golden opportunity to curb the attacks on education and rouse the city labor movement to its feet in defense of itself and the black and Latino masses. Early in the year, both the CTU and the Amalgamated Transit Union were working without contracts, and teachers were ready and willing to hit the picket lines. Then-mayor Emanuel was on the ropes, having covered up the cop killing of black youth Laquan McDonald. But CORE pulled the plug on strike action,

accepting City Hall’s claims of financial distress and refusing to make waves for the Democrats in an election year.

Four years prior, in 2012, the CTU membership had been waging a solid strike for nine days, only to have its CORE leadership criminally push through a settlement that left key issues unresolved. The door was left open for Emanuel to impose the Obama administration’s brutal “school reform.” Schools in poor neighborhoods were shuttered and union jobs lost, while non-union charter schools were set up around the city. These charters have served as clubs against public schools and organized labor.

In the current contract negotiations, the city has agreed to an extension of the existing moratorium on new charters. However, the goal should be to get rid of the charter industry, bringing its teachers and staff into the public school system. The way forward is to unionize all charters and provide union protections, wages and working conditions. Teachers at recently unionized charters in Chicago have engaged in strike action, including CTU members at Passages Elementary this week. Unity in struggle of CPS and charter teachers would give a big boost to further organizing drives.

The question of affordable housing has loomed large in the strike against CPS. The CTU is demanding housing assistance for teachers and additional school staff to help students who are either homeless or at risk of eviction. Such demands, which have Lightfoot seething, speak to a deeply felt need in a city where rents are skyrocketing and some 17,000 students are without permanent housing. Education doesn’t

exist in a vacuum: housing instability and general misery at home directly impact students’ ability to learn.

But the “social justice unionism” promoted by CORE, like everything else it does, is a form of Democratic Party pressure politics. CORE would have teachers believe that Lightfoot, who presented herself as an advocate for public education, should be made to live up to her “campaign promises.” In so doing, the union tops falsely portray the capitalist rulers and working people as sharing common interests, a viewpoint embodied in the widely heard refrain: “Lori Lightfoot, get on the right foot!”

In fact, as far as the capitalist masters are concerned, Lightfoot is on the right foot. Her job is to balance the city budget on the backs of the working class, black people and the poor. To that end, she now has the assistance of none other than Jesse Jackson Sr. He was invited to mediate contract talks by Sharkey, who praised the Democrat for having “broken countless labor stalemates.” Jackson has broken them all right—in favor of the bosses. His long anti-labor track record includes the sabotage of earlier CTU strikes, in 1973 and 1983.

There is a burning need for quality, integrated housing and education for all, including bilingual programs that ease the way for non-native English speakers and give other students more opportunity to learn a second language. Such demands, though, are not going to be granted by placing faith in the “good graces” of capitalist politicians, but must be fought for through a broad mobilization of workers and the oppressed, independent of and in opposition to the Democratic Party.

In this Democratic Party stronghold, black and Latino youth are deprived of resources and treated as criminals under the Boss Daleys and Harold Washingtons alike. The ruling class as a whole has little besides prison and menial jobs to offer these youth, and has no interest in spending money to upgrade inner-city schools or in paying decent wages to teachers to educate them. The money and resources are there, but they will not be used to fully provide for working people and the poor short of getting rid of the capitalist order.

The CTU has a history of combativity and is in a good position to spark wider class struggle uniting black, Latino, Asian and white workers against the city rulers. What is posed is forging a leadership of the unions that is committed to breaking all ties to the Democrats and fighting it out class against class. Such a leadership would help build a workers party capable of bringing the working class to power. Only then can the productive wealth of society be seized and put to the common good. ■

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Syria...

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and arm a raft of Islamist insurgents and other forces that had risen up against Assad in 2011. Just recently, the Trump administration pledged \$4.5 million to the reactionary White Helmets who are fighting alongside Turkey and are linked to extremist Islamists. The U.S. rulers' aim has always been to further strengthen their grip on the oil-rich Near East and, in particular, to go after Assad's backers, Russia and Iran. Trump's current policy for maintaining U.S. domination of the region includes shifting some forces from Syria into Iraq; it also includes adding 1,800 more troops and more military hardware to its presence in Saudi Arabia, with the aim of supporting that ISIS-like theocracy as it wages relentless war against the Houthis in Yemen.

As we emphasized at the outset of the Syrian civil war, the working class internationally had no side in that multi-sided inter-communal conflict, which has mainly pitted the Sunni majority against the politically dominant Alawite minority, as well as Arabs against Kurds. But workers did have a side in opposition to U.S. imperialism and its proxies, including the YPG/SDF. Today we repeat that it is in the class interests of U.S. workers to demand: All American troops and bases out of Syria, Iraq and the rest of the Near East. ***U.S. imperialism: Hands off the world!*** We also call for the ***immediate withdrawal of all Turkish, Russian and Iranian forces from Syria.***

Opposition to the U.S. imperialists is essential to the struggle for self-determination of the Kurdish people, who are divided among and oppressed by four capitalist states—Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq. As Marxist internationalists, we call for a united, independent Kurdistan and would also support Kurdish secession from any one of the oppressor states. This position is crucial to our program for proletarian revolutions in the region, which would lay the basis for a socialist federation of the Near East that would include a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan.

ISIS: Washington's Frankenstein's Monster

By enlisting in the U.S. war against ISIS, the YPG/SDF, along with the Kurdish bourgeois nationalists in Iraq, sold themselves to the same imperialists who gave birth to the Islamist killing machine that went on to butcher Kurds, Yazidis, Christians and many others. Following the destruction of the Soviet Union almost 30 years ago, America's rulers have justified their campaigns of imperialist terror in the Near East and Central Asia, as well as Africa, by waving the bloody shirt of Islamist terrorism. In fact, the Islamist terrorists were largely made in the U.S.A. Beginning with the anti-Soviet Cold War at the end of World War II, Washington embraced religious reactionaries as potential tools against "godless Communism" (and left-leaning bourgeois-nationalist regimes).

In the 1980s, the U.S. armed and financed the *mujahedin* cutthroats in Afghanistan to kill Soviet soldiers and drown in blood a modernizing regime that sought to implement minimal reforms,



AFP photos

Left: Kurdish YPG fighter with U.S. military officer, April 2017. Below: Syrian Arab and Kurdish civilians fleeing Turkish bombing campaign against Kurdish areas in northern Syria, October 10.



especially for women. Among the CIA's beneficiaries were Osama bin Laden and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. (For more on this history, see "The 1998 Embassy Bombings, Osama bin Laden and the CIA: The Afghan Connection," WV No. 761, 6 July 2001.) Zarqawi went on to head the Iraqi affiliate of Al Qaeda. The 2003 U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq, which devastated the country, sparked communal warfare between the now-dominant Shia majority and an aggrieved Sunni minority that had been on top previously. It was that ruinous conflict that fed Al Qaeda, and out of which ISIS emerged.

In Syria in 2012, the CIA launched a \$1 billion effort to finance, arm and organize a ragtag coalition of "moderate rebels" under the rubric of the Free Syrian Army (FSA), whose alumni today include Turkey's murderous Islamist proxies, notorious for beheading Kurds in the "safe zone." As journalist Max Blumenthal has reported, the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency knew that these "moderates" were linked to Jabhat al-Nusra, the Al Qaeda affiliate in Syria, and were intent on establishing a "Salafist principality in eastern Syria," i.e., an "Islamic State" (consortiumnews.com, 21 October). These were the "hard men with the guns" whom Hillary Clinton praised as those who could bring about a "political transition" in Damascus (thegrayzone.com, 16 October).

It was only when these outfits (including one called the Bin Laden Front) proved useless in overthrowing Assad that the U.S. turned to the YPG as a proxy force to wield against its Frankenstein's monster, ISIS. In their pact with the imperialist devil, the PYD/YPG misleaders, who are allied with the petty-bourgeois nationalist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in Turkey, turned their fighters into "boots on the ground" for the Pentagon. We insisted

that "by selling their souls to the U.S. imperialists, the Kurdish nationalists have committed a crime for which the long-dispossessed Kurdish masses will pay the price" (WV No. 1084, 26 February 2016).

For a United, Independent Kurdistan

It did not take a crystal ball to foresee this betrayal, which is but the latest in a long history of maneuvers by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois Kurdish nationalists to ingratiate themselves with the imperialists and/or oppressive regional capitalist regimes. This treachery dates back to even before the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1918, when the Kurdish nation was carved up by the British and French imperialists.

In Iraq in the 1960s, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) tied its fortunes to the CIA, the Israeli Mossad and the Shah of Iran after the Arab nationalist Ba'ath regime launched an attack on Iraqi Kurds. In return, the KDP hunted down Iranian Kurds, turning them over to the blood-drenched regime of the Shah. In 1975, the Shah made a deal with Ba'athist leader Saddam Hussein and cut off support to the KDP, with the CIA following suit. This led to an Iraqi onslaught against the Kurds.

In 1991, the KDP and its rival, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), sided with the U.S. in its war against Iraq. Vainly expecting that Washington would back them, the Kurds then rose up against Saddam Hussein. The U.S. stood aside while the Iraqi regime brutally suppressed them. The KDP and PUK went on to serve as military auxiliaries to the U.S. occupation force following the 2003 invasion. With the U.S. manipulating and reinforcing sectarian divisions, the Kurdish *pesh merga* joined with Shia militias in crushing Sunni insurgents in Falluja in 2004 as American troops leveled the city.

Additionally in Syria (officially known as the Syrian Arab Republic), the Kurds have suffered oppression under the country's Arab rulers. In the 1960s, some 20 percent of Kurds were stripped of Syrian citizenship, and many of their land. In the late 1970s, the Ba'athist regime of Hafez al-Assad (father of the current Syrian president) carried out further seizures of Kurdish land and gave it to Arab settlers—part of an "Arabization" drive that also banned Kurdish books and even names. At the same time, as tensions arose between Turkey and Syria, the Assad regime allowed the PKK, which has always been brutally repressed in Turkey, to move into Syrian Kurdistan. Then in 1998, Assad, under pressure from Turkey, banned the PKK,

imprisoned a number of its leaders and expelled its founder, Abdullah Öcalan. The following year, Turkey captured Öcalan with CIA assistance.

The true allies of the Kurdish toilers are not the imperialists or the regional bourgeois oppressors but those who are exploited and oppressed by the same class enemy. The proletariat of Turkey includes a sizable Kurdish component. Turkey's capitalist rulers thrive on fomenting chauvinist hatred of the Kurds in order to divide the workers. To unite their forces and enhance their ability to struggle in their class interests, it is vital for Turkish workers to champion the cause of Kurdish self-determination, including defending the PKK against state repression. We call for military defense of the PKK without giving political support to its petty-bourgeois program.

In the course of class and social struggles and through the intervention of a Leninist vanguard party, the workers of the Near East can be broken from the chauvinism and other backward prejudices that currently bind them to their exploiters. It is necessary to cohere Leninist-Trotskyist nuclei that will fight to build revolutionary workers parties, national sections of a reformed Fourth International. Such parties must be based on the understanding that the fight against national, ethnic and religious oppression and to liberate women—the "slaves of slaves"—is essential to the struggle for proletarian revolution to sweep away capitalist rule and break the chains of imperialist subjugation. Centrally important to this perspective is the presence of hundreds of thousands of Kurdish and Turkish workers in Germany, where they have the potential to form a bridge between class struggles in the Near East and in the imperialist powerhouse of Europe.

For Class Struggle at Home Against U.S. Imperialism

For the multiracial working class in the U.S., opposition to the imperialist depredations of America's rulers is key to advancing its interests. When Trump announced the (partial) troop withdrawal from Syria, self-described "socialist" Bernie Sanders fumed that "you don't turn your back on allies," while fellow "progressive" Elizabeth Warren railed that "Trump recklessly betrayed our Kurdish partners." With their long track records of supporting American intervention abroad, Sanders and Warren are no less committed to furthering U.S. imperialist domination than are the Republicans and more openly pro-war Democrats such as Hillary Clinton. Sanders, for example, has long championed "regime change" in Syria, a declaration that the U.S. should impose regimes of its choosing on any country it can overpower.

For the Democrats, Trump's real crime in pulling back U.S. troops was to hand Syria over to Russia (as well as to Iran). Sanders, Warren & Co. want to concentrate on those they've declared to be the main enemies, capitalist Russia and the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state. Warren made this clear in a *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2019) article published shortly after she declared her presidential candidacy, writing that U.S. entanglement in the Near East has "distracted Washington from growing dangers in other parts of the world: a long-term struggle for power in Asia, a revanchist Russia that threatens Europe, and looming unrest in the Western Hemisphere, including a collapsing state in Venezuela that threatens to disrupt its neighbors."

When "labor friendly" capitalist pols like Warren and Sanders appear at union rallies and picket lines, it is to strengthen the political ties that bind the working class to the capitalist-imperialist system of exploitation, oppression and war. Those ties must be broken as part of the struggle to build a workers party, the necessary instrument to lead the fight to sweep away the U.S. imperialist beast through socialist revolution. This is the task to which the Spartacist League in the U.S., section of the International Communist League, is dedicated. ■

Memorial gathering in honor of our comrade

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Down With Democrats' War on Public Education!

Teachers: Fight to Win!

OCTOBER 29—The following leaflet was issued on October 23 by the Chicago Spartacist League and has been distributed on picket lines and at rallies in support of the school strike. The teachers at Passages Elementary charter school returned to work yesterday. As we go to press, members of one of the striking unions, SEIU Local 73, are voting on a tentative agreement. As long as the Chicago Teachers Union remains on strike, SEIU school staff must honor the picket lines and not return to work.

* * *

A sea of red and purple has washed over Chicago as some 32,000 members of the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) and Service Employees (SEIU) Local 73 enter the second week of a popular strike to defend public education and improve the working conditions and livelihoods of teachers and school staff. Their determined fight is also being waged on behalf of the students, with demands for reduced class size, more librarians, counselors and nurses, increased school funding and affordable housing. The education unions are up against the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) administration and newly elected Democratic mayor Lori Lightfoot. Crying that there is "no more money" in the budget, the mayor tried to strong-arm underpaid and overworked teachers and staff back to work, and into overcrowded classrooms. The two unions must stand strong together until all their demands are met!

At mass strike rallies, chants of “Get up, get down, Chicago is a union town” echo through the streets. Lightfoot grotesquely blames strikers for causing “economic hardships” to families. But there is widespread support for this important



Striking CTU teachers, school staff and their supporters during mass march in downtown Chicago, October 23.

includes special education classroom assistants, bus aides and some custodians—take on second jobs just to make ends meet.

During the strike, the SEIU Local 1 leadership has had its school custodians report to work. Authorizing scabbing is a betrayal of all SEIU members, as well as the CTU. Picket lines must be honored. ***One out, all out!*** In order to maximize the collective strength of the unions, there should be coordinated struggle among school employees, which a common contract expiration would facilitate. Joint struggle could also lay the groundwork for consolidating one single union within the city school system.

The fact that campus security guards are also part of SEIU Local 73 undermines the union. Security guards are mistakenly viewed as fellow workers, especially because many come from poor black and minority communities. But security guards are an arm of the administration, to be used against teachers, school staff and students. Their job is to act as aux-

iliaries to the capitalist state, that is, the repressive apparatus made up of the cops, courts, prisons and military that defends the profits and rule of the tiny exploiting class over the working and oppressed masses. School cops and security guards have no place in the labor movement.

During a strike, the question is posed sharply: who are the workers' friends and enemies? The CTU and SEIU have as class allies the rest of city labor and working-class Chicago. The capitalist Democrats, who posture as the "friends of labor" when convenient, are on the opposing side. They are a party of the bosses and bankers, along with the openly racist

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For a Workers Party!

labor battle among the working and poor people of Chicago, not least black and Latino students and families, who know full well that teachers are going to bat for them. In “Segregation City,” as elsewhere in this society built on racial oppression, the black population bears the brunt of the very real hardships of unemployment and police terror, which the Democratic Party city rulers are responsible for.

It's not only about striving for decent and

quality education in a profit-driven system that condemns millions of youth to segregated and run-down schools. It's also about combating austerity measures, union-busting and dismal conditions affecting working people across the board: poverty wages, inferior housing, exorbitant health care costs. The salaries of numerous CPS workers are so low that their own children qualify for free lunch programs. Meanwhile, many in Local 73—which

Syria: No to YPG Alliance with U.S. Imperialism, Enemy of Kurdish National Liberation!

U.S. Out of the Near East!

OCTOBER 28—The most recent developments in the Kurdish areas of northeastern Syria have made clear, yet again, the truth: U.S. imperialism is the greatest enemy of the dismembered, stateless Kurdish nation. For five years, the Kurdish nationalist Democratic Union Party (PYD) and its military arm, the People's Protection Committees (YPG), have acted as foot soldiers for the U.S. war against the ISIS reactionaries, thus subordinating the national aspirations of the Kurds in Syria to the interests of American imperialism. After Donald Trump announced that U.S. troops would be pulled out of Syria, allowing the Turkish army and its Arab Islamist

mercenaries to slaughter Kurds south of the Turkish border, it appeared that the U.S.-Kurdish alliance might be unraveling, as we noted in WV No. 1163 (18 October). But the YPG has since continued its alliance with the imperialists, and it is the Kurdish masses who will, as always, suffer the consequences.

As part of the cease-fire agreement brokered by the White House between Turkey and the vastly outgunned YPG-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), SDF fighters were forced out of a “safe zone” that extends 18 miles into Syrian Kurdistan. After Vladimir Putin’s Russia cut a deal with Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan to jointly patrol

the Syria-Turkey border area, further screwing the Kurds, Trump declared that hundreds of U.S. troops would remain to “protect” oil facilities in eastern Syria, with the SDF again acting as U.S. auxiliaries. Washington’s control of the oil fields, which Russia has aptly called “banditry,” is meant to starve the Syrian bourgeois regime of Bashar al-Assad of revenue. Meanwhile, Assad’s forces have moved into some of the area formerly held by the Kurds.

The YPG's continuing role as U.S. tools was highlighted yesterday when Trump announced that Special Ops commandos had succeeded in killing ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in

northwestern Syria. As he reveled in the gory details, Trump gave a shout-out to the YPG, who, according to U.S. officials, “continued to provide information to the C.I.A. on Mr. al-Baghdadi’s location even after Mr. Trump’s decision to withdraw the American troops left the Syrian Kurds to confront a Turkish offensive alone” (*New York Times*, 27 October).

Notwithstanding howls from various Democratic Party presidential hopefuls over Trump's "betrayal" of the Kurds, U.S. intervention in Syria was never about defending them against ISIS. The Obama administration helped fund

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