

Trump, Sanders, Clinton – Immigrant-Bashing, Populism and Warmongering

Capitalism's Racist Electoral Circus Is Back

Break with the Democrats, Republicans and All Capitalist Parties!
Build a Revolutionary Workers Party!

They're back. Once again the politicians of the partner parties of American capitalism are polluting the airwaves with their election pitches. The Republican debates are an orgy of racist reaction, a competition to see who is the most hateful boss of all. Donald Trump says he would build a border wall and put his name on it, while Carly Fiorina's claim to fame is that she fired 30,000 employees of Hewlett-Packard during her stint as chief executive.

The Democrats, meanwhile, are engaged in a non-debate between "Hillary" (Clinton) and "Bernie" Sanders posing as "progressives" even as they gear up for the next escalation by the U.S. war machine in response to the Syrian refugee crisis. Sanders wants to contract out the fighting while Clinton wants to drop U.S. bombs on Assad if not put boots on the ground.

In fact they are all defenders of capital and enemies of poor and working people who produce the profits, of the African American, Latino, Asian and immigrant population that bear the brunt of the repression. And so long as workers are chained to the politicians and parties of the ruling class, particularly the Democrats who act as the "people's party" of American capitalism, things will keep going from bad to worse.

Despite months of massive protests coast to coast, racist murder by police continues unabated. We're now up to 890 civilians killed by cops in 2015 and counting. That's on track to match or surpass the 1,100 gunned down, choked and beaten to death last year. After Sandra Bland's life was taken by lynch-law terror when she was arrested for the "crime" of "driving while black" in July, tennis star James Black was brutally tackled outside a Midtown Manhattan hotel for "standing while black." And on September 24, Jeremy McDole was cut down in a hail of at least ten bullets by police in Wilmington, Delaware for "sitting while black" ... in a wheelchair!

Meanwhile, prosecutors in Pasco, Wash-

ington announced that no charges would be filed against the police who murdered Mexican agricultural worker Antonio Zambrano Montes last February. And liberal Democratic president Barack Obama has by now deported over 2.5 million immigrants, far more than conservative Republican George W. Bush. When you include "removals" from the border area, *Obama has expelled over 800,000 people a year*, while keeping tens of thousands (including many children) locked up in concentration camps.

Over the summer, Donald Trump grabbed the headlines with his threat to deport all 11 million undocumented immigrants. Actually, when you include family members the number of those who daily face the threat of being kicked out of the country and having their lives destroyed, the total is over 15 million. Trump gives voice to the unalloyed racism that other politicians won't say out loud. He outrageously labels Mexican immigrants criminals, drug dealers and rapists, when in fact he has been accused of raping his former wife Ivana.

The spectacle offered by the Republican debates is somewhere between a TV reality show ("Who Wants to Be President") and a WWE Friday Night Smackdown. Trump brags that he has made billions, but his leadership style and business acumen seem to consist of screaming "you're fired." While he has oodles of cash, and the capitalist ruling class does exercise its rule by throwing around money sweated from the toil of workers, Trump is actually a marginal

Ferguson One Year Later



Whitney Curtis for the New York Times

Protests on the one-year anniversary of the police murder of Michael Brown were again met with a massive display of police force in Ferguson, Missouri. All the capitalist candidates support the racist killer cops, for the police are the first line of defense of capital, against us.

figure in U.S. capitalism.

The Wall Street bankers, industrial magnates and technology tycoons who constitute the decisive sectors of capital will not tolerate a loose cannon like Trump for long. For one thing, he joins liberal economists like Paul Krugman in opposing the tax exemption for hedge fund operators (no skin off his back, he makes his money from gambling and construction). If Jeb Bush appears to be a cipher, the big money may ultimately go to Fiorina or someone else deemed both sufficiently ruthless and reliable to be CEO of U.S. capitalism.

Democrats Squirm Over Black Lives Matter

Over on the Democratic side of the bourgeois political spectrum, Hillary Clinton staked out her terrain as a "tough-guy" militarist hawk during her term as Secretary of State. As a candidate she is pro-war, pro-cop and pro-death penalty. Blatantly

pandering to the racist vote, in a July 23 speech she said "the sight of a young black man in a hoodie" causes fear "for a lot of open-minded, well-meaning white people." Hillary and her handlers believe she can get away with it, since the overwhelming majority of African Americans who vote cast their ballot for Democratic candidates.

Husband Bill Clinton has for years basked in an ill-gotten image as somehow favorable to black people, despite the vicious impact of his presidential policies, from the 1994 Omnibus Crime Bill and the 1996 Effective Death Penalty Act to skyrocketing inequality during his administration. Hillary was particularly responsible for the "reform," intended to "end welfare as we know it," that threw millions of poor, overwhelmingly black women into poverty. A new Clinton presidency will ramp up the war on the oppressed that has escalated during the Obama years.

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For his part, Bernie Sanders is campaigning as a standard-issue economic populist. His program boils down to capitalism with a slightly higher social welfare budget. Many on the left see him as the reincarnation of the Occupy movement, with support for a sub-minimal \$15 per hour minimum wage replacing populist rhetoric about the 99% (which always made the “1%” a little nervous). Repeatedly elected to the Senate by one of the “least diverse” states in the U.S., Sanders made few efforts to even pretend he cared about black people.

Enter Black Lives Matter. An August 8 rally in Seattle – a Democratic campaign event commemorating the establishment of Social Security (by FDR) and Medicare (by LBJ) – was addressed by a local congressman and “socialist” Seattle city council member Kshama Sawant, who called for “a political revolution, as Bernie Sanders has said.” As Sanders stepped forward to give the keynote address, two activists from the local BLM group took over the microphone to demand that Sanders be held “accountable” for downplaying issues of racial equality. Part of the overwhelmingly white crowd chanted “Shame on you” against the protestors, while Sanders stood by scowling and eventually left.

That night Sanders issued a statement denouncing the “two people [who] disrupted a rally attended by thousands,” while claiming he would work for “criminal justice reform” and to “fight racism.” The Sanders campaign decided it would shout down future protesters with the “color-blind” chant “We stand together,” equivalent to white liberals trying to drown out “Black lives matter” with “All lives matter.” In the confrontation between the young BLM activists and Bernie Sanders, revolutionary Marxists definitely side with the black “disruptors” against the would-be nominee of the government party of American racist oppression.

The day after his Seattle debacle, Sanders shifted gears into co-optation mode. Having hired Symone Sanders, a young African American activist from the Coalition for Juvenile Justice, he was introduced by her at a rally in Portland, Oregon. His campaign suddenly announced that he was unveiling a platform for “racial justice,” centered on the usual calls for body cameras, a call to “demilitarize” police departments, and the like. What was most significant politically about the statement is its appeal to more fully ensnare Black Lives Matter activists in schemes for “community policing” – that is, being responsible for capitalist state repression:

“At the federal level we need to establish

a new model police training program that reorients the way we do law enforcement in this country. With input from a broad segment of the community including activists and leaders from organizations like Black Lives Matter we will reinvent how we police America” (berniesanders.com).

Candidate Clinton was already well along this path, hiring former Congressional Black Caucus executive director LaDavia Drane as her “black outreach director.” In late July, Drane attended the Movement for Black Lives convention in Cleveland to hold one-on-one meetings with activists as part of a push to “engage a wide array of stakeholders, including members of the black lives matter movement,” a campaign official stated (“Clinton Campaign Starts Black Lives Matter Outreach,” BuzzFeed-News, 26 July).

But things went awry when a group of Black Lives Matter activists was barred from an August 11 forum on “substance abuse” that Hillary Clinton held in New Hampshire. Afterwards, the candidate spoke with three BLM activists, who held her “personally and politically responsible for policies that have caused health and human services disasters in impoverished communities of color through the domestic and international war on drugs that you championed as first lady, senator and secretary of state.”

Clinton’s response was a display of finger-wagging arrogance, chiding the activists on the need to “change laws” and the “allocation of resources” – as if she and her ex-president husband had not massively mobilized laws and resources of state repression against black people, immigrants and the poor.

Sensing both danger and opportunity, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) passed a resolution in late August in which it “joins with Americans across the country in affirming ‘Black lives matter’” and calling to minimize the use of “weapons that were used to police peaceful civilians in the streets of Ferguson, Missouri” (under a Democratic governor and president!).

To win the struggle against racist oppression requires a decisive break from, and head-on political struggle against, the Democratic Party, which rules on behalf of the capitalist class which has always coined gold from the blood and sweat of African American people going back to slavery days.

This is far from the actual perspective of most leaders of the loose BLM movement. Less than two weeks after Bernie Sanders launched his list of pallid palliatives for “police reform,” the Campaign Zero site (joincampaignzero.org), closely associated with national Black Lives Matter organizers,

issued a platform along very similar lines calling for body cams, demilitarization, training, “community representation,” etc. – plus “fair police union [sic] contracts” to “remove barriers to effective misconduct investigations and civilian oversight.”

It is noteworthy that a prominent member of Campaign Zero’s planning team, Brittany Packnett, is the head of Teach For America in St. Louis. TFA is a union-busting outfit that recruits Ivy League students to spend a couple years in inner-city schools while blaming teachers unions for the failures of the public school system which TFA and its Wall Street backers want to milk for private profit. Packnett was part of Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, along with the Baltimore police chief who was held up as a model of community outreach, as well as the Ferguson Commission set up by Democratic Missouri governor Jay Nixon.

The machinery of Democratic Party control and cooptation will go into overdrive over the next period. Myriad NGOs, non-profits and foundations are there to grease the wheels. As we have underlined, no supposed “reform” will do away with, or even substantially reduce, racist police violence in this country where racial oppression is a pillar of capitalist class rule.

Without a program to pull racial oppression out by its capitalist roots – that is, without a program for black liberation through socialist revolution – even the best-meaning activists will be politically disarmed in the face of this onslaught.

Build a Revolutionary Workers Party

Over the past year, tens and hundreds of thousands marched, night after night, against racist police killings. Yet the racist repression goes on without skipping a beat. Across the globe, the continuing capitalist economic crisis has sparked protests and revolts, from North Africa to Europe and Latin America: the Arab “revolutions,” the *indignados* (outraged) in southern Europe, the Occupy movement in the U.S. Yet these massive upheavals have all ended in defeat.

The spectre of falling wages while bankers make billions through speculation and government subsidies has fueled populist parties and candidates from SYRIZA in Greece to Bernie Sanders in the U.S. The bankruptcy of capitalism in its “neo-liberal” free-market phase has likewise contributed to the sudden rise of support for a left-wing leader of the British Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn (see page 6).

Each of these movements and upheavals has been “unexpected,” at least to the ruling class, seemingly coming out of nowhere and assuming mass proportions almost overnight. Politically there is a common thread running through their demands: they



Break with the Democrats and Republicans, parties of racist repression and imperialist war. We need to build a revolutionary workers party.

seek to reform the system, to eliminate the worst excesses. They want the police to respect black lives, they want to restore social services and reduce mass unemployment. Yet they have been uniformly unsuccessful.

The fundamental fact is that they are coming up against the capitalist system itself. As we noted in our last issue (“Killer Cops, White Supremacists: Racist Terror Stalks Black America,” *The Internationalist* No. 40, Summer 2015), all the proposed reforms of the police have done nothing to stop the killing: “No amount of protest will convince the ruling class to muzzle its uniformed guard dogs, whom it requires to keep the poor and working people down.” Racist repression “is essential to American capitalism, and has been ever since African slaves were brought here in chains.”

As demonstrated by the debacle in Greece (see pages 8 to 19 of this issue), there will be no escape from anti-worker austerity under this system. The bankers’ *diktat* will trump any “democratic mandate,” for what is involved is not a policy (“neoliberalism”) but the survival of capitalism, driven to speculative frenzies and excruciating intensification of exploitation by a falling rate of profit that produced the market crash of 2008 and the ongoing economic depression.

The failure of one outbreak of unrest after another is centrally due to one key fact: the absence of a revolutionary leadership. The right-wing Tory press in Britain remarked that in another period, economic distress on the order experienced in recent years would have produced a revolution. They thank their lucky stars that they only have to deal with a manageable Labour left. But they should not breathe a sigh of relief too quickly.

Authentic Marxists seek to intervene on a program of revolutionary working-class struggle. Workers and fighters for social justice must take up those struggles that have pointed the way forward, such as the shutdown of the Port of Oakland, California last May Day by ILWU Local 10 demanding “Stop Police Terror!” (see *The Internationalist* No. 39, April-May 2015). Above all it is necessary to build a genuinely communist party of the working class, like the Bolsheviks of Lenin and Trotsky, so that the upheavals are no longer unexpected, and when they break out there is an organized vanguard, to provide the necessary program, organization and determination that are key to victory. ■

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Wages, Hours, Jobs Cut – Union Health Plans Terminated

Obamacare Screws Workers,

Windfall for Insurance Companies

By Class Struggle Workers –
Portland

PORTLAND, OR – The Affordable Care Act (ACA), commonly known as “Obamacare,” survived a key legal challenge in the U.S. Supreme Court on Thursday, June 25. The court came down 6-3 against a suit by David King, a Virginia limousine chauffeur for a cartel of conservative ideologues who claimed that it was illegal for the federal government to offer tax credits as a subsidy to offset the cost of purchasing private health insurance, if the insurance was purchased through the federal government-administered marketplace. The ruling, along with the same day’s historic verdict allowing gay marriage nationwide, elated Democratic partisans, who have been all atwitter about the President’s legacy as he enters his “victory lap.” But Chelsea Manning, the transgendered Army veteran serving a 35-year sentence for courageously revealing U.S. imperialism’s war crimes, cautioned that the Supreme Court’s gay marriage ruling didn’t mean equality for all.

If the court had gone the other way on the ACA, it would have made it even harder for millions of Americans to afford any kind of health insurance. That only goes to show that in bourgeois politics, “it could always be worse” for working people. If reactionary troglodytes oppose the ACA because god told them to oppose any sort of social welfare programs, especially those enacted by a Black president, it does not follow that class-conscious workers should support it. This law gives billions to the insurance industry out of the pockets working and poor people in the U.S. Class-conscious workers oppose the ACA and fight for a universal, socialized health care system while implacably defending every health care benefit that workers have won as a concession from the employers. And this can only be achieved as part of a broader class struggle against all factions of the capitalist ruling class, particularly the Democratic party.

Obamacare is a far cry from universal health coverage. The “insurance” it does provide for millions of working and poor people is often illusory. While it has ensured a steady stream of revenue for private health insurance companies, it has had its *intended* effect of adding to the pressure on unions to give up their hard-won health insurance programs. And that’s only one of the negative aspects for workers. So let’s go down the list. First up, who is excluded from the ACA? For starters, more than 15 million undocumented immigrants, many of whom work in dangerous jobs like construction, agriculture and food industry, are denied coverage, even though many of them pay Medicare and Social Security payroll taxes from which they will never see any benefit. Class-conscious workers demand *full citizenship rights for all immigrants*.

Second, while private health insurance plans may cover elective abortions, this portion of the insurance cannot be subsidized by the federal government under the ACA. Medicaid coverage is available in states

which have accepted “expanded” funding for individuals earning up to 133% of the Federal Poverty Level. But Medicaid is barred from covering abortion since the Hyde Amendment was passed by Congress and signed by the Democrat president Carter in 1977. Combined with the increasing restrictions on abortion in the U.S. as legal traps and terrorist attacks shutter clinics across the country, this means that millions of poor and working class women effectively have no safe, legal option for ending an unwanted pregnancy. Far from a step towards the *free abortion on demand* that we fight for, the ACA reinforces the legal obstacles to affordable abortion that Democrats and Republicans have put in place since *Roe vs. Wade*.

What of the insurance that is offered? The sick reality behind the statistics of increasing enrollment and decreasing number of uninsured since the passage of the ACA is that for working people, the insurance is an illusion, a scam that will not prevent them from being cast into devastating debt because of illness, accidents or chronic disease. The “bronze” health plans have the lowest monthly premiums. These vary by state, and are expected to increase. Currently they are around \$150 per month. Already, that’s a significant “invisible” pay cut for a low-wage worker struggling to pay rent and other essential expenses. Yet these bronze plans can have deductibles of over \$2,000 for an individual or \$5,000 for a family, and annual maximum out-of-pocket costs of \$6,000/\$12,000 family. Can you afford that? Many working people can’t.

The Kaiser Family Foundation estimated that median single-person, non-elderly households above the poverty level (in other words, those ineligible for standard Medicare or Medicaid) have liquid assets of \$2503, and net assets of just \$1,369! Households on the poorer end of this spectrum, earning up to twice the Federal Poverty Level, have liquid assets of just \$766. ***Low- to moderate-wage workers on the “bargain” bronze health plan cannot afford to get medical care!*** And only the more expensive “silver” and higher plans are eligible for federal subsidies to cover out-of-pocket costs. The health-care reform lobbying group Physicians for a National Health Program accurately characterized low-end “affordable” plans as “a mirage, a simulacrum of insurance rather than actual insurance.”

What we have here is literally ***“insurance” for the insurance companies***: a guaranteed customer base that *must* purchase “coverage” of dubious value, or pay a hefty tax penalty. Yet in the event of a serious illness, they can only expect to see a payout long after they have been squeezed dry by medical bills. Key to this cash cow for insurance companies is the “precarious” workforce of part-time workers whose employers are not required to offer company health plans since they work less than 30 hours per week on average at any one job. The *New York Times* (4 July) reports that



AWPPW Local 153 on strike at Kapstone paper mill in Longview, WA, August 27, over the company’s imposition of contract cancelling health insurance to avoid Obamacare “Cadillac plan” tax.

private insurance plans are demanding increases of 20 to 40 percent for 2016. And through its “risk corridor” program, the ***ACA guarantees federal subsidies to insurance companies*** if they fail to reap sufficient profits during the transition to the ACA!

Employer-sponsored plans are generally marginally better when they are offered (required for most wage workers averaging over 30 hours per week), yet most still leave poor and middle-income workers in a catastrophic financial state before “insurance” kicks in. Again, there is the monthly premium, a significant effective pay cut. Three-quarters of company-sponsored plans, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation, have a single-member deductible of over \$1,500, and the average annual out-of-pocket limit is \$3,000-\$3,500 dollars. So for singles, the maximum deductible – the amount a patient must pay up front before insurance covers anything – is greater than the average total financial assets of the median household *above the poverty line!*

On top of this, there are the *several hundred thousand* mainly low-waged part-time workers who have had their hours cut to less than 30 a week so that the employers don’t have to offer them health care (see Ben Casselman, “Yes, Some Companies Are Cutting Hours in Response to ‘Obamacare,’” *FiveThirtyEight*, 13 January). Class Struggle Education Workers (CSEW) in New York already exposed this vicious anti-worker plan when it was being debated in Congress and at the time of its passage. See “On the Healthcare Crisis” (September 2009) and “Healthcare ‘Reform’ Law: Bonanza for Wall Street, an Attack on Working People” (March 2010), reprinted in *Class Struggle Education Workers Newsletter* No. 2 (October-November 2010) and *The Internationalist* No. 32 (January-February 2011).

This bleak situation was not created by the ACA. By every reasonable measure, the U.S. has long had one of the worst and most expensive health care systems among wealthy imperialist countries. Health care bills are the leading cause of bankruptcy

for individuals in this country, and have been for decades. ACA has *reinforced* this perverse system while liberal Democrats like economist Paul Krugman crow about Obama’s historic “reform.” What’s new to the ACA is a huge incentive for companies to push to dismantle health care coverage that unions have established through years of protracted struggle. In 2018, an excise tax of 40% will kick in on benefits valued at over \$10,200 per year for individuals or \$27,500 for families, the so-called “Cadillac” plans. Unions are doubly vulnerable in fighting this attack on workers benefits, because it comes from the Democratic Party that they loyally support.

The corporate analysis firm Jones Day offered clear advice to companies on this:

“Significantly, the ACA does not require employers to provide coverage for spouses and does not penalize employers for excluding spouses from coverage, so employers will need to evaluate the potential savings from excluding spouses from eligibility for health coverage.... While unions may resist efforts to curtail employee benefits in the near term, employers should consider the leverage that avoiding the Cadillac tax provides at the bargaining table.... Employers should take advantage of the leverage that the ACA provides, whether that means negotiating union waivers to allow employers significant flexibility to change and modify their plans, negotiating lower levels of coverage to balance out the added costs of expanded coverage, or negotiating to end coverage under employer-sponsored plans altogether.”

– “What’s the Deal? The Affordable Care Act in Labor Contract Negotiations,” October 2013

In recent contract negotiations, union workers have seen employers follow this playbook, demanding lower coverage and ending employer-sponsored plans.

While some of the most well-entrenched unions, such as the New York City United Federation of Teachers, have

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Brooks Johnson/The Daily News [Longview, WA]

Down with the Racist Dominican Nationality Law – For Haitian-Dominican Workers Solidarity

Stop Expulsion of Haitians from the Dominican Republic

The following article is an expanded version of the Internationalist Group leaflet distributed at the June 15 NYC protest described below.

JUNE 16 – Beginning this week, the government of the Dominican Republic intends to start the mass expulsion of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent. This impending human disaster has been passed over with virtual silence by U.S. and international media. Based on a racist nationality law, hundreds of thousands of Dominicans have been deprived of their citizenship and are at risk of being seized on the street, at their workplace or in their homes in desperately poor *bateyes* (shantytowns), and dumped across the border in Haiti. Many have lived all their lives in the Dominican Republic, don't speak Kreyòl and have no relatives in the neighboring country. Now they are officially stateless, with no rights at all anywhere.

An emergency protest was held on June 15 outside the Dominican Consulate in New York City. The Internationalist Group, CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Class Struggle Education Workers participated in the protest while calling for **workers action against the deportations and racist attacks**, and for **full citizenship rights for all living in the Dominican Republic**. Against the racist champions of anti-Haitian “Dominican-ness” (*dominicanidad*) we call for **workers revolution throughout Quisqueya** (Hispaniola). The key is **Haitian-Dominican workers solidarity**, and the place where it can begin is New York City, where hundreds of thousands of Dominican and Haitian immigrants are likewise deprived of rights by racist immigration laws.

Moreover, we point out that Dominican-Haitian tensions are fueled by U.S. imperialism. The system of importing Haitian

workers to carry out backbreaking labor in the Dominican Republic, with no rights, was set up when both countries were under U.S. occupation that began a century ago. In addition, the Dominican border police, the Cuerpo Especializado de Seguridad Fronteriza (CESFRONT), was set up at the instigation of Washington in 2006 as part of its drive to militarize U.S. borders, and it has been trained by the U.S. Border Patrol. And last year, U.S. vice president Joe Biden on a trip to Santo Domingo grotesquely praised the Dominican nationality law as a “bold step” that would provide a “path to citizenship” for people of Haitian descent, when in fact it makes official the stripping of their citizenship!

Rather than looking to U.S. politicians and the Obama government – which itself deports over 400,000 people a year, including thousands of Haitians and Dominicans – to hypocritically pressure the administrators of its Dominican semi-colony, we demand **an immediate end to deportations, release everyone in the immigration jails and concentration camps and full citizenship rights for all immigrants in the U.S.** as well.

June 17 is the deadline for registration under the Dominican Republic's Program of Identification and Documentation of Immigrants from Haiti (PIDIH) and the National Program of Regularization of Foreigners (PNRE, according to its Spanish acronym). These two programs were set up to implement the September 2013 Dominican Constitutional Tribunal sentence (TC168-13) and subsequent Law No. 169-14 that decreed that any person born in the Dominican Republic whose parents, grandparents, great-grandparents or earlier progenitors migrated to the country without immigration documents since 1929 be



Nehemias Alvino/Diario Libre

Dominican police repress Haitian Dominicans seeking papers allowing them to stay (temporarily) in the country where many of them were born. Hundreds of thousands are affected.

stripped of their citizenship. In practice, this racist legal battery applies exclusively to Dominicans of Haitian descent.

In contravention of norms throughout the Americas providing the right of citizenship to all those born in the country (*jus soli*), the Dominican Republic joins with Chile under the Pinochet dictatorship in basing it on “blood law” (*jus sanguinis*), excluding the children of “foreigners.” And it joins Hitler's Third Reich, whose infamous Nuremberg Laws canceled the citizenship of Jews, in excluding a particular group. These Nazi-like laws and decrees “denationalize” upwards of half a million Dominicans in addition to persecuting another half million immigrants born in Haiti who are a key component of the workforce. Any defender of democratic rights must demand the immediate abrogation of the Dominican Republic's racist nationality law.

Under these grotesque laws and decrees, any “foreigner” without the required papers will be subject to immediate deportation. There should be no doubt that the Dominican government is preparing for mass deportations, on an industrial scale. Already it has requisitioned a fleet of buses sufficient to deport 2,000 people a day. A formal agreement has been signed with the Dominican Army to carry this out, and detention facilities have been set up along to border.

The general who heads the immigration department announced that “beginning Thursday” (June 18) teams including soldiers “will comb urban areas with large numbers of immigrants to detain and deport those who have not registered” (*El Nacional*, 16 June). Agents have been “trained to pick up in the street those who, by their appearance, could be foreigners without residence permits.” *El Nacional* adds that

while 250,000 people have registered to legalize their status, only a few hundred have received a temporary residency permit, and “many of the immigrants, especially those who have lived in the Dominican Republic for decades, have no identity papers at all” and thus cannot register.¹

Dominican authorities have carried out mass expulsions in the past. In 1999, tens of thousands were deported to Haiti in just two weeks. Buses cruised the streets of the Dominican capital of Santo Domingo snatching anyone who “looked Haitian,” including hundreds of dark-skinned Dominicans. Although Dominican authorities claim that deportations have been suspended for the last year, they have soared at the main border crossing point in the north, reaching 6,700 in the first four months of this year, triple the rate of 2014. So far, some 53,000 Dominicans have had their citizenship canceled, and while this was later supposedly reversed, they have not received identity cards and thus could be picked up and expelled.

Meanwhile, as always when the Dominican authorities step up anti-Haitian repression, this has been accompanied by an escalation of anti-Haitian bigotry and gruesome attacks, lynchings and pogroms. On February 10, a Haitian man, Henry Claude Jean (known as “Tulile”), 35, a shoe shine worker, was found hanging from a tree in Santiago Park. The day before, a machete-wielding band of masked Dominican nationalists gathered in Santiago to trample on and burn a Haitian flag while calling for mass deportations. Videos have circulated on the

¹ Since the 2004 immigration law, Dominican hospitals have routinely refused to issue birth certificates for babies born to undocumented parents. Without this, children cannot be entered in the civil registry, and without identity papers cannot attend schools.

Internationalist photo



Internationalists at protest outside Dominican Consulate in New York City, June 15, protesting racist nationality law and demanding stop of deportations, in Dominican Republic and the U.S.

**In the U.S. and D.R.: Full Citizenship Rights for All!
For Workers Mobilization Against Deportations and Racist Attacks**

Internet of a mob attack on April 8 in the city of Moca that drove out 300 Haitians. Images show young men beating women, breaking into homes and smashing everything in sight with the complicity of the National Police.

Amid this mounting anti-Haitian hysteria, as the June 17 deadline approached thousands of undocumented Dominicans have sought to register, even as foreigners, to avoid being deported. But while long lines have formed outside the registration offices, only small numbers are admitted. There have been angry protests every day this week in the capital of Santo Domingo, dispersed by police using tear gas. The Union of Cane Workers was promised 10,000 permits for those receiving pensions after working decades in the sugar cane fields, but only 2,900 have been approved since most lack even Haitian papers, and only a small number have been given documents. Meanwhile, some 49,000 people live in the *bateyes* on the sugar plantations.

The government of the Dominican Republic is infamous for its continuous racist and xenophobic attacks against the Haitian population. This can be traced all the way back to the 1937 “*perejil*” massacre² led by U.S. puppet Generalissimo Rafael Trujillo, a/k/a *El Chivo* (The Goat). More than 30,000 Haitians and dark-skinned Dominicans were massacred from October 2 to 8 of that year near what in Haiti is called Massacre River.³ Trujillo headed the National Guard, which was set up by the U.S. occupation authorities, and the U.S. government effectively condoned the massacre, including by agreeing to a miserable \$525,000 in reparations. But of the supposed \$30 per victim, survivors only received 2 cents each. The racist immigration decree “Sentencia 168/13” is just the continuation of those attacks targeting Dominicans of Haitian descent, this time by “legal” means.

For decades Haitians have provided very cheap labor for the Dominican bourgeoisie. Not only do they do the backbreaking work of harvesting sugar cane in conditions of near slavery, Haitian workers are also the core of construction workforce in the Dominican Republic, including in building the Santo Domingo metro. Haitians as well as their children born in the Dominican Republic are an integral part of the Dominican working class. But due to the racist hysteria whipped up by the authorities, they are constantly being harassed, persecuted and attacked. The *bateyes* where they live often lack a basic infrastructure of potable water and electricity, and they are easy prey for lynch mobs there.

Ever since the Trujillo dictatorship, official government policy has been that everything Haitian is condemned as bad, and must be eradicated. The 1937 massacre set off a process of “bleaching” the Dominican population. After Trujillo was assassinated in 1961 (with the complicity of the CIA, as the Democratic Kennedy administration figured *El Chivo* had become a liability), the U.S. invaded the country a second time, in 1965, this time under Democrat Lyndon Johnson, to prevent the Dominican Republic from “going Communist.” Long-time Trujillo aide Joaquín Balaguer was installed as

the U.S.’ Dominican flunkie, and the racist policies continued during his seven terms as president.

The present “denationalization” of Dominicans of Haitian descent has been carried out under the presidencies of Leonel Fernández and Danilo Medina, both of the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD). But it was based on the 2004 immigration law enacted by the government of Hipólito Mejía of the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD), which classified undocumented residents as “in transit.” When one of those affected, Juliana Deguis Pierre, appealed to the courts, the Dominican Constitutional Tribunal ruled on 23 September 2013 to uphold the racist law, and make it retroactive to anyone whose ancestors arrived in the Dominican Republic in the last 84 years! Hundreds of thousands of Dominicans were declared “in transit” although they were born there and lived in the D.R. their entire lives.

From the 2004 Dominican immigration law onwards, we are seeing a real “ethnic cleansing in the Caribbean,” as Sonia Pierre, the late president of the Movement of Dominican-Haitian Women (MUDH) titled an article.⁴ Although she was hardly radical (she was twice given awards by the imperialist U.S. government), the leader of the MUDH received constant death threats because of her defense of Dominicans of Haitian origin. Pierre died in December 2011 due a heart attack caused by hypertension in the midst of a ferocious hate campaign and persecution against her orchestrated by the government, media and business sectors. World-famous Dominican author Junot Díaz has also been demonized and labeled a “traitor” for denouncing the infamous “Sentencia 168/13.”

While the bourgeois ruling parties of the Dominican Republic, the police and army are up to their necks in the racist persecution of Haitian Dominicans, the Dominican left and labor movement have done little or nothing to combat it. The Partido de los Trabajadores Dominicanos mildly criticized the 2013 sentence, but it does not support the *right* of Dominicans of Haitian descent to citizenship, and it runs in election in a bloc with the PLD. Narciso Isa Conde, leader of the Izquierda Revolucionaria (remnant of the former Dominican Communist Party), did issue a statement against the exclusionary laws, but overall the left has been shamefully absent in the struggle against the virulent racist attack on this most vulnerable sector of Dominican working people.

Although weakened, there are still a number of unions in the Dominican Republic (CASC, CNTD, CNUS), but while they have occasionally called national strikes against the economic policies of the PLD government, they have not joined together with the Dominican Haitian workers of the Unión de Trabajadores Cañeros de los Bateyes (UTC). When the UTC has marched for medical insurance, to extend and increase pensions and now to obtain legal papers, they have done so alone. The Movimiento de Trabajadores Independientes (MTI) has spoken out for rights for Dominicans of Haitian origin, but on May 1, the international workers day, and in recent talk of a general strike, this burning issue has been unmentioned. Solidarity *action* by Dominican unions against the mass deportations to Haiti would throw the country into turmoil, yet such an *internationalist* program of

⁴ Sonia Pierre, “Ethnic Cleansing in the Caribbean,” Project Syndicate, 3 December 2008.

militant class struggle is anathema to the present pro-capitalist misleaders of labor.

The international outcry against the xenophobic “Sentencia 168/13” has been very strong, even among imperialist organizations like the United Nations, the Interamerican Court of Human Rights and pro-imperialist “non-governmental organizations” like Amnesty International. But of course, this will have no effect. U.S. imperialism is so concerned about a mass exodus from Haiti (whose poverty is a direct result of U.S. policies, from the destruction of rice farming to superexploiting Haitian workers in garment sweatshops) that it has permanently posted the Coast Guard to prevent “boat people” from escaping, it has kept Haiti under occupation by “U.N.” mercenary troops (the MINUSTAH) since 2004, and it invaded the country following the 2010 earthquake in order to prevent unrest.

After the Dominican court’s ruling was announced there were several protests in New York City in 2013 demanding that it be reversed. In 2008, the Internationalist Group helped initiate and organize a demonstration bringing together Dominican, Haitian and U.S. leftists and labor activists to protest the racist treatment of Haitians in the Dominican Republic.⁵ But such protests are not enough. What is needed is a class-struggle program that seeks to mobilize the power of the working class on both sides of the Hispaniola island in defense of Haitians and their children as well as here in New York City, where well over 100,000 Haitians and more than 600,000 Dominicans live.

“Sentencia 168/13,” the 2004 nationality law and all the rest are scraps of paper that can be ripped up. That requires a class-conscious working class which fights against the chauvinist poison of nationalism. The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International proclaim, as stated in the Communist Manifesto, that the workers have no fatherland. We call for the fighting unity of Haitian, Dominican and U.S. workers against capital and the racist rulers.

Stop the expulsions of Haitians from the Dominican Republic!

Defend Haitians in the Dominican Republic against violence and persecution!

Down with the racist anti-Haitian Dominican immigration laws!

Down with attempts to disenfranchise Dominicans of Haitian origin!

Full citizenship rights for all who live in the Dominican Republic ... and the U.S.! ■

⁵ See “New York Protest Against Persecution of Haitian Workers in the Dominican Republic,” The Internationalist No. 28, March-April 2009.

Obamacare...

continued from page 3

been able to resist ACA-related cuts to their health care plans, in recent contract negotiations, unions across the country have succumbed to the employees blackmail. Even some allegedly “progressive” unions have gone to the bargaining table offering to slash members’ health care benefits right from the beginning of negotiations. This was the case in ILWU Local 5 covering workers at Powell’s Book Store in Portland, which Class Struggle Workers – Portland fought against. And across the board, increasing premiums and stagnating wages are forcing union members to make painful decisions about canceling optional enrollment for spouses and domestic partners.

Recently, 800 members of Local 153 of the Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers (AWPPW) at the Kapstone paper mill in Longview, WA were forced to go out on strike after rejecting a concessionary “final offer” from the company. The most prominent concession that the bosses demanded was to cancel the workers’ health insurance in order to avoid the ACA tax and replace it with a cheap “high deductible” plan. The strike was called off on September 3 when the company brought in scabs, but the fight continues. Meanwhile, 2,200 metal workers across the country have been locked out since early August by Allegheny Technologies, among them United Steelworkers (USW) Local 7150 at a titanium plant in Albany, OR, for refusing the company’s “offer” that slashed health insurance benefits. There, too, management is using scabs.

Similar fights over essential health coverage are posed from coast to coast. Obamacare is one more weapon in the arsenal of the bosses’ offensive against the unions. AFL-CIO leaders have criticized the tax on union-negotiated health plans, yet they keep on rounding up votes for the Democrats. This sorry spectacle underscores that whether the issue is union-busting “right to work” laws or attacks on health care and retirement benefits, the key for labor to defeat these attacks is adopting a *class-struggle* program for powerful working-class action across traditional trade-union divisions, independent of and *against* all the parties of capital, Republicans and Democrats.

There’s no need for any of this deadly mess that’s called the health care “system” in the U.S. – except the need for profit. U.S. reported corporate profits are at over *\$8 trillion per year*. Even ignoring the fact that a socialized health care system would be freed from the disastrous anarchy, inefficiency and bureaucracy required by private ownership, the present U.S. health care system, the most expensive in the world, consumes around \$3 trillion per year. Present corporate profits could fund it twice over with trillions to spare. But this isn’t a question of accounting, tax rates, or one that any “reform” of the present system could achieve.

Union signs call to “stop the war on workers.” But that one-sided *class war* is the domestic face of the imperialist war U.S. rulers are waging around the world, and it won’t stop until it is defeated by mobilizing workers’ power, here and abroad. We can’t accomplish that so long as workers are bound hand-and-foot to one of the bosses’ parties. As the union tops once again throw their support behind the Democratic Party in the upcoming U.S. elections, worker militants must draw the lessons of their leaders’ support for the administration that designed the ACA bonanza for the insurance companies that is destroying health care for working people.

The key lesson is the need for a class-struggle workers party. It all comes down to a question of power, and Obamacare is one more reason why the workers must rise up and smash the power of the tiny minority of exploiters, rip the productive forces that we have built up out of the hands of these vultures, and establish a workers government to organize a planned economy, producing to fulfill human needs rather than the dictates of profit. Otherwise, the ACA debacle is a harbinger of worse to come – much worse. ■

² Soldiers ordered detainees to say *perejil* (parsley in Spanish), which many French and Kreyól speakers find hard to pronounce. Anyone who failed to do so “properly” was killed on the spot.

³ For a detailed account of lynch mobs against Haitians, see “Stop Persecution of Haitian Workers in the Dominican Republic!” *The Internationalist* No. 23, April-May 2006.

Corbynmania Sweeps Britain

On September 12, Jeremy Corbyn, longtime left-wing Member of Parliament (MP) from Islington North (London), was resoundingly elected as head of the British Labour Party. He won hands down on the first ballot, with nearly 60 percent of the vote. After a summer of predicting apocalyptic disaster should Corbyn win, with swarms of immigrants overrunning the sceptred isle and the economy collapsing as bankers fled the City of London, still the British ruling class almost universally fell into shock at his incontestable victory. In contrast, there was euphoria among many trade unionists and tens of thousands of young people who had flocked to the party in hopes of turning out the vile “New Labour” crowd of acolytes of the hated Tony Blair.

Leftist activists were ecstatic when Corbyn, chairman of the Stop the War Coalition and now Labour Leader, left the convention hall where the vote results were announced and headed to a Refugees Welcome Here march. In Parliament Square he mounted the platform, gave a brief speech and together with singer Billy Bragg belted out the Labour anthem, *The Red Flag* (“The people’s flag is deepest red, it shrouded oft our martyred dead”). They were even more enthused two days later when at a veterans’ commemoration of the Battle of Britain, Corbyn, a republican opponent of the monarchy, refused to sing the national anthem, *God Save the Queen*. The bourgeois media and right-wing Labour MPs, on the other hand, were aghast at the “insult.”

All week long, the press kept up a deafening drumbeat of anti-Corbyn mudslinging and red-baiting scare stories: “Unions threaten chaos after Corbyn win” (*Daily Telegraph*); “Corbyn union pals pledge strike chaos” (*Daily Mail*); “Why Labour’s Corbyn is a danger to Britain” (*Daily Express*); “Corbyn rocked by cabinet chaos” (*London Evening Standard*); “Corbyn snubs the Queen” (*Sun*). While the tabloids were having a field day, the proper *Times of London* dug up the old revelation of a “hot affair” between Corbyn and Diane Abbott (a black Labour left spokeswoman who is now his shadow minister of development) that ended during a motorbike tour of East Germany in the 1970s (“The motorcycle diaries”). Even his wardrobe came in for ridicule (“50 shades of beige”).

The frenzied assault on Corbyn began well before his election. It has been spearheaded not only by the hysterical Tory press but also by Blair himself and his formidable New Labour machine – which includes the vast majority of Labour members of parliament. Barely 20 out of 232 sitting MPs actually supported the new party Leader in his campaign, and even as Corbyn and his allies occupy the front bench as the official Opposition in the House of Commons, his “shadow cabinet” is far from uniformly left-wing. Corbyn has been Labour’s most intransigently leftist MP, defying the party whip in more than 500 votes – especially during Blair’s tenure as prime minister (1997–2007) – and will have a hard time calling the Blairites to order.

The vote for a new Leader came because the New Labour party that Blair made crashed and burned in the May 2015 elections. Its mildly left-wing leader Ed Miliband resigned. Workers were clearly

fed up with a Tory-like party, led by money-grubbing careerists and austerity-mongering technocrats. As such Labour had little chance of defeating the real Tories. Enough traditional Labour voters stayed home or switched their allegiance to give David Cameron’s Conservatives a comfortable majority. In Scotland, which has been solidly Labour for generations, enough voters switched to the bourgeois Scottish National Party (SNP) to elect 56 of Scotland’s 59 MPs from that party, wiping out Labour’s hefty contingent of Scottish MPs.

Thus the leadership vote was an elemental expression of outrage at what the Labour Party has become. Tony Blair is a certified warmonger, reviled as (George W.) “Bush’s poodle” for his tail-wagging support for the U.S.’ 2003 invasion of Iraq, supported by the “dodgy dossier” of “sexed-up” (doctored) intelligence purporting to document Saddam Hussein’s non-existent arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. Conservative prime minister Margaret Thatcher regarded New Labour as her greatest achievement. Blair embraced her “TINA” doctrine – that There Is No Alternative to free-market capitalism – and continued her dismantling of remnants of the social-democratic “welfare state” institutions previous Labour governments had built up.

The Corbyn revolt threatens to resurrect and revitalize the trade union-centered reformist party that Blair worked so hard to destroy. He sought to turn Labour from what Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin termed a “bourgeois workers party,” with its working-class base and a pro-capitalist leadership, into a straight-out bourgeois party, much as the once formidable Italian Communist Party was transmogrified into today’s Democratic Party. Blair dismisses Corbynistas as living in an “Alice in Wonderland world, this parallel reality” (*Guardian*, 29 August) as he conspires with other leaders of British imperialism to force Labour to dump its new leader, *pronto*. But the Blairites have just suffered a huge setback.

Supporting Corbyn is a renewed Labour left wing, comprised of trade unionists, students, jobless youth, and black and Asian minorities. Many were participants in the mass protests against the endless Tory/Labour austerity cuts. They see Corbyn as *their* candidate, and several hundred thousand signed up to vote for him. Tens of thousands of new trade-union Labour Party members were enrolled; many more voters signed up as supporters – a new category permitted by a rule change in 2014, requiring only a £3 (US\$5) registration fee. This really stuck in the craw of the rightists, since they had engineered that rule expressly to further dilute the power of the unions in the party.

Now the British left has been seized by “Corbynmania,” attracting a whole layer of people new to politics and extending



Jeremy Corbyn at final campaign rally for Labour leadership, September 2015.

to almost the entire panoply of socialist and ostensibly Marxist groups, including a number who mistakenly see themselves as supporters of Leon Trotsky. Jeremy Corbyn is by all accounts a decent and fairly principled social democrat, although under tremendous pressure as Labour Leader he is now setting aside some key positions (such as opposition to NATO). He has supported Palestinian rights and opposed U.S./British wars on Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Yugoslavia in the 1990s. He courageously voted, according to a count by *The Times*, against 13 counterterrorism bills. But he is still a committed reformist.

No Return to “Welfare State” Capitalism

Corbyn’s election as Labour Party leader has been described as an “earthquake” and even a “revolution” in British politics, which shows how insipid mainstream political life has been for years and why so many are turned off by it. While it has clearly shaken up the establishment and the scribbling classes in the press, it is basically a return to the social-democratic Labour Left of previous decades led by Tony Benn and Ken Livingstone. And while “red Ken” managed to get elected mayor of London as an independent over Blair’s opposition, this supposed “hard left” never could and never would be able to transform Labour into a socialist party. As Ralph Miliband (father of Ed) noted in the first sentence of his book *Parliamentary Socialism* (1961):

“Of political parties claiming socialism to be their aim, the Labour Party has always been one of the most dogmatic – not about socialism, but about the parliamentary system.”

From its inception as the Labour Representation Committee in 1900, the Labour Party has been a mainstay of British capitalism. Labour served in the government in both imperialist world wars and was a key component of the anti-Soviet Cold War beginning in the late 1940s. Even the most prominent Lefts, like Aneurin Bevan after WWII, were kept at a safe distance from the center of power. And while Corbyn is the first leftist to be elected Labour Party leader over the objections of the parliamentary party, he will serve the same function

today of bringing potential radicals into the Labour Party with illusions about eventually pushing the party to the left.

Over the course of his political career, Corbyn has exemplified the values of the Labour left, extolling as *socialism* an extensive program of *capitalist reforms* – a strong national health service, nationalized transport and utilities, union rights, equal pay for women, and social welfare supports. He was a campaigner for and protégé of Benn, the Labour left’s iconic leader who died last year. Corbyn has been a longtime columnist for the *Morning Star*, the now unofficial mouthpiece for the staid Communist Party. He has campaigned for gay liberation and in defense of the Irish victims of British imperialism. In addition to chairing the Anti-War Coalition, he is a member of the pacifist Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

In some ways, Corbyn has taken stands to the left of his mentor Benn, who supported British occupation of Northern Ireland and restrictions on immigration. But the reforms that Corbyn seeks are the same that the Labour lefts have extolled for decades, and in some cases well to the right of them. The centerpiece of his economic program (“The Economy in 2020,” 22 July) is the call for “people’s quantitative easing.” In other words, the Bank of England (like the U.S. Federal Reserve) would keep on creating money but instead of sitting in the coffers of the commercial banks, it would upgrade deteriorating infrastructure and go to a national investment bank to invest in hi-tech industries. Nothing the least bit “anti-capitalist” about that.

Meanwhile, the more radical-sounding stances are rapidly being watered down. Corbyn’s call for renationalizing the railways, which has 70% support in the opinion polls, including a majority among Tory voters, has been reduced to restoring state ownership as franchises expire, no earlier than 2020. “Renationalizing” energy companies would be by the government purchasing a majority of shares. In the past, Corbyn’s shadow chancellor of the exchequer (the equivalent of the U.S. treasury secretary) John McDonnell has called for nationalizing the banks. At most they are now talking of undoing the privatization of the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) Group. As we have in-

sisted, nationalizing such failing banks is a decidedly *pro*-capitalist measure, but it will take nothing less than workers revolution to wrest control of the City of London “investment banks,” the key center after Wall Street of finance capital.

At bottom, Jeremy Corbyn has embraced the same populist program of a return from “neo-liberalism” to the Keynesian economics of yesteryear advocated by “theoreticians” like Thomas Piketty (*Capital in the Twenty-First Century*), who is now a McDonnell advisor, and bourgeois parties and politicians like SYRIZA in Greece or Democrat Bernie Sanders in the U.S. Unlike the latter two, Labour is still a workers party, and under certain circumstances one might give critical support to it or candidates like Corbyn, to expose the bankruptcy of their reformist politics. Yet decaying capitalism will not tolerate the concessions it reluctantly granted in the past to stave off the “Communist threat.” There will be no second coming of the welfare state.

Across the planet, ever since the onset of the world capitalist economic crisis in 2007-08 which continues to this day with massive unemployment, falling wages and stagnant production, there has been an upsurge of interest in radical politics. But if “neoliberalism” is past its heyday, it is still enjoying a profitable afterlife, as banks continue to rake in stratospheric profits (and bankers wallow in obscene bonuses) while even highly educated youth toil at minimum wages or are unable to find any job at all. The stark fact is that every single struggle against austerity and attacks on social benefits, from North Africa to northern Europe, has been defeated. The central reason is the absence of a truly revolutionary leadership.

That means a leadership with the program and determination to fight for socialist revolution, not in the sweet bye-and-bye but as the goal and ultimate outcome of today’s struggles, which is what Trotsky’s Transitional Program is all about. It is vital to reach out to the new layers energized by Corbyn’s victory in the Labour leadership vote, with their will to struggle and their rejection of politics as usual. It’s necessary to be attentive should possibilities open up within the Labour Party, but this will centrally involve intersecting them in struggle. Opportunities will soon arise, as showdowns loom over the Trident nuclear missiles, a vote on extending bombing to Syria and the trade-union bill now before Parliament. Key in every case is mobilizing workers’ power.

The sudden rise of the Labour lefts has already galvanized hundreds of thousands, and it could arouse many more in the fight against the Tory and Blairite imperialists and their hangers on. Yet this also creates new illusions in the arch-reformist pro-capitalist Labour Party that had largely dissipated. Whoever thought that Blair’s New Labour could be a road to revolution? Winning young radicals to become professional revolutionaries requires telling the unvarnished truth, that the Labour Party will never become socialist – not even under the most left-wing Labour lefts – and will be a key obstacle to revolutionary struggle. And we must aid in showing through experience the need for a genuinely revolutionary, Leninist-Trotskyist workers party.

Tories and Blairites Unite for Imperialist War...

David Cameron’s Tories act toward Corbyn with the bloodthirsty hauteur of a party of lords and ladies riding to hounds,

September-October 2015

setting their dogs in the media to hunt down the red fox. “Drunk on class prejudice,” as Unite union leader Len McCluskey described them, they are intent on destroying the labor movement as they “paint the millions of trade unionists and their families as ‘the enemy within’.” Conservative Party right-wingers view Corbyn’s election as a godsend, believing him to “unelectable.” Party hacks make fundraising pitches: “Labour’s new leader is a threat to our national security, our economic security, and your family’s security. We can’t ever let Labour back into power again. Donate now.”

They revile Corbyn’s close ally John McDonnell as “a socialist red in tooth and claw.” McDonnell was an official of the National Miners Union (NUM) and is chair of the Socialist Campaign Group. His earlier calls for nationalization of the banks, as well as saluting Bobby Sands and other Irish Republican Army martyrs, are being paraded in the media as evidence of lunacy, if not treason. He is excoriated for a 2003 speech praising the bravery of the Provisional IRA, and musing on a later occasion about going back in time to the 1980s to “assassinate Margaret Thatcher.” McDonnell dutifully made the groveling apologies.

But if Labour lefts are given to fantasizing, especially since they have been consigned to the political wilderness for decades, their right-wing detractors are making serious threats. In the past, Corbyn called for British withdrawal from the NATO imperialist military alliance and to scrap Trident, the U.S.-controlled British nuclear-armed submarine program. *The Sunday Times* (20 September) quoted a “senior serving general” who was deployed in Northern Ireland in the 1980s and ’90s saying that if Corbyn ever became prime minister, the military would take “direct action” to stop him:

“There would be mass resignations at all levels and you would face the very real prospect of an event which would effectively be a mutiny.... The Army just wouldn’t stand for it. The general staff would not allow a prime minister to jeopardise the security of this country and I think people would use whatever means possible, fair or foul to prevent that.”

In addition, a “senior intelligence source” reportedly said that a Corbyn cabinet would be denied operational information.

The London *Guardian* pooh-poohed the notion of a military revolt against Corbyn as “far-fetched,” although their main argument was that “he is unlikely ever to become prime minister.” Yet the flagship paper of the “center-left” quoted the military chief of staff in a speech following the election of Corbyn as Labour Leader complaining about the “ever greater constraints on our freedom to use force” posed by the need for “parliamentary consent.” Many recalled the 1982 novel (and later TV series) *A Very British Coup* about the election of a left-wing trade-unionist from Sheffield (the stomping ground of miners leader Arthur Scargill) as Labour Leader and the successful plot by MI5 (Britain’s domestic spy agency) and military leaders to bring him down.

That fictional account was based on the very real preparations for a coup d’état against the Labour governments of Harold Wilson in 1965 and again in the mid-1970s, confirmed in a 2006 BBC documentary. The plots involved military figures with connection to the royals (Lord Mountbatten, the last viceroy of India), press barons (Lord Cecil King of the *Daily Mirror*), an MI5



British general strike of 1926 (above) betrayed by Labour left leaders of TUC.

operation to defame Wilson (codenamed “Clockwork Orange”) and a 1974 military takeover of Heathrow Airport, about which the government was not informed, as a dry run. The head of MI5, Peter Wright, wrote in his memoirs that the plan was a “carbon copy” of the infamous “Zinoviev letter” forgery concocted to destabilize the first Labour government in 1924.

But in 2015, as the author of *A Very British Coup*, Chris Mullin, noted (*Guardian*, 10 August), the first attempt to bring down Corbyn will likely come from the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP). It has already begun. *The Sunday Times* published a fly-on-the-wall account (“Knives Out for Comrade Chaos”) of conspiring amongst the Blairites on post-election night at a pub near Victoria station and later in the week in a flat in South Kensington. One after another former shadow ministers refused to serve under Corbyn. Their main thrust was to prevent him from democratizing Labour so that a party conference could overrule the PLP and National Executive Committee (NEC), which the right-wingers control.

The first clashes could come over bombing Syria and Trident nukes, which many Labour MPs support and Corbyn and most Party members oppose. As recently as this August, the new Labour leader spoke against Trident, which is up for a £100 billion renewal next year. The nuclear subs, left over from the anti-Soviet Cold War, are based in the Firth of Clyde in Scotland, and the SNP and supporters of Scottish independence oppose them. In 2003, the Stop the War Coalition, with Corbyn at the forefront, brought out up to 2 million people to oppose the invasion of Iraq. But it didn’t stop even one of Blair’s bombs from falling on Iraqi children, as British workers and unions *were not called upon to use their power as workers to shut Britain down*.

Rather than Corbyn’s pacifist politics of protest and of “unilateral nuclear disarmament,” revolutionary Trotskyists call for *labor strikes against imperialist war and not one penny, not one person for the imperialist armed forces*.

...and War on Workers “at Home”

Meanwhile the entire workers movement is facing a frontal assault by the government’s Trade Union Bill. This draconian piece of legislation aims to make it well-nigh impossible to have a legal strike. The bill would end closed shops and dues check-offs, require picket captains to register with the police by name (thus providing employers with a blacklist of union activ-

ists), require super-majority votes to call strikes and as much as 80% in “strategic” occupations like the National Health Service. The bill, which goes far beyond even Thatcher’s anti-labor laws, passed its second reading on September 14 after a six-hour parliamentary debate. But no amount of parliamentary haggling will stop its passage.

The Trades Union Congress annual meeting at Brighton on September 14 voted for a “day of action” against the bill. Corbyn spoke there, saying that the Tories “are declaring war on organised labour.” Quite right. The question, then, is what to do about it. Corbyn’s response sums up the impotency of the Labour left: “We will fight this Bill all the way, and if it becomes law we will repeal it in 2020.” So the capitalist government is declaring war on the workers, and the answer will be ... *to hope for an election victory five years from now so that Her Majesty’s Parliament can repeal it!* One couldn’t ask for a more succinct example of electoral cretinism, the senile disorder afflicting the British workers movement.

Precisely because this law is a declaration of war on workers’ right to organize, it can only be defeated through defiant class struggle and industrial action. Significantly, the Brighton meeting also passed a second motion, submitted by the left-led RMT transport workers union, calling for “generalized strike action” against the bill. (TUC General Secretary Frances O’Grady expressed “reservations” that it was open to “ambiguous interpretation.”) The RMT along with the Fire Brigades Union, which are not members of the Labour Party, had voted to back Corbyn along with Unite, which is. This motion was clearly intended simply as another pressure tactic, but were a general strike to actually occur, which is what the TUC tops fear, it would be the first time in Britain since 1926.

A real general strike is not the one- or two-day affairs that pass for one these days in much of Europe, which are nothing more than glorified stop-work demonstrations. It is the highest level of workers struggle short of an armed insurrection. Even if called as a defensive action, it necessarily poses the question of *which class rules*. As Trotsky wrote just after the May 1926 general strike had broken out, it “demands a clear, resolute, firm (i.e., a revolutionary) leadership.” Noting that the TUC had declared the strike to be non-political, he continued:

“In the present strike there is no trace of such a leadership of the British proletariat.... And herein lies the chief danger: men who did not want the general

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Referendum Ploy: Syriza Government Caves In to Eurobankers' Assault Greek Workers: Defeat the Bankers' *Diktat*, Occupy the Banks and Ports!

JULY 4—For the past five months, ever since the January 25 elections brought the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA) into office in Greece, there has been a bitter struggle between the new regime and the European Central Bank, European Commission and International Monetary Fund. The ECB/EC/IMF “troika” has insisted that Athens comply with the Eurobankers’ program of brutal, anti-working class austerity which has devastated the Greek economy for the last five years. While European Union bureaucrats in Brussels haggle about the details, hard-liners in Berlin have made it clear that they were prepared to boot Greece out of the common currency, the euro (one variant of what’s being called “Grexit”). SYRIZA, which is not a radical leftist party at all but a bourgeois nationalist populist formation, has sought to bargain for less onerous terms and for relief from the staggering €320 billion public debt, while insisting it will not leave the eurozone.¹

On June 25, the Eurogroup of finance ministers handed Greek prime minister Alexis Tsipras and finance minister Yanis Varoufakis a “take-it-or-leave-it” final offer demanding drastic pension cuts, tax increases on the poor, privatizations and anti-labor “reforms.” In response, Tsipras announced that the government would ask the Greek electorate to vote on whether to say “yes” or “no” to the troika’s extortionate demands, vowing that the government would not give in to the “ultimatum.” This took the Eurobankers by surprise, and after first trying to stop the referendum, they have launched a lavishly financed media blitz for a “yes” vote. Meanwhile, tens of thousands of working people, pensioners and others who have borne the brunt of the austerity have demonstrated repeatedly in Syntagma (Constitution) Square for “OXI” (“no” in Greek) while smaller, more affluent crowds demonstrated for “NAI” (“yes”).

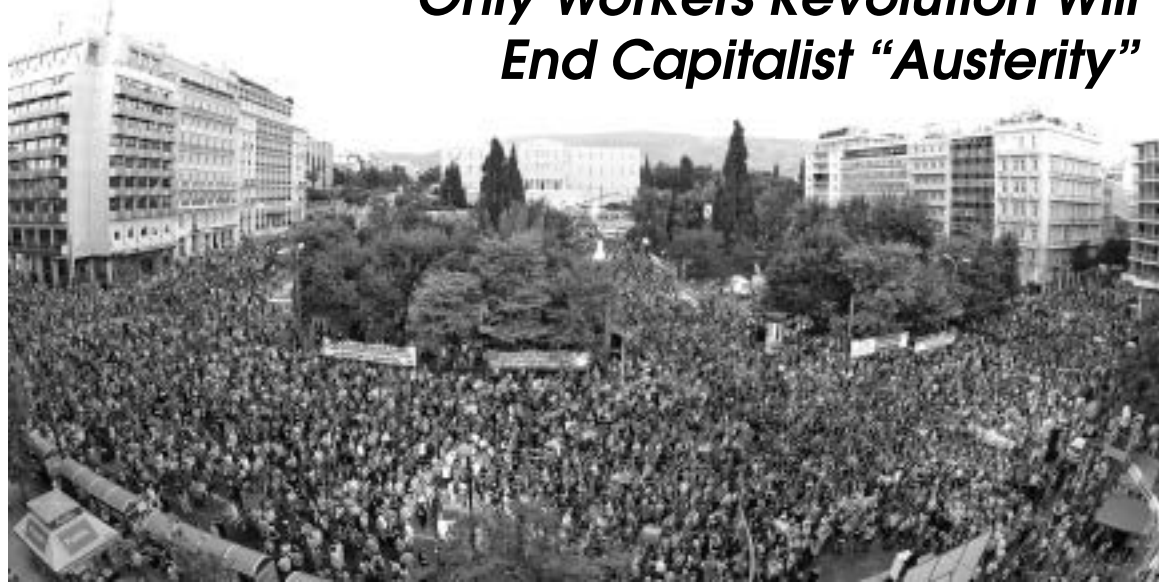
There is no doubt what the “institutions” (i.e., the hated troika) want: total surrender to their program and “regime change” in Athens. Their aim is to bring down the

¹ See “Greece: The SYRIZA Illusion Exploded” and “What Is SYRIZA?” in *The Internationalist* No. 39, April-May 2015.

elected Greek government by using the crudest financial blackmail and doomsday threats. Workers must fight tooth and nail against the assault on their living standards and very existence by these bloodsuckers. But they cannot do that by voting “no” in the referendum, for a very simple reason: *Tsipras, Varoufakis & Co. have already capitulated to and accepted almost all the anti-worker demands of the troika.* The government of SYRIZA and its right-wing populist allies of ANEL (Greek Democrats), which is already looting pensions, is using the referendum as a bargaining ploy: if they get a majority “no” vote, they will use this to attempt, once again, to negotiate a new austerity program that will further impoverish Greece’s hard-hit population.

The first duty of revolutionary Marxists is to tell the truth to the masses. The League for the Fourth International says that the only way to defeat the bankers’ *diktat* and put an end to the devastating austerity program of the Eurobosses is by mobilizing the workers’ power on the road to a socialist revolution in Greece and throughout Europe. To stop the financial extortion, *workers should occupy the banks* and place them under control of *elected workers commissions* against the Eurobankers and the Greek capitalist government. Against the threat of privatization, workers in the ports of Piraeus, Thessaloniki and the Greek islands should *occupy the ports* (and airports) and place them under workers control. Make public health and public transportation permanently free, under workers control. As for the unpayable foreign debt, the workers should repudiate (cancel) it entirely, as the Russian workers did in October 1917. But that will take a revolution.

*Only Workers Revolution Will
End Capitalist “Austerity”*



Thousands jammed Syntagma (Constitution) Square in July 2 Communist Party (KKE) protest against austerity plans of the Eurobankers and of the Greek government led by SYRIZA.

And while they’re at it, since the fabulously wealthy Greek shipping magnates are so adept at avoiding any taxes and hiding their assets, instead of hopelessly advocating “tax the rich,” as most of the left calls for, workers should seize the oligarchs’ sumptuous residences, estates and island retreats to be used as summer camps for poor children and other socially useful purposes.

By now there is hardly any need to convince Greek workers, pensioners or students, or anyone on the left internationally, that the bankers’ demands are ruinous. Millions of Greeks have spent the last five years trying to resist them, to no avail. What is worth underlining is that the ECB hardliners have been pushing this program since even before SYRIZA was elected. Indeed, German chancellor Angel Merkel and finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble forced the January election by refusing to grant former premier Antonis Samaras of the right-wing New Democracy (ND) more time to carry it out. They figured that if SYRIZA won, they could burn it by forcing these phony “radical leftists” to bow down to the bankers’ *diktat*, or failing that, could force Greece out of the euro, which would then unmistakably be the D-mark in disguise, with the Bundesbank calling the shots.

In fact, during the months of “negotiations” in Brussels the Eurocrats haven’t ceded on anything. Every time the Greek government gave up a point, the “institutions” demanded more. Already at the end of May, Varoufakis handed in a 47-page policy draft (and another 8-page summary) agreeing to run a 3.5% primary budget surplus (i.e., before payment of debt) by 2018; to raise sales (value added) taxes to 11% for hotels, restaurants and most products and 23% for many foods; to gradually raise the lower age limit for early retirement to 62 years; to privatize a host of state-owned enterprises (plus tightening tax collection and raising taxes on the rich). Even though this represented an unheard-of level of austerity for a country in the depths of economic depression, it was rejected out of hand. So the Greek government capitulated again and submitted a new plan agreeing to just about everything. Troika negotiators made positive noises.

But even that was not enough. On

June 24, the day after Athens’ proposal was handed in, the troika negotiators handed their Greek counterparts a red-lined version with a whole series of amendments, notably:

- VAT (sales tax) to go to 23% immediately, including for hotels and restaurants. This would be a body blow to the one functioning sector of the Greek economy, tourism.
- Raise VAT for many medical supplies, hitting the healthcare industry hard, while setting lower prices for generic pharmaceuticals, one of Greece’s main exports to Europe.
- Abolish preferential tax treatment and fuel subsidies for farmers, further weakening agriculture, once a mainstay of the Greek economy.
- Cut back corporate tax hikes.
- Raise the minimum retirement to 67, except for those who have worked 40 years, while eliminating supplements for the lowest pensions, many of which are around €360 (US\$400) a month.
- Double the reduction in the military budget and require “reduction in head-count.”

Obviously, this “proposal” was designed to be rejected, as it would hit the poorest, most vulnerable working people hardest, devastate the functioning parts of the Greek economy, and encourage unrest in the military. Sure enough, within days the German press was speculating about whether the Greek military was about to revolt and impose a dictatorship, as it did in 1967. The purpose of this exercise was to force the Greek government into groveling total submission, or to lay the basis for a German-engineered “Grexit” should Tsipras balk.

A “yes” vote in the referendum would mean abject surrender to the Brussels bureaucrats, Frankfurt bankers and vicious Berlin politicians who seek to humiliate the Greek people. But can a “no” vote strike a blow against the austerity mongers? It cannot, because the whole purpose of “voting NO,” as Tsipras himself says repeatedly, “means continuing the negotiation with better conditions for the Greek people” (July 3 TV speech). Or again: “NO is a decisive

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Athens street poster calling for “NO” (OXI) in July 5 referendum showing German finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble: “For five long years he has drunk your blood, now say NO to him.”

The SYRIZA Debacle: “Leftists” Enforce the Bosses’ Austerity

Greece: The Naked Rule of Finance Capital

JULY 18 – Late in the night of July 15-16, after going through the motions of a debate, the Greek parliament cast the fateful vote to accept the draconian austerity measures ordered by Europe’s central bankers two days earlier. The “Agreement” was put forward by Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and his governing Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA). It represented the groveling surrender by these purported radicals who won office in January on a program to reverse the cutbacks and layoffs that have devastated the Greek economy and drastically impoverished working people over the last five years. Worse yet, the populist left rammed through and is enforcing a raft of brutal anti-working-class measures that is even more brutal than what its conservative predecessors tried and failed to carry out. While claiming to have fought the good fight, and pretending to have won some concessions, Tsipras & Co. acted as flunkies for the Eurobankers, who used SYRIZA to get what the right couldn’t deliver.

The showdown was not without drama. While riot police attacked anti-austerity protesters in Syntagma (Constitution) Square outside, inside the chamber a number of SYRIZA members of parliament criticized their own government’s motion. SYRIZA has 149 members of parliament, just shy of a majority, but a quarter of them voted no (32) or abstained (6) in the crucial vote. Earlier in the day, a majority of the party’s Central Committee issued a statement calling the “agreement” a “disaster for our country and our people,” and requesting an immediate meeting of the CC. This “statement of the 109” cited the “proud OXI (NO) in the referendum” held only ten days earlier in which 61% of those voting rejected the prior ultimatum by the European Central Bank, European Commission and International Monetary Fund (the hated “Troika,” now euphemistically known as “the institutions”). But it was all to no avail.

Neither the emphatic “NO” from the Greek population nor the dissent in his own ranks deterred Tsipras. Relying on the votes of the conservative right, he got parliament to say “YES” to a program that will sink Greece even further into the abyss. There will now be more poverty, more mass firings, more cuts of the pensions of the poorest retirees, a sharp rise of taxes on the country’s only functioning industry (tourism), and privatization of the country’s most valuable assets. The shameful vote signifies the utter *bankruptcy of SYRIZA, and of all those leftists who supported it*, both in Greece and internationally. Even those in SYRIZA who dissented, like the Left Platform, are guilty of building a party that won office running on a lie, that one could end austerity in the framework of the imperialist European Union. The bitter experience of

the last five months has exposed this illusion, and shown how *imperialist “democracy” only masks the dictatorship of finance capital*.

The mask is off, and it is the working class, the poor and the oppressed who are paying the price of SYRIZA’s deception, which was eagerly promoted by its cheerleaders and apologists around the world, including those who now scramble to dissociate themselves from their erstwhile heroes. As the conservative London *Telegraph* (16 July) wrote: “By a twist of fate, the Left has become the enforcer of an economic structure that has led to levels of unemployment once unthinkable for a post-war social democratic government with its own sovereign currency. It has found ways to justify a youth jobless rate still running at 42% in Italy, 49% in Spain and 50% in Greece. It has acquiesced in the Long Slump of the past six years.” Agreeing, as Tsipras did, to have budget surpluses (before debt service) of 3.5% of the gross domestic product, said the Tory mouthpiece, “is a formula for permanent depression.... It is a doomsday construct.”

There was opposition in the streets to this attack on the vital interests of workers, pensioners and large sectors of the middle classes. The ADEDY federation of public workers unions, led by a member of SYRIZA’s central committee, called a 24-hour strike and a rally outside parliament during the debate. ANTARSYA (Front of the Anti-Capitalist Left) joined ADEDY with more militant slogans, but basically pressuring the SYRIZA legislators and government to vote “no.” The PAME (All-Workers Militant Front) labor federation led by the Communist Party (KKE) held a march of thousands of workers from Omonia Square to Syntagma, as well as marches in Thessaloniki and other cities, denouncing the alliance of the Tsipras government which called for a “NO” in the referendum with the bourgeois “opposition” which called for a “YES” now joining in support of a Third Memorandum to increase the profits of capital by squeezing ever more sweat and blood from the workers.

But these were basically ritual protests, “symbolic” blockades and limited strikes of the sort Greece had experienced by the dozens in 2010-12, with no effect at all on government actions. Likewise with the



This time it is the SYRIZA government that is sending riot cops against anti-austerity demonstrators. Syntagma Square, Athens, July 15 while the Greek parliament was voting for Eurobankers’ austerity deal. Free all the arrested protesters!

firebombs and clashes with the police by a few anarchists. These tactics were just as impotent against SYRIZA, since they in no way challenge the capitalist order. Thus there was no attempt to prevent the bourgeois parliament from voting the fateful law. But although the Greek parliament passed the measure with an ample majority, there is no guarantee that the Eurobankers will in fact agree to a new loan of another €82 billion (or more, according to the IMF analysis kept secret during the Brussels “negotiations”) needed to service the €240 billion already lent, 90% of which went to “bail out” the commercial banks and almost none ever went to Greece, on top of another €100 billion in emergency assistance to keep Greek banks afloat.¹

Various leftists in and around SYRIZA, including the Left Platform and ANTARSYA, are now pushing for Greece to default on the extortionate loans, take over the collapsed banking system and issue some form of scrip, adopt a parallel currency or leave the euro zone altogether (“Grexit”) and issue a new currency, whether a revived drachma or some other denomination. Leaving aside the complicated mechanics of such an operation which requires considerable preparation, the way this would eventually work to revive the economy is by a drastic devaluation, making imports more expensive and exports cheaper. Yet Greece exports very little that would become more competitive by devaluation, its manufacturing industry having been largely destroyed since adopting the euro in 2001, and is heavily dependent on vital imports including food. In any case, while it may become inevitable, a “Grexit” under capitalism will inevitably

¹ The euro (€) is currently valued at about US\$1.10.

mean a further massive attack on workers’ livelihoods – austerity with a vengeance.

While the government of SYRIZA and ANEL (Greek Democrats), bourgeois populists of left and right, knuckled under to the *diktat* of the Eurobankers, joining their flunkies of the domestic mini-Troika of New Democracy (ND), the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Party (PASOK) and Potami, the battle is by no means over. With the exception of the Nazi-fascists of Golden Dawn (Chrysi Avgi, or XA), who will now seek to profit from the abject failure of SYRIZA, the entire panoply of Greek bourgeois parties has agreed to pay off the phony “Greek debt” and to enforce austerity policies of a ferocity never before experienced in a developed capitalist country. But facing this doomsday scenario which would spell its destruction, the organized working class has not yet responded in force. Revolutionary Marxists would seek to mobilize the proletariat to lead the fight to resist, undermine and defeat the capitalist offensive which spells ruin for the large majority of the Greek population. As we wrote on the eve of the July 5 referendum:

“The League for the Fourth International says that the only way to defeat the bankers’ *diktat* and put an end to the devastating austerity program of the Eurobosses is by mobilizing the workers’ power on the road to a socialist revolution in Greece and throughout Europe. To stop the financial extortion, *workers should occupy the banks* and place them under control of *elected workers commissions* against the Eurobankers and the Greek capitalist government. Against the threat of privatization, workers in the ports of Piraeus, Thessaloniki and the Greek islands should *occupy the ports* (and airports) and place

**Workers: Sink the Bankers’ Memorandum, Occupy the Banks and Ports!
Build a Trotskyist Party to Fight for International Socialist Revolution!**



By forcing the closure of Greek banks, the European Central Bank set off panic buying, soon leading to shortages. Above: empty grocery shelves in an Athens supermarket in early July.

them under workers control. Make public health and public transportation permanently free, under workers control. As for the unpayable foreign debt, the workers should repudiate (cancel) it entirely, as the Russian workers did in October 1917. But that will take a revolution.”

–“Greek Workers: Defeat the Bankers’ Diktat, Occupy the Banks and Ports!” (see page 8)

This program to mobilize workers power in sharp class struggle is all the more urgent today, after the ignominious passage of the Third (SYRIZA) Memorandum. The imperialist bankers have made excruciatingly clear that there is no measure that any government of a capitalist state can take to stop the ruling-class war on the workers known as “austerity.” But the working class can take action independent of and against the government to defend its vital interests and fend off the assault. There should be an immediate drive to form *workers councils* in industrial areas and proletarian districts to undertake steps to ensure the survival of the population – not just soup kitchens but seizing the networks of distribution of vital necessities (food, fuel, medications) – to impose *workers control of production* and initiate *workers defense guards* against official repression and fascist attacks, notably against immigrants.

SYRIZA, as we have explained elsewhere, is not a workers party at all but a bourgeois nationalist populist formation like PASOK, whose trajectory it has followed and whose position on the Greek political chessboard it has now occupied. Like its forerunner, it ran on a left-populist platform to get elected (although not as radical as PASOK’s original program), then abandoned it upon taking office. Virtually none of the planks in SYRIZA’s September 2014 Thessaloniki Program were implemented, not even raising the minimum wage, and now what few minor steps were taken are being rolled back. Alexis Tsipras performed his required *kolotoumba* (somersault, or U-turn), as the bourgeois pundits predicted. Voters reportedly still give him high marks, for trying hard and upholding Greek dignity, and still want him as prime minister because he is “clean” unlike his corrupt predecessors. But poor and working people will still be ground into even deeper misery.

Leftists in Greece and internationally who deposited high hopes in SYRIZA, on the other hand, are despondent. For the first time in decades, a party not belonging to the “neoliberal” mainstream had been elected and could show what it could do. But now SYRIZA has suffered a humiliating defeat,

forced to renounce everything it said it stood for. Already the cabinet has been reshuffled, with the dissenting ministers shown the door. The Coalition of the (not-so) Radical Left will almost certainly split, and the reformist leftists in it (Left Platform, Left Current, Red Network, KOE, DEA, etc.) may join with others in and around ANTARSYA. But at most this would only be a new edition of SYRIZA on a slightly more leftist program, incapable of leading a struggle to overturn capitalism. For that requires forging a *revolutionary workers party* on the Bolshevik program of Lenin and Trotsky.

OXI (NO) = NAI (YES): The Saga of the Greek Referendum

In the view of the central bankers and conservative politicians who run the show in the European Union, things were going along fine in the drawn-out “negotiations” with the upstart Greek government. The Eurogroup of finance ministers had worn down their interlocutors by demanding detailed statistics, then rejecting every plan out of hand as soon as it was submitted while disparaging supposedly juvenile behavior in Athens. The snooty social-democratic Dutch fin min who heads the cabal, Jeroen Dijsselbloem, a would-be Tony Blair of the second coming, would sneeringly put down his Greek counterpart whenever Yanis Varoufakis tried to talk about the economic disaster that EU austerity policies had caused. Economist Varoufakis later remaked that he “might as well have sung the Swedish national anthem” for all the bankers cared. As an end of June deadline approached, the financiers issued a “take-it-or-leave-it” ultimatum.

But just after midnight on June 27, Tsipras threw a spanner (monkey wrench) into the works by suddenly calling a referendum on whether to accept the Eurobankers’ “final offer.” How dare this “demagogue” ask the people to decide such a “complicated” issue, the imperialist media and politicians howled. The “Troika” declared that the offer was no longer on the table, then accused the Greek prime minister of calling a vote on something that didn’t exist. The cynical arguments from Brussels were trumpeted in propaganda for a “NAI” (YES) vote that blanketed the airwaves and almost all the papers. They were then repeated by correspondents interviewing people having their morning latte in trendy cafes in the leafy northern suburbs of Athens. In working-class areas that had borne the brunt of the austerity over the last five years, however, opinion was overwhelmingly in favor of “OXI,” to give the “big NO” to the arrogant masters of Europe.

At the same time, there was plenty of un-

ease among OXI supporters, some fearing that a “no” vote would mean exiting the euro as the right wing argued, and many with questions about what Tsipras would do with a favorable vote, and why he was continuing the charade of negotiations. Eleni, a fast food worker in Thessaloniki, commented in an interview:

“There are lots of small-time bosses in Syriza, running a business with five to ten workers, and probably not paying them according to the law. Syriza, like any governing party, wants to have the majority of the people on its side – bosses, workers, soldiers, police, retirees, everyone.... [T]hey have to balance the interests of all these different constituencies. This would make it hard for Syriza to do something very radical. “It’s funny for me and my boss to discuss Syriza, and agree. But that’s the point the battle is at right now. There is not a class struggle against our bosses – the situation this week is Syriza and all of us against the measures of the European Union. Of course, there are differences between workers and bosses, but for now we are united on the referendum.”

–“Life Under Austerity,” *Jacobin*, 12 July

Asked what voting “no” means to most people, Eleni said she is “not sure that the majority of people like me – workers in my sector – understand what it means.” Stathis Kouvelakis, a member of the Left Platform reported on his experience campaigning for a “no” vote, saying that it was “tough within the railways” since “the workers knew that the Syriza government had already accepted the privatization of the railways.” He added:

“But despite the varying contexts, in all these places, the discussion was around two different issues: why has the government done so little so far, why has it been so timid? And also what are you going to do after the No victory? ...

“So the questions were: what are your plans? What are you going to do? Why do you still talk about negotiations when for five and a half months we have seen this approach clearly fail?

“I was in a very embarrassing situation, because, in my role as a Syriza spokesperson and central committee member, I couldn’t give convincing answers to all this.”

–Sebastian Budgen and Stathis Kouvelakis, “Greece: The Struggle Continues,” *Jacobin*, 14 July

In fact, Tsipras had no intention of using a “no” vote to stand up to the EU bosses.

In our article on the eve of the July 5 referendum, noting that most of the left had called for OXI, we said that while a “yes” vote meant abject surrender to the dictates of capital, a “no” vote could not “strike a blow against the austerity mongers” because “the whole purpose of ‘voting NO,’ as Tsipras himself says repeatedly, ‘means continuing the negotiation with better conditions for the Greek people.’” Moreover, the Greek leader had already agreed to “drastic tax increases, lower wages for public sector workers, continued elimination of collective bargaining, rampant privatizations and all the rest. SYRIZA is using the referendum not only to bolster its maneuvering, but as a vote of confidence in its government.” What happened in the wake of the referendum fully confirms our warnings and validates our refusal to call for a “no” vote. We told the unvarnished truth about Tsipras’ ploy rather than ceding to the pressure of mass sentiment.

The almost universal expectation in the capitalist media was of a close vote, based on public opinion surveys which systematically understate support for the left (in good part because they are based on

telephone surveys which leave out the large percentage of workers and the poor who don’t have a land line phone). Instead there was an unprecedented landslide 61% “OXI” vote, with a majority for “no” in every single one of the 74 prefectures of Greece. In working-class districts such as Piraeus B and historically leftist areas like Crete it was well over 70%. Crowds poured into the streets to celebrate. Tsipras emerged to hail the voters’ “brave choice” and to declare that this proved that “even under the most difficult circumstances, democracy cannot be blackmailed.” But behind the scenes it was a completely different story. The Greek leader’s reaction was consternation and he decided to cave in to the creditors’ demands.

There are now several accounts, all consistent on the essentials. Whether Tsipras “never expected to win Sunday’s referendum on EMU [European Monetary Union] bail-out terms, let alone to preside over a blazing national revolt against foreign control,” and instead planned to “put up a good fight, accept honourable defeat” and let his successor do the dirty work, as Ambrose Evans Pritchard reported in the London *Telegraph* (6 July), he was certainly not prepared to wage the all-out battle that was posed. In an interview with the Australian ABC (13 July), Varoufakis said that coming from the celebration in Syntagma Square, “The moment I entered the prime ministerial office, I sensed immediately a certain sense of resignation.... an air of defeat, which was completely at odds with what was happening outside.” Since Tsipras was not willing to use the “no” vote to fight the forces of austerity, and the latter wanted Varoufakis’ head, the Greek finance minister resigned.

In the following hours, Tsipras formed a de facto coalition with the defeated parties of the “yes” vote on the basis of their program. He called a meeting of leaders of the parliamentary parties except the fascist XA, presided over by the right-wing president Pavlopoulos (installed by SYRIZA) who had openly called for a “yes” vote. Except for the KKE, the leaders agreed to back the government in negotiating on the basis of the EU demands. The government cobbled together yet another proposal agreeing to just about everything. This was then rammed through parliament, with most of SYRIZA’s Left Platform voting yes but a few abstaining as a fig leaf. But even that capitulation was not enough for the Euro-bosses, who demanded total surrender, or “Grexit.” So after a marathon Euro-summit lasting 27 hours and involving what one EU official called extensive mental waterboarding” of the Greek premier, Tsipras groveled.

The Sorry Fate of SYRIZA’s Camp Followers

It was not so long ago that the left internationally was enraptured with SYRIZA. Alexis Tsipras at 40 (he was born four days after the fall of the military dictatorship) and his hip finance minister were seen as harbingers of a promising new era. At the yearly “Left Forum” gab fest in New York City at the end of May, representatives of almost the entire fake left groaned or laughed derisively when the Internationalist Group made the simple Marxist observation that SYRIZA and the government it leads are bourgeois. In several workshops, the IG’s insistence that Europe’s capitalist rulers would never agree to end or even cut back on austerity was simply dismissed. Even so, many had a hard time stomaching the sneering rejection of “ideology” by spokesmen for SYRIZA

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and its aggressively anti-Marxist Spanish counterpart, Podemos.

Now many leftists are accusing Tsipras of betrayal. He certainly trampled on the OXI vote, agreeing to bailout terms worse than that which Greek voters rejected in the July referendum. He trampled underfoot SYRIZA's anti-austerity election campaign promises. One can't say that he betrayed his own principles or that SYRIZA betrayed the working class, however, since he was committed to staying in the euro zone at all costs, and the "Coalition of the Radical Left" is not a workers party but a bourgeois populist formation. In fact the double-talk Tsipras engaged in during the referendum campaign was nothing new. In article for *Le Monde* (31 May) he accused the Eurocrats of in effect calling for "the complete abolition of democracy in Europe." But even as he talked of "a Europe of solidarity, equality and democracy," he submitted a plan agreeing to raising the retirement age, proceed with privatizations, etc.

As we noted in our previous article, virtually the entire left, in Greece and internationally, jumped on the OXI bandwagon, thereby helping Tsipras peddle the illusion that he was valiantly resisting the EU tops. The one significant exception was the KKE which called to oppose the austerity plans of both the EU and the Greek government. The cheerleaders for a "NO" vote included not only the left wing of SYRIZA, which is now being unceremoniously booted out, but also its camp followers on the outside, notably ANTARSYA. It even extended to small centrist outfits like the Trotskyist Group of Greece (TGG), affiliated with the International Communist League (ICL). The TGG had called on workers not to vote for SYRIZA in January, instead advocating critical support to the KKE. But now it shamefully *placed itself to the right of the Stalinists*, who although dyed in the wool reformists (and Greek nationalists), stated the fact that Tsipras was using the referendum as a maneuver to push through an attack on the workers.

So how is the TGG/ICL call for a "no" vote in the July referendum working out for them? Not so good, it seems. Their statement claimed to give "no support to the Syriza government," even as it was doing just that. But according to *Workers Vanguard* (10 July), "TGG comrades distributing at the final 'no' rally were physically driven out by pro-Syriza Greek nationalists who understood clearly enough that our 'no' vote in the referendum was certainly not a 'yes' vote for Syriza." We, of course, oppose such thuggery on the left, but this incident confirms that for many the "no" vote in the referendum was emphatically a "yes" vote for SYRIZA. The other notable aspect of the *Workers Vanguard* article is its support for a "Grexit," which like its call for a "no" vote in the referendum, echoes the position of the SYRIZA left and its hangers-on. *WV* writes:

"The example of Argentina (or Iceland) graphically shows that Greece might be much better off if it defaulted on its debts and left the eurozone, reinstating its own currency. After Argentina pegged its peso to the U.S. dollar in 1991, its economy went into a deep recession and the country defaulted in 2001. In response, Argentina stopped pegging its currency to the dollar and the economy recovered. Average wages initially dropped 30 percent, but within a year unemployment fell and wages rose."

So now the ICL is in the business of offering advice on how to handle the capitalist crisis within the framework of capitalism,

arguing on the terrain of reformism. It conflates the relatively simple operation of delinking an existing currency to another foreign currency with the extremely complex task of creating a new currency from scratch. Even worse, *WV* echoes bourgeois liberal economists like Joseph Stiglitz and Paul Krugman in prettifying what actually took place in Argentina. The currency peg had generated a severe economic crisis and the desperate rulers in Argentina (which had five presidents in the space of a week in 2001) had no choice in ending it. But the immediate aftermath was massive poverty and *millions* of unemployed, who didn't find work for years. The *piqueteros* blocking highways were not striking workers but jobless. The supposed fall in unemployment was largely the result of lying official statistics, as in the U.S. today when the Obama government puts it below 6% by simply eliminating long-term unemployed from the workforce (it's actually around 23%).

Now the various leftists in and around SYRIZA, having been used and discarded "like a squeezed lemon," are talking about forming a new party. Those still inside – such as the DEA (International Workers Left, allied with the International Socialist Organization in the U.S.) and the Communist Tendency (part of Alan Woods' International Marxist Tendency) – are calling on the leadership to call an immediate national conference to discuss the bailout deal, which Tsipras will surely not do unless he is certain of crushing the opposition. Those on the outside like ANTARSYA are angling to hook up with the Left Platform. But all this would be is another "broad left" formation with a program for a "left government" of the capitalist state, that at most could be condemned to repeat the disastrous SYRIZA experience, when what's urgently needed is to build as a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard to break out of the capitalist straitjacket.

Imperialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of Finance Capital

In the wake of the Greek parliament vote accepting the Eurobankers' *diktat*, we hear a lot about the "democratic deficit" of the European Union, where unelected bureaucrats override the will of millions of voters in elections. But liberal/social-democratic rhetoric about "democracy" ignores the fact that from the start, the EU has been an imperialist alliance based on subjugation of the working class. Born out of the Cold War, following the destruction of the bureaucratically degenerated Soviet Union and deformed workers states of East Europe, the hard-nosed capitalist ideologues and financiers took aim at the "welfare state." These programs aimed at warding off off the post-WWII "communist threat" in Europe were now seen as a drag on profits. German finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble is today going after state-owned firms in Greece with the same scorched-earth tactics he used to dismantle the collectivized economy of East Germany.

But more generally, the underlying issue is not a negation of some mythical classless "democracy" but the fact that the democratic trappings of the bourgeois state mask the rule of capital, and under imperialism, the dictatorship of finance capital. As Friedrich Engels wrote in the concluding chapter of his work *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1885), under the parliamentary regime:

"the democratic republic no longer officially recognizes differences of property. Wealth here employs its power



Imperialist bankers' diktat: IMF chief Christine Lagarde after "mental waterboarding" of new Greek finance minister Tsakalokos at EU summit, July 12.

indirectly, but all the more surely. It does this in two ways: by plain corruption of officials, of which America is the classic example, and by an alliance between the government and the stock exchange, which is effected all the more easily the higher the state debt mounts and the more the joint-stock companies concentrate in their hands not only transport but also production itself, and themselves have their own center in the stock exchange."

V.I. Lenin elaborated on this in *The State and Revolution* (1917), where he noted:

"At present, imperialism and the domination of the banks have 'developed' into an exceptional art both these methods of upholding and giving effect to the omnipotence of wealth in democratic republics of all descriptions...."

"Another reason why the omnipotence of 'wealth' is more certain in a democratic republic is that it does not depend on defects in the political machinery or on the faulty political shell of capitalism. A democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism, and, therefore, once capital has gained possession of this very best shell ..., it establishes its power so securely, so firmly, that no change of persons, institutions or parties in the bourgeois-democratic republic can shake it."

What we have seen unfolding in Greece in the last five months is the clearest possible proof that imperialist "democracy" in reality is the rule of finance capital, which "no change of persons, institution or parties in the bourgeois-democratic republic can shake." A dramatic victory by SYRIZA in the January elections, an unprecedented landslide for "NO" to the EU ultimatum in the July 5 referendum, and only a week later, the bankers emerge triumphant, ordering the Greek parliament to rubber-stamp the dictated "Agreement" in 48 hours, which it dutifully does. And in this epoch of imperialist decay, the radical-left "democrats" who serve as the instruments of the bankers are systematically ripping up past gains of the working class, privatizing nationalized industries such as railroads, postal services and electrical power, and pulverizing social programs such as health insurance that date back to the time of Count Otto von Bismarck.

The bourgeoisie often brings in populist parties or popular-front coalitions like Salvador Allende's Unidad Popular in Chile in times of crisis. PASOK was brought in after the fall of the military dictatorship in the mid-1970s, as the traditional bourgeois parties couldn't keep the masses energized by the struggle against the colonels' regime,

in check. SYRIZA became a mass party following the more than 30 general strikes, explosive mass demonstrations and occupation of city squares during 2010-12. It won office in January after the ND-PASOK duopoly which had ruled Greece for 40 years failed to implement the bankers' vicious austerity regime due to popular resistance. The Eurobankers forced the election knowing SYRIZA might win, figuring that they could oblige it to accomplish what ND-PASOK could not, or else force it into a Grexit so painful that it would scare off populist leftist oppositions elsewhere in Europe.

Unlike Euroleftists like SYRIZA, authentic Trotskyists have opposed the imperialist European Union from the beginning. The vicious anti-worker austerity offensive of the EU may yet force Greece out of the euro zone, but the League for the Fourth International fights to bring down the imperialist EU through *Europe-wide socialist revolution*. For this, the actions of workers outside Greece are key in bringing down the imperialist masters of Europe. This includes not only the rulers of the Fourth Reich of German imperialism, who have been the hardliners in "disciplining" Greek workers, but also the "progressive" bourgeois democrats and social democrats in Italy and France who have played "soft cop" in the Greek bailout drama. But while there have been large "solidarity with Greece" demos from London and Dublin to Paris and Berlin, they seek to pressure their bourgeois rulers rather than fighting to overthrow them.

What we have seen these past months is a disaster that was foreseeable from the beginning. According to the rules of Greek tragedy laid out by Aristotle, the ultimate demise is not the result of unforeseen events or outside forces, but due to inherent features of the protagonists. For any Marxist it was clear, already in the first act, that SYRIZA's vow to fight austerity was incompatible with its loyalty to the imperialist EU and capitalism. What happened since was the inevitable result of those fatal flaws, that could only be overcome by the action of the working class, independent of and against the "left" capitalist rulers. But Greek workers are not constrained to choose between two disastrous courses, between the Scylla of crashing on the shoals of the Eurobankers' Memoranda and the Charybdis of drowning in the whirlpool of a capitalist Grexit. Instead workers and revolutionaries in Greece and throughout Europe must undertake the fight to sweep away all the exploiters in a socialist united states of Europe. ■

“Radical Left” In Shock After SYRIZA Flip-Flop

What Road for Greece: Perpetual Debt Peonage or Workers Revolution?

AUGUST 12 – Following Greek prime minister Alexis Tsipras’ July 12 surrender to the horrific austerity demands of the European Central Bank, the European Commission and the International Monetary Fund, there has reportedly been a general mood of resignation in the Greek population. On the other hand, among leftists in and around the governing Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA) there has been mounting anger. And internationally, we’ve seen disappointment and confusion among the opportunist left which not so long ago was singing hosannas for Tsipras and SYRIZA. Resignation, anger, disappointment, confusion, but what’s lacking is a clear program for militant class struggle against this unmitigated disaster for Greek working people.

When the first round of “bailout” demands by the ECB/EC/IMF “Troika” was presented to the Greek parliament on July 16, a quarter of the SYRIZA deputies refused to vote for their own government’s bill. The measures increased the value added tax (VAT, or sales tax) to a whopping 23% and slashed pensions, particularly for the poor. Next up are laws to gut workers’ collective bargaining rights, calling for massive privatization (particularly of the ports of Piraeus and Thessaloniki) and further cuts to social services. On the eve of the July 5 referendum, Tsipras had called on the Greek people not to give in to “blackmail.” But when 61% of the population voted for OXI (“no”), he turned around and did just that. The referendum was a cynical ploy by Tsipras and SYRIZA to absolve themselves of responsibility.

The capitulation comes as a brutal shock to those on the left who had hailed SYRIZA, which despite the social democratic, Stalinist, and other reformists in its ranks is actually a bourgeois populist party. Tsipras & Co. were elected in January on a promise to reject austerity, appealing to the resentment, anguish and exhaustion of a Greek working class that has been put through hell by European finance capital since 2010. The Thessaloniki Program (SYRIZA’s election platform) called for a debt write-off and a “European New Deal”

– referring to the policies of U.S. president Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930s Depression.¹ Yet this was to be financed by the ECB, the leeches who had been sucking the lifeblood of Greek working people! As we noted in our article “Greece: The SYRIZA Illusion Exploded” (*Internationalist* 39, March-April 2015), it was clear from the outset that this “left” government would be administering austerity.

But this is not what a host of self-proclaimed socialists said at the time. In an article written as election returns came in, the International Socialist Organization (ISO) in the U.S. gushed about “A New Day for Greece” and declared, “SYRIZA needs the support of workers and social movements across Europe and beyond” (*Socialist Worker*, 26 January). The ISO’s Greek co-thinkers in the International Workers Left (DEA) headlined “Taking the first step in a new direction,” calling the election results “a landmark moment in the struggle of the working class, the poor, the youth and the left.” But the first step of the SYRIZA prime minister was to form a coalition with the right-wing populist and militarist Greek Democrats (ANEL), who were given the ministry of defense. The very next day, the embarrassed DEA issued a statement saying that the deal with ANEL “jeopardizes the political project for a government of the left.”

But the DEA went along with it, merely saying that “the role of SYRIZA as a political party is irreplaceable.” It even declared that, “The implementation of the commitments made at Thessaloniki will be the first stop for the new government” (*SW*, 28 January). It took less than a month for that illusion to be exploded, when Greek finance minister Yanis Varoufakis signed the February 20 statement with the Eurogroup agreeing to continue the austerity policies demanded by the Troika and abandoning the “commitments” of the Thessaloniki program. Again the ISO and DEA grimaced, describing this as “a clear retreat by the gov-

¹ Contrary to popular myth, the Depression wasn’t ended by FDR’s deficit financing policies in the 1930s but only by the imperialist Second World War.



Photos: Reuters



Athens, July 15. Outside parliament anti-austerity protester is arrested by police (above) under orders of SYRIZA-led government, while inside Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras votes in favor of anti-worker debt deal under orders of the Eurobankers’ Troika. From the outset, SYRIZA only sought to negotiate “austerity lite.” Now it has rammed through brutal measures that rightist governments couldn’t pass. “Radical leftists” are in shock, but they helped put SYRIZA into office

ernment” (“Confronting the concessions to austerity,” *SW*, 2 March), but didn’t actually do anything that would inconvenience Tsipras, Varoufakis et al. Being an opportunist requires a strong stomach, as they swallow one bitter dish after another.

Then came the July 5 referendum, and the same pattern was repeated. In the first flush of the “OXI” landslide the DEA was jubilant, declaring that the coming days would be crucial for the “consolidation and further development of this crucial election victory” (*SW*, 7 July). DEA leader Antonis Davanellos (who is also a member of SYRIZA’s Central Committee and Political Secretariat) renewed his oath of fealty to his party and government, writing that the massive “no” vote had “given the government and SYRIZA a clean slate to work from.” But just as happened after the January election, Tsipras immediately moved sharply to the right, and the day after the referendum issued a joint statement with the parties that said “yes” to the Eurobankers’ diktat. Yet while calling this a “wrong step,” the DEA leader endorsed “negotiating” with the Troika bloodsuckers, saying, “It is perfectly understandable that the government feels

obliged to take part in new negotiations with the lenders” (*SW*, 10 July).

What a travesty! The political outlook and gut-level instincts of anyone who could say this, or stomach it, particularly as Greek working people sink further into poverty, is worlds removed from Leon Trotsky’s elemental insistence that “We are not a government party; we are the party of irreconcilable opposition” (*In Defense of Marxism*).

So now we get handwringing over Tsipras’ capitulation, and even a hint of contrition, along with pious hopes that “we find the strength to face a challenge of historic dimensions.” For “[t]his time, the Memorandum and the harsh austerity policies come as a proposal from the government led by SYRIZA – from the political leadership that we, along with a very wide section of the working class and popular forces, actively supported” (Davanellos, in a meeting of the Left Platform, *SW*, 30 July). He adds, “another difficult question we face: How did we get here?” How you got there, backers of the DEA, ISO, Left Platform – and those who “critically” supported SYRIZA, hailing its election and/or

continued on page 18



Police under SYRIZA’s command attack immigrants on the island of Kos, August 11, locking them in a stadium for 24 hours with little water and food and tear-gassing them. Trotskyists demand asylum for refugees and full citizenship rights for all immigrants. Organize workers defense guards against racist attacks, particularly by the fascist Golden Dawn!

Against the Eurobanker/SYRIZA Assault – Occupy the Banks and Ports For Workers Control of Production and Distribution, Form Workers Councils

Greek Elections: For a Europe-Wide Workers Revolt Against Capitalist Austerity

SEPTEMBER 23 – Just weeks after Greek prime minister Alexis Tsipras signed new, crippling austerity measures into law, Greek working people faced yet another election – the third vote this year. The outcome of the September 20 ballot was to return Tsipras' SYRIZA (Coalition of the Radical Left) to office, with only slightly fewer seats in parliament than before. But after being voted into office in January on an anti-austerity platform, SYRIZA instead delivered the exact opposite. So this time it ran as enforcers of the devastating Memorandum dictated by the Eurobankers which promises even deeper impoverishment. As a result, rather than the euphoria of its earlier election victory, now there was only resignation.

After Tsipras performed his dramatic *kolotoumba* (somersault or U-turn) in July, abandoning all pretense of resisting the bankers' demands, the former Left Platform of SYRIZA quit to form a new electoral coalition, Popular Unity (LEA, for Laiki Enótita). So immediately upon ramming approval of the third Memorandum through parliament in August, Tsipras called a snap election, hoping to undercut his leftist critics by forcing a vote before they had time to build up an electoral apparatus. His ploy worked, as LEA got only 2.86% of the vote, below the 3% cutoff for representation in parliament. This could be a devastating blow to Popular Unity which, like SYRIZA, is essentially an electoral front without an organized mass base.

The election was mainly between SYRIZA, which despite its name is a bourgeois populist party, and the rightist New Democracy (ND). There was little debate, as both are committed to carrying out the drastic attacks on Greek working people ordered by the European Central Bank (ECB). But many middle-class voters were fed up with ND for getting Greece into this mess with its corrupt, clientelist practices when it ran the country in a duopoly with PASOK (Pan-Hellenic Socialist Party, another bourgeois populist outfit) for the last 40 years, so they voted for SYRIZA. Such capitalist parties masquerading as leftists (like Podemos in Spain) are vehicles to bind the exhausted and bled working people to the vultures and loan sharks of finance capital.

That can require some subterfuge. So the SYRIZA tops engaged in a lot of theatrics with the "Troika" of the ECB, the European Commission (EC) and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Perhaps they started out believing their own election propaganda that they could end austerity within the European common currency, the euro, but that illusion soon went up in smoke. When Tsipras called the July 5 referendum on the ECB/EC/IMF "final offer," it was a cynical gambit to hide the fact that he had already given in to the Troika's demands, and to shift responsibility onto Greek workers. Even



Public sector workers strike in Athens as Parliament voted to adopt Eurobankers' Third Memorandum of brutal austerity, July 15.

before 61% of voters backed his call to vote for "OXI" (Greek for "No"), he made clear that this was only an attempt to bargain for slightly better surrender terms.

While the mass of OXI voters surely thought they were voting against austerity, they were being used. Any would-be Marxist who didn't see through the maneuver wasn't paying attention. The League for the Fourth International warned that neither a "NAI" (Yes) nor an "OXI" vote would strike a blow against the European financiers. We stressed that the referendum was called to legitimize Tsipras' next move on the Eurobankers' chess board, and as a vote of confidence in the regime. What was necessary instead, we insisted, was hard class struggle against the Troika and the SYRIZA government that had become its instrument (see "Greek Workers: Defeat the Bankers' Diktat, Occupy the Banks and Ports!" on page 8 of this issue).

The Stalinist KKE (Communist Party of Greece) correctly characterized the referendum as a ploy, and on this issue it was to the left of every other ostensibly socialist organization in Greece, who all enthusiastically called for an "OXI" vote. However, the KKE's answer is not to mobilize real, hard-hitting workers' actions to thwart the capitalist assault, but speeches in parliament plus more ritual one-day strikes, which pose no real threat to the ruling class. While the Stalinists have become more cautious since 2012 about calling for a Greek exit from the Eurozone ("Grexit"), recognizing that under capitalism this would involve extreme pain for Greek workers, their call to "disengage with the EU" with "people's power" is nationalist popular-frontism.

Popular Unity: SYRIZA 2

In the aftermath of Tsipras' about-face, it was clear to all that there would soon be a major reordering of the Greek left. This is now happening. Having split from SYRIZA, the former Left Platform, now (with a few additions) called Popular Unity (LEA), is engaged in an opportunist maneuver seeking

to return to the "good SYRIZA" of yore. But it was the "old SYRIZA" of the Thessaloniki Program that formed a coalition with the clericalist-militarist right-wing bourgeois populists of ANEL (Greek Democrats). The leaders of the LEA were ministers in the capitalist government and spokesmen for this bourgeois party that capitulated to the Eurobankers as early as February. They want to absolve themselves of responsibility, but the fact is that they hung on to their precious ministerial posts until Tsipras chucked them out on orders from the Troika.

Popular Unity, whose name is ostentatiously copied from the bourgeois popular-front Unidad Popular coalition government of Salvador Allende in Chile during 1970-73, is indeed a replay of the pre-referendum SYRIZA before it scrapped its formal anti-austerity program. Where the LEA raises a few planks not in the watered-down 2014 Thessaloniki Program, these are taken right out of the 2013 Political Resolution of the First Congress of SYRIZA. Thus LEA (2015) calls for "Nationalization of the banks and their operation under a regime of social control." The "original SYRIZA" (2013) demand was: "Set the banking system under public ownership and control." Both call for banks to service farmers and small and medium businesses.

Nor is there anything socialist about calling for nationalization of the banks when the whole system is already bankrupt. Much of the assets of Greek banks (aside from emergency loans from the ECB) consist of government paper of dubious value. And in fact, the leading banks are already effectively state-owned, since the government's Hellenic Financial Stability Fund holds a majority of the shares of the National Bank of Greece, Piraeus Bank and Alpha Bank, and is the biggest shareholder of Eurobank Ergasias, while management is in the hands of the bankers.¹ In fact, "nationalization" of the banks would just amount to a transfer of management, and funneling billions more in

¹ Hellenic Financial Stability Fund, Annual Report 2014 (April 2015).

tax funds to recapitalize them in order to protect depositors.

With its calls for "generous funding" of this and that, for a "socially just and redistributive taxation system," etc., the LEA Program is a wish list of programs for a "government supported by the power of the organized people" based on the capitalist state. Certainly, Popular Unity talks of "democracy everywhere, people's power," of a "radical transformation of the state, the judiciary, and public administration," of "a new, much more advanced democracy, conjoining representative with direct democracy," and of course "a new constituent assembly." Many pretty words tied up in a bow. *But who holds the guns?* For all the fantasizing about participatory democracy, actual state power –

the "special bodies of armed men" of the police and army – is the instrument of capital until a socialist revolution overthrows its rule. About that, Popular Unity has nary a word to say.

LEA calls for "a great popular patriotic front" that would be the continuation of the OXI vote in the July 5 referendum. This standard-issue Stalinist call for a class-collaborationist coalition foresees a "social alliance of working people" with bourgeois sectors such as "small and medium business strata." And not just in the abstract. After Popular Unity split from SYRIZA, it briefly had the third-largest parliamentary fraction (now it has none). During the three days when it had a mandate to try to form a government, LEA leader Panagiotis Lafazanis appealed to employer groups, including the commerce confederation (ESSE) and the professionals' and merchants' association (GSVEE), to join LEA in fighting the Memorandum (*Iskra*, 25 August).

The one real difference between SYRIZA and LEA is the latter's call to (prepare to) break from the euro, "if necessary." The KKE accurately summed up the policy of Popular Unity as "a capitalist Greece with a national currency." Dubbing the breakaway "SYRIZA Mark II," it added ironically that "the sequel is usually worse than the original film."

Trotskyists have always opposed the European Union and its economic "rules" embodied in the euro as a capitalist attack on the working class. We call for workers struggle to bring down this imperialist alliance from within and without. Greece may be forced to exit the euro and the EU to avoid economic collapse. But while the bourgeois economics professors of SYRIZA and LEA concoct economic policies for a "left" government of the capitalist state, we do not call for Grexit under capitalism. In fact, a greatly devalued drachma would drastically hit workers' living standards (by making imports more expensive) long before it makes Greek exports more competitive. Moreover, creditors could refuse to renegotiate the debt, and bankers could simply refuse to accept a new

Alexis Konstantinidis/Reuters

Greek currency for international payments.

The hard reality is, inside the EU or outside, with the euro or a new drachma, *only socialist revolution will end capitalist austerity*. Any leftist tendency that doesn't understand and forthrightly say that isn't telling the truth to the working people of Greece, and all of Europe.

Opportunist Leftists in the Shadow of SYRIZA, and Now LEA

Of the groups standing to the left of SYRIZA and Popular Unity, the largest is ANTARSYA (Front of the Anti-Capitalist Left), which ran in an electoral coalition with the smaller EEK (Revolutionary Workers Party) in the recent election. But far from offering a class alternative to SYRIZA I and II, ANTARSYA sought to form an electoral bloc with LEA, and only launched its own slate when it was rebuffed by Lafazanis & Co., who insisted that it had to join Popular Unity or no deal. (Several groups associated with ANTARSYA did go over to LEA.) After the fact, ANTARSYA "discovered" that Popular Unity's call for a "democratic, patriotic, progressive" front didn't have anything anti-capitalist about it.

A number of the groups in ANTARSYA claim to be Trotskyist. A "Statement on the Upcoming Elections" by the OKDE-Spartakos (International Communist Organization of Greece, part of the tendency of the heirs of Ernest Mandel) noted correctly that Popular Unity's program was "the strategy of the Popular Front," that it just wanted "a return to the original SYRIZA and their electoral governmental tactic, plus the demand for national currency," and thus "political and electoral collaboration with LEA is not possible." Yet ANTARSYA, to which the OKDE-Spartakos belongs, has long sought political collaboration with SYRIZA, and now LEA, only to be constantly disappointed.

Another component of ANTARSYA, the SEK (Socialist Workers Party, part of the tendency of the heirs of Tony Cliff) said it was "hopeful that after the election we can unite [with Popular Unity] in fighting back" against austerity. But the SEK limited itself to supporting strikes by railway workers and others, plus an "anti-capitalist transitional programme put forward by Antarsya" of "cancelling the entire debt, nationalising the banks and big companies under workers' control, banning lay-offs and breaking with and exiting from the euro and the EU." The EEK similarly justifies its electoral participation under the ANTARSYA banner.

While the assorted Mandelite, Cliffite and other pseudo- and anti-Trotskyist currents talk of transitional programs and opposition to popular frontism, their rhetoric is devoid of revolutionary content. The laundry list of demands consists of calls on the present bourgeois rulers or some kind of "left government" to carry various measures while the Trotskyist 1938 Transitional Program was a call for *action by the workers movement against the capitalist state* and leading to its overthrow.² Even when they add references to "workers control," this is just an adornment on the demand for nationalization. Real workers control is a form of dual power. Tacked on to calls for nationalization by an entrenched bourgeois government, rather than as part of a program to bring down

capitalism, talk of "workers control" will amount to some kind of class collaboration.

Their "transition" is divorced from struggle for socialist revolution. Moreover, the various "transitional programs" of the fake Trotskyists are put forward as the programs of one or another front. The DEA (International Workers Left, a dissident Cliffite group linked to the International Socialist Organization in the U.S.) is part of the Red Network, which was part of the Left Platform, which was part of the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA). Trotsky's program, in contrast, was the founding document of the Fourth International and had as its central focus the need to build a *revolutionary, Bolshevik-Leninist party*. The Greek left suffers from an acute case of "frontitis," and much of its activity is bound up in squabbling between the various pseudos.

The Kolotoumba of the ICL

Another tendency which has recently put forward its own call for "committees composed of workers from different tendencies" with a similar program to those of the ANTARSYA conglomerate is the Trotskyist Group of Greece (TGG), part of the International Communist League (ICL) led by the Spartacist League in the U.S. (see "The ICL on Greece: Goodbye Trotsky, Hello Minimum Program," on page 17 of this issue). Its cut-rate, minimum program has no mention of a workers government, revolutionary party or socialist revolution, or even a call for bringing down the SYRIZA government (thereby tailoring its program to discontented SYRIZA supporters).

In defending this left social-democratic program at a September 2 forum on Greece held by the Grupo Internacionalista in Mexico, an ICL spokesman argued that, in contrast to the League for the Fourth International's calls for international socialist revolution, the key is to demand Grexit as a fight for "national sovereignty." "Greece today has less sovereignty than a semi-colonial country like Mexico," he argued. But Trotskyists fight against national oppression, and for liberation from the yoke of imperialism, while the bourgeois nationalist demand for "national sovereignty" is a call for the capitalist government to hold sway over its territory (and thus is the battle cry of reactionary Ukrainian nationalists against the revolt in Russian-speaking eastern Ukraine today). Moreover, the cry of "national sovereignty" has been a hallmark of Greek nationalists, notably in insisting that Macedonia be called FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).

A second argument was put forward by ICL supporters at their own forum on Greece in Mexico a week later, namely that their program is really for a united front, and that's why it has no mention of a revolutionary party. But a united front is essentially a call to *action*, which is hardly the case with a detailed nine-point program. And what "united front" is going to "expropriate the banks" and "industrialize Greece"? That can only be done by a government, and since they don't call for a workers government, this amounts to a call on the current bourgeois government. Moreover, in citing Argentina's 2001 break with the dollar as an example, the ICL is advising the capitalist government on how to administer its crisis. By calling for a "Grexit" under capitalism, this reformist minimum program would further impoverish Greek workers in the name of "national sovereignty."

The TGG/ICL have since followed up

with a statement calling for "No Vote to Syriza! No Vote to Popular Unity!" in the September 20 election, along with an "Open Letter to the Greek Communist Party" (*Workers Vanguard*, 18 September). They "call on the KKE to repudiate its position on the July 5 referendum" as a precondition for giving it critical support. This is fairly comical (a flea making demands on an elephant), but more importantly attacks the Communist party *from the right*. While the TGG joined the bulk of the opportunist Greek left in calling for a "NO" vote in Tsipras' referendum, the KKE called for a "double OXI," with posters saying "NO" to the Troika's austerity plan and "NO" to SYRIZA's austerity plan.

So while the reformist Stalinists for their own reasons exposed the fraud of the July 5 referendum, saying that even a "NO" vote would lead to more brutal austerity – *which it did* – the TGG/ICL argues that refusing to join the opportunists in following Tsipras' call was "not just an error but a betrayal." In fact, the position of these pseudo-Trotskyists is a betrayal of the Greek workers in the name of "national sovereignty," and of the history of the Spartacist tendency that for several decades knew how to "swim against the stream." The reason that today the TGG/ICL's action program for Greece reads like it could have been written by various groups in ANTARSYA, is that it has adapted to and increasingly adopted the outlook of the these opportunists.

In the September 20 vote, the correct policy for class-conscious workers was not only to oppose the parties of Eurobanker austerity (ND, PASOK, To Potami, ANEL, SYRIZA, etc.), but also to refuse to support Popular Unity (LEA) as one more bourgeois populist formation that only offered a repeat of the SYRIZA debacle. Authentic Marxists insist that the bottom line for any form of political support is the fight for the *independence of the working class from all capitalist politicians, parties and alliances*. Thus, in the September vote, as in the January 25 election, the League for the Fourth International was for critical support to candidates of the KKE, on the grounds of its opposition to SYRIZA, LEA and the other bourgeois parties, while calling for internationalist workers action rather than the Stalinists' nationalist and parliamentarist passivity.

While SYRIZA won the election, the struggle in Greece is far from over. The Eurobankers' program of extreme austerity will inevitably fail once again: the returns from privatizations will fall far short of their goals, and the mountain of debt will keep on growing. Meanwhile, the draconian cuts threaten to provoke an explosion of opposition, whether from workers facing mass layoffs or petty-bourgeois sectors such as farmers or pharmacists facing bankruptcy. What's needed is a class-struggle program for workers action. In particular it is necessary to defend the *right to asylum* for all refugees and of *full citizenship for all immigrants*, while mobilizing workers defense against the fascist Gold Dawn as it seeks to whip up racist hysteria.

As we wrote on the eve of the July referendum:

"The first duty of revolutionary Marxists is to tell the truth to the masses. The League for the Fourth International says that the only way to defeat the bankers' *diktat* and put an end to the devastating austerity program of the Eurobosses is by mobilizing the workers' power on the road to a socialist revolution in Greece and throughout Europe. To stop the fi-

nancial extortion, *workers should occupy the banks* and place them under control of *elected workers commissions* against the Eurobankers *and the Greek capitalist government*. Against the threat of privatization, workers in the ports of Piraeus, Thessaloniki and the Greek islands should *occupy the ports* (and airports) and place them under workers control. Make public health and public transportation permanently free, under workers control. As for the unpayable foreign debt, the workers should repudiate (cancel) it entirely, as the Russian workers did in October 1917. But that will take a revolution."

In the face of the impending catastrophe, it is necessary to fight for *workers committees to control distribution of vital goods*, and for the formation of *workers councils* to challenge and bring down the rule of the bourgeoisie.

The key is revolutionary leadership, and the task of the hour is to cohere the nucleus of an authentic Trotskyist party in Greece. In the late 1930s, Trotsky insisted on the vital necessity of exposing the popular front which served as a bulwark for the bourgeoisie against the struggle for workers revolution. He wrote trenchantly about "the left centrists [who] seek to present this question as a tactical or even as a technical maneuver, so as to be able to peddle their wares in the shadow of the People's Front."³ Today, as at the time of the Spanish Civil War, or of the Chilean popular front in the early 1970s, the struggle in Greece has thrown into sharp relief the counterposed strategies of bourgeois reform and proletarian revolution.

The SYRIZA debacle has exposed the bankruptcy of all programs calling for a "democratic" struggle against austerity.⁴ A genuine Trotskyist organization in Greece must be built in struggle not only against the bourgeois populists of SYRIZA and the LEA but also by winning revolutionary-minded militants and class-conscious workers from the Communist Party and the various reformist and centrist groups that are currently reeling under the impact of Tsipras' July-August capitulation and now the victory of the pro-austerity parties in the September elections. At this time when their past policies have led to disaster, a serious reexamination going back to Marxist basics is required.

Only by confronting the capitalists with workers power can the Greek working class gain relief. That fight goes far beyond a small eastern Mediterranean nation of 11 million, especially as waves of refugees fleeing imperialist war and communalist slaughter sweep through Greece and up through the Balkans. Far from appeals to Greek nationalism, revolutionaries raise the counterposed banner of uniting the workers of Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, Macedonia and the entire region, together with the workers, oppressed – and desperate refugees – from the crisis-gripped Near East and throughout the world. Genuine communists fight for militant workers action from the Balkans to Spain, Italy, France and Germany, where strike struggles have been mounting under the Social Democratic/Christian Democratic Grand Coalition. Only Europe-wide socialist revolution and the formation of *Socialist Federation of the Balkans* and a *United Socialist States of Europe can end the brutal capitalist war on the workers*. ■

³ See the quotations from Trotsky in the Internationalist Group Readings pamphlet on *The Popular Front: Roadblock to Revolution*.

⁴ See "Greece: The Naked Rule of Finance Capital," on page xx.

Capitalist “Left Government” vs. Revolutionary Workers Government

During 2010-11, Greek working people repeatedly went into the streets to protest the brutal austerity imposed on them by governments of the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Party (PASOK) and New Democracy (ND) on orders from the “Troika”¹ of imperialist financiers. More than 30 one- and two-day general strikes, numerous mass protests and occupation of city squares lasting months had zero effect. So when SYRIZA² campaigned in the 2012 elections calling for a “government of the left” to replace the disastrous governments of the center and right, its vote skyrocketed. In the 2013 elections for the (toothless) European parliament, it was the largest party in Greece. By 2014, it was evident that the “radical left” coalition could win next time around. But gearing up ostensible socialists in and around this populist party for the prospect of taking office in the capitalist state would take some doing.

The Greek cothinkers of the International Socialist Organization (ISO) in the U.S. did their part by invoking the Communist International for theoretical justification. Last fall, the International Workers Left (DEA) published a volume of selected materials translated from the Fourth Congress (1922) of the Communist International, edited by Canadian socialist John Riddell under the title, *Toward the United Front*. DEA leader Antonis Davanellos contributed an introduction relating those documents to the current situation in Greece. “The essence of the united front policy was that the communist parties, in a situation in which an immediate struggle for power was not in the cards,” he wrote, “must propose alliances with Social Democratic parties – while retaining [their] independence and right to criticize the limits of the reformists – for the purposes of securing immediate economic and political demands.”

The purpose of this exercise was to provide a “sophisticated” rationale for support for a bourgeois government and participation in the government party. Thus Davanellos writes:

“During the Fourth Congress, the debate on the united front was focused on the issue of the workers’ government, meaning the possibility of a government supported by the left-wing workers’ parties, arising in the context of capitalism, through a combination of massive struggles from below and a parliamentary crisis.

“Despite strong objections, the slogan for a workers’ government was approved, as ‘a result of the logic of [the] united front.’ It was approved as suitable for general propaganda everywhere, and as an immediate political prospect in those countries where the crisis of the bourgeois parties created the potential for the formation of a workers’ government,



Greek prime minister Alexis Tsipras lays down the law to SYRIZA Central Committee, July 31, demanding that dissidents vote for brutal austerity. Opportunists cite Comintern Fourth Congress resolution on workers government to justify participation in SYRIZA, a bourgeois populist party, as it administers capitalist government. Trotskyists insist there can be no workers government of a capitalist state.

while the conditions for actual workers’ power did not yet exist.”

–“The Fourth Comintern Congress,” *International Socialist Review* No. 95, Winter 2014-2015

A “workers’ government” without “actual workers’ power,” or even the conditions for it? Meaning? In plain text: some leftists and unionists sitting in the ministers’ seats while the military and police – the core of state power – are controlled by capital. If it sounds like a recipe for disaster, that’s because it is.

Davanellos’ conclusion: “In our view, the discussion on the Fourth Congress of the Comintern indicates a way to claim victory.” Some “victory”! In reality, this was “theoretical” rationalization for selling the masses the fool’s gold of a bourgeois “left government” that would supposedly put an end to austerity, but in reality would end up selling out Greek workers to the Eurobankers.

In part the ISO/DEA’s argument is based on distortions of the positions adopted by the Communist International, but it also reflects weaknesses and confusion in the Fourth Congress resolutions. As a rule, capitulatory policies among ostensible socialists are not the result of misunderstanding programmatic texts but reflect opportunist appetites, a desire for popularity and influence expressed in “get-rich-quick” schemes. But understanding the lessons of past revolutionary struggles and their strategic codification can help genuine communists arm politically against terrible errors and betrayals. So it is worth looking at the Comintern’s Fourth Congress discussion of the united front, and the workers government slogan in particular.

In the first place, the Fourth Congress did not advocate broad political “alliances with Social Democratic parties ... for the purpose of securing immediate economic

and political demands,” as Davanellos claims. Rather it called for united actions against the bourgeoisie together with social democrats and other reformists and centrists. The distinction is important. The *ISR* article quoted above cites Trotsky’s March 1922 article “On the United Front,” yet nowhere in that article will the reader find a call for political alliances with social democracy under capitalism. On the contrary, in his report on disputes in the French Communist Party, Trotsky argues emphatically against any political support for the social-democratic Dissidents who were allied with supposedly “progressive” bourgeois parties – which in France went under the labels Radical, Republican Socialist and even Radical Socialist – in a Left Bloc (later called the Cartel des Gauches) against the ruling right-wing National Bloc.

Trotsky wrote that while “we can and must, in all suitable instances, propose to the Dissidents a specific form of joint aid to strikers, to locked-out workers, unemployed, war invalids, etc., etc.,” such “practical agreements” are only permissible where they “must choose between the known interests of the bourgeoisie and the definite demands of the proletariat, to support the latter in action” and “renounce their ties with the parties of the bourgeoisie, that is, the ‘Left Bloc,’” a forerunner of the Popular Front in the 1930s. Anyone who supported the class-collaborationist Left Bloc, or even called for “unification with the reformists and Dissidents,” he insisted, “must be mercilessly ejected from our party.” The Comintern “Theses on the United Front” (December 1921) likewise called to challenge the reformists to support “mass strikes” and “revolutionary demonstrations” but ruled out any support to the Left Bloc or softness on those who refuse to break from the social patriots.

The International Workers Left, in

contrast, is part of the “Coalition of the Radical Left,” a kind of Left Bloc in the form of a party – that is, a capitalist political formation subordinating ostensible socialists (like the DEA) to outright bourgeois elements. As promoters of the government party, whose election they loudly supported and trumpeted as a huge victory, they are responsible for the actions of the Greek government in carrying out the dictates of the imperialist bankers to impoverish the Greek masses. When we challenged ISO spokesman Todd Chretien on this at an April 23 forum in Brooklyn, ISOers tried to absolve themselves by (a) citing the Comintern Fourth Congress on the united front, and (b) saying that the DEA didn’t actually have anyone in the government. The latter is a distinction without a difference: the DEA campaigned for the government party in the elections and indeed is part of SYRIZA, including its leadership, hence it bears responsibility for its actions before the working class, no matter what edifying criticisms they may voice.

Beyond misrepresenting the Communist International’s tactic of the *united front* – turning the call for joint actions while maintaining political independence into a political *alliance* with reformist and even bourgeois forces – these opportunists justify being part of SYRIZA as it administers the capitalist state by citing the Fourth Congress discussions on the workers government. Several things should be said about this. For starters, a “left government” of the bourgeois populist SYRIZA is not identical to a government of reformist workers parties. And it’s quite a stretch to call the governing coalition together with the rightist Greek Democrats “left,” even in bourgeois electoral terms. But the fundamental *betrayal* by the DEA and its mentors is in being part of a bourgeois party and supporting its government based on the army, police, courts and overall repressive apparatus that is the core of the *capitalist state*, whose job is to defend the exploiters against the exploited, no matter which party is in office.

The social-democratic ISO and others in its milieu have insistently pushed this line ever since SYRIZA made its breakthrough into the electoral big time. An article on “The debate on the workers’ government” (*International Socialist Review*, June 2012) by John Riddell was quite explicit, arguing that the Comintern Fourth Congress (in its “Resolution on Tactics”) “sketches out the conditions under which a workers’ government may actually exist within a capitalist state, for a transitional period, with positive results.” This is why Davanellos thanked the ISO’s Haymarket Books “for its help in publishing a book in Greek on the Fourth Congress of the Communist International [Riddell’s *Toward the United Front*].... We thought that with our relationship to SYRIZA, we were opening up a new path for socialists, but with these documents, we realized that the path was begun some years ago.”

¹ European Central Bank (ECB), European Commission (EC) and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

² Greek acronym for Coalition of the Radical Left, which as we have shown is a bourgeois populist party based on middle-class sectors (see “What Is Syriza?” *The Internationalist* No. 39, March-April 2015).



Leon Trotsky, ca. 1922. At time of the Fourth Congress and later, Trotsky insisted that call for a workers government must be to mobilize workers to break with the bourgeoisie.

We have seen where that path leads: to becoming accomplices and enforcers for the bourgeoisie. What the elucubrations of the ISO, DEA and Riddell on a “workers” or “left” government of a capitalist state mean in practice was shown on the night of July 15. As the deputies of the “Coalition of the Radical Left” voted for vicious measures of capitalist austerity in the Greek parliament, privatizing and impoverishing the masses on behalf of the Eurobankers, outside riot police at the orders of the SYRIZA government were brutally attacking anti-austerity worker and leftist demonstrators in Syntagma Square. Alexis Tsipras is not the only guilty party here, but also those who helped put SYRIZA in office, and the working people who bought their bill of goods are paying the check.

Trotsky: Only as a Bridge to Socialist Revolution

At the same time as we expose the flim-flam of the reformist pseudo-socialists, it must be said that the theses of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International on the workers government are deeply flawed and confusionist. They open the door that opportunists and revisionists can drive through to carry out their distortion of Marxism. At the 1922 Congress, Grigori Zinoviev as chairman of the Comintern executive committee presented a sliding scale of different variants of “workers government,” ranging from “ostensible/illusory” regimes such as a Labour Party government in England or Australia, or a Social-Democratic government in Germany, to “genuine workers governments” which could include a government of workers and peasants in the Balkans, a government with Communist participation or, finally, a “genuinely revolutionary proletarian Workers government” led by the Communist Party.

There were sharp debates during the Congress over the slogan, with some insisting that a workers government can only mean the dictatorship of the proletariat, while others (notably Karl Radek) argued that it is a “transition point.” The resolution did specify that a workers government must have as its elementary tasks arming the proletariat, disarming the bourgeoisie, workers control of production and breaking counterrevolutionary resistance – all of which are a far cry from the track

record in office of the bourgeois populist SYRIZA. But by presenting a potpourri of numerous varieties of workers governments, and saying that Communists might even support the “ostensible” variants, the resolution left plenty of room for opportunist interpretations.

It’s noteworthy that in their “new study” of the workers government slogan, the ISO, DEA and Riddell, all of whom claim some relation to Trotskyism, pass over Leon Trotsky’s comments on it at the time. In an article on “The Call for a Workers Government in France” (November 1922), the Bolshevik leader warned about this “algebraic formula” that “a purely parliamentary meaning can be given to it,” which would be “the most dangerous imaginable ideologically.” Instead, he emphasized, “calling for a workers government in France ... is a slogan for mobilizing the masses of workers to break completely from parliamentary combinations with the bourgeoisie....”

Likewise, in seeking doctrinal authorization for their call for a “left government” of the capitalist state, the modern-day opportunists do not mention Trotsky’s drumbeat rendition of what the struggle for a workers government in France in 1934 would involve:

“...the creation and strengthening of the workers’ militia; well-organized demonstrations driving the reactionary bands from the streets; rotest strikes; and open campaign for the unification and enlargement of the trade union ranks under the banner of resolute class struggle; stubborn, carefully calculated activity to win the army over to the cause of the people; broader strikes; more powerful demonstrations; the general strike of toilers of town and country; a general offensive against the Bonapartist government; for the workers’ and peasants’ power.”

–“Whither France” (October 1934)

A different historical period, to be sure, but this is light years away from SYRIZA in Greece today.

Over the years, various would-be Marxists have called a whole host of bourgeois regimes workers, or workers and peasants governments. The label has been applied to the post-WWII British Labour cabinet under Clement Attlee and Aneurin Bevan and to “Third World” nationalist capital-

ist regimes like Nasser’s Egypt (by Livio Maitan in 1965). Michael Pablo, who as head of the Fourth International broke from Trotskyism by abandoning the struggle for an independent Leninist vanguard, declared post-independence Algeria in 1962 under Ahmed Ben Bella’s National Liberation Front a workers and peasants government ... and became a top advisor to Ben Bella in charge of implementing “self-management.” Others have used the term for budding Stalinist regimes, such as Mao Zedong’s China (Ernest Mandel in 1952) and Fidel Castro’s Cuba (Joseph Hansen in 1960) as they became bureaucratically deformed workers states.

Basically every pseudo-Trotskyist who wanted to tail after a regime would label it a workers (or workers and peasants) government. That doesn’t invalidate the slogan, correctly used, which derived from the experience of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Leon Trotsky in the founding document of the Fourth International, known as the Transitional Program (1938), discussed the demand for a workers and peasants government, and the misappropriation of this call by the Stalinized Comintern which gave it a very different content, capitalizing on the confusionist resolution of the 1924 Fourth Congress. Since the ISO, DEA and Riddell make no mention of Trotsky’s most extensive discussion of the slogan (and since, like Stalin, they seek to counterpose it to the dictatorship of the proletariat), we have reproduced it here (see box). As Trotsky put it:

“The slogan, ‘workers’ and farmers’ government,’ is thus acceptable to us only in the sense that it had in 1917 with the Bolsheviks, i.e., as an anti-bourgeois and anti-capitalist slogan, but in no case in that ‘democratic’ sense which later the epigones gave it, transforming it from a bridge to socialist revolution into the chief barrier upon its path.”

Authentic Trotskyists insist *there can be no “workers government” of a capitalist state*, which no matter what party is in office is an apparatus for enforcing the rule of capital. When at different times in 1917, the Bolsheviks called on Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries to take power, *it was on the basis of their majority in the soviets*, to expose their refusal to break with the bourgeoisie, and was combined with the call for “*All power to the soviets!*” Trotsky conjectured that some petty-bourgeois party might somehow, somewhere “go further than they wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie” (a loophole that just about every opportunist in the business has sought to use), but added that such a hypothetical “workers and peasants government” would be “merely a short episode on the road to the actual dictatorship of the proletariat.” The experience of the *bourgeois* party SYRIZA in office, however, has been a short episode reaffirming the dictatorship of finance capital.

For revolutionary Marxists, as the crowning demand of a transitional program, *a workers or workers and peasants government must be based on organs of workers power (such as workers councils) opposed to the bourgeois state apparatus*. And when Trotskyists call for it, it is to begin *the socialist revolution*, to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, not as some intermediate stage.

Trotsky noted that the Stalinists and social democrats in the 1930s falsely tried

to portray the popular-front governments in France, Spain and elsewhere as representing some kind of workers and peasants governments. But in France this regime tying the workers to their class enemy opened the way for the Nazi-allied Pétain regime. In Spain, even with the workers rising up in arms, the *bourgeois* governments of the popular front blocked the road to revolution and opened the way for the bloody Franco dictatorship. In the 1970s, the Unidad Popular government of Salvador Allende in Chile awakened similar illusions, with the same disastrous outcome, as his last defense minister, Augusto Pinochet, installed a military junta, murdering tens of thousands.³ Yet DEA leader Davanellos explains the demise of the UP as due to lack of “a clear direction on the character of a left-wing government,” rather than the nature of the popular front as a coalition of class collaboration chaining the workers to a sector of the bourgeoisie.

At the time, the Spartacist League/U.S. (SL) warned that: “It is the most elementary duty for revolutionary Marxists to irrevocably oppose the Popular Front in the election and to place absolutely no confidence in it in power. Any ‘critical support’ to the Allende coalition is class treason, paving the way for a bloody defeat for the Chilean working people when domestic reaction, abetted by international imperialism, is ready” (“Chilean Popular Front,” *Spartacist* No. 19, November-December 1970). Chile had a very class-conscious working class, which by 1972 had set up *cordones industriales* (industrial belts), which could have become the basis for soviets. Yet they had been duped into believing that a peaceful and “democratic” transition to socialism was possible. When the clock struck 12 for the Allende regime on 11 September 1973, the workers were left both without arms and without a clear revolutionary program.

Marxists are notoriously exacting in programmatic questions because a false or even ambiguous interpretation can be used to justify policies with terrible consequences. In China in the mid-1920s, Stalin called Chiang Kai-shek’s bourgeois nationalist Guomindang a “workers and peasants party” and ordered the Communist Party to submit to its discipline, leading straight to Chiang’s 1927 Shanghai massacre of Communists and revolutionary workers. In 2015, pseudo-Trotskyists use the Fourth Congress discussions of a workers government to justify participation in the SYRIZA “left government” as this bourgeois populist party joins the imperialist financiers in “waterboarding” Greek working people, further submerging them in poverty.

In Greece today, and since the moment the “Coalition of the Radical Left” took office, the struggle for a genuine workers government is not to support SYRIZA, or to present a new more leftist version of it, but on the contrary, to wage intransigent struggle in defense of the working people against the depredations of finance capital, and its administrators in Athens. For genuine Leninists and Trotskyists, the struggle against capitalist austerity must lead to a workers government that is the opening of a Europe-wide socialist revolution. ■

³ See the Internationalist Group Class Readings volume on *The Popular Front: Roadblock to Revolution* (May 2007).

The ICL on Greece: Goodbye Trotsky, Hello Minimum Program

Over the last two decades, the Spartacist League/U.S. and its International Communist League have step-by-step abandoned key programmatic positions of revolutionary Trotskyism, capitulating to its Yankee imperialist rulers: refusing to call for independence for Puerto Rico (1998), dropping the call to defeat U.S. imperialism after the 9/11 attacks (2001), supporting the post-earthquake U.S. invasion of Haiti (2010). The latest installment in this downward spiral is dropping Lenin and Trotsky's call for a revolutionary workers government precisely when and where it is most urgently posed today.

For some time now, the SL/ICL has rarely raised any transitional demands, while shrilly denouncing the Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International for continuing to do so. But conditions in Greece have reached the point that the ICL finally felt obliged to raise some immediate demands. In the July 5 referendum, its Trotskyist Group of Greece (TGG) joined the bulk of the left in heeding SYRIZA leader Alexis Tsipras' call for a "no" vote, knowing full well that he intended to use it as a bargaining ploy with the Troika, and had already accepted almost all of the Eurobankers' demands for draconian cuts of Greek workers' living standards.¹ Following Tsipras' surrender and the rubber stamping of the Troika's extortionate demands by the Greek parliament, the TGG issued an agitational July 17 leaflet titled "Enough!"

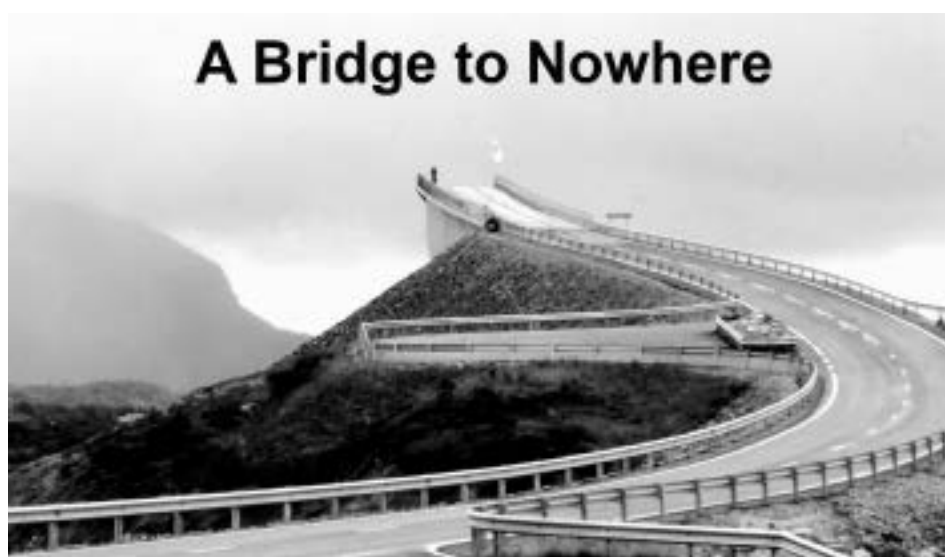
Yet this statement, which the ICL says has been massively distributed, is a parody of Trotsky's call for a "system of transitional demands, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat." In fact, the leaflet makes no mention of revolution, the overthrow of capitalism, or the need for a revolutionary party. This is no accident, as according to the SL's *Workers Vanguard* (7 August), the call to form "workers committees of action" is intended to "mobilize larger forces" in "defensive struggle." Thus it is a classic "minimum program"

¹ See our article, "Greek Workers: Defeat the Bankers' Diktat, Occupy the Banks and Ports!" on page 8 of this issue.



Posters in Piraeus, July 2. SYRIZA poster at bottom urges "OXI" (No) vote in referendum called by Tsipras as bargaining ploy with the Troika. Top poster of the KKE calls for a double "OXI" to the austerity plans of the Eurobankers and SYRIZA.

September-October 2015



Trotsky called the Transitional Program a "bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution." By leaving out any mention of revolution or the overthrow of capitalism, the International Communist League's program for Greece is a "bridge to nowhere." Above: the notorious "bridge to nowhere" in Ketchikan, Alaska.

like those raised by Stalinists and social democrats for struggle *within the bounds of capitalism*, aiming to attract reformists with demands they can all agree on.

While raising some correct calls, including for a number of demands we have put forward in recent articles (workers defense guards, shorter workweek with no loss in pay, workers control of food distribution), the ICL/TGG call to expropriate the banks and cancel the debt omits the crucial condition that this be done by a revolutionary government. Nor does it advocate workers control of the banks. But a nationalized banking system (as the TGG called for last January) would, under a capitalist regime, still be an integral part of the capitalist system, as we explained.²

Most notable, however, is the ICL/TGG leaflet's exceedingly vague slogan for "a government which will act in the interests of the working people and be subordinated to them." What kind of beast is that? This could well be a government of the capitalist state backed by unions and supposedly pledged to carry out pro-worker reforms.

There is a long history to such mealy-mouthed formulations. We recall Andreu Nin's talk of a government based on the CNT unions in Spain in the 1930s, the call by Nahuel Moreno and his successors for "All power to the COB" labor federation in Bolivia, and calls in the early '70s for an SP-CP government in Chile based on the CUT labor unions. By using the term workers government to describe governments based on the existing bureaucratized labor movement, they were counterposed to the Bolsheviks' call in 1917 for a workers and peasants government based on the soviets. The workers and peasants councils born in the revolutionary upheaval 1917 in Russia were organs of dual power and a potential basis for a proletarian state, whereas the labor bureaucracies are beholden to capitalism. But the ICL's program is an elastic call for what could amount to "left-wing" bourgeois governments.

Indeed, it is remarkably like appeals from several Greek pseudo-Trotskyist groups containing a laundry list of demands for all good things within the capitalist framework.

² See "Centrists Waffle in Greece," *The Internationalist* No. 39, April-May 2015.

Compare the ICL/TGG's call for "a government which will act in the interests of the working people and be subordinated to them" to the appeal by Antonis Davanellos, the main spokesman of the DEA (International Workers Left, allied with the social-democratic ISO in the U.S.) at a Left Platform rally to cancel the debt, nationalize the banks, tax the rich and raise "the slogan of achieving a government of the left — one that is accountable to the workers and that determines its policies based on the needs of the people" (*Socialist Worker*, 30 July). Sound familiar?

It's notable that neither in the TGG leaflet nor in the latest *WV* front-page article is there a word of criticism of the numerous Greek "radical left" groups in the SYRIZA orbit, even though they have been Tsipras' (and the Eurobankers') accomplices in pushing through the vicious austerity that the right wing couldn't enact. And no wonder, since the call by the TGG in Greece now sounds remarkably like the rest of the fake left. In reality, the ICL/TGG, recognizing that SYRIZA is about to split and a reorganization of the Greek left is in the offing, is trying to put a left veneer on the program of the Left Platform and the ANTARSYA coalition of "anti-capitalist" reformist leftists. And like these opportunists, it is demanding, "Greece should leave the EU and the euro" *under capitalism*.

We already exposed the ICL's claim that Argentina is a positive model for Greece, pointing out that millions of Argentine workers were thrown out of work for years following its 2001 devaluation.³ Now *WV* comes back by again praising the Argentine experience, "while initially harsh." It even admits that hard-line Ger-

³ See "Greece: The Naked Rule of Finance Capital," *The Internationalist*, on page 9.

man finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble wants to push Greece out "to maintain capitalist profit," but claims the ICL's call for Grexit is different, that "it would create more favorable conditions for the working class to struggle in its own interests." How so? As wannabe advisors of a "pro-working people" bourgeois Greek government, the ICL argues that a "weakened currency makes exports more competitive." Maybe, or maybe not, but it also makes imports more expensive, and in any case will further impoverish Greek workers.

As with its "no" vote in the phony referendum, here also, the TGG/ICL places itself to the right of the Stalinist Greek Communist Party (KKE), which at least recognizes that there is no "alternative for the people in a capitalist Greece of the drachma," in which the only winners "would be some monopoly groups in shipping, pharmaceuticals, energy and the arms trade" while "the needs of people ... will continue to be sacrificed on the altar of competitiveness of monopolies" (*Rizopastis*, 16 July). While the Stalinist reformists call for a "popular social alliance with other people's movements with an anti-monopoly orientation," genuine Trotskyists call for a struggle against capital for transitional demands in defense of the working people leading to workers revolution, whether Greece is under the euro or the drachma.

Trotsky called to raise transitional demands in order to "help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution." Lacking any call for revolution, the TGG program is a bridge to nowhere. Even with the caveat that the "battle cannot be won within a parliamentary framework" (which just about every left group in and around SYRIZA says), the TGG/ICL leaflet does not call for a government to overthrow capitalist rule. Having paid the price of admission by calling for a "no" vote in the July 5 referendum, the erstwhile Trotskyist centrists of the SL/ICL have joined the other denizens of the opportunist swamp. As for providing revolutionary leadership to workers, in Greece and throughout Europe, for the ICL it's goodbye Lenin, and Trotsky. ■

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Which Road?...

continued from page 12

going along with its referendum maneuver – is by endorsing this bourgeois party, its policies and ploys, when what was called for was intransigent revolutionary opposition. Be assured, Tsipras couldn't have done it without you.

In a January 27 statement, the DEA had claimed “With the social movement at the forefront, we should open the way for the overthrow of austerity, once and for all.” Six months later, austerity has won out, and the opportunists are scrambling for an explanation. But what credence can one give to their after-the-fact critique when they (“critically”) went along with one sellout after another?

The fact that the “left” social democrats of the ISO and DEA ended up in a capitalist party that is dutifully implementing the dictates of the imperialist financiers is the result of their whole political trajectory and training in the political tendency founded by Tony Cliff. At the dawn of the post-WWII Cold War, Cliff broke with Trotskyism, declaring the USSR “state capitalist” and refusing to defend it against the imperialist West. This led Cliff & Co. to support anti-Soviet reactionaries from CIA-backed Islamist mujahedin in Afghanistan, who systematically killed “communist” women teachers, to CIA-backed Catholic clericalists like Solidarność in Poland, who led the counterrevolution that impoverished workers and denied women the right to abortion.

While deriding this as “ancient history for ortho-Trots,” the Cliffites keep tailing after one supposedly “progressive” bourgeois regime or ruler after another, enthusing over the election of Evo Morales in Bolivia in 2006 and proclaiming “Yes We Can!” over Obama's election as commander in chief of U.S. imperialism in 2008. These professional tailists are always on the prowl looking for a new “movement” to chase after, and principles be damned! While they may now try to use Trotsky for radical window-dressing, they are certainly alien to the declaration of the Fourth International's founder that it “uncompromisingly gives battle to all political groupings tied to the apron-strings of the bourgeoisie” (Transitional Program).

Having backed Solidarność that closed the Gdansk shipyards, now Tony Cliff's heirs are part of SYRIZA that is closing Greek shipyards and privatizing the ports of Piraeus and Thessaloniki. That stark fact tells you a lot about whose class interests they ultimately serve. But, of course, the Cliffites are not alone. The same could be said about a host of pseudo-lefts buzzing around SYRIZA.

Keeping the proletariat in line at the behest of their financier overlords is precisely what opportunist leftists do best. It is their *raison d'être*. The German Social Democrats (and their counterparts elsewhere in Europe) did it when they voted for war credits in 1914, and a new generation is doing it now. Whether directly voting for austerity or cheerleading for SYRIZA, their task for the bosses is to deceive the working class and would-be leftists, chaining them to bourgeois coalitions and parties. Now, writes Paul D'Amato of the ISO, SYRIZA “can no longer be a party of anti-austerity resistance.” Instead, “That task will fall to the Left Platform of SYRIZA and to Greece's radical left” (*SW*, 23 July). Translated: SYRIZA is dead, long live the new SYRIZA! But these same forces did

nothing to block Tsipras and Varoufakis. As for the Left Platform, its main spokesman, Panagiotis Lafazanis, declared: “In case the agreement is voted, then we can do nothing” (Greek Reporter, 5 August).

The Greek working class has suffered a huge defeat with the savage new measures against it, one which will reverberate throughout Europe and the world, and for which ostensible socialists paved the way. What's key is what is learned from it. A correspondent in Athens from the ISO's Australian sister group, Socialist Alternative, writes: “The creditors hope that the ‘SYRIZA example’ now will show that the left says one thing and in office does another.” That is precisely what the opportunist left has done in Greece! She goes on: “There are some on the left who draw the old lessons about reform or revolution from Tsipras's back-down: SYRIZA is reformist – what we need is a revolutionary party. This is a timeless truth, but the road to a revolutionary party of some weight inside the working class is not as simple as drawing up the right program and distributing it among workers” (Colleen Bolger, “Turning resignation into resistance in Greece,” *Red Flag*, 27 July).

Behold opportunism incarnate. Rather than “Tsipras's failed strategy,” Bolger wants “a clearer strategy to oppose austerity” ... but one which “cannot yet be purely revolutionary.” The DEA, ISO, et al. would have the workers shielded from a revolutionary program, directing them instead to what? Break with SYRIZA? “DEA activists argued, to walk out now cedes the ground to Tsipras.” So like Lafazanis, they seek to stay in SYRIZA. What then? Only vague hopes of a revival of the class struggle “if people resist the implementation of the agreement.” But Greek workers already went through that experience five years ago, to no avail. It failed because the leaderships would not challenge capitalist rule. The “SYRIZA example” demonstrated that talk of ending austerity in this deep-going capitalist crisis is an illusion. It didn't work under FDR in the 1930s, and it won't happen in Europe today.

Unless militants spark sharp class struggle pointing to workers revolution, and unless they seek to build a revolutionary workers party to lead it, calls for resistance will again go nowhere.

Revolutionary Program the Key

As we have emphasized repeatedly, the crisis in Greece is not a national problem but the focal point of a Europe-wide and world-wide capitalist economic crisis that has lasted since the Wall Street crash of 2008. Europe and the U.S. are stuck in a depression, much more pronounced in the former where even official unemployment figures are everywhere in double digits, inflation has been replaced by deflation (falling prices), poverty has risen to unprecedented levels (even above 20% in Germany) as social programs are slashed to the bone and economic growth is virtually non-existent. Greece, with official unemployment over 25% and 50+% for youth while the economy is collapsing, is only the most extreme case of a general condition.² That is a key reason why the Eurobankers are digging in their heels in refusing debt relief and why they insist on “reforms” intended to drive down wages and benefits and drive up profits.

And not only in Europe. Puerto Rico,

² Official unemployment in Spain is 22% of the workforce, and 44% of young workers.

the U.S.' Caribbean colony, is now facing total devastation as a result of a debt crisis. Public education is being gutted in order to pay off Wall Street bankers. Water supplies are threatened in the midst of a drought because of a lack of investment. Young people are fleeing the island. Pension obligations are 99.3% unfunded. Interestingly, some of the same hedge fund vultures who have bought up Greek bonds and properties at fire sale prices are also the main holders of Puerto Rican debt. Leading the pack is John Paulson, who made billions off of speculation in subprime mortgages in the 2008 crash. Bourgeois liberals like economist Paul Krugman are crowing that the crisis in Puerto Rico won't be so bad because it still receives U.S. transfer payments such as Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. But that is little solace to laid-off teachers and jobless youth.

The economic crisis is the result of a systemic problem of capitalism, a falling rate of profit, rather than particular policies (“neoliberalism,” “financialization,” free trade agreements, etc.). European banks are hugely undercapitalized – even in Germany where the capital of leading banks is as little as 3% of outstanding loans – and thus vulnerable if debtors start defaulting. They're hard-lining it with Greece, whose debt is overwhelmingly held by official bodies, to send a message to Spain and Italy, whose far larger debt is held by commercial banks. Bankers are not that concerned about economic growth, since they can make money during boom times or bust, but they are threatened by a bank run. So companies are not investing and banks hold onto the euros doled out by the European Central Bank. There will be no return to Keynesian deficit financing, and nothing short of the fear of revolution will get the capitalists to end austerity.

Although Tsipras and SYRIZA promoted illusions about getting the Eurofinanciers to ease up on Greece, they were only trying to negotiate a kind of “austerity lite,” or “neoliberalism with a human face.” Even this was impossible from the start, as Marxists warned and EU leaders have made painfully clear. An honest revolutionary leadership would not have hoodwinked Greek working people into thinking that an “honorable” deal with the Eurobankers was possible, but neither would it promote illusions in “going it alone.” Exiting the euro and reverting to the drachma may eventually strengthen the Greek national bourgeoisie, or not, but in the short run it will for certain mean austerity with a vengeance for Greek workers. *The only solution for the Greek and European working classes is revolution, workers revolution on a continental scale. But that requires above all a revolutionary leadership – armed with an internationalist Bolshevik program. And that is what is lacking in Greece today.*

The bankruptcy of Tsipras' policies is plain for all to see, and a split in SYRIZA seems inevitable. Now attention is focusing on the Left Platform, which made mild criticisms of the government line while doing nothing to block it. The best articulated expression of its policies comes from Stathis Kouvelakis, professor of political theory at King's College London and member of SYRIZA's central committee. Writing for *Jacobin* (3 August), Kouvelakis describes the Greek left as being in “post-traumatic shock.” He even admits that he “bear[s] part of that collective responsibility” for the disaster, and notes that “there have been enclaves providing bridges with sectors of

the oligarchy inside Syriza, even before it came to power.” He argues that what has been defeated is not just Tsipras' policies but the strategy of “left-Europeanist.” But what does he propose in its place?

This Left Platform leader argues absurdly that the calamitous experience of the last half year confirms the idea “that a unitary government of radical left forces is a necessary and tested instrument for approaching the question of power has been validated”! Since, as he spells out, the SYRIZA tops made “a clear choice in favor of continuity at the level of the repressive mechanisms of the state,” he adds: “It is obviously one thing to be the government and quite another to have power. The question is whether we are able to use the first to achieve the second, and if so how.” The answer, as revolutionary Marxists who have done their homework could tell him, is that this “question” has been answered many times over – with the spilt blood of millions of workers. The bourgeoisie brings leftists into government not to promote “democracy” but to do the dirty work for capital, paving the way for war, dictatorship and brutal anti-worker austerity.

What Kouvelakis is advocating is another brand of bourgeois “left government” with different policies, namely “a new political project that will be class-based, democratic, and anti-Europeanist, and in a first phase will take the form of a front [!], open to experimentation and to new organizational practice.” With a nod to Antonio Gramsci, talking of a “‘war of position’ strategy,” and citing his comrade Eleni Portaliou, he declares the goal of this “project” to be “the reconstruction of this ruined country...headed by the working classes and the popular bloc.” This is the same populist drivel mouthed by Tsipras & Co. to justify *their* “political project” of class collaboration. It is counterposed to the fight of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky for the *political independence* of the working class from all wings of the bourgeoisie. The only difference with the SYRIZA majority is the “anti-Europeanist” bent. Meaning?

Kouvelakis warns of the danger of Greece being turned “into a kind of Kosovo writ large, a country bound hand and foot in neocolonial chains and consigned to the status of an insignificant and ruined Balkan semi-protectorate.” But in talking of “liberation of the country, and the Greek people, from the shackles of the eurozone,” and arguing for “regaining national sovereignty as a prerequisite for exercising not even anticapitalist but democratic and progressive policies of the most elementary kind,” Kouvelakis makes clear that he is calling for a “Grexit” *under capitalism*. While claiming not to support “some ‘popular frontist’ conception of trans-class unity with some spectral ‘national bourgeoisie’,” that is precisely what the Left Platform is aiming at. Its focus on nationalizing the banks and some industries would bolster a weak bourgeoisie that needs a strong state to compete with imperialist rivals.

Exiting the Eurozone won't wipe out the imperialist debt, and the Eurobankers are sure to make the whole process as painful as possible. What's needed, as the League for the Fourth International has repeatedly stated, is a revolutionary mobilization of the Greek working class, seizing banks, ports, airports, and key industries and imposing workers control, organizing workers defense guards to crush the Nazi-fascists of Golden

Dawn and appeal to the ranks of the conscript army, and organizing workers councils with delegates recallable at any time. This would lay the basis for a new state power, a workers state, led by a Leninist-Trotskyist communist party built on the program of international socialist revolution.

This points to the other key factor in the Greek debacle: the failure of the workers movement elsewhere in Europe to rise up in defense of their class sisters and brothers under fire from the Eurobankers who are bashing labor throughout the continent. Yes, there were protests, some fairly large, but these were largely Sunday parades rather than attempts to block the functioning of the imperialist machinery. Why could Eurogroup finance ministers meet in peace? Where were the strike actions shutting down transportation in Paris, Berlin, Milano and Brussels? As for Spain, the left has been tailing SYRIZA's confreres of Podemos, viscerally anti-communist bourgeois populists who have let the Brussels bureaucrats and Frankfurt bankers know that they have learned the "SYRIZA lesson" and will be oh-so reasonable and "responsible" in office.

For all the talk of "resistance" to austerity, the European left and labor movement has been no more ready to challenge the dictates of finance capital than were Tsipras, Varoufakis ... or the Left Platform. That is why every one of the struggles over the past dozen years against youth wages, pension cuts, slashing social programs and mass unemployment and inequality have gone down to defeat.

The attempt to end, or simply to mitigate, austerity and debt peonage within the framework of the European Union has been proved to be an illusion. No less illusory is the idea that this can be accomplished by exiting the Eurozone and even the EU while capital rules. The same policies are being enforced by governments the world over, from Mexico and Brazil to South Africa, in response to the global economic crisis, while millions of refugees brave death to escape war and hunger. The only way out of this hecatomb is through international revolutionary struggle against the capitalist system that produced the crisis. The experience of 2011, when popular struggles quickly leapt across the Mediterranean – from Tunisia and Egypt to Portugal, Spain and Greece – shows the potential. But they were all defeated. The experience of Greece in 2015 demonstrates anew that a genuinely revolutionary leadership is indispensable.

The workers of Greece and Europe have the power to break the chains of imperialism and liberate themselves. But they must understand that there is no peaceful, gradual, parliamentary transition to socialism. The capitalist state cannot be reformed to serve the exploited and oppressed. After browbeating Tsipras in order to intimidate anyone in Europe who dares resist, the vicious Eurobankers want to asset-strip the country in order to pay off the German and French banks, just like corporate raiders in any leveraged buyout. The results of elections and referendums are dismissed, as the oligarchs of capital show that there will be no democracy for their wage slaves, any more than there was for the slaves of ancient Athens.

Greece may be forced out of the euro and the EU simply to avoid collapse. But victory over these loan sharks in Armani suits can only be won by a Europe-wide workers revolt that becomes a revolution. Supposed radicals who sneer at this con-

clusion today – when the bankruptcy of capitalism is starkly staring humanity in the face – are no friends of the working people. They may claim to be the most modern (or postmodern) "Marxists" of the day, but they are recycling age-old reformist recipes that have produced a chain of defeats worldwide.

The brutality of the German imperialist onslaught against Greece has shocked many all over Europe. Imperialist rivalries are reviving: French rulers are getting nervous about plans for Siemens to take over Alstom. Spanish and Italian bankers worry if they could be next. EU countries that have not entered the euro are having second thoughts. The Greek disaster may yet set off explosions elsewhere. Schäuble and Merkel may have won the battle in Greece only to lose the war for a German-dominated *Festung Europa* (Fortress Europe). The fight is not over, but the road to a *socialist united states of Europe* will be through a fight to *bring down the European Union of capitalist*. If Greek and European workers are "not ready," the task of a revolutionary vanguard is to prepare the way. ■

Referendum...

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step towards a better deal that we aim to be signed immediately after Sunday's result" (July 1 TV speech). Even if Varoufakis could miraculously convince the other European finance ministers to agree to Athens' proposal of last May, it would be an unmitigated disaster for Greek working people. They would be immediately hit with drastic tax increases, lower wages for public sector workers, continued elimination of collective bargaining, rampant privatizations and all the rest. SYRIZA is using the referendum not only to bolster its maneuvering, but as a vote of confidence in its government.

The bulk of the Greek left has joined the call for a "NO" vote, as one would expect since most are either part of SYRIZA, including its leftist components (Left Platform, Red Network), or give critical support to it from the outside like the smaller ANTARSYA (Front of the Anti-Capitalist Left) coalition. Even the small Trotskyist Group of Greece (part of the International Communist League led by the Spartacist League/U.S.) is calling for a "no" vote. The TGG spices this up by saying "down with the EU" and "no support to the SYRIZA government" (July 1 leaflet) when in fact the vote is precisely a vote to politically support the SYRIZA government, which insists that it will stay in the imperialist European Union, and the euro, no matter what. Curiously the TGG says that "A 'yes' vote would be a victory for the imperialist rulers and the Greek bourgeoisie." But previously the TGG/ICL held that SYRIZA is a bourgeois party.

A somewhat larger centrist group, the EEK (Revolutionary Workers Party), likewise calls for a "no" vote while adding down with the EU, cancel the debt, etc., but barely criticizes SYRIZA (July 28 statement). Some groups, such as the Communist Tendency of SYRIZA (linked to the International Marxist Tendency led by Alan Woods), call for voting "no" while urging SYRIZA to nationalize the banks, cancel the debt and carry out "anti-capitalist" measures supposedly constituting a "socialist rupture" with the "economic power of the Troika and of capital within the country." But calling for a *bourgeois* party (of which these supposed Marxists are a part, contradicting Marx's insistence on workers independence from *all*

bourgeois parties) to nationalize the banks hardly represents any kind of "rupture" with capitalism. Banks nationalized by the SYRIZA-ANEL government will act like any other capitalist banks.

For their part, the sinister "Golden Dawn" (Chrysi Avgi, or XA) Nazis have called for a "no" vote, clearly hoping to pick up the pieces if SYRIZA fails, using this to fuel their vicious anti-immigrant, anti-working-class drive. What's needed is a militant, mass worker-immigrant mobilization to crush the fascist threat.

The main force to refuse to join the regime's call for a "no" vote in the referendum is the Greek Communist Party (KKE), which remains a sizeable force in the workers movement. The KKE and its trade-union affiliate, PAME, held a large demonstration of thousands of workers on July 2 saying "No to the proposal of the EU-IMF-ECB, No to the proposal of the government." It is encouraging workers to place a flyer with those slogans in the ballot box, or to write "no" over both choices, essentially to cast a spoiled ballot. The KKE's answer is entirely parliamentary, as it has been throughout the euro debt crisis: some big demonstrations and one- or even two-day "general strikes" as a pressure tactic, but nothing that would challenge the capitalist system or state. And second, as dyed-in-the-wool Stalinists and nationalists the KKE calls to "disengage with the EU" with "people's power" (nothing about socialism, of course).

Revolutionary Marxists, supporters of the program of Lenin and Trotsky, politically oppose all of the competing bourgeois forces, the ECB-EC-IMF Eurobankers, their Greek flunkies of the mini-troika ND-PASOK-Potami, and the SYRIZA-ANEL government. We call instead on the workers to take action to prevent the present or a future Greek government from carrying out further austerity policies and to unleash a proletarian counteroffensive with measures that challenge capitalist rule. Whatever the outcome of the Sunday referendum, it will not decide this battle. Since the troika is out to punish Greece for electing SYRIZA, would-be regime-changers may not stop at financial blackmail and doomsday talk. In the face of an attempt to topple the government, if the struggle goes to pitched battles in the streets, Trotskyists must take their place fighting against the coup-makers. But even then, we will be fighting for a workers government, not the bourgeois populist SYRIZA-ANEL.

A potentially revolutionary situation may be opening in Greece. The multifaceted Greek left is facing a decisive test. By hitching their cart to the SYRIZA horse, many leftists, including would-be socialists and communists, have sought to cash in on its popularity. But the reason that millions voted for the supposedly "radical left" coalition is that they could no longer take the grinding austerity which had reduced the country to penury, with 27% official unemployment, over 50% youth unemployment, large numbers of young professionals forced to emigrate and sharply increased suicides as desperate people saw no way out. Tsipras



Athens street mural: "Then they used tanks. Now they use banks."

on the other hand, only wants a better deal within the confines of the imperialist EU. And his finance minister Varoufakis is a Keynesian bourgeois economist who wants to "save European capitalism" from itself.

What has happened in Greece is not an isolated national event, supposedly due to "lazy Greek workers" (who work longer hours for lower wages than any other West European country). Everyone is watching Greece, workers and capitalists alike, because it is the focal point of the world capitalist crisis. Throughout Europe in the last two decades there have been militant struggles against the capitalist offensive. Battles over pensions and reduced youth wages in France. Occupation of the squares in Spain, Portugal and Greece. "General strikes" all over the continent. Even in Germany, railroad engineers have been striking. But they have all failed, because the leadership limited their struggle to purely defensive battles within the limits of capitalism.

The capitalists will never agree to massive debt reduction or elimination of austerity because the survival of their system is ultimately at stake. They are not worried about Greece itself, but the rest of the continent. Greek debt of €320 billion is held by governmental institutions. The five times larger Spanish debt and much larger yet Italian debt is held by private banks, which could go under. Despite the phony "stress tests," all the European banks are effectively bankrupt, and what the bankers fear is that if Greece can get out from under their heel, Spain and Italy will be next. So all attempts to negotiate the way out of crushing debt and debilitating austerity are doomed to fail.

If SYRIZA succeeds in implementing a new program of attacks on working people – which will hardly be "austerity light" – the leftists who aided it, including in the referendum ploy, will have criminally sabotaged this chance at unleashing revolutionary struggle throughout the continent. They will have aided German finance minister Schäuble in either burning the "left" or in turning it into the obedient servant of the bankocracy, in either case betraying Greek poor and working people. Instead of presenting a revolutionary opposition to the bourgeois populist regime, they have acted as opportunist camp followers. But if the most conscious militants in Greece draw the lessons of the events of these past months and undertake the struggle to forge the nucleus of a genuinely communist, Leninist-Trotskyist workers party, then it can serve to spark a proletarian, revolutionary response that can turn the slogan of a *socialist united states of Europe* into a reality. ■

A Year After Police Murder of Mike Brown in Ferguson

CUNY Internationalist Speakout Against Racist Repression

Internationalist photo



Speakout called by Hunter Internationalist Club on September 2 brought out dozens of students, workers to protest racist police terror.

By CUNY Internationalist Clubs

"A year since Ferguson, racist terror continues," declared the call for a Speak-Out Against Racist Repression that CUNY Internationalists organized outside Hunter College on September 2. Approximately 80 students and workers participated in the protest, which highlighted the case of Sandra Bland, whose death in police custody embodies this ongoing repression. Pulled over by a police officer in Prairie View, Texas, the African American education worker and activist refused to bend to intimidation and was violently arrested. Three days later, she was found hanged in her holding cell. Authorities attempted to pass it off as suicide, but Bland's family has denounced the attempted cover-up, noting her excitement over getting a new job at her alma mater as well as her well-known activism against police brutality. Having stopped and jailed Sandra Bland for "driving while back," lynch-law terror cut short her life on July 13, 2015.

Participants in the Hunter Speak-Out held placards and enthusiastically joined in chants like "From Ferguson to New York, Stop Racist Terror" and "Sandra Bland, Michael Brown – Shut the Whole System

Down." In addition to Sandra Bland, signs featured names and faces of many others targeted by racist repression and police violence, among them Eric Garner, Mike Brown, Tamir Rice, Rekia Boyd, Samuel DuBose and Amadou Diallo. Other carefully made posters showed faces and names of transgender women, mainly African American and Latina, who have been murdered this year, including London Chanel, Taja Gabrielle DeJesus and Ashton O'Hara. Placards declared solidarity with the abducted teachers college students of Ayotzinapa, Mexico; upheld the defense of immigrant rights in the face of Donald Trump's hate campaign and Barack Obama's record-level deportations; and stated opposition to Democrats, Republicans and all capitalist politicians. Internationalist speakers called for building a revolutionary workers party, linking this to appeals to "uproot racism" and achieve women's liberation through socialist revolution.

Students, immigrant workers and adjunct professors spoke with fervor and clarity on the topic of racist repression. One new Club member, speaking from her personal experiences, said:

"The thing that scares me the most is that it's coming from the NYPD, from people we're told are there to protect us. But they're not, they're against us, and they kill us every single day. And we have to watch them kill us on YouTube and on Facebook every single day, and there's no justice! Hearing [Eric Garner] say 'I can't breathe' eleven times, and still nothing. You all watch them die. No justice."

When she ended her speech with "Only Revolu-

tion Can Bring Justice!" – a chant the Internationalist Club has brought to protests throughout the recent period – the crowd took up the call, and the feeling in the air was electric.

Parents of the 43 abducted Ayotzinapa students sent a special statement to the Hunter rally. Police and army troops "disappeared" their sons in the southern state of Guerrero on the night of September 26-27, 2014. The parents, who had just addressed a mass meeting on their struggle organized by the Grupo Internacionalista at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, sent "greetings to the struggle of the teachers, students and workers of CUNY...in their fight against the privatization of education and against the racist murders orchestrated by the same bourgeoisie that at the international level has carried out [these] attacks. From Ferguson to Ayotzinapa, it's the same struggle!"

At the Speak-Out, an immigrant worker from Mexico linked the message of internationalism to the recent 75th anniversary of Leon Trotsky's assassination in Mexico City. "Trotsky told us that the revolution must be international, because the capitalist system extends its claws internationally. In the country I come from, the oppressed people are living on the border with that monster. They have a wall against us, but we must build a bridge uniting the working class of all countries to defeat imperialism and the 'national' bourgeoisie." That is the only way to eradicate racism and all forms of oppression, he said.

Workers from the taxi and food industries (including the Hunter cafeteria) participated in the Speak-Out, together with low-paid adjuncts and others who spoke about the need to link labor struggles to the fight against racism. Several speakers demarcated the contrast between revolutionary class politics and liberal "iden-

tity politics," stressing the importance of mobilizing the enormous potential power of the working class in the fight against oppression. As examples pointing to this, they cited this year's May Day, when the dock workers union (ILWU Local 10) shut down the port of Oakland, California and marched on City Hall to protest police terror, and union activists marched in Portland, Oregon in the "Labor Against Racist Police Murder" contingent.

Many speakers at the Hunter protest addressed the inseparable connection between capitalism and racism in the United States. A rally organizer emphasized that racial oppression is "fundamental to the nature of this capitalist state, born in the blood of black slaves and the genocide of native peoples."

"That is its legacy in the United States of America: human lives in exchange for profit. The police were not created to protect human lives, but to enforce this ruthless equation, to act as the armed fist of the capitalist state. The origins of modern-day police forces lie in the slave patrols of the South. The first uniformed police force was established in 1783 in Charleston, South Carolina to control the local slave population."

In his classic *State and Revolution*, she noted, Lenin defines the state as an organ of class rule that "legalizes and perpetuates oppression." She stressed: "We can't afford to indulge in illusions of pressuring capitalist politicians to the left"; any real fight against poverty, war and racism means breaking from "subjugation to the Democratic Party," whether its candidate be Hillary Clinton or Bernie Sanders. "We need a revolution. That's the only way we're going to end this racist violence."

The Internationalist Clubs are active at Hunter, the Graduate Center and elsewhere in the CUNY system. For more information, write: cunyinternationalists@gmail.com.

Internationalist photo



Protesters at rally read letter of solidarity from parents of 43 kidnapped Ayotzinapa students.

Corbynmania...

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strike, who fear nothing so much as the consequences of a victorious strike, must inevitably direct all their efforts to keeping the strike within the scope of a semi-political semi-strike, i.e., to deprive it of its power.

“We must face matters: the *main* efforts of the official leaders of the Labour Party and of a considerable number of official trade union leaders will not be directed toward paralyzing the bourgeois state by means of the strike, but towards paralyzing the general strike with the aid of the bourgeois state. The government, through its most diehard conservatives, undoubtedly wants to provoke a civil war on a small scale so as to be in a position to resort to measures of terror even before the struggle develops, and thus suppress the movement.”

—L.D. Trotsky, “Problems of the British Labor Movement” (6 May 1926)

Although, and precisely because, striking workers fought militantly, after little more than a week a terrified TUC General Council, *led by Labour lefts*, ignominiously called off the strike.

The Labour Left: A Pressure Valve for Letting Off Steam

Writing at the end of 1925 Trotsky summed up the role of the British Labour lefts of the day: “The left wingers reflect the discontent of the British working class.... They transform the political helplessness of the awakening masses into an ideological maze. They constitute an expression of the forward move, but also act as a brake on it” (*Ibid.*). He noted that the lefts act “as a kind of safety-valve for the radical moods of the masses.” One might say the same of the Corbyn “movement” today, which is barely reformist politically and only seems radical by comparison with the openly anti-working-class New Labour crowd who shamelessly imitate the Tories.

The Labour Party was founded as a break from the bourgeois Liberal Party, and unlike the formally Marxist parties of the Second International which turned to the right, was reformist from the start. Its founding leader Keir Hardie was a lay preacher and a follower of populist Henry George and social democrat William Morris. The British ruling class prefers Tory governments, but in troubled times they are satisfied that Labour will protect their interests. In WWI, Labour leaders joined the cabinet of Lloyd George, and in WWII Winston Churchill and the Tories led a coalition government with right-wing Labour Party leaders Clement Attlee and Ernest Bevin, who were key allies in keeping industrial peace and preserving Britain’s colonies.

After the war, Labour won a landslide electoral victory and Attlee became prime minister, with Bevin as foreign secretary in the anti-Soviet Cold War, as Britain played a key role in smashing leftist guerrillas in Greece and Malaya. Labour left Aneurin “Nye” Bevan as minister of health oversaw the construction of low-cost housing and led the creation of the National Health Service, the longest-lasting and most popular of the Labour Party’s “welfare state” creations. Bevan, a union organizer from a Welsh mining family, was the first hero of the Labour lefts, several of whom (including future prime minister Harold Wilson) resigned from the cabinet when Britain joined the U.S. imperialist slaughter in Korea in 1951.



Striking miners clash with police near Dover, Kent, April 1984. Miners were betrayed by Labour Party and TUC tops, while Labour left them hanging.

Bevan hated the crimes of capitalism, but was a reformist his whole life, following the disastrous popular front path of alliances with bourgeois forces in the 1930s and supporting Churchill in the 1940s. He played a key role in supporting the government in 1944 as British troops oversaw the massacre of leftist demonstrators in Athens, Greece. His dream was not for a revolution but for a Labour Party government. When he got it, Labour proceeded to administer British capitalism and imperialism. He offered verbal criticism at times, but no alternative for workers. In practice, the Bevanites served to reconcile would-be socialists to supporting British imperialism – drenched in blood from Egypt to South Africa, from the Indian subcontinent to the Caribbean – and defusing working-class unrest. This has always been the role of the Labour left.

In 1964, Labour came to power again. Prime minister Harold Wilson, a Bevanite no longer, dispatched British troops to Northern Ireland to fight the IRA. After a stint in opposition, he returned as Labour prime minister in 1974 when the Tory government of Edward Heath was toppled by a miners strike. Over the next five years, Labour governments, despite right-wing plotting against Wilson, remained reliable Cold Warriors, while waging a war on the working class at home. Amidst a world capitalist crisis following the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam, profits in Britain’s mining and manufacturing economy were declining. Wilson and his successor James Callaghan pressured the trade unions to accept wage controls.

Through this “Social Contract,” the Labour government helped drive real wages down in Britain, until the workers exploded in the strike wave that began in the “winter of discontent” of 1978-79. From the perspective of the bosses, Labour had done its job. To put down the workers now a ferocious frontal assault was needed. This would be led by Margaret Thatcher, as the leader of a new Tory government beginning in 1979. The workers fought “Iron Lady” Thatcher tooth and nail, and might have toppled her government early on – but the bourgeoisie whipped up a patriotic frenzy around the Falklands/Malvinas conflict with Argentina. As Her Majesty’s Most Loyal Opposition, Labour participated to the hilt in this frenzy.

Labour leftist Tony Benn had been a minister (of industry and then energy) in the cabinets of Wilson and Callaghan. Reflecting the workers’ discontent, Benn moved further to the left, and closely contested right-winger Denis Healey for Labour Party

leadership. The rise of “Bennism” during the Thatcher years was a result of most of the British left fulsomely supporting him – ignoring how when he was in the Wilson government their hero helped craft the laws Thatcher was now using in her devastating anti-labor assault. The Social Contract of Labour reformism not only restricted wages in a time of raging inflation but also imposed limits of all kinds on strikes. It laid the ground for the vicious anti-union bill Corbyn is fighting against today.

Many a rule and law from the days of the Wilson-Callaghan regime was invoked by Thatcher during the great miners strike of 1984-85. The strike was defeated for lack of a revolutionary leadership. The miners fought with great courage but needed a solid nationwide strike to win. National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) leader Arthur Scargill and the strikers were unsupported – or outright opposed – by legions of right-wing Labour Party pols and TUC bureaucrats. The only way to have won that key class battle, as authentic Trotskyists advocated at that time, was to extend it, breaking with the Labour/TUC traitors and demanding that transport, rail and dock unions go out on strike in a fighting “triple alliance” to prepare the way for a general strike.¹

Yet during the strike, Scargill remained loyal to Labour. Neither he nor Labour left Benn did anything to challenge the despicable violence-baiting Neil Kinnock for party leadership. Had NUM leaders spearheaded a breakaway from Labour at that time, it could have looked to the 140,000 striking miners as a base and capitalized on the widespread sympathy and solidarity among workers to provide a powerful pole of class struggle nationwide. But only a decade later did Scargill break to form the Socialist Labour Party, which had at most a marginal existence and a tepid program. The reformist Bennite Labour lefts were ultimately committed to the bourgeois order, and thus time and again have contributed to the *defeat* of workers’ struggles.

The Spectre of Trotskyism

As the Corbyn revolt was getting underway, the *Sunday Times* (23 August) published an article by the former Labour NEC member and Speaker of the House of

¹ See “Road, rail, docks: Strike with the miners!” *Workers Hammer* No. 66, January 1985, and “British Miners: Spread the Strike and Win!” *Workers Vanguard* No. 372, 8 February 1985, published by the British and U.S. sections of the international Spartacist tendency when it embodied the program of revolutionary Trotskyism.

Commons Baroness Boothroyd under the headline, “The Trots have a gun to Labour’s head. And so the fight begins again.” Now the prestige paper of Australian press tycoon Rupert Murdoch, whose tabloid property *The Sun* was a big backer of Blair’s New Labour, is discovering a conspiracy of “Trotskyite and other hard-left groups who are disbanding as official political parties in a move that will allow them to infiltrate Labour” (*Sunday Times*, 27 September). We are surely in for a new round of “reds under the beds” (if not in them) scandal-mongering from the Tory press.

They have already singled out Corbyn’s chief of staff, Simon Fletcher, a supporter of Socialist Action who became Mayor Ken Livingstone’s right-hand man. But then, Alastair Darling, Tony Blair’s top aide, was of the same denomination, which entered the Labour Party back in the mid-1980s. The blatantly pro-imperialist social-democratic Alliance for Workers Liberty (AWL) has formally appealed to the Electoral Commission to deregister as a political party in order to enable supporters to enter the post-Corbyn Labour Party, which still maintains the witch-hunting ban on membership in other political groups that was used to purge the Militant tendency in 1982. It seems a couple other small leftist groups have also deregistered.

But beyond this, there was almost universal, unmitigated celebration of Corbyn’s victory throughout the British left:

The **Socialist Appeal** (SAp) group and its International Marxist Tendency, led by Alan Woods, has continued the policy of entrism in the Labour Party of Ted Grant’s Militant tendency going back to the 1960s. The SAp declared: “The astonishing victory of Jeremy Corbyn for the Labour leadership represents a political earthquake of monumental proportions” (Socialist Appeal, 12 September). A few days later, SAp launched the Labour Young Socialists (recalling the similarly named Labour Party youth group led by Militant in the 1970s) and a campaign to “Defend Corbyn – Fight for Socialism.”

The **Socialist Party in England and Wales** (SPEW) and its Committee for a Workers International, led by Peter Taaffe, abandoned Militant’s entrism in the early 1990s. Now they write: “Corbyn’s leadership victory – A new era for the 99%.” SPEW had a little problem, as it had labeled the Labour Party an out-and-out bourgeois party. It got around that sticky wicket by declaring that “This is a new party in the process of formation” (*The Socialist*, 17 September). But its “What we stand for” blurb still calls for “Trade unions to disaffiliate from the Labour Party” (*The Socialist*, 24 September).

The **Socialist Workers Party** (SWP) are the heirs of Tony Cliff, who broke with Trotskyism in the late 1940s declaring the Soviet Union “state capitalist” and refusing to defend it during the Korean War from 1950 on. Belatedly climbing aboard the Corbyn bandwagon, the SWP was jubilant: “Seize the time! Let’s kick out the Tories” and “A new hope” (*Socialist Worker*, 19 September). Its paper is now filled with people declaring they are joining the Labour Party to support Corbyn after the SWP earlier (at its Marxism 2015 conference) discouraged people from doing so.

Socialist Resistance (SR), the British heirs of Ernest Mandel and affiliate of the International Secretariat that masquerades as the Fourth International, headlined (*International Viewpoint*, 14 September): “Jez [Jeremy] we did – A political earthquake.”



Jeremy Corbyn as Lenin?! Reformist British left (in this case Socialist Appeal) goes gaga for new Labour leader.

SR proclaimed: “*Socialist Resistance* enthusiastically welcomes the election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party.”

Alliance for Workers Liberty founder-leader Sean Matgamna crowed: “The trade unions and the working class have retaken the Labour Party!” (“Organize Labour’s newcomers, remake the Party,” *Solidarity*, 16 September).

As for the various left alliances, according to the *Weekly Worker* (24 September) of the **Communist Party of Great Britain** (CPGB), people have left Left Unity to join the Labour Party and it will debate its future existence at an upcoming conference. The CPGB-supported Labour Party Marxists is encouraging leftists to join Labour and fight to democratize the party, as is, of course, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy.

And so on, and so forth.

This virtual unanimity of the British (not-so) “far left” reflects the fact that the entire milieu, even groups that had totally written off the Labour as any kind of workers party, is deeply imbued with Labourism as a tradition supposedly encompassing the entire workers movement. The chumminess and numerous alliances, coalitions and political blocs between the various groups underline the fact that their reformist programs are virtually indistinguishable. So it’s no accident that they will all be back together in Corbyn’s Labour Party, constantly maneuvering for position on various bodies. Rather than a revolutionary opposition, they will become (as some already are) an organic part of this “imperialist workers party.”

A particular mention should be made of the peculiar and spectacularly opportunist stance taken by the Spartacist League/Britain (SL/B), section of the International Communist League (ICL). Historically, the SL/B was sharply counterposed to the Labourite left. Shortly after expelling ICL cadres who went on to found the League for the Fourth International, the SL/B gave critical support to a candidate of Arthur Scargill’s nascent SLP in a by-election in Yorkshire. This was a perfectly correct tactic toward a break to the left from Tony Blair’s New Labour. But rather than offering critical support as Lenin advocated, “as a rope supports a hanged man,” the SL/B did so in perfectly opportunist fashion, distributing the SLP’s propaganda rather than their own.

Recently, the ICL has taken another sharp turn to the right, notably over Greece, where it followed SYRIZA prime minister Alexis Tsipras’ call for a “no” vote in a July referendum that prepared the way for the imposition of vicious austerity measures. It followed up with an action program that makes no mention of socialism, revolution or even bringing down the SYRIZA government, and rather than calling for a workers government substituted the formula of “a government which will act in the interests of the working people and be subordinated to them.”² Even with the caveat that this could not be won in a parliamentary framework,

² See “The ICL on Greece: Goodbye Trotsky, Hello Minimum Program,” on page 17.

this formula could cover a call by any British opportunist left group for a Labour Party government led by Corbyn.

Lo and behold, a few weeks later, the SL/B came out with a leaflet titled “Jeremy Corbyn: Tony Blair’s nightmare!” (12 August) which is a veritable encomium to the Labour left leader. It declares that “Corbyn opposes NATO and is for Britain out of this imperialist military alliance,” even though he was already and predictably backtracking on this issue. It proclaims him “a principled and honest representative of the left wing of old Labour in the tradition of Nye Bevan, Michael Foot and Tony Benn.” The ICL’s main claim is that “While the demands posed by the Corbyn campaign are supportable, they cannot be achieved through old Labour parliamentarism,” and require the overthrow of capitalism and socialist revolution.

This is hardly critical support in the Leninist sense of exposing the bankruptcy of the reformists. Instead it is fulsome support with a fig leaf saying Corbyn doesn’t go far enough. And it is based on prettifying, i.e., falsifying, Corbyn’s actual program. It would take a revolution to renationalize the railways? “People’s quantitative easing” can’t be accomplished without the overthrow of capitalism? Nonsense. Having abandoned revolutionary Trotskyism, the ICL and SL/B have become “critical” Corbynistas.

Authentic Trotskyists warn, as Trotsky did in 1926 and as British Trotskyists did in 1944-46, that the Labour lefts reflect the radicalization of the working masses *in order to block it from revolutionary struggle*. In the particular circumstances of Britain, they substitute for a class-collaborationist popular front. As large numbers of workers and youth move to the left, fed up with decades of wage cuts, destruction of union gains, dismantling of social services, and endless imperialist war, communists must explain that the Labour lefts are no alternative, that their actual program, far from pointing toward revolution, is an attempt to head it off by hoodwinking the masses. And the leftists now flocking to Corbyn’s banner are aiding that swindle.

A revolutionary opposition, both outside and inside the Labour Party, would underline that fighting austerity and regenerating the British economy can only be accomplished through workers revolution laying the basis for international socialist planning. It would stress that the haughty British ruling class is armed and dangerous and will use that force to smash resistance unless it is checked and defeated by a greater power, of a mobilized working class armed with a class-struggle program and led by a Leninist-Trotskyist party prepared to sweep away the cops, goons, strikebreakers and court orders, as well as the Labour leaders, left and right, who are the biggest obstacle to victory. For the workers to take power, they must bring down the dictatorship of capital. In no way can that be done by the thoroughly parliamentarist Labour Party, even if it resuscitates Old

Labour’s famous Clause IV calling for public ownership of industry.

Jeremy Corbyn and his supporters believe, sincerely in many cases, in the reforms they extol. The growing mass discontent that his election reflects is real. Possibilities may open up to win some partial reforms, but only through hard struggle against the capitalists, their state *and their labor lieutenants*. The Labour Party remains a bourgeois workers party, and a Corbyn government, should he survive the all-sided attacks that have only begun, would be a capitalist government. Major class battles require revolutionary leadership. As Trotsky wrote following the failure of the 1926 general strike: “Without a party ... the proletarian revolution cannot conquer.” ■

Dominicana...

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recho a ciudadanía a todos los que nacen en el país (*jus soli*), la República Dominicana se suma a Chile bajo la dictadura pinocheta al basar la ciudadanía en una “ley de sangre” (*jus sanguinis*), según la cual, ésta no ha de otorgarse a los hijos de los “extranjeros”. Y al excluir a un grupo en particular del otorgamiento de la ciudadanía, la RD se suma también al Tercer Reich alemán, cuyas infames Leyes de Núremberg despojaron de ciudadanía a los judíos. Estas leyes y decretos de estilo nazi “desnacionalizan” a más de medio millón de dominicanos, además de que azuzan la persecución de otro medio millón de inmigrantes nacidos en Haití y que son un componente clave de la fuerza laboral dominicana. Todo defensor de los derechos democráticos debe exigir la inmediata abrogación de la racista ley de nacionalidad de la República Dominicana.

Bajo estas grotescas leyes y decretos, todo “extranjero” que no cuente con los papeles requeridos será objeto de deportación inmediata. No debe caber la menor duda de que el gobierno dominicano está preparándose para deportaciones en masa, en una escala industrial. Ya ha contratado una flota de autobuses capaz de deportar a 2 mil personas diarias. Se ha firmado un acuerdo formal con el Ejército Dominicano para que realice estas tareas, además de establecer instalaciones de detención en la zona fronteriza.

El general que encabeza el departamento de migración anunció que “a partir del jueves” (18 de junio) equipos de esa institución acompañados por miembros del ejército “recorrerán las zonas urbanas con amplia presencia de inmigrantes para detener y deportar a quienes no se hayan registrado en el programa” (*El Nacional*, 16 de junio). Sus agentes han sido “capacitados” para “detener en la calle a quienes por su apariencia puedan ser extranjeros sin permiso de residencia”. *El Nacional* añade que aunque unas 250 mil personas se han registrado para legalizar su estatus, sólo unos cuantos cientos han recibido un permiso temporal de residencia, y “muchos de los inmigrantes, especialmente aquellos que han vivido por décadas en República Dominicana, no cuentan con ningún tipo de identificación”, de modo que no pueden inscribirse.¹

Las autoridades dominicanas han reali-

¹ Desde la aprobación de la ley migratoria de 2004, los hospitales dominicanos se han rehusado rutinariamente a emitir partidas de nacimiento para los bebés que han nacido de padres indocumentados. Sin éstas, los niños no pueden ser inscritos en el registro civil, y sin documentos de identidad no pueden asistir a la escuela.

zando expulsiones en masa en el pasado. En 1999, decenas de miles fueron deportados a Haití en apenas dos semanas. Los autobuses recorrían las calles de Santo Domingo, la capital dominicana, para pescar a cualquiera que “parezca haitiano”, incluidos cientos de dominicanos de piel oscura. Aunque las autoridades dominicanas afirman que las deportaciones habían sido suspendidas a lo largo del año pasado, éstas se han incrementado notablemente en el principal puente fronterizo en el norte, alcanzando las 6,700 en los primeros cuatro meses del año, triplicando así la tasa de 2014. Hasta el momento, unos 53 mil dominicanos se han visto despojados de su ciudadanía, y aunque supuestamente esto fue revertido más tarde, aún no reciben credenciales de identidad, de modo que podrían ser detenidos y expulsados.

Entretanto, como siempre ocurre cuando las autoridades dominicanas desencadenan una andanada represiva antihaitiana, se han intensificado el racismo y los brutales ataques, linchamientos y pogromos contra los haitianos. El 10 de febrero, un haitiano, Henry Claude Jean (conocido como “Tulile”), de 35 años, de oficio lustrador de calzado, fue encontrado colgado de un árbol en el parque Santiago. Un día antes, una pandilla de dominicanos enmascarados que blandían machetes se reunió en Santiago para pisotear y quemar una bandera haitiana, exigiendo deportaciones en masa. Han circulado videos en Internet de un ataque multitudinario realizado el 8 de abril en la ciudad de Moca que expulsó a 300 haitianos. Las imágenes muestran a jóvenes golpeando mujeres, irrumpiendo en hogares y rompiéndolo todo, con la complicidad de la Policía Nacional.

En medio de esta histeria antihaitiana galopante, mientras se aproxima el plazo del 17 de junio, miles de dominicanos indocumentados buscan registrarse, ¡como extranjeros! para evitar ser deportados. Pero aunque largas filas se han formado afuera de las oficinas de registro, sólo unos cuantos han sido admitidos. Ha habido airadas protestas a diario en Santo Domingo, que han sido dispersadas con gas lacrimógeno por la policía. Se aseguró al Sindicato de Trabajadores Cañeros de los Bateyes emitir unos 10 mil permisos para quienes reciben pensiones tras trabajar durante décadas en los campos de caña de azúcar, pero únicamente 2,900 personas han recibido la aprobación, puesto que la mayoría carece incluso de documentos haitianos, y de éstos sólo un pequeño número ha recibido documentos. Entretanto, unas 49 mil personas viven en los bateyes de los ingenios azucareros.

El gobierno de la República Dominicana es tristemente célebre por sus continuos ataques racistas y xenófobos en contra de la población haitiana. Esto se retrotrae a la masacre de “perejil”² de 1937 lanzada por el títere de EE.UU., el generalísimo Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, *El Chivo*. Más de 30 mil haitianos y dominicanos de piel oscura fueron masacrados entre el 2 y el 8 de octubre de ese año, en lo que en Haití es denominado como “Río Masacre”.³ Trujillo encabezaba a la Guardia Nacional, establecida por las autoridades de ocupación norteamericanas, y el gobierno de EE.UU.

² Los soldados ordenaban a los detenidos pronunciar la palabra “perejil”, lo que muchos francófonos y hablantes de *kreyòl* encuentran difícil. Quienquiera que no pudiera hacerlo “correctamente” era matado en el acto.

³ Para un relato de los crímenes perpetrados por linchadores en contra de los haitianos, véase “¡Alto a la persecución de trabajadores haitianos en la República Dominicana!” en el suplemento de *El Internacionalista*, enero de 2006.



Union of Sugar Cane Workers (UTC) demonstrating outside police headquarters in Santo Domingo, May 25, demanding papers. Signs say “Cane Workers Trapped, Unable to Regularize” and “We Are Cane Workers, We Only Have ID From the Sugar Mills.” Below: even with Haitian identity documents, retired sugar cane worker unable to obtain papers to prevent deportation.



efectivamente condonó la masacre incluso al acordar pagar unos miserables 525,000 dólares de indemnización. Pero de los supuestos 30 dólares que correspondían a cada víctima, los sobrevivientes únicamente recibieron dos centavos cada uno. El racista decreto migratorio “Sentencia 168/13” es tan sólo la continuación de estos ataques que tienen como blanco a los dominicanos de ascendencia haitiana, esta vez por medios “legales”.

Durante décadas, los haitianos han provisto fuerza de trabajo muy barata a la burguesía dominicana. No sólo se ocupan de las durísimas labores de corte de caña de azúcar en la zafra, en condiciones cercanas a la esclavitud, sino que los trabajadores haitianos también constituyen el núcleo de la fuerza de trabajo en el sector de la construcción civil en la República Dominicana, incluyendo la construcción del metro de Santo Domingo. Los haitianos, lo mismo que sus hijos nacidos en la República Dominicana, son parte integral de la clase obrera dominicana. Pero debido a la histeria racista azuzada por las autoridades, son constantemente hostigados, perseguidos y atacados. Los bateyes donde viven carecen casi siempre de la más elemental infraestructura de agua potable y electricidad, y ahí son presa fácil para las bandas de linchadores.

Ya desde la dictadura trujillista, la política oficial del gobierno ha sido de condenar todo lo haitiano como malo, que deben ser erradicado. La masacre de 1937 desencadenó un proceso de “blanqueamiento” de la población dominicana. Después de que Trujillo fuera asesinado en 1961 (con la complicidad de la CIA, una vez que el gobierno demócrata de Kennedy había llegado a la conclusión de que *El Chivo* se había convertido en un lastre), EE.UU. invadió al país por segunda vez, en 1965, esta vez bajo el demócrata Lyndon Johnson, para impedir que la República Dominicana “se volviera comunista”. Joaquín Balaguer, quien durante largo tiempo fuera un cercano colaborador de Trujillo, fue

instalado como la nueva marioneta dominicana de EE.UU., y las políticas racistas continuaron durante sus siete periodos como presidente.

La actual “desnacionalización” de los dominicanos de ascendencia haitiana ha sido realizada bajo las presidencias de Leonel Fernández y Danilo Medina, ambos del Partido de la Liberación Dominicana (PLD). No obstante, está basada en la ley migratoria de 2004 aprobada bajo el gobierno

de Hipólito Mejía del Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD), que clasificaba a los residentes indocumentados como “en tránsito”. Cuando una de los afectados, Juliana Deguis Pierre, presentó una apelación judicial, el Tribunal Constitucional emitió una sentencia el 23 de septiembre de 2013 a favor de la ley racista, y la hizo retroactiva para que se aplicara a quienquiera cuyos ancestros hubieran ingresado a la República Dominicana en los últimos 84 años (!). Cientos de miles de dominicanos fueron así declarados “en tránsito”, aunque hubieran nacido y vivido en la RD toda su vida.

De la ley migratoria de 2004 en adelante, estamos presenciando una verdadera “limpieza étnica en el Caribe”, como lo expresó en el título de un artículo⁴ Sonia Pierre, la difunta presidente del Movimiento de Mujeres Dominico-Haitianas (MUDHA). Aunque no fuera nada radical (fue galardonada dos veces por el gobierno imperialista de EE.UU.), la dirigente del MUDH recibió constantes amenazas de muerte por su defensa de dominicanos de origen haitiano. Pierre murió en diciembre de 2011 de un infarto debido a la hipertensión en medio de una feroz campaña de odio y persecución en su contra orquestado por el gobierno, medios de comunicación y sectores empresariales. El mundialmente famoso escritor dominicano Junot Díaz también ha sido satanizado y tildado de “traidor” por repudiar la infame Sentencia 168/13.

Mientras los partidos gobernantes burgueses de la República Dominicana, la policía y el ejército están metidos hasta el cuello en la racista persecución de dominicanos de origen haitiano, la izquierda y el movimiento obrero dominicanos han hecho poco o nada para combatirla. El Partido de los Trabajadores Dominicanos criticó suavemente la sentencia de 2013, pero no apoya el derecho de los dominicanos de ascendencia

⁴ Sonia Pierre, “Depuración étnica en el Caribe,” *El Nuevo Diario*, 23 de mayo de 2009.

haitiana a la ciudadanía. Además, participa en un bloque electoral con el PLD. Narciso Isa Conde, dirigente de Izquierda Revolucionaria (remanente del antiguo Partido Comunista Dominicano), emitió un pronunciamiento en contra de las leyes excluyentes, pero la mayor parte de la izquierda ha estado vergonzosamente ausente de la lucha contra este ataque virulentamente racista contra el sector más vulnerable de los trabajadores dominicanos.

Aunque debilitados, hay aún varias federaciones sindicales en la República Dominicana (CASC, CNTD, CNUS), que aunque ocasionalmente convocan huelgas nacionales contra la política económica del gobierno del PLD, no se han unido a los trabajadores dominicanos de ascendencia haitiana de la Unión de Trabajadores Cañeros de los Bateyes (UTC). Cuando la UTC se ha manifestado para exigir seguro médico, para extender e incrementar las pensiones y ahora para obtener documentos legales, lo ha hecho sola. El Movimiento de Trabajadores Independientes (MTI) se ha manifestado a favor de los derechos para los dominicanos de origen haitiano, pero el Primero de Mayo, el día internacional de la clase obrera, y en recientes notas acerca de una posible huelga general, este asunto candente no fue mencionado. Eventuales *acciones* de solidaridad de los sindicatos dominicanos contra las deportaciones en masa en Haití generarían una tormenta política en el país, pero el programa *internacionalista* que hace falta para librar la combativa lucha de clases que se necesita es anatema para los actuales falsos dirigentes procapitalistas del movimiento obrero.

El clamor internacional en contra de la xenofobia “Sentencia 168/13” ha sido muy fuerte, incluso entre organizaciones imperialistas como las Naciones Unidas, la Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos y “organizaciones no gubernamentales” proimperialistas como Amnistía Internacional. Esto, por supuesto, no tendrá ningún efecto. El imperialismo norteamericano está tan preocupado por el espectro de un éxodo masivo desde Haití (cuya pobreza es resultado directo de la política norteamericana, desde la destrucción del cultivo de arroz hasta la superexplotación de los trabajadores haitianos en los talleres de costura) que ha destacado permanentemente a la Guardia

Costera para que impida que “balseros” escapen, además de mantener a Haití bajo la ocupación de las tropas mercenarias de la ONU (la MINUSTAH) desde 2004 y de haber invadido al país tras el terremoto de 2010 para impedir disturbios.

Después de que el tribunal dominicano emitiera su sentencia, hubo varias protestas en Nueva York en 2013 para exigir que ésta fuera revertida. En 2008, el Grupo Internacionalista ayudó a iniciar y organizar una manifestación para reunir a izquierdistas y activistas sindicales dominicanos, haitianos y norteamericanos para protestar contra el racista trato que reciben los haitianos en la República Dominicana. Tales protestas, sin embargo, no son suficientes.⁵ Lo que hace falta es un programa de lucha de clases que busque movilizar el poder de la clase obrera en ambas mitades de la isla de Quisqueya en defensa de los haitianos y de sus hijos, así como aquí en Nueva York, donde viven más de 100 mil haitianos y más de 600 mil dominicanos.

La “Sentencia 168/13”, la ley de nacionalidad de 2004 y todas las demás, no son más que trozos de papel que pueden triturarse. Lo que se requiere es una clase obrera con conciencia de clase que luche contra el veneno chovinista del nacionalismo. El Grupo Internacionalista y la Liga por la IV Internacional proclaman, como se dice en el Manifiesto Comunista, que los trabajadores no tienen patria. Hacemos un llamado a la unidad en lucha de los trabajadores haitianos, dominicanos y norteamericanos en contra del capitalismo y sus racistas gobernantes.

¡Alto a las expulsiones de haitianos de la República Dominicana!

¡Defender a los haitianos en la República Dominicana contra la violencia y la persecución!

¡Abajo las racistas leyes antihaitianas de la RD!

¡Abajo los intentos de privar de derechos a los dominicanos de origen haitiano!

¡Plenos derechos de ciudadanía para todos los que residen en República Dominicana ... y en EE.UU.! ■

⁵ Véase “Protesta en Nueva York contra la persecución de trabajadores haitianos en la República Dominicana”, suplemento de *El Internacionalista*, agosto de 2008.

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¡Abajo la racista ley dominicana de nacionalidad!

¡Solidaridad obrera haitiano-dominicana!

¡Alto a la expulsión de haitianos de la República Dominicana!

El siguiente artículo es una versión ampliada del volante del Grupo Internacionalista que fue distribuido en la protesta realizada en Nueva York el 15 de junio, descrita a continuación.

NUEVA YORK, 16 de JUNIO – A partir de esta semana, el gobierno de la República Dominicana pretende iniciar la expulsión en masa de haitianos y dominicanos de ascendencia haitiana. El desastre humanitario que se aproxima ha sido virtualmente ignorado por la prensa norteamericana e internacional. Sobre la base de una racista ley de nacionalidad, cientos de miles de dominicanos han sido despojados de su ciudadanía y corren el riesgo de ser detenidos en la calle, en sus centros de trabajo o en sus casas en los terriblemente pobres bateyes en que habitan, para ser arrojados al otro lado de la frontera con Haití. Muchos han pasado toda su vida en la República Dominicana, no hablan *kreyòl* ni tienen parientes en el país vecino. Son ahora oficialmente desnacionalizados, despojados de ciudadanía de cualquier país, y no tienen derechos en ningún lugar.

Una protesta de emergencia fue realizada el 15 de junio frente al consulado dominicano en Nueva York. El Grupo Internacionalista, los Clubes Internacionalistas de CUNY y los Class Struggle Education Workers (trabajadores de la educación cla-

sistas) participaron en la protesta llamando a favor de **acción obrera contra las deportaciones y los ataques racistas**, exigiendo también **plenos derechos de ciudadanía para todos los que residen en la República Dominicana**. En contra de los racistas defensores de la antihaitiana “dominicanidad”, llamamos por una **revolución obrera en toda Quisqueya** (Hispaniola). La clave radica en la **solidaridad obrera haitiano-dominicana**, y ahí donde ésta puede originarse es precisamente la ciudad de Nueva York, donde cientos de miles de inmigrantes dominicanos y haitianos carecen por igual de derechos en virtud de las racistas leyes migratorias norteamericanas.

Además, señalamos que las tensiones entre dominicanos y haitianos son azuzadas por el imperialismo norteamericano. El siste-

ma de importación de trabajadores haitianos para realizar las labores más duras en la República Dominicana, careciendo de derecho, fue iniciado cuando ambos países se encontraban bajo la ocupación norteamericana, que comenzó hace un siglo. Por añadidura, la policía fronteriza dominicana, el Cuerpo Especializado de Seguridad Fronteriza (CESFRONT), fue establecida por incitación de Washington en 2006, como parte de su empeño para militarizar las fronteras norteamericanas, y sus elementos han sido entrenados por la Patrulla Fronteriza norteamericana. El año pasado, el vicepresidente de EE.UU., Joe Biden, durante una visita a Santo Domingo, grotescamente alabó la ley dominicana de nacionalidad al decir que constituye un “sólido paso” que daría “una vía hacia la ciudadanía” a la población de ascendencia haitiana, cuando

de hecho oficializa la eliminación de su ciudadanía (¡!).

En lugar de apelar a políticos norteamericanos y al gobierno de Obama –que deporta a más de 400 mil personas al año, incluidos miles de haitianos y dominicanos– para que presione a los administradores de su semicolonía dominicana, exigimos el **fin inmediato de las deportaciones, la liberación de todos los que se encuentran en las cárceles y campos de concentración migratorios y plenos derechos para todos los inmigrantes en EE.UU.** también.

El 17 de junio se cumple el plazo para registrarse en el Programa de Identificación y Documentación de Inmigrantes Haitianos (PIDIH) y en el Programa Nacional de Regularización de Extranjeros (PNRE). Estos dos programas fueron establecidos para implementar la Sentencia TC168-13 del Tribunal Constitucional dominicano y la subsecuente Ley No. 169-14 que decretó que toda persona nacida en la República Dominicana cuyos padres, abuelos, bisabuelos o progenitores previos hayan migrado al país sin documentos desde 1929, serían despojados de su ciudadanía. En la práctica, esta agresión racista se aplicará exclusivamente a los dominicanos de ascendencia haitiana.

En contravención de las normas que en todo el continente americano proveen el des-

sigue en la página 22



Nehemías Alvino/Diario Libre

Policía dominicana reprime dominicanos haitianos que intentaron registrarse para poder evitar la deportación y permanecer (temporalmente) en el país en donde muchos de ellos nacieron. Se anunció el inicio de deportaciones masivas para el 18 de junio al vencer el plazo para la registración. Cientos de miles de personas serán afectados.



Contingente internacionalista en la protesta frente al Consulado Dominicano en Nueva York, el 15 de junio, para repudiar la racista ley de nacionalidad dominicana y exigir que cesen las deportaciones, tanto en República Dominicana como en Estados Unidos.

**¡En EE.UU. y en RD: ¡Plenos derechos de ciudadanía para todos!
¡Movilización obrera contra las deportaciones y los ataques racistas!**