

Bolivia



Reuters



EFE

Down With U.S.-Backed Right-Wing Coup!

NOVEMBER 25—The U.S.-backed coup that forced bourgeois-populist president Evo Morales to flee and installed an anti-indigenous regime of Catholic extremists has plunged Bolivia into chaos. Insurgent protesters and supporters of Morales have been met with brutal repression—many have been arrested or disappeared, dozens massacred and hundreds wounded, with the toll climbing. Demonstrators waving the multicolor native Andean Wiphala flag have bravely confronted military and police shock troops in the streets of La Paz and elsewhere, demanding that Morales be allowed to return from exile in Mexico and finish his term. In a sinister act last week, the interim government accused Morales of sedition and terrorism for supposedly fomenting the unrest.

Self-appointed president Jeanine Áñez, notorious for branding indigenous religious practices as “satanic,” rejoiced that “God has allowed the Bible to come back” to Bolivia. Áñez granted the armed forces immunity to carry out more bloodshed, targeting the heavily indigenous working and peasant population, trade unionists and leftists. With cities facing shortages of food and fuel as a result of protest blockades, the situation remains unstable. In an attempt to defuse the crisis, Congress approved new elections open to candidates from Morales’s Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement Toward Socialism—MAS) but excluding Morales himself.

The U.S. bourgeois establishment disingenuously denies that there was any coup, with its media steadfast behind the narrative that the Bolivian president “resigned.” On November 10, the military abandoned Morales and demanded that he step down amid a growing mutiny

“Interim president” Jeanine Áñez (right), with military officer and Bible, November 13, has unleashed state violence against largely indigenous supporters of deposed Evo Morales. Above left: La Paz, November 15. Above right: Three days later, security forces confront coca growers in Sacaba, where ten anti-coup demonstrators had been shot dead.

by police, who joined anti-government protests spearheaded by far-right opposition forces in the Bolivian oligarchy. The police/military coup was the culmination of weeks of mobilizations that accused Morales of stealing the October 20 election. The fact that he was able to win, not to mention run for, a fourth consecutive term, incited his hard-line opponents, who cried “fraud.” Racist mobs and fascist gangs went on a rampage, ransacking and burning the homes of MAS politicians, torturing women and peasants’ leaders and burning the Wiphala.

In a White House statement, President Trump applauded the toppling of Morales, and ominously warned the “illegitimate regimes” of Venezuela and Nicaragua that “the will of the people will always prevail.” The U.S. imperialists have been itching to reverse the “pink tide” that brought in a number of bourgeois-nationalist and populist Latin American regimes over the last couple of decades starting with Hugo Chávez and including Morales. Such motives also drove the Obama administration in 2009, when then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton endorsed the military coup that ousted Manuel Zelaya of Honduras.

The Republicans and Democrats alike are parties of imperialism and war, with a common class interest in maintaining U.S. political and economic supremacy in its “backyard.” Liberal-left darlings Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez condemned the Bolivian coup;

but it should be noted that these “progressives” are dutiful shepherds for U.S. imperialism, as shown by their support for “regime change” in Venezuela against President Nicolás Maduro.

Morales, initially elected in 2005, rode to power with a significant social base among the indigenous masses and peasant social movements following the water and gas wars—mass upheavals against privatization and IMF-dictated austerity measures. The country’s first indigenous president, Morales was a former leader of the *cocalero* union that organized indigenous coca leaf farmers. While he posed as a friend of workers and the oppressed and occasionally acted as a thorn in the side of the U.S. overlords, his radical-sounding rhetoric was used to co-opt and contain working-class and plebeian discontent. All the while, his bourgeois MAS government was a loyal servant to the capitalist ruling class, administering the repressive state apparatus on its behalf, which necessarily meant subordination to the world imperialist system.

It is urgently necessary for the Bolivian proletariat to oppose the coup without giving any political support to Morales or MAS. We take a side with the anti-coup protesters and defend Morales supporters against murderous state repression and reactionary mobilizations. At the same time, we fight for the proletariat, leading behind it the rest of the besieged indigenous masses, to emerge independently



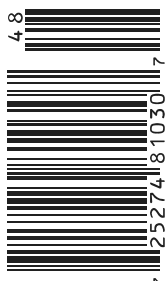
EFE

under its own banner. As revolutionary Marxists in the U.S., we call on the working class here to oppose the bloody machinations of its imperialist ruling class.

U.S. Imperialism and “Andean Capitalism”

It was the Washington-based Organization of American States (OAS), a tool of U.S. imperialist domination, which spun the dubious charge of fraud in the October 20 election. The OAS claimed “irregularities” in the vote count without providing a shred of evidence. Since its origins in the Cold War, the OAS has been Washington’s “ministry of colonies.” It sought to quash Communist and leftist movements south of the border, aiming at the Cuban Revolution, which led in 1960-61 to the expropriation of the capitalist class there and the creation of a bureaucratically deformed workers state. Recently, the OAS promoted the U.S. puppet Juan Guaidó during the White House’s failed

continued on page 2



For an Indigenous-Centered Workers and Peasants Government!

Bolivia...

(continued from page 1)

coup attempt against Maduro in capitalist Venezuela. Not coincidentally, one of the first acts of Bolivia’s post-coup regime was to expel hundreds of Cuban doctors and Venezuelan diplomats.

For decades, the U.S. State Department has directly and indirectly intervened in Bolivia, supporting previous coups, promoting right-wing “civic committees” and providing funding to opposition leaders like Carlos Mesa. A *Grayzone* article (13 November) notes that Bolivia’s head of the army and chief of police, who participated in the coup, had both been attachés in Washington. At least six of the key coup plotters were alumni from the School of the Americas, infamous for its death squad butchers.

The central political figure who drove the overthrow of Morales is ultra-right Catholic millionaire Luis Fernando Camacho. Camacho represents the powerful agricultural oligarchy from the eastern lowlands of Santa Cruz. A mineral-rich region with a white-minority secessionist movement, it was a staging ground for a 2008 “civil coup” attempt against Morales. Camacho got his start in a fascist paramilitary organization called the Unión Juvenil Cruceñista (Santa Cruz Youth Union), the separatist movement’s “brass knuckles” that terrorizes indigenous peasants, leftists and journalists. He went on to head the infamous comité cívico (civic committee) of Santa Cruz. There he was groomed by the Christian separatist and magnate Branko Marinkovic, whose family is reported to have ties with the Croatian Ustasha, which collaborated with the Nazis during World War II.

The racist elites in eastern Bolivia hark back to the days when the lighter-skinned (Spanish-descended) rulers kept the boot



San Cristóbal miners on strike against Sumitomo Corporation, September 6. Morales government sided with bosses against workers.

on the neck of the indigenous majority—mostly Quechua and Aymara, with smaller populations like Chiquitano and Guaraní, among many others. The landowning class resents the fact that the “plurinational state” established under Morales used proceeds from royalties of natural gas—one of Bolivia’s main exports—to improve the conditions of the indigenous and poor population. The 2006 so-called “nationalization” of gas was actually a renegotiated partnership with the foreign gas firms, under which they paid higher rents to the government. The state used a portion of these payments, together with other commodity revenue, to invest in social programs and infrastructure.

As a result, during nearly 14 years under Morales and Vice President Álvaro García Linera, the country experienced a decline in extreme poverty, unemploy-

ment and illiteracy. An expanding economy made it possible for MAS to implement popular measures and appease the demands of various social sectors, while immense wealth was left in the hands of the tiny bourgeoisie.

Today, Bolivia remains one of the most impoverished nations in South America. The bulk of the indigenous population is still left to subsist as poor *campesinos* or low-wage workers in the mines, factories and oil fields. Many are in the informal sector—including women street vendors and domestic workers—as well as a significant percentage of child laborers. At the same time, Bolivia has seen the emergence of an indigenous entrepreneurial bourgeoisie. This stratum of urban petty capitalists is showcased in the few colorful mansions scattered in the overwhelmingly working-class and poor city of El Alto outside of La Paz.

Some in this layer are committed to reaping the lion’s share of benefits from extractive industry like lithium mining. The Potosí region sits on one of the world’s largest reserves of lithium, the crucial element in batteries for cell phones, computers and electric vehicles. Initial plans by the Morales government to mine lithium through joint ventures between state-owned companies and German and Chinese firms enraged the indigenous leader of the Potosí civic committee, Marco Antonio Pumari, who wanted higher royalties from the project. Pumari worked in close alliance with Camacho during the coup.

While Morales was heralded by much of the international left as a socialist, he made no bones about overseeing “Andean capitalism” and upholding private property and profit. The policies of the MAS

government have always benefited the transnational corporations involved in the extraction of the country’s energy and mineral wealth. MAS also incorporated substantial elements of the agribusiness and ranching elites into its ranks, and made compromises with the same right-wing and secessionist forces that sought the demise of Morales.

For many years, Morales had the allegiance of the leaders of the main labor confederation, the COB, and controlled indigenous movements. But some of this support has frayed, if not cracked. The MAS government carried out brutal state repression against the same “popular movements” it has purported to represent. In 2011, the federal police attacked indigenous protesters marching against the building of the TIPNIS highway through a rain forest reserve, and their protected homeland, in the Bolivian Amazon. During the 2013 national strike, riot police assaulted miners, teachers, health care and factory workers demanding higher pensions.

For a Trotskyist Workers Party in Bolivia!

Bolivia is a case of combined and uneven development, where modern industry like natural gas extraction coexists alongside rural backwardness. In this Andean country, varying forms of bourgeois rule—from military dictatorships and “neoliberal” regimes to populist governments—have demonstrated their subordination to the imperialist order. Indeed, throughout Latin America, the weak national bourgeoisies are incapable of breaking with the imperialists, to whom they are bound by a thousand threads. To the extent that a nationalist-populist government rallies the toiling masses and offers some resistance to imperialist diktats, it does so to advance the interests of the domestic bourgeoisie. Both neoliberal regimes and populist ones fear the force that is capable of throwing off the imperialist yoke: the working class.

Leon Trotsky spelled out the perspective of permanent revolution, which applies to countries of belated economic development, and found confirmation in the experience of the October 1917 Russian Revolution. In the age of imperialism, only the proletariat, standing at the head of the oppressed masses, can carry out key tasks—like agrarian revolution, national emancipation from imperialist subjugation and fulfillment of the democratic aspirations of the masses—by overthrowing the capitalist rulers and their state. Through expropriating bourgeois private property, the working class would establish the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasantry, that is, a

continued on page 7



TROTSKY

The Proletariat in Underdeveloped Countries

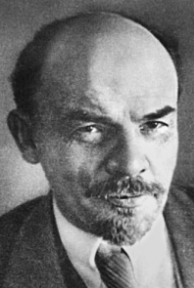
In a manifesto adopted by the 1940 Emergency Conference of the Fourth International, revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky underlined that in neocolonial countries, liberation from imperialism and the local bourgeoisie requires that the proletariat stand at the head of the oppressed masses as the driving force of socialist revolution. This perspective requires building revolutionary workers parties, as part of a reformed Fourth

International, to lead the workers to power and to link their struggles in backward countries with those in the imperialist centers.

Only under its own revolutionary direction is the proletariat of the colonies and the semicolonies capable of achieving invincible collaboration with the proletariat of the metropolitan centers, and with the world working class as a whole. Only this collaboration can lead the oppressed peoples to complete and final emancipation, through the overthrow of imperialism the world over. A victory of the international proletariat will deliver the colonial countries from the long-drawn-out travail of capitalist development, by opening up the possibility of arriving at socialism hand in hand with the proletariat of the advanced countries.

The perspective of the permanent revolution in no case signifies that the backward countries must await the signal from the advanced ones, or that the colonial peoples should patiently wait for the proletariat of the metropolitan centers to free them. Help comes to him who helps himself. Workers must develop the revolutionary struggle in every country, colonial or imperialist, where favorable conditions have been established, and through this set an example for the workers of other countries. Only initiative and activity, resoluteness and boldness can really materialize the slogan “Workers of the world, unite!”

—Leon Trotsky, “Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution” (May 1940)



LENIN

WORKERS VANGUARD



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

DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Liz Gordon

EDITOR: Michael Davisson

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

EDITORIAL BOARD: Jeanne Mitchell (managing editor), François Donau (production manager), Edie Goldberg (letters editor), Mónica Mora (Spanish-language editor), Bruce André, Ray Bishop, Jon Brule, Paul Cone, Walter Jennings, Michael Joyce, Jane Kerrigan, Alan Wilde, Laura Zamora

The Spartacist League is the U.S. section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Workers Vanguard (ISSN 0276-0746) is published biweekly, except skipping issues in January, June, July, August and December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 1618, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116. Email address: vanguard@tiac.net. Domestic subscription: \$10/21 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers Vanguard, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

The closing date for news in this issue is November 26.

No. 1166

29 November 2019

34th Annual Holiday Appeal Fundraisers

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

NEW YORK CITY

Saturday, January 25

(Time and location to be announced)

Information: (212) 406-4252

Tickets \$10 • students/unemployed \$5

CHICAGO

Sunday, December 8

3 to 7 p.m.

U.E. Hall

37 S. Ashland (at Monroe)

Information: (312) 563-0442

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

OAKLAND

Saturday, January 25

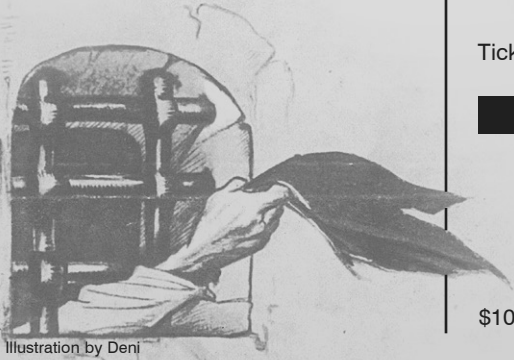
3 to 7 p.m.

Oakstop, 1721 Broadway

(Near 19th St. BART stop)

Information: (510) 839-0852

\$10 Donation • students/unemployed \$5



This is not charity—it’s an act of solidarity with those in prison. Their fight is our fight!

Sponsored by the Partisan Defense Committee

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

Every year, comrades of the Spartacist League/U.S. and Spartacus Youth Clubs participate in a *Workers Vanguard* subscription drive, traveling to places where we do not have branches to broaden the reach of our revolutionary Marxist press. *WV* reports on struggles of the working class and oppressed peoples here and abroad, aiming to paint for our readers a picture of capitalist exploitation and subjugation, and to put forward our internationalist program of workers revolution. While subscribing individuals, union locals and bookstores, we came across those interested in learning more about the struggle for a socialist future.

This year, we returned to Puerto Rico with *WV* and *Espartaco*, the paper published by our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México. We sold new subscriptions to students there, building on the previous trips to the beleaguered U.S. colony that had established links to militant teachers and trade unionists. We also distributed *suplementos en español de WV*, translations of select articles to better intersect Spanish-speaking working people across the U.S., as well as the Puerto Rican people, who over the past century have suffered massive repression in their struggles for independence.

On our joint visit with the GEM to the Texas borderlands, the *suplementos* served to underscore our support to the fight against the national oppression of the overwhelmingly Mexican population there and for the equality of languages. The residents of the borderlands, part of the vast territory that the U.S. ripped away from Mexico in the 19th century, were for decades subjected to bloody violence and are still blocked from learning to read and write in Spanish. As one comrade observed, “La opresión de la lengua permea en todos los aspectos de la vida cotidiana.” (“The oppression of language permeates all aspects of everyday life.”) We call to make Spanish a recognized standard language in the region. The trip highlight was meeting teachers who have battled to create a dual-language program for math, science and other subjects.

In the middle of the sub drive, nearly 50,000 members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) went on strike against General Motors, shutting down its U.S. plants for 40 days (and 40 nights). We joined picket lines in Michigan, Indiana, Tennessee, Texas and California in solidarity, and discussed our class-struggle perspective with the strikers. Many workers bought introductory subscriptions of six issues. We encourage them to renew their subs for a full year, so that they can keep reading the only newspaper around that is committed to working-class rule!

On the picket lines, workers had a keen sense of the need to stand up for the rights of the most exploited and vulnerable union members, and were centrally



fighting to end wage tiers and temporary jobs. Workers in other industries saddled with tiers were eager to read our coverage of the strike after learning what it was all about.

The pro-capitalist UAW bureaucrats angered a lot of auto workers by letting scabs and managers cross picket lines. This undermining of the picket lines is an expression of the labor tops' view that the union should be a "partner" of the bosses. Despite their betrayals, we defend the UAW officials against the federal criminal probe, which is an attack on the union as a whole.

In many cases, our teams brought the news to the GM picket lines that 50,000 workers, many of them women, had won a hard-fought strike against maquiladora factory owners in Matamoros early this year. We emphasized the need for international working-class solidarity. Notably,

our call for a workers party, independent of all capitalist parties, to fight for a workers government grabbed the attention of UAW strikers. Most workers had not considered it possible to have an alternative to the two capitalist parties, with many placing their hopes in Democrats like Bernie Sanders.

We had to combat similar illusions in the Democrats on college campuses. Some students didn't buy the tired old lie, peddled by the Democratic Socialists of America (itself a part of the Democratic Party), that the capitalist Democrats can be pressured to serve the interests of labor, black people and the oppressed. Still, many of them argued that you have to support the "lesser evil." We explained that "progressives," such as Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, simply want to refurbish the image of the party in order to corral disaffected youth and workers back into its fold.

Our front-page article on the U.S.-backed counterrevolutionary protests in Hong Kong was polarizing on the campuses. We have a military side with the Chinese deformed workers state, including the Hong Kong police, against the anti-Communist rabble. This position flows from our defense of the gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution, which overthrew capitalist property relations in China. The parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy threatens these gains. We call for workers political revolution to oust the bureaucrats and establish a regime based on workers and peasants councils. We say: Expropriate the filthy rich tycoons in Hong Kong!

Over the past year, Chinese students at U.S. universities have been subjected to a witchhunt, and many Chinese-language programs eliminated. On campus sales, we displayed signs in Mandarin demanding, "U.S. Government: Hands Off Chinese Students, Scholars and Scientists!" Chinese students approached our table, often amazed to see American communists defending China. They thanked us and engaged in lively discussions about the anti-China hysteria pushed by Democrats and Republicans alike.

We sold subscriptions in the South to activists who had participated in protests against racist Confederate monuments. Trips to the Virginia Tidewater area and to New Orleans renewed longstanding ties with readers, particularly ILA longshoremen. One selling point was our pamphlet *Black History and the Class Struggle*, which is included with full WV subscriptions and illustrates our program for black liberation through socialist revolution.

The 2019 sub drive was a success. Congratulations to comrade Jake, who racked up the most points this year, and a special thanks to Tom and Ruth for their invaluable help in the Midwest! We made 143 percent of the national quota, with many subscriptions going to UAW strikers. The recent uptick in class and other social struggles in the U.S. and abroad just may have cleared a few cobwebs, leaving workers and students more open to the possibility of fighting capitalism. We encourage readers to keep in touch, including by writing letters to *WV*. ■

WV Photo

On November 16, the Spartacist League intervened into an “NYC Unites Against the Proud Boys” protest of some 200 people in Midtown Manhattan, three blocks away from a fascist Proud Boys rally. Some 20 fascist thugs, under heavy police protection, assembled to demand the release of two of their ilk sentenced to prison for a brutal attack on antifa activists last year (see “Fascist Proud Boys Rampage in NYC,” *WV*

No. 1143, 2 November 2018). The Proud Boys were able to get away with their latest provocation in the heart of this union, black, Latino and Jewish city, which can only embolden them to carry out further acts of violence.

The counterprotest organized by various liberals and reformists—who lump together race-terrorists with right-wing racist ideologues—was a form of “moral witness.” In contrast, our com-

rades emphasized that massive, integrated, disciplined mobilizations based on the social power of the multiracial working class are needed to *stop* the fascists and crush them in the egg. We chanted, “Smash the Nazis, smash the Klan; Only workers defense guards can!” and had placards reading: “Break with the Democrats! For a Revolutionary Workers Party That Fights for a Workers Government!”

29 NOVEMBER 2019

Down With School Segregation, Legacy of Slavery!

We print below, edited for publication, the second part of a presentation by comrade L. Singer at a Socialist League forum held in Chicago on October 26. The talk was first given in Brooklyn. Part One appeared in WV No. 1165 (15 November).

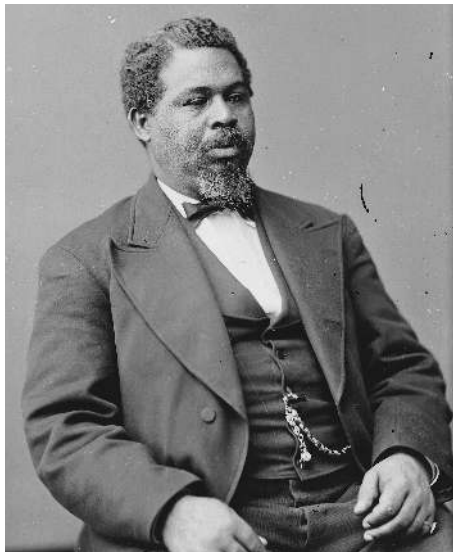
PART TWO

Most of the first free public schools in the South were established after the Civil War and during Radical Reconstruction, the turbulent decade of Southern interracial bourgeois democracy. The freedmen and their white allies were protected by federal troops, many of them black. The Reconstruction Acts, passed by Congress in 1867, mandated the military occupation of the ex-Confederate states and provided for universal common school education. The Fourteenth Amendment was ratified in 1868; this stated that everybody born in the U.S. was a citizen, invalidating the *Dred Scott* decision. In 1870, the Fifteenth Amendment was ratified, granting the right to vote to all male citizens. Black people who served in the Union Army were among the principal leaders of Reconstruction governments and fought tenaciously against segregation.

Thousands of public schools were built, to the enormous benefit of black people and poor whites, although the schools largely remained segregated by race. Some 1,500 schools were built in Texas alone by 1872, and by 1875 half of all children in Mississippi, Florida and South Carolina were attending school. The freedmen's drive for education for themselves and their children was insatiable, as it was viewed as a path out of conditions of servitude. Thousands of Northern teachers, black and white, flocked to the South to aid the freedmen and were themselves often the target of violence by racists.

There were some attempts to desegregate schools. One effort was led by Robert Smalls, who had earned fame as a slave in 1862 by commandeering a heavily armed Confederate ship in Charleston harbor. He delivered it to the Union fleet, bringing himself and 16 other slaves to freedom. After the war, Smalls was elected to the new South Carolina government. He pushed through legislation to desegregate schools in the state. But when the first black student entered the University of South Carolina, the teachers resigned and the entire student body left the school! In New Orleans in the early 1870s, there was even a brief experiment with integrated public schools. In January 1866, the *New Orleans Tribune*, the first black daily newspaper in the U.S., published the headline: "All children, without discrimination, will sit together."

But widespread and violent opposition to "race mixing" ensured that the majority of Southern schools were segregated,



Library of Congress

Former slave Robert Smalls fought to desegregate schools as member of Reconstruction-era South Carolina legislature.

and it goes without saying that the black schools were inferior. While abolitionists opposed the heinous institution of slavery, many saw full equality for black people as a whole different matter. As I noted earlier, prior to the Civil War, systematic segregation had taken root in the North, where a fight against the color line was also waged. Radical abolitionist Charles Sumner, in every Congressional session from 1870 until his death four years later, fought against Jim Crow, which he termed "the last tinge of slavery." Civil War hero Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson

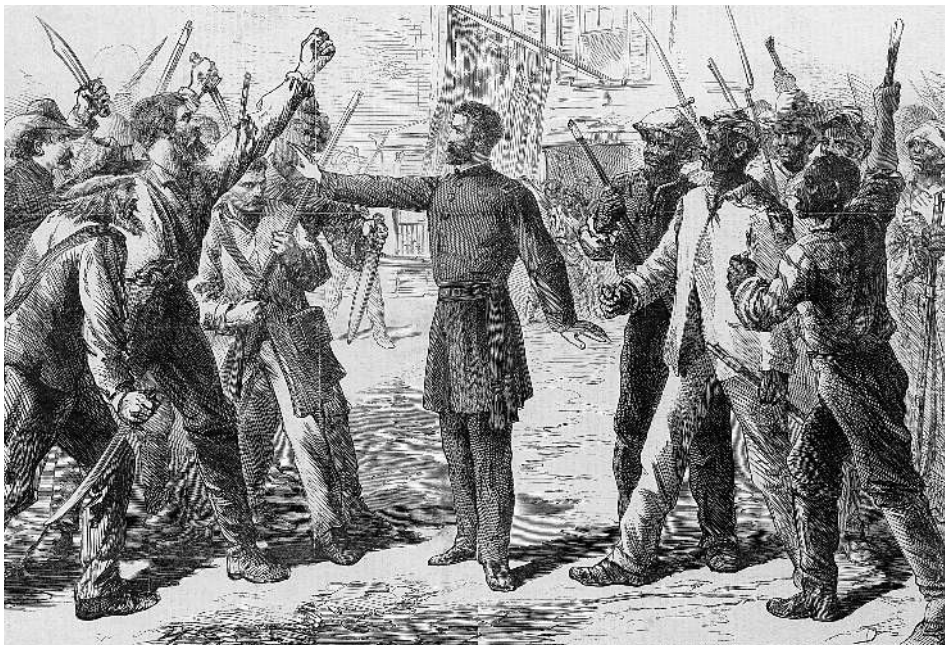
1868, the federal government conceded the eight-hour day to federal workers. Karl Marx captured the scene in the first volume of *Capital* (1867):

"In the United States of North America, every independent movement of the workers was paralysed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded. But out of the death of slavery a new life at once arose. The first fruit of the Civil War was the eight hours' agitation, that ran with the seven-leagued boots of the locomotive from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from New England to California."

U.S. Army



Right: Integrated faculty of a Freedmen's Bureau school near Norfolk, Virginia. Bottom: Freedmen's Bureau, backed by Union Army in South, was instrumental in defending rights of freed slaves.



Harper's Weekly

was ejected from a local school board in 1869 for demanding an end to segregated schools in Rhode Island.

Frederick Douglass powerfully argued the case for integration, especially as a basis for unity of poor whites and blacks against their common enemy: "The cunning ex-slaveholder sets those who should be his enemies to fighting each other and thus diverts attention from himself. Educate the colored children and white children together in your day and night schools throughout the South, and they will learn to know each other better, and be better able to cooperate for mutual benefit."

Reconstruction was the first attempt in this country to create a society in which black and white people were *equal citizens*—which flew in the face of all U.S. history. While Reconstruction is usually viewed as an issue of black and white, the defeat of the slavocracy also accentuated class differences among Southern whites. Democratic Party appeals to white supremacy were a way to block unity between poor whites and blacks. There was no real labor movement in the U.S. before the Civil War. However, it came on the scene afterwards; strikes and other labor protests became widespread. By

It was a highly combative labor movement, and that combativity reached its height in the Great Rail Strike of 1877. The crushing of that strike coincided with the final undoing of Reconstruction. Some of the federal troops removed from the South were sent against the rail workers, an early example of how labor rights and black rights are intertwined. The growth of labor militancy in the U.S. and internationally helped persuade Northern capitalists that their class interests, which had led them into the Civil War to destroy the Southern slave system, now compelled opposition to the demands of the black freedmen, as well as to the struggles of the working class.

Despite the tenacious struggles of a few courageous white Radical Republicans like Sumner and his House colleague Thaddeus Stevens, as well as black leaders like Douglass, Reconstruction was defeated. The withdrawal of the last Union troops with the Compromise of 1877 made clear that Northern capital was interested in consolidating the economic advantages of its victory over the Confederacy, not in black rights. Left defenseless before their former owners, black people were driven out of government and off their

land as Reconstruction regimes were smashed by naked racist terror.

A number of Supreme Court decisions, taken together, legally codified the end of Reconstruction. They also demonstrated that the courts are part of the bourgeois state machine, whose purpose is to defend capitalist class rule against the exploited and oppressed, regardless of which bourgeois party holds power. The core of the state consists of the police, army and prisons, as well as the courts. In 1883, the Supreme Court struck down the 1875 Civil Rights Act as unconstitutional. That Act, passed in honor of Sumner the year after his death, was a watered-down version of a bill he had proposed to promote integration. In 1896, the Court affirmed segregation as the law of the land in the *Plessy* decision. Homer Plessy, a man of mixed-race ancestry, sued in Louisiana after he was arrested for trying to sit in the "white section" of a train. The Court declared that if black people regard separate facilities as racial discrimination, it's because they choose to interpret them as such, i.e., it's all in their heads.

Arguing that segregation violates no part of the Constitution or its amendments, the *Plessy* ruling allowed separate treatment by race so long as it was supposedly equal. In *Brown v. Board of Education: Caste, Culture, and the Constitution* (2003), authors Robert Cottrol, Raymond Diamond and Leland Ware note: "At its zenith this system of segregation would turn Negroes into a group of American untouchables, ritually separated from the dominant white population in almost every observable facet of daily existence." Laws were put into effect throughout the South mandating separate seating on buses, separate water fountains, separate bathrooms, separate schools, separate Bibles to swear on in court. Laws echoing those that existed in the time of slavery were passed that forbade white teachers from teaching black children.

It is out of the ashes of the defeat of Reconstruction that Booker T. Washington arose as the voice of accommodation to Jim Crow segregation. Washington disparaged Reconstruction and blamed black people for their own oppression, deeming them "unfit" for "high-minded" professions. In periods of defeat, like now, echoes are heard of Washington's gospel of self-help, appealing to black youth to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps—in other words, to accept the racist status quo and look to the white rulers for patronage.

Heroic struggles erupted in the 1950s and '60s that aimed to end the formal legal inequalities imposed on black people. *Brown v. Board of Education* struck down the doctrine of "separate but equal" for schools. But there was immediate and often violent resistance to desegregation, and foot-dragging by the federal government. In Prince Edward County, Virginia, starting in 1959 all public schools were shut down for five years to prevent integration. White kids got vouchers paid for by public funds to attend private schools; the black kids got nothing.

Fundamentally, the civil rights movement did not remedy the *systemic* racial oppression at the core of U.S. capitalism. Its liberal leadership, exemplified by Martin Luther King Jr., sought legal reforms through pressuring the capitalist Democrats and courts, the same forces maintaining de facto segregation outside the South. In the North, there were no laws forbidding black people to eat at the same lunch counters as whites; but the unwritten laws of American capitalist exploitation kept black people a "last hired, first fired," doubly oppressed race-color caste. In 1965, the great writer James Baldwin remarked: "De facto segregation means Negroes are segregated, but nobody did it."

In 1954, addressing how the *Brown* decision applied to segregation in New York City, the school superintendent insisted,

WORKERS VANGUARD

“We have natural segregation here—it’s accidental.” Today, we hear that a lot, too. School officials in the North argued against using the word “segregation” on the grounds that segregation is deliberate—“racial imbalance” was the preferred term. The same thing is heard today, along with “lack of diversity.” While there was some struggle for school desegregation in the mid to late 1950s, it was in the early 1960s that larger struggles broke out.

Democrats and Social Democrats

In Chicago, segregation of housing and schools was openly enforced by the Democratic Party machine of Richard J. Daley. When the school superintendent, Benjamin Willis, was pressured to address overcrowding at black schools, he ordered 100 mobile classrooms rather than busing black kids to white schools. There was a boycott by over 222,000 students in 1963 against the segregation embodied in these “Willis wagons.” The *Chicago Tribune* called the boycott and other protest a “reign of chaos” and denounced the organizers as “reckless” for pulling kids out of school. That might sound familiar: the current “progressive” Democratic mayor, Lori Lightfoot, has lobbed similar vitriol at teachers who are now on strike. Daley and the Chicago Democrats viciously resisted any attempt at integration and made sure that schools and housing would stay segregated, as they still are.

In NYC, the struggle for integration reached a fever pitch in the early 1960s amid tumultuous struggles for decent housing and jobs and against rampant cop terror. In 1964, massive school boycotts by black and Puerto Rican parents and students were among the country's largest civil rights demonstrations on record. The first boycott was led by liberal Brooklyn minister Milton Galamison and Bayard Rustin, today an icon of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), who was already an expert in selling out struggles on behalf of the Democratic Party, which he wanted to "realign." Some 460,000 students didn't go to school. There was a racist backlash, with 10,000 white mothers, organized as "parents and taxpayers," marching across the Brooklyn Bridge to denounce "busing."

A second boycott was called, but this time Rustin wouldn't support it, labeling it too militant. Liberal white organizations saw the boycott as an inappropriate tactic; the *New York Times* declared it a "violent, illegal approach of adult-encouraged truancy!" Notably, Malcolm X supported the boycott, observing: "You don't have to go to Mississippi to find a segregated school system, we have it right here in New York City."

White Democratic Party politicians and black Democrats in the civil rights movement abandoned the battle. The NYC teachers union, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), was led by Albert Shanker, an anti-Communist “democratic socialist” who ran the UFT like a business. He refused to have the union endorse the 1964 school boycott for integration.

The Spartacist League intervened into



Lower East Side, Manhattan, February 1964: Protest against school segregation, part of massive boycott of city schools.

the boycott. When the struggle for black rights develops a mass character, it poses a direct threat to the capitalist system but cannot go forward without a revolutionary leadership. Our *Spartacist* article (No. 2, July-August 1964) stated that such a leadership would seek “to educate the black workers about the real nature of the Democratic Party of cold-war liberals, Southern racists, kept union leaders, and Uncle Toms in order to break up the system of two capitalist parties which perpetuates the status quo.”

This struggle was happening in the lead-up to the Civil Rights Act passed in 1964. Here we see the racist role of the Democrats in full effect. It was a Democratic Congressman from Brooklyn, Emanuel Celler, who enabled the incorporation of an amendment that the act could not be used to “overcome racial imbalance” in public schools. There was an anti-busing amendment as well, to stop “any official or court of the United States to issue any order seeking to achieve a racial balance in any school by requiring the transportation of pupils or students from one school to another...in order to achieve such racial balance.” So here you have the Democrats gutting the civil rights legislation they claimed to support in the abstract and upholding the segregation of Northern schools. This anti-busing amendment would be regularly cited in the *Chicago Tribune* to argue in defense of school segregation.

The civil rights movement mainly benefited a thin layer of middle-class black people, but it could not make a dent in the deep-seated oppression of the black ghetto masses. The formula of equal rights under the law provides no answer to the miserable conditions of black life entrenched in American capitalist society: joblessness, crumbling homes, overcrowded schools, racist cop terror. Fed up with these conditions, Harlem erupted in 1964 and Watts in 1965, as did ghettos across the country over the next three years. These upheavals were an expression of the bankruptcy of the liberal-led civil rights movement in the face of these social conditions.

There was a growth in black separatist sentiment, which did not and could not generate a program of struggle to get rid of racial oppression under capitalism. The black nationalists who raised “community control” made a virtue of the ingrained segregation that was seen as unchangeable. By the late 1960s, “community control” had become a major slogan used by the ruling class, mainly acting through the Democratic Party, to *co-opt* a layer of young black activists. Many of these activists, including those who voiced white-baiting separatist rhetoric, became overseers of the segregated black ghettos. The actual content of the “community control” slogan was an appeal for more black Democratic Party politicians, cops, judges and administrators. Since then, black mayors have been installed in one major city after another to help contain the discontent of the black masses, while presiding over cop terror and unleashing attacks on social programs and labor.

All these events are the background to understanding the 1968 New York City teachers strike. The administration of Mayor John V. Lindsay was trying to

bust the public employee unions, which were quite combative in the mid 1960s. There was a transit strike in 1966, led by Mike Quill. On its eve, Quill famously ripped up an anti-strike court injunction. Republican governor Nelson Rockefeller announced that he was “determined that this should never happen again.” The Taylor Law banning public employee strikes was put in place in 1967. When sanitation workers struck in early 1968, Lindsay decided that the time had come to break the public-sector unions.

Teachers had gone on strike in 1967, defying the Taylor Law. A leaflet we put out on September 24 after that strike noted the “policy of ‘professionalism’ advocated



Sauro/New York Times

Albert Shanker (middle), UFT president, at City Hall rally during 1968 NYC teachers strike. While politically denouncing Shanker, Spartacists stood with union against city rulers, black nationalist “community control” strikebreakers.

by the UFT leadership has held the union largely aloof from many of the past struggles of the ghetto communities, widening the gap between teacher, student and parent. Such a situation [of UFT indifference combined with black nationalist calls for 'keeping the schools open'] provides a ready excuse for the development of racist attitudes."

The spark for the 1968 strike came when the newly appointed black superintendent of Brooklyn's Ocean Hill-Brownsville school district fired union teachers in order to replace them with non-union ones. Lindsay and Rockefeller, in cahoots with the Ford Foundation, pulled out all the stops to bust the union by mobilizing black people and Latinos in the ghettos and barrios against the strike, using the demagogic call for "community control" of the schools. While politically denouncing Shanker, we stood with the union, which was at that time disproportionately Jewish, in its fight for survival. In our leaflet "New York City School Strike: Beware Liberal Union Busters!" (13 November 1968), we sought to link the struggles of the union movement to those of New York's black and Puerto Rican working people. Most of the reformist left came out in support of outright strikebreaking, siding with the "community control" crowd.

A few years later, there was a teachers strike in Newark, New Jersey, that played out differently. In 1971, black Democratic mayor Kenneth Gibson attacked the teachers union. However, because the union had an integrated membership and a black woman president, the ensuing teachers

strike had substantial support from the city's black population. The Newark teachers strike exposed the anti-union purpose behind the rhetoric of "community control" that had been wielded three years earlier in an attempt to break the NYC teachers union.

Racist Mobs and Liberals Defeat Busing

By the early to mid 1970s, the fight for school busing had become the front line in the fight for integration. The battle in Boston, a quintessential Democratic Party stronghold, took place almost 20 years after *Brown* and after every conceivable legal and political obstacle had been thrown up against integrating its schools. In 1974, a landmark Supreme Court decision prohibited busing black schoolchildren from Detroit to the suburbs, where the white schools were. This ruling set a precedent, including in Boston. The busing of black students there was purposely limited to neighborhoods like South Boston, known as Southie, which at the time was one of the poorest white areas outside of Appalachia. The aim was to pit poor and working-class whites against blacks. Again, demagogic politicians inflamed racist sentiments in these white ethnic enclaves under the watchwords of defend “neighborhood schools” and “stop forced busing.”

The Spartacist League intervened in Boston with a class-struggle program, calling to defend school busing as a minimal application of the elementary democratic right of black people to equality. We called to extend busing to the wealthier suburbs,

so that poor kids, black and white, could have access to quality education. We called for quality, racially integrated housing and free universal higher education. While the NAACP and such craven reformists as the Socialist Workers Party called for federal troops to Boston, we fought for *labor-black defense* to stop racist mob attacks and protect black schoolchildren. We knew the defeat of busing in Boston would set the stage for further attacks against black people and for rolling back social gains more broadly, which it did.

All the metropolitan areas in the country with the most integrated schools had mandatory city-suburban busing plans. Most of these plans had been reversed or stopped by the 1990s. In 2007, the Supreme Court threw out school desegregation plans in Seattle and Louisville, enabling the overturn of others that remained across the country and eviscerating the *Brown* decision.

While busing was an inadequate solution to school segregation, it did not “fail” but was *killed* by an alliance of liberals in Congress and howling mobs of racists in the streets. The reformist left played its part in this defeat by channeling the fight to defend busing into faith in the Democrats and appeals for federal intervention.

A few months ago, an early Democratic Party presidential debate included the spectacle of Kamala Harris, former California attorney general, going after Joe Biden for opposing busing for black schoolchildren. Of course, Biden supported racist anti-busing measures as

continued on page 6

A Spartacist Pamphlet \$1.50

Black History and the Class Struggle

No. 26

Capitalist America: Hellhole for Blacks, Immigrants, Labor

Homeless man with his possessions, New York City (left). Mother and child from Honduras seized in Texas after crossing the border (right).

Racist Trump White House: Democrats Paved the Way

We Need a Multiracial Revolutionary Workers Party!

**No. 26, August 2018
\$1.50 (64 pages)**

Black History is sent to WV subscribers.

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

Segregation...

(continued from page 5)

a Senator from Delaware. But this criticism is pure hypocrisy coming from Harris. For one, the role played by Biden in killing busing was not his alone, but that of the Democratic Party as a whole. And while a younger Harris personally benefited from the busing program in Berkeley, California, she went on to bus thousands of black and Latino youth, only not to better schools but to prison hellholes.

A number of petty-bourgeois liberal writers have powerfully documented the segregated and horrible conditions of the majority of public schools in this country. But they all propose the same dead-end answer of a better capitalist government to change things, while putting the fundamental blame on racist backwardness among whites.

This *is* a deeply and viciously racist country. But backward consciousness is not the source of racial oppression, although it is part of sustaining the oppression and degradation of black people, Latinos and other minorities. Racial oppression fundamentally stems from the American capitalist system and division of the working class along racial lines. As veteran American Trotskyist Richard Fraser put it:

“Karl Marx proved conclusively, however, that it was not greed but property relations which make it possible for exploitation to exist. When applied to the Negro question, the theory of morality means that the root of the problem of discrimination and white supremacy is prejudice. This is the reigning theory of American liberalism and is the means by which the capitalists throw the responsibility for the Jim Crow system upon the population as a whole. If people weren’t prejudiced there would be no Negro problem. This contention is fundamentally false.”

—“The Negro Struggle and the Proletarian Revolution” (1953), printed in “In Memoriam—Richard S. Fraser,” *Prometheus Research Series* No. 3, August 1990

The capitalist rulers have profited immensely by sowing racial divisions, pitting white workers against blacks, Asians against blacks and Latinos, blacks against immigrants and so on. They want to mask the fact that the class division between the workers and the capitalists is the primary dividing line in this society. Truth is, racial oppression serves to deepen the exploitation of *all* workers. The horrific conditions of life that black and immigrant workers have long endured are increasingly faced by the working class as a whole.

Funding for education and other social services is always rationed in a way that purposely fans racial and ethnic tensions. De Blasio’s pseudo-attempt to get rid of the racist, elite NYC high school exam was fiercely opposed by some Asian parents, who bought into the bourgeoisie’s lie that “merit” is what gets one to the top. To this end, the rulers have long invoked the myth of the Asian “model minority” as yet another way to blame black people

for their own oppression. Such pernicious stereotypes also disappear national and class differences among Asians. In NYC alone, some quarter-million Asians live in poverty. Asians are also a component part of labor in the city.

Asians, as well as Latinos and other predominantly non-white minorities, suffer oppression in capitalist America. However, as an intermediate layer, they navigate a society where the main racial divide is between black and white, and every institution is permeated by anti-black racism. Many Latino students in the U.S. attend deeply segregated and impoverished schools. In California, Latinos attend schools that are 84 percent non-white. There is also a

while leaving white schools untouched. The rights of workers, Latinos and Asians, black people and immigrants will either go forward together or fall back separately. That’s why we emphasize the fight for bilingual education as part of the struggle for free, quality, integrated education for all. Bilingual education, which is vital for all Spanish-speaking and immigrant children, would also benefit native English speakers.

For Free, Quality, Integrated Public Education for All!

Today, the blame for the lack of learning and for low test scores is cynically put on teachers and their unions. But over the

step in this direction would be for labor to organize the existing charters, as has already happened in some cases. Teachers at recently unionized charters in Chicago have engaged in strike action; unity in struggle of Chicago public school and charter teachers would give a big boost to further organizing drives.

There has been a series of teachers strikes across the country, beginning in West Virginia a year and a half ago up through Chicago today. These walkouts over better pay and conditions found wide support as well as some expressions of solidarity from other unions. But the potential impact of these battles has largely been wasted by the trade-union officialdom that ties the unions to the same Democratic Party that has been attacking them and devastating public education.

An article on the Chicago teachers strike in the DSA-sponsored *Jacobin* was titled “It’s Chicago Educators Versus the Ruling Class” (23 October). However, it declares, “Following Sanders’s lead, Harris, Warren, and Biden, have expressed support for union demands, exposing [Chicago mayor Lori] Lightfoot’s pro-big business economic program”—as though these other Democrats don’t have a pro-big business program. They *all* are capitalist politicians upholding viciously racist U.S. imperialism.

Every child across the country, whatever their background, deserves to attend a school with the same level of resources now allocated to the elite NYC high schools. The same filthy rich ruling class attacking public education and teachers unions from L.A. to Chicago to NYC has been waging a broader one-sided class war against working people in this country. From auto workers in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and Flint, Michigan, to transit and sanitation workers in NYC and Chicago, the multiracial working class has every interest in fighting for free, quality, integrated public education for all, up to and including the universities!

But it will take a leap in consciousness and organization for the proletariat to bring its power to bear in this fight, which must be linked to the struggle for its own freedom from capitalist wage slavery. Key to this task is building a revolutionary, internationalist *workers party* that will politically combat those like the DSA and the reformist Socialist Alternative that push support to the same old racist capitalist Democratic Party of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Sanders, as well as Nancy Pelosi and Biden. This support has only led to defeats for the oppressed and blocks the road to liberation.

Our model is Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolshevik Party, which led the working class to power in the Russian Revolution of October 1917. That revolution was a beacon for the workers and oppressed around the world and sent shivers down the U.S. bourgeoisie’s spine. Tsarist Russia had been, in Lenin’s words, a “prison house of peoples” of many oppressed nations and national minorities. By building a revolutionary party based on the social power of the workers, with a clear political program opposing capitalist exploitation, national oppression and all forms of Great Russian chauvinism, the Bolsheviks were able to shatter the old order. They sought to truly provide education to the masses and to do away with the bourgeois distinction between mental and manual labor.

Our task in the U.S. is to build a party like the Bolsheviks, with a heavily black and Latino leadership, that mobilizes all workers to fight black oppression. Communist leadership and interracial class struggle can break down racial and ethnic divisions within the working class. A revolutionary workers party, acting as a tribune of all the oppressed, can bring together the power of labor with the anger of the ghettos and barrios in order to smash this entire system of racist capitalist oppression and bring about workers rule. A socialist revolution will finish the unfinished tasks of the Civil War, achieving freedom and equality for black people in this country. It will take nothing less to realize such a basic demand as, “All children, without discrimination, will sit together”!■



Young Spartacus



Boston Globe

Above: In midst of Boston busing crisis, Spartacist banner at rally for school integration calls for defense of Columbia Point housing project against race terror, 1974. Left: Racist protest against busing, 1976.

whole history of segregation of Latinos on the basis of anti-Spanish discrimination, including “English only” schools.

In 1970, a federal district court ruled that the *Brown* decision applied to segregation of Mexican students in Texas. In response, Houston school officials classified Mexican students as “white” in order to place them in black schools and then declared those schools “integrated,”

last four decades, public education has come under sustained bipartisan assault, from extreme cutbacks to widespread school closures. The Obama administration led the pack in launching sweeping attacks on the public schools and the teachers unions packaged as education “reform,” which included a major expansion of the privately run charter industry.

Among the advocates of this “reform” are some of America’s biggest billionaires and venture capitalists, like Bill Gates and Sam Walton. Cornell University professor Noliwe Rooks, in her book *Cutting School* (2017), usefully details how increased privatization of the public schools is a way to slash the cost of educating poor and minority youth and at the same time enables individual capitalists to make lots of money. She writes: “Charter schools, ...vouchers, virtual schools, and an alternatively certified, non-unionized teaching force represent the bulk of the contemporary solutions offered as cures for what ails communities that are upward of 80 percent Black and Latino.”

Out of desperation over the awful state of inner-city public schools, many black and Latino parents have been manipulated into thinking that charter schools are some kind of answer. In fact, the overwhelmingly non-union charters are even more segregated than the public schools and are notorious for vicious discipline and excluding non-English speakers and disabled students. We call for class struggle to destroy the charter industry through bringing its teachers and staff into the public schools and the unions. An important

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE IN QUEBEC AND CANADA

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

Toronto.....Box 7198, Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X8, (416) 593-4138
trotskyist.toronto@gmail.com

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

Corbyn...

(continued from page 8)

Corbyn’s Unionism and his Brexit betrayal left the nearly 40 per cent of Scottish leave voters without any working-class political representation and was a gift to the SNP, who aspire to become the capitalist rulers in Scotland. Contrary to the illusions pushed by the SNP, the EU is an enemy of oppressed nations! Just look at the EU’s participation in the vicious persecution of Catalan nationalists for the “crime” of holding an independence referendum.

The precondition for advancing the unity of the workers of England, Scotland and Wales is opposing English chauvinism. Unity requires championing the equality of nations and the democratic right of self-determination, which includes both the right to separate and the right not to, as the Scottish population chose in the 2014 referendum. In Northern Ireland, where the oppressed Irish Catholic nation is interpenetrated with the distinct Protestant population, under capitalism the self-determination of one community can only be achieved at the expense of the other. An equitable solution to the conflicting national aspirations requires overthrowing capitalist property relations.

The starting point must be the withdrawal of all British troops and bases, a demand that cuts against the Labour Party’s history of administering bloody anti-Catholic repression. Wilson’s Labour government sent troops into Northern Ireland in 1969 to crush the Catholics’ struggles for social equality. Corbyn remains a supporter of the British military occupation of Northern Ireland (despite members of the Guards Parachute Platoon using his picture for target practice). Corbyn has always supported the Good Friday “peace” deal, which is premised on the oppression of the Irish Catholics and the continued presence of British troops—and hasn’t done Protestant workers any good, either. *Down with the “United” Kingdom! For a voluntary federation of workers republics in the British Isles!*

Those Who Labour Must Rule!

Despite their paper position of supporting Brexit, Peter Taaffe’s Socialist Party (SP) are over the moon campaigning for a Corbyn government, which would be committed to the EU. The SP advise: “If



Above: Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn campaigns for Britain to remain in EU, London, June 2016. Pseudo-Marxists of International Marxist Tendency (top right) and Socialist Party campaign for Corbyn even as he pledges allegiance to that imperialist consortium.



Corbyn comes out with a fighting, socialist manifesto he could transform the situation and win the general election” (*Socialist*, 31 October). What kind of socialist manifesto upholds the EU bosses’ club? For their part, Alan Woods’s International Marxist Tendency (IMT)—who could never bring themselves to oppose the EU—fantastically claim that a Corbyn government “will need to take control of the economy out of the hands of the billionaires” (*Socialist Appeal*, 6 November). A Labour Party government can only be a capitalist government!

The pseudo-Marxists of the SP and IMT inherited the parliamentary reformist programme of their forebears in the Militant tendency, who spent decades buried inside the Labour Party and adapted to their host. Their illusory “road to socialism” is to elect a Labour government which, supposedly, would pass an act in the bourgeoisie’s Parliament nationalising what they describe as “the commanding heights of the economy.” Of course, this pipe-dream has nothing to do with the Labour Party’s real programme or practice. But it does contain the political bacillus of reformism: the lie that you can get socialism without revolution.

The SP and IMT endlessly misuse Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky—who

are dead and can’t defend themselves—while rejecting the key lesson of the Paris Commune. As Marx and Engels explained in their 1872 preface to the *Communist Manifesto*: “One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that ‘the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes.’”

The illusion that electing a Labour government could meet the needs of working people constitutes a major obstacle to the fight for socialism in Britain. The parliamentary system is a democratic facade for the dictatorship of the capitalist class, who own the means of production and make their profits from the exploitation of labour. To put the productive wealth of society at the service of the population as a whole requires *breaking the power of the bourgeoisie*. It requires proletarian revolution to sweep away the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state and establish a workers state.

The IMT and SP often present the post-World War II Labour government of Clement Attlee as proof that it is possible to advance towards socialism through elections. In fact, the Attlee government shows the contrary: that gains for working people and the oppressed are won through

hard-fought struggle, not by putting a Labour government in Westminster. When Attlee’s government took office in 1945, the Soviet Red Army, having smashed Hitlerite fascism, occupied half of Europe. Despite the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet workers state, its victory inspired working people. A wave of working-class militancy was sweeping the continent, and in Britain workers and soldiers were determined not to return to the desperate poverty that had followed World War I. As Tory MP [Member of Parliament] Quintin Hogg had put it in 1943: “If you don’t give the people social reform, they will give you social revolution.”

This was the context for genuine gains for working people: the establishment of the NHS and the large-scale construction of council housing. It was also the context for nationalisation of British industries including coal and rail, which amounted to a gigantic bailout of their bourgeois owners. What was and is necessary is not the piecemeal nationalisation of capitalist losers but the expropriation of the bourgeoisie as a class.

Attlee’s government was a capitalist government. In 1945, it called out troops against dockers on strike—as any other capitalist government would. A willing servant of British imperialism, it helped to found NATO, sent troops to fight against the North Korean and Chinese deformed workers states, fought a brutal colonial war in Malaya and presided over the bloody partition of India. Attacks on the benefits provided by the NHS began in 1952 when charges for prescriptions and spectacles were introduced to help finance the war in Korea.

Corbyn’s fealty to the EU stands in the long tradition of Labour’s betrayals. Winning Labour’s working-class base away from illusions in parliamentarism is strategic for building a party that can lead the working class to power. The model for such a party was provided by Lenin’s Bolsheviks, who led the multinational working class to power in Russia in the October Revolution of 1917. Following in their footsteps, we are dedicated to building a combat party of the working class, part of a reformed Fourth International, committed to socialist revolutions around the world that will finally lay the basis for an egalitarian society of abundance based on an international planned economy.■

Bolivia...

(continued from page 2)

workers and peasants government based on the collectivization of the means of production.

In Bolivia, such a government would necessarily be centered on the deeply oppressed indigenous majority. For such a revolution to survive and open the way to a socialist future, it must be extended beyond the borders of Bolivia and spread internationally, ultimately to the imperialist centers.

Our last article on Bolivia, “Trotskyism vs. Bourgeois Nationalism,” (WV No. 868, 14 April 2006) pointed to the material and political decimation of the tin miners, who had once been some of the most

class-conscious workers in Latin America, and asserted that “the proletarian instrumentality for overturning capitalism has been qualitatively diminished.” While it is true that the tin mining industry was devastated decades ago, and that some 20,000 miners were fired and displaced and their radical union gutted, our article essentially denied that there was a working class in Bolivia and thereby argued that the basis for workers revolution did not exist in the country. The article also wrongly implies that struggle is futile in Bolivia unless it is sparked in countries with more “viable concentrations of the proletariat.” These assertions amounted to a rejection of permanent revolution as applied to Bolivia.

As laid out in Trotsky’s *The Permanent Revolution* (1930), it is incorrect to

approach the question in the framework of “mature” and “immature” countries. He wrote:

“Insofar as capitalism has created a world market, a world division of labour and world productive forces, it has also prepared world economy as a whole for socialist transformation.

“Different countries will go through this process at different tempos.”

Young and relatively small proletariats can take power if they develop allies among broad layers of the oppressed, which in Bolivia includes rural toilers and urban slum dwellers.

A core of the Bolivian working class remains in extractive industry. This August, some 830 unionized miners at Bolivia’s San Cristóbal mine, the third-biggest producer of silver in the world, went on a three-week strike against its owner, the Japanese company Sumitomo. Strikers won their wage and other demands, but continue to battle with the bosses, who want to nullify the settlement by having the strike declared illegal.

Due to its centrality in capitalist production, the working class has the strategic social power to overthrow capitalist rule, but it must be made conscious of the need to harness that power. The key question is leadership. The tumultuous struggles of the proletariat, centered on the tin miners, sparked revolutionary and pre-revolutionary situations in 1952, 1970-71 and 1985. However, the workers’ misleaders directed them to form alliances with the supposedly “anti-imperialist” bourgeoisie, thus tying them to the class enemy and betraying those revolutionary opportunities.

To fight for victory, it is necessary to build a Trotskyist party, as a national sec-

tion of a reformed Fourth International, in sharp political struggle against reformism and bourgeois-nationalist populism. A revolutionary workers party would act as the tribune of the people, fighting to mobilize the proletariat as the champion of all the oppressed—especially indigenous women, who are enslaved in the family and subjected to brutal exploitation and daily violence. It was on the basis of such a perspective that our forebears in Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolshevik Party successfully led the proletariat to power in Russia. And it is only on this basis that Bolivia’s “wretched of the earth” will be liberated.■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

☐ \$10/21 issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist* and *Black History and the Class Struggle*)

☐ New

☐ Renewal

☐ International rate: \$25/21 issues

☐ \$2/6 introductory issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist*)

☐ \$2/4 issues of *Espartaco* (en español) (includes Spanish-language *Spartacist* and, in U.S. and Puerto Rico, *suplementos en español de WV*)

☐ I would like to contribute \$_____ to the production of *Workers Vanguard*.

Name _____

Address _____

Apt. # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ Email _____

1166

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

Purchase *Workers Vanguard* subscriptions online at: icl-fi.org/subscribe/wv

International Communist League Pamphlet

The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution

See Page Three

Rearming Bolshevism
A Trotskyist Critique of Germany 1923 and the Comintern.....30

International Communist League's Fifth International Conference:
Down With Executive Offices of the Capitalist State!.....56

AUSTRALIA...A\$2 BRITAIN...£1.50 CANADA...C\$2.00 IRELAND...£1.40 SOUTH AFRICA...R4 USA...US\$2

\$2 (56 pages)

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

Corbyn: EU Running Dog British Elections: No Choice for Workers



Tory PM Boris Johnson (left) and Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn during November 19 debate.

We print below a November 21 leaflet issued by our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain.

There is no party to vote for in December's election—no party is standing for even a deformed expression of the interests of working people. Under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, the Labour Party is attempting to throw out the June 2016 Brexit vote and force the EU [European Union] bankers' and bosses' cartel on the party's working-class supporters. By abandoning his decades-long opposition to the EU, Corbyn opened the way for Tory demagogue Boris Johnson to present his chauvinist Oxford Union cronies as the "party of the people." Grotesquely, they claim to speak for Brexit voters in the former industrial strongholds in the Midlands and north of England, Scotland and Wales, which were laid waste during Thatcher's war on the unions and kept down by subsequent Labour and Tory regimes. Such is the anger at Labour's betrayal that lifelong Labour supporters are considering casting a vote for the hated Tories. Enough of Labour's betrayals—we need a different kind of party, one that will stand up for working people and the oppressed!

The EU is an inherently unstable alliance between capitalist countries, dominated by German imperialism, designed to increase the exploitation of labour across Europe and to bleed oppressed countries such as Ireland, Greece and Poland. The EU's exploitative treaties have enriched the bourgeoisies of Britain and the other imperialist powers, including the U.S., by spearheading anti-union attacks, privatisations and public services cuts. For the European imperialists, the EU is a means to increase their competitiveness against their rivals, the U.S. and Japan. At the same time the EU, together with NATO, is an integral part of the U.S.-dominated

world order. (And Corbyn's election manifesto upholds NATO too.)

The 2016 Brexit vote delivered a stinging defeat to the City of London, its senior partners in Wall Street and the capitalist exploiters across Europe. Theresa May's government failed to deliver a "Brexit in name only" deal that would allow the British imperialists continued access to the single market and the rest of the EU's

this imperialist-dominated conglomerate, further destabilising it and creating more favourable conditions for working-class struggle across Europe—including against a weakened and discredited Tory government in Britain" (*Workers Hammer* No. 234, Spring 2016). The three years of government crisis since the Brexit vote *have* created favourable conditions for working-class struggle, which

Brexit Now!

spoils. Now Labour, the bourgeois SNP [Scottish National Party] and an alliance of capitalist parties—the Lib Dems [Liberal Democrats], Greens and Plaid Cymru [Party of Wales]—are campaigning to scrap Brexit while absurdly promoting the EU as a defender of workers and immigrants. In contrast, Boris Johnson represents a wing of the ruling class, encouraged by U.S. president Donald Trump, willing to break with the European alliance and pursue other means of plunder.

We of the Spartacist League, British section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), support Brexit because the break-up of the imperialist-dominated EU would advance the interests of workers and the oppressed against the capitalist exploiters. This position flows from our perspective of sweeping away the decaying capitalist system through a series of proletarian revolutions internationally. *For a Socialist United States of Europe, united on a voluntary basis!*

As we explained in advocating a leave vote in the 2016 referendum: "A British exit would deal a real blow to

could also drive Britain out of the EU.

The union bureaucrats have spent decades isolating and containing strikes while diverting workers' anger into illusions in the EU and the losing strategy of electing a Labour government. But union members fed up with the capitalists' one-sided class war have shown an appetite to fight. Postal workers, rail workers, university lecturers, and nurses and hospital workers in Northern Ireland have voted for strike action. The anti-union laws have been invoked against strikes by postal workers and London Underground cleaners. Successful strike action could make the anti-union laws worthless scraps of paper.

Rebuilding the fighting strength of the unions is tied to forging a new, class-struggle union leadership, one that understands that the workers can prevail only through their own mass strength and solidarity. Working-class struggle is confronted at every turn by the capitalist government, its anti-union laws and strike-breaking cops and courts. Building a new leadership in the unions cannot be separated from building a revolutionary party that unites all the oppressed behind the social power of the multiethnic working class in a struggle to sweep away the repressive apparatus of capitalist class rule.

Labour Lieutenants of the Capitalist Class

Brexit is the main issue in this election. But the Labour Party is frantically trying to change the channel. Labour's election promises are intended to speak to the felt needs of the population: rescuing the NHS [National Health Service]; building new council housing; free university tuition; renationalising Royal Mail, rail and other infrastructure; and expanding social services. But Labour's campaign promises are empty, contradicted by the party's support to the EU, which was founded on the commitments to privatise nationalised industries and to reduce government spending on social services.

The Labour Party is a bourgeois workers party with a working-class base but a bourgeois programme and pro-capitalist leadership. It provides an invaluable service to Britain's ruling class by subordinating the needs of the working class to the interests of the bourgeoisie and by diverting struggle into parliamentary channels. Because of Corbyn's commitment to the EU, analysts at some major investment banks view him as a lesser evil than Johnson despite Labour's campaign promises. The Labour Party's leaders have always gone to bat for the imperialist rulers when it mattered.

The slave trade, the bloody subjugation of Asia and Africa and the genocidal expropriation of the indigenous populations in the Americas largely financed the rise of British capitalism. Racial oppression in Britain today is the product of this history, with black and Asian people treated as second-class citizens, facing discrimination in jobs and housing, deprived of social services and subjected to brutal cop repression. It is in the interests of the working class as a whole to combat the oppression of the black and Asian minorities, as well as to fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. No deportations! Minority and immigrant workers—who have the fewest illusions in capitalism and the most to gain from its overthrow—will play a role in the fight for socialist revolution out of proportion with their weight in the society.

The Labour Party is saturated with the prejudices of bourgeois society. During the post-World War II labour shortage—the Windrush era—workers from the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent were recruited to do the hardest and dirtiest jobs in Britain. Harold Wilson's Labour government subsequently extended racist legislation to slam the door on black and Asian people while encouraging white immigration. Today, with its support for the anti-Muslim "war on terror" and its calls for more cops and border guards, Labour's commitment to increasing the forces of state repression is bad news for the working class as a whole, and for black and Asian people in particular.

The Labour Party has always been unambiguously loyal to the "United" Kingdom, an unequal union based on the oppression of the Irish, Scottish and Welsh nations and on the reactionary institutions of the monarchy, the House of Lords and the established churches. In Scotland, formerly a Labour stronghold, the party has been on life support since campaigning together with the Tories against Scottish independence in 2014. Corbyn stands on Labour's record of English chauvinism, demonstrated repeatedly with his arrogant proclamation: "We will not countenance an early referendum in Scotland."

continued on page 7



University and College Union picket line at University College London, November 25. UCU is on strike across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in defense of pensions and for better pay, work conditions.