



Defeat O'Farrell's Attacks on NSW Public Sector Unions!

For Class Struggle Against Capitalist War on Workers!

Break With Laborism— Build a Multiracial Revolutionary Workers Party!

On 8 September, in the biggest protest by the organised working class in Australia for years, tens of thousands of New South Wales public sector workers mobilised in Sydney's Domain against the O'Farrell Liberal/National coalition state government's vicious anti-union attacks on their pay, jobs and conditions. Elected in March in a landslide victory against the justifiably hated previous Labor government, the O'Farrell regime has announced \$8 billion in public sector cuts, including the slashing of 5,000 jobs. Sidelining the Laborites' beloved arbitration courts, earlier O'Farrell arrogantly declared that all public sector annual wage increases would be capped at 2.5 percent unless there are givebacks on working conditions. With even official inflation above 3.5 percent, this is effectively a pay cut. Meanwhile givebacks and job cuts mean speedups for those left in work and further degradation of NSW's decrepit public services. O'Farrell also aims to privatise Sydney Ferries, an open union-busting attack on the maritime union.

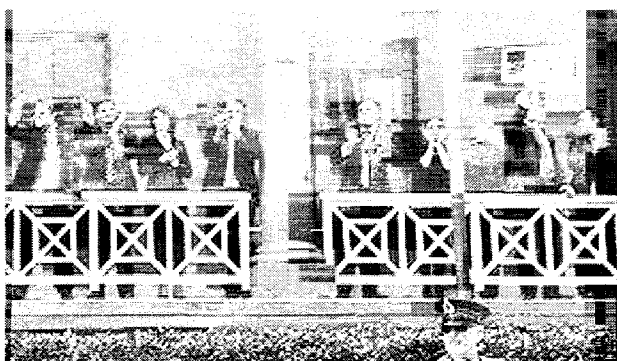
Highlighting the widespread anger over O'Farrell's attacks, teachers across the state went out on a 24-hour strike, defying the bosses' NSW Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) order to halt the action. Joining the thousands of striking teachers at the Domain were ferry workers, who had walked off the job, as well as contingents of firefighters, transport and hospital workers. However, in a provocation against decent unionists and all opponents of state repression, the pro-capitalist leaders of Unions NSW also welcomed into the demonstration contingents of police and prison guards, the sworn servants of the bosses. Promoting these forces as bona fide workers, the union tops outrageously gave over the speakers' platform to a cop and prison guard, the latter railing against those locked up in the bosses' brutal injustice system. The military, police, courts and prisons are the core of the capitalist state. Along with their auxiliaries such as security guards, the cops and screws have no place in the workers movement and should be ousted from the unions!

To turn back O'Farrell's attacks, it is necessary for workers to organise inde-



Nick Moir

Sydney, 8 September: Mass NSW public sector union rally against Liberal/National government's cuts (above). Cynical Labor MPs applaud from parliament (right). ALP in government spent 16 years attacking workers' rights.



Stephanie Gardiner

pendently of the capitalist state. Using the methods of the class struggle, including strikes, mass pickets and occupations, a leadership needs to be built that would seek to draw in all workers and oppressed minorities in a common struggle against the cuts and for jobs for all with full union wages and conditions. Workers need a leadership that will say to hell with the bosses' arbitration courts and anti-union laws, which serve the interests of the profit-gouging capitalist rulers by shackling and suppressing workers' struggles. Hard class struggle can turn the anti-union laws, including the huge fines levelled against unions by the likes of the witchhunting Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC), into a dead letter. In 1969, when Victorian tramways union leader, Clarrie O'Shea, was jailed for refusing to pay fines for defying anti-strike laws, concerted mass strike action won his release. These strikes spiked the arbitration court's penal powers for over a decade. The only illegal strike is one that loses!

The chief obstacle to mobilising workers in struggle is the current, hidebound union misleaders, who push reliance on the bosses' arbitration system and divert workers' anger into pressuring bourgeois parliament. These bureaucrats are fused

at the hip to the Labor Party, a *bourgeois workers party*, i.e. pro-capitalist in its leadership and program while based on the unions. When in power, as it is today federally, the ALP administers the capitalist state *for the bosses*. During 16 years of successive ALP state governments in NSW, the wretched union tops refused to lead the necessary battles against attacks on workers' rights and jobs, on health, education and transport services, thus paving the way for the current attacks. In political struggle against the class-collaborationist program of the union tops, which sacrifices workers' interests for the bosses' profits, we fight to win the working-class base of the ALP away from its pro-capitalist leadership in the struggle to

build an internationalist revolutionary workers party.

Capitalist Economic Crisis and War Against Workers

The attacks by the O'Farrell government are part of a multi-pronged attack by the capitalist rulers across the country and occur in the context of the ongoing international economic crisis kicked off with the 2007-08 crash. With the U.S. heading towards double-dip recession, and multiple European countries on the brink of collapse, one government after another is announcing savage measures to starve the poor, bust unions and drive down wages. While the banks and mining giants in Australia are raking in record profits—largely thanks to exports to the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state—the economy outside the resources sector is stagnant if not in decline.

In the last six months, 50,000 jobs have been lost in manufacturing nationally. Meanwhile, the retail sector is sagging, welfare is being slashed, and more and more workers are threatened with losing their jobs and benefits, superannuation and homes. In this "boom and gloom" economy, the capitalist rulers have launched a broad campaign to target unions and make the workers pay for the malaise of their irrational profit-driven system. The bourgeois media is bellowing for the minority federal Labor Government to enforce even greater workplace "productivity," "flexibility" and "labour reform" through strengthening their already draconian anti-union laws.

The escalating anti-union campaign is captured in a 9 September *Australian* editorial, which smugly advised:

"A return to the option of individual contracts for new employees and a clamp on unions 'striking now, bargaining later' would help bring the system into the 21st century, as would an overhaul of unfair dismissal provisions."

This mouthpiece for the bosses demands a more atomised, compliant workforce with even less rights so the capitalist rulers, who

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**Capitalism in Crisis: Karl Marx Was Right
We Need an All New Ruling
Class—the Workers!**

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grow fat from the wealth produced by the workers' labour power, can increase their rate of exploitation and expand their profit margins. Already, cost-cutting, speed-ups and poor working conditions result in hundreds of workers being killed and thousands more injured across the country every year.

Down with Nationalist Protectionist Poison!

With the ongoing erosion of Australia's outmoded manufacturing base—built behind high tariff barriers—numerous union bureaucrats are demanding that if only the anti-working-class Gillard minority Labor government would act to "protect" local industry this would protect workers' jobs. Exemplifying such chauvinist appeals, the anti-communist leader of the Australian Workers Union, Paul Howes, responded to Bluescope Steel's announcement of more than 1,000 job cuts by railing, "I'm not a protectionist but I believe it's the role of the Australian government to protect Aus-

tionably counterposed to those of the capitalist exploiters.

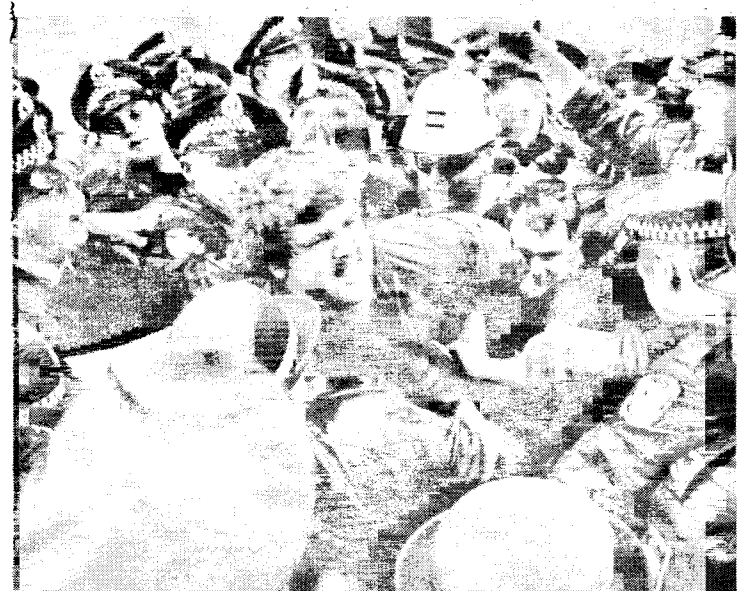
The bureaucrats' nationalist defence of "Australian jobs" pits workers against their international class brothers and sisters. Protectionism serves to protect the bosses' profits, while driving up the price of imports. It does not lead to more jobs and better conditions for workers but ultimately to trade wars. And, as seen in the barbarism of two World Wars last century, trade wars lead to shooting wars in which workers are lined up to slaughter each other in imperialist conflicts for the division and redivision of the world's resources and sources of cheap labour to superexploit in the neocolonial countries.

In Europe, where there have been massive strikes and protests against brutal government austerity measures, the nationalist, reformist misleaders of the unions similarly push illusions in bourgeois parliament and protectionism as they seek to insulate "their nation" from the economic crisis. Keeping workers tied to their own capitalist rulers and sowing poisonous divisions along national lines, the protectionist union tops undermine the unity of the multiracial proletariat at home



Daily Telegraph

December 2010: Protest at Christmas Island detention centre following horrific shipwreck of refugee boat in which up to 50 died. Free all the detainees! Workers must fight for full citizenship rights for all who have made it here.



Stephen Cooper

June 2001: Police attack unionists protesting NSW ALP government gutting of workers compensation. Cops, screws and security guards out of the unions!

tralian and I believe it's the role of the Australian government to put the interests of the Australian people first" (*Australian*, 26 August).

Far from waging a fight against job losses, such nationalist demagoguery serves to line the proletariat up behind the ruling class and their state. Opposed to a class-struggle defence of workers' rights, and pushing the lie that there can be a mutually beneficial partnership between labour and capital, the trade-union misleaders have spent decades selling out workers' hard-won gains in the "national interest," that is, in the interest of capital. During the Hawke/Keating Labor governments of "national consensus" from 1983 to 1996, the union tops presided over a massive loss of jobs, dismantling of union gains, and wage cuts. When workers' organisations stepped out of line, they were met with savage union-busting by the Labor government. It is necessary to forge a leadership that is based on the understanding that the interests of the working class are irrec-

and keep it divided from workers in other countries. Against the union bureaucrats' putrid nationalism, we Marxists declare that workers have no country: workers of the world unite!

For a Class-Struggle Fight to Defend Unions, Minorities!

The social power of public sector workers is not that of industrial workers, who can directly stop the wheels of production, and thus of profit, from turning. But public sector unions include transportation, utility and other workers who provide the means and services by which the economy runs. Hard class struggle would win plenty of allies among the unemployed, immigrants, and all those thrown on the scrapheap by the ruling class. It would also help to forge a fighting unity between public and private sector unionists such as wharfies at Patrick and workers at Toyota, Qantas and myriad others who have gone out on strike and protested against the bosses' attacks. In the recent

period Qantas workers, organised in multiple unions, have struck against threatened job cuts and erosion of conditions. In this situation it is vital to overcome craft divisions and fight for "one out—all out," backed by mass pickets that no one dares cross. This is how the necessary industrial unions will be forged. Against the bosses' attempts at scabberding, unions need to fight for the rights of casual workers and the unemployed, bringing them onto the picket lines.

To unite the working class in anti-capitalist struggle, the proletariat needs a leadership that will unleash its immense social power in struggle against the exploiters for its own class interests and all the oppressed, from women, to victims of "anti-terror" witchhunts, to the besieged Aboriginal population. It is necessary to champion the rights of immigrants and oppose the rulers' war on refugees, its raids and roundups of undocumented workers and cruel deportations. Recruiting new layers of immigrant workers to the unions, with full rights and responsibilities, would bring into the unions new and powerful sources of fighting strength and provide a bridge to working-class struggles overseas.

This is part of defending the unity and integrity of the working class against the divide-and-rule schemes of the capitalist rulers. The fight to organise the unorganised would not only reverse the decline in union membership but also address the spiralling poverty and exploitation of masses of workers, including the growing number of casual workers battling to survive under capitalism.

A class-struggle fight against the exploiters would take up such demands as jobs for all through a shorter work week with no loss in pay, to spread the available work around; equal pay for equal work; a massive program of public works to rebuild crumbling roads, schools, hospitals and transport systems; for decent healthcare, pensions and other social services. Such measures will not be granted by the capitalist ruling class, whose only interest is maintaining its profits and privileges. It will take socialist revolution to provide jobs and a decent life for all.

Reformist Left: Loyal Tails of Pro-Capitalist Union Tops

Any hard-fought defence of workers' rights, or the rights of the oppressed, will face the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state, which exists to suppress the proletariat and anyone else who might challenge the bourgeoisie's exploitative rule. The cops, who violently attack workers' picket lines and student, refugee and anti-war protests, and the prison guards, who enforce the bosses' repressive prison system and beat up and kill Aboriginal people behind bars, are the enemies of workers and the oppressed.

Such an understanding is diametrically opposed to the views of reformist left groups such as Socialist Alliance (SA), Socialist Alternative (SAIt) and the Com-

munist Party (CP). Commenting on the 8 September rally SAIt declared, "The crowd, which filled Sydney's Domain, was made up of all different public sector workers including nurses, bus drivers, ambos, RTA staff, librarians, park rangers and even prison guards and police." For its part the CP gushed, "The Police Association, whose members were on the same side of the blue line as the protestors said the police were not going to be bought off with government announced exemptions on the 2.5 percent wage cap and other cost-cutting. They will remain united with the rest of the union movement to defeat the cuts."

Such disgusting trash is consistent with the wretched reformism peddled by these opponents of revolutionary Marxism; they truly believe that the capitalist state can be pressured to act in the interests of workers and the oppressed. However, as Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin wrote in his famous 1917 pamphlet, *State and Revolution*, "The state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another." It cannot be cleaned up, reformed or pressured to act on behalf of the workers and oppressed; it must be smashed through victorious workers revolution.

In embracing cops and prison guards as supposedly union brothers or, as the Socialist Party contends, "workers in uniform," the reformists act as loyal tails of the pro-capitalist Laborite union tops. Thus, the CPA also reported uncritically on a placard at the rally that declared "No IRC No Justice," backing the prostrate union tops' campaign to restore the authority of the arbitration courts and the IRC's supposed role as an "independent umpire."

Compulsory arbitration, established in the early 1900s, was based on a historic racist pact between the Laborite bureaucracy and the capitalist rulers institutionalising tariff-protected industries and a "whites only" labour force. It also enshrined unequal wages for women. It is no "safety net" but a safeguard for the bosses to keep workers' struggles firmly within the bounds of capitalism. As a part of the capitalist state apparatus, it serves to regulate union struggles in every sphere, from wages and conditions, to strikes. If the working class is to further its own class interests it must be mobilised in complete independence from the capitalist state. We say: No reliance on the bosses' courts! Bury Arbitration!

We also oppose on principle all state intervention into the internal affairs of the

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Australasian

SPARTACIST



For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia!

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Reformists Cheer Libyan “Rebels”—Flunkeys for NATO

Imperialists Overthrow Qaddafi Regime

The following article is reprinted, with a minor factual correction, from Workers Hammer No. 216 (Autumn 2011), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain. The Socialist Workers Party referred to in the article is the British parent group of Socialist Alternative and Solidarity in Australia, the latter being formally affiliated. The Socialist Party Britain, also referred to in the article, has an Australian affiliate called the Socialist Party Australia.

The fall of Tripoli on 21 August marked the overthrow of the bonapartist bourgeois regime of Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi at the hands of the imperialist powers. Spearheaded by Britain and France and backed by the US, in March the world's most powerful imperialist countries unleashed a massive military onslaught. The assault on Libya carried out by NATO was authorised by a United Nations Security Council resolution that claimed the operation aimed to “protect civilians”. NATO subjected Tripoli and other areas of Libya to unrelenting aerial bombardment while “special forces” carried out covert operations on the ground. According to a NATO statement, between 31 March and 31 August, the imperialist alliance carried out a “total of 21,090 sorties, including 7,920 strike sorties”. These deadly bombing raids did not stop with the fall of Tripoli—NATO planes continue to pound areas held by forces loyal to Qaddafi including Sirte and Bani Walid. Several attempts by the imperialists to assassinate Qaddafi have so far failed but an intensive manhunt for him continues.

The imperialist bombardment posed pointblank the need for defence of Libya. In a statement we issued at the start of the bombing, the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) called on workers around the world to take a stand for military defence of Libya against the imperialist powers, without giving any political support to Qaddafi's capitalist regime. We noted that the imperialist intervention, which had the blessings of the sheikhs, kings and military bonapartists of the Arab League, would slaughter countless innocent people.

Prior to the imperialist attack, the conflict in Libya took the form of a civil war, overlain by tribal and regional divisions, between Qaddafi's Tripoli-centred government and the imperialist-backed opposition forces concentrated in the east, a conflict in which Marxists had no side. But with the NATO bombing, the civil war became subordinated to imperialist military intervention. Our statement [published in *Australian Spartacist* No. 213, Winter 2011] urged: “Every step taken by the workers of the imperialist countries to halt the depredations and military adventures of their rulers is a step towards their own liberation from capitalist exploitation, impoverishment and oppression. **Defend Libya against imperialist attack! US Fifth Fleet and all imperialist military bases and troops out of North Africa and the Near East!**”

Prime minister David Cameron greeted the overthrow of Qaddafi by praising the “rebels”, declaring that “free Libyan forces” are now in control in the country and that it is “now up to Libyans to shape

their future”. News media endlessly re-tailed the image of the anti-Qaddafi “rebels” celebrating in the streets of Tripoli and elsewhere. But without NATO, the “rebels” could not have defeated Qaddafi's army. The real value of the “rebels” to the imperialists was in providing a “humanitarian” and “democratic” cover for naked subjugation of a neocolonial country. Now these flunkeys are setting up a puppet government in Tripoli led by the



NATO terror bombing of Tripoli, authorised by United Nations.

KeystoneUSA-ZUMA/Rex Features

The British reformists take their cue from the Labour Party, which stood foursquare behind Cameron on the bombing of Libya. As shadow foreign secretary Douglas Alexander put it: “Labour has steadfastly supported the military action to protect the Libyan people” (*Independent*, 4 September). Following suit, the Alliance for Workers Liberty (AWL) maintained its long track record of support to “democratic” British imperialism. In addition to a 23



Reuters

Tripoli, August: Rebels target black immigrants as “pro-Qaddafi mercenaries.”

Transitional National Council, which is opening up Libya's resources, especially its enormous reserves of oil and gas, to the imperialist vultures.

Defence of Libya against imperialist bombardment should be elementary, not only for proletarian opponents of capitalist rule but for anyone opposed to the strongest capitalist powers imposing their will on weaker countries through overwhelming military might. Not so for the bulk of the “socialist” left internationally, which served to line up workers and youth behind the imperialist murderers by championing the Libyan “rebels”.

March statement titled: “Why we should not denounce intervention in Libya”, the AWL published foam-flecked articles denouncing the Socialist Party, British section of the Committee for a Workers International (CWI) and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) for their stated opposition to the NATO intervention. But while these social-democratic organisations offered pro-forma opposition to the bombing, mobilisations against it were patently small because as cheerleaders for the Libyan “rebels” these leftists lined up with their “own” capitalist ruling classes and welcomed the overthrow of Qaddafi.

The Socialist Party proclaimed the downfall of the regime “a victory for the Libyan people”, but added a disclaimer that it was “also a success for imperialism” (socialistparty.org, 26 August). The SWP favoured imperialist intervention in Libya, but would have preferred an alternative to bombing. In March they advocated: “Instead of bombing Libya, Western governments could hand all the assets they have seized from Gaddafi's regime to the revolutionary forces” (*Socialist Worker*, 22 March). On this the reformists got what they wanted: in March the British imperialist gangsters seized a huge haul of Libyan dinars, the assets of a sovereign country. On 31 August the Royal Air Force flew 280 million dinars (£140 million) to the imperialist puppets in Libya, as a first instalment of the cash they had looted.

On the eve of the overthrow of Qaddafi, the SWP proclaimed: “Good riddance Qaddafi, but don't trust the West” (*Socialist Worker*, 20 August) while the article underneath said: “The end of Qaddafi's regime is a cause for celebration”, while absurdly moaning that the imperialist powers “hijacked the Libyan revolt”. Some hijack: the “rebels” were willing tools of the imperialists. They pleaded for military intervention and fed lurid tales to a pliant Western press of atrocities by Qaddafi's forces, including mass rapes of women, for which no evidence has been found. During the bombing of Libya, the so-called Libyan “revolutionaries” colluded with NATO, acting as spotters on the ground, calling in air strikes and pinpointing targets.

Bitter Fruits of Libyan “Revolution”

The anti-Qaddafi forces were whipped into shape by British and other imperialist “special” forces, the type of shadowy operatives who carry out hideous torture and massacres in Iraq and Afghanistan. An article in the *Telegraph* (28 August) positively crowed that, months before the attack on Tripoli, groups of young males secretly travelled to Benghazi “to learn the art of insurgent warfare from an international force of covert units composed of the British SAS and MI6 and troops from the French, Qatar and United Arab Emirates special forces”. The British imperialists “covertly supplied 1,000 sets of body armour, advanced telecommunications equipment and night vision goggles”; while “hundreds of weapons, tons of ammunition and communications equipment were smuggled into Tripoli and hidden in secret arms dumps”. On their return to Tripoli, the article claimed, the undercover agents convinced an officer in Qaddafi's army, Mohammed Eshkal, to open the gates of Tripoli to the imperialists.

For Marxists, the question of extending military support in civil wars and other conflicts is determined by whether the victory of one side or the other would further the cause of the working class and the oppressed. We refused any support to the anti-Qaddafi forces, which we described as a cabal of pro-imperialist “democrats”, CIA stooges, monarchists and Islamists. Today there is a mounting body of

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evidence showing their reactionary character. "This is a bad time to be a black man in Libya," reported Alex Thompson on Channel 4 News on 28 August, and the bourgeois press is awash with stories of racist atrocities against black African immigrants. Under Qaddafi there were an estimated one million undocumented immigrant workers in Libya, which has a population of six million and a workforce of 1.7 million. Immigrants were subject to racist discrimination and attacks, including anti-immigrant riots in 2000. Today dark-skinned males are being indiscriminately targeted by "rebel" forces as "pro-Qaddafi mercenaries", which can mean summary execution. Writing in the *Independent*, Kim Sengupta described the bodies of 30 black men lying decomposing on the ground, noting that many of them "had their hands tied behind their back, either with plastic handcuffs or ropes". Sengupta continued that "the mounting number of deaths of men from sub-Saharan Africa at the hands of the rebels—lynchings in many cases—raises disturbing questions about the opposition administration, the Transitional National Council" (*Independent*, 27 August).

Among Libya's "revolutionaries", murderous tribal and other divisions are evident. In July their commander-in-chief, General Abdah Fattah Younes, and two of his aides were murdered, by rival "rebel" factions by all accounts. The Obeidi tribe, of which Younes was a member, blames the Islamists for his death. Ali Senussi, a leader of the tribe, told reporters that if the rebel government does not bring those responsible to justice, "the Obeidis are promising this will not go unpunished" (*Christian Science Monitor*, 25 August). Many rebel commanders are former Libyan army officers; Khalifa Belqasim Haftar, a former commander and veteran of Qaddafi's war against Chad, is also a CIA stooge.

The current rebel military commander in Tripoli, Abdel Hakim Belhaj, founder of the now defunct Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, has caused a furore in Britain by complaining that MI6 provided intelligence on him to the Qaddafi regime as a result of which he was imprisoned and tortured. During this time the British secret service worked with the CIA and with Qaddafi's forces in the "extraordinary rendition" of prisoners. At the behest of MI6, Belhaj was kidnapped in 2004 in Bangkok and handed over to the CIA. From there he was flown to Tripoli where he was interrogated, including by British forces, and tortured. Now that Belhaj is in cahoots with the imperialists, he has made assurances that the fact he was imprisoned and tortured in the past "will not stop the new Libya having orderly relations with the United States and Britain" (guardian.co.uk, 4 September).

Workers Power: Once More Unto the Breach...

Among the most avid supporters of the "rebels" on the Labourite left, Workers Power admits that "a major part of the rebel leadership was willing to hand over larger parts of the economy to imperialist multinationals", while sections "with Islamic roots plan to include elements of Sharia into the legal system". But never mind that: "It would be ridiculous to give up on the Libyan revolution because of the crimes of its leadership or the manoeuvres of the imperialists in Washington, London or Paris". For Workers Power, the imperialist-backed "rebels" provide an opening for "a struggle for consistent democracy and internationalism" ("Should socialists support the Libyan revolution?" 22 August).

Workers Power's blatant pro-imperialism seemingly caused some dissent within its membership and led to the expulsion of

Chris Newcombe. In a public statement dated 28 August he declared that he is forming a faction in opposition to the Workers Power leadership. Opposing support to the "rebels", Newcombe asks:

"given that the rebel TNC has totally aligned itself with the imperialist aggressors, what possible basis is there for revolutionaries among the rebel forces to strike even a military front with its leadership and forces loyal to it? Should they



At pro-NATO "Workers Aid for Kosova" demonstration in London on 10 April 1999, Workers Power beats drums for war on behalf of "poor little Kosova," hypocritical cover for bloody imperialism.

not, rather, immediately turn their guns on these pro-imperialist traitors?"

Newcombe adds that anyone reading articles on Libya by Workers Power's League for a Fifth International (L5I) may "ask themselves whether the League has in fact reversed the polarity of its programme, rejecting the AIUF [anti-imperialist united front] in favor of a pro-imperialist united front" (WP-L5I Left Opposition internet posting, 28 August).

Workers Power has a record of marching in lockstep with imperialism. In 1995, under the guise of providing humanitarian aid for workers in Bosnia, Workers Power refused to defend the Bosnian Serbs against imperialist bombing. Four years later, during the 1999 NATO bombing of Serbia, led by then Labour prime minister Tony Blair and Democratic US president Bill Clinton, this arch Labourite organisation joined in the imperialists' war cry over "poor little Kosova", supporting the Kosovo Liberation Army which was a stalking horse for the imperialist attack on Serbia. Despite a veneer of opposition to the bombing, Workers Power marched alongside the Alliance for Workers Liberty in a 10 April 1999 rally in London dominated by NATO and Albanian flags and placards screaming, "NATO Good Luck" and "NATO Now or Never".

Capitalist counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union, an enormous defeat for the working masses of the entire world, emboldened the imperialists to aggressively assert their might over weaker countries through an increasing number of bombings, wars and occupations, exemplified by the slaughter of Afghans and Iraqis in which US and British imperialism have taken a leading role. The social-democratic "left" helped pave the way for these atrocities by hailing the counterrevolutionary forces, from Polish Solidarność to Boris Yeltsin's Russian "democrats".

In Third World countries, the pseudo-Trotskyists invoke the "anti-imperialist united front" as a cover for supporting bourgeois regimes. This includes support to the reactionary "Islamic Revolution" of Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran in 1979. In the Arab world, both Stalinists and pseudo-Trotskyists hailed the so-called "Arab revolution" represented in the 1950s by Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt and in the 1970s by Qaddafi in Libya. Support to Arab nationalism has led to the bloody defeat of workers movements throughout the Near East, not least in

Egypt, where Nasser rewarded the Communists for their support by imprisoning, torturing and killing them.

The bourgeois nationalist regimes of Nasser and Qaddafi inevitably failed to address the felt needs of the masses. To the "anti-imperialist united front", we counterpose the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution, which holds that in the neocolonial countries, the proletariat

must lead all the oppressed masses in a struggle for socialist revolution against their "own" bourgeoisie, as part of an internationalist strategy for proletarian revolution in the imperialist countries.

We have always politically opposed Qaddafi's capitalist regime, a dictatorship that has brutally suppressed anyone suspected of opposing his rule. At the same time, we have consistently defended Libya against imperialist attacks. During the 1986 US bombing of Tripoli under US president Ronald Reagan our comrades of the Spartacist League/US sent a team to Tripoli to express our solidarity with the neocolonial victims of imperialism. The same year we wrote:

"For the 'crime' of defying American imperialism and for being a military client of the Soviet Union, Libya's Qaddafi was chosen by Reagan early on to take the rap for all the world's terrorist incidents. For over five years the U.S. has conducted a vendetta against this small desert country with a population of under 4 million."

—*Workers Vanguard*, no 411,
12 September 1986

In fact, when Qaddafi first came to power in 1969, he was fanatically anti-Communist and anti-Soviet. But with US imperialism targeting Libya—and him personally for destruction—he became increasingly reliant on Soviet arms to defend his country. The destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92 removed what had been the main impediment to imperialist depredations around the world. Following the invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003, Qaddafi

renounced Libya's nuclear weapons programme and welcomed imperialist inspectors to verify this. In 2004, then Labour prime minister Tony Blair brokered a rapprochement with Qaddafi and over the last decade his regime closely collaborated with Washington and London in the "war on terror", while policing the Mediterranean to help the imperialists to keep African immigrants out of Europe.

Myth of the "Arab Revolution"

On Qaddafi's downfall, the SWP hoped that his removal might yet invigorate the "Arab revolution" and warned: "Don't let west hijack Arab Spring" (*Socialist Worker*, 27 August). An "Arab revolution" by definition cannot be a class revolution of the workers in the Arab countries against their bourgeois rulers. It flies in the face of the need for the political independence of the proletariat from all bourgeois forces and is an obstacle to the working class developing basic class consciousness.

A fundamental difference between the events in Libya and the popular upsurges in Tunisia and Egypt is that in the latter two countries there is a powerful, concentrated working class. The proletariat is the only force that has the potential social power and class interest to lead all of the impoverished and oppressed in socialist revolution to overthrow all the murderous regimes of the region. But to achieve this task, the working class must emerge as a revolutionary force under its own class banner. The task of genuine Marxists is to combat illusions in an "Arab revolution" (Mark II) and all manifestations of nationalism, which in Egypt leads to the masses placing their trust in the army. It is also vital to dispel illusions in "democratic" imperialism, which will be used by the capitalist rulers to derail struggles against dictatorship. The NATO bombing of Libya, as well as the occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, is a reminder that "democracy" is only a mask to conceal the true nature of imperialism which has an inherent drive to subjugate the neocolonial countries.

What's needed are revolutionary workers parties to lead the proletariat in a struggle for socialist revolution against the military bonapartists, the religious fundamentalists and all bourgeois political forces, opening the road to the emancipation of women and the liberation of all the oppressed and exploited.

As our comrades in the Spartacist League/US wrote (*Workers Vanguard* no 976, 18 March):

"The Libyan proletariat has clearly been devastated in the current conflict, as migrant workers—a major component of the working class in that country—have fled the chaos, armed violence and racist attacks en masse. The future of the Libyan masses will be decided by working-class struggle that extends beyond the national terrain to include the proletariats of Algeria, Tunisia and, especially, Egypt. That requires the forging of revolutionary working-class parties as part of a genuine Trotskyist Fourth International, which would link the fight for socialist federations of North Africa and of the Near East to the struggle for proletarian revolution in the imperialist centers." ■

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AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST

Cliffites Back Capitalist Pheu Thai Party in Elections

In a widely-anticipated outcome, the bourgeois party Pheu Thai (PT) won Thailand's 3 July general elections, defeating Abhisit Vejjajiva's ruling Democrat Party (DP), which had been installed in government following a judicial coup in 2008. Yingluck Shinawatra, the newly elected PT prime minister, is the sister of exiled former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, broadly seen as de facto leader of the party. Among those backing PT in the elections was Giles Ji Ungpakorn, exiled founding member of Turn Left Thailand and a member of the Cliffite British Socialist Workers Party. His article trumpeting the PT election victory as "a slap in the face for the dictatorship" was eagerly republished by much of the reformist left in Australia, including Solidarity, Socialist Alternative and Socialist Alliance. However this was far from a victory for the oppressed Thai masses.

Like Thaksin's earlier Thai Rak Thai party (banned after the 2006 military coup that ousted Thaksin), the bourgeois Pheu Thai presents a nationalist, populist program that postures to ameliorate conditions for the oppressed masses. Election pledges such as raising the minimum daily wage to 300 baht (about A\$10), debt restructuring for the poor and a guaranteed price for rice farmers ensured widespread support for PT among the impoverished rural masses in the populous north and north-east of the country. For Pheu Thai, such reforms serve to co-opt and contain plebeian discontent within the framework of the brutal and exploitative capitalist system. With concerns among the imperialists about parts of PT's populist platform, particularly raising the minimum wage, a key purpose of Thaksin's visit to Japan in August was to assure the Japanese imperialists that "wage increases [will] not be that high and corporate taxes [will] also be reduced." (*Nikkei Shimbun*, 24 August).

Economically, Thailand is largely a neocolony of Japan—some 40 percent of total foreign investment is from Japan—while the anti-communist alliance with the U.S. dominates politically. The imperialists have made it clear that they are running out of patience with the ongoing bitter divisions within the Thai bourgeoisie, centred around PT and its Red Shirt supporters on one side and the DP and Yellow Shirts on the other. The neocolonial masters are demanding their Thai underlings come together to keep the oppressed and poor down and ensure a stable environment for capitalist exploitation. U.S. president, Barack Obama, phoned Yingluck after the election to congratulate her. Together they affirmed the importance of the U.S.-Thai alliance and pledged to ensure "peace and stability" in the Asia-Pacific region. Earlier, *Nikkei Shimbun*, mouthpiece of Japanese imperialism, wrote in a 5 July post-election editorial: "It is desirable also for stability in the region that an end will be put to the serious domestic strife. More than anything else, it is necessary for the next PM Yingluck to work towards national reconciliation."

Indeed, Yingluck Shinawatra cam-

Abolish the Monarchy! For a Workers and Peasants Government!



Bangkok, 8 August: Pheu Thai's Yingluck Shinawatra kneeling before portrait of reactionary King Bhumibol, receives royal command appointing her prime minister.

paigned under the banner of "reconciliation" during the elections. With its large victory, and particularly its support from the poorer layers of society, PT is well placed to deliver on the demands of the imperialist masters and Thai bourgeoisie for "stability." Furthermore, as reported in a 30 June *Asia Times* article, since February, "high-level secret talks" had been held between the royal palace, military and Thaksin camps in which the military agreed to allow Pheu Thai to form government. In exchange, Thaksin's PT would not pursue reprisals against military leaders over the 2006 coup and the 2010 bloody crackdown against anti-government Red Shirt protesters, and "refrain broadly from intervening in military affairs."

Thaksin's envoy was also pushed to "rein in the anti-monarchy elements in his camp." In her first official address to the nation as PM, Yingluck pledged her loyalty to the deeply repressive monarchy, a symbol and purveyor of Thai nationalism, and historic rallying point for capitalist reaction in Thailand. In mid-September, the new PT coalition government denied bail to labour activist and Red Shirt supporter, Somyot Prueksakasemsuk, in prison for allegedly insulting the king, and has already jailed a further three people under the *lèse majesté* law. We say: Free all those arrested under this draconian law! Drop the charges! Down with the *lèse*

majesté law! Abolish the monarchy!

As revolutionary Marxists, the International Communist League (ICL) has defended the Red Shirt activists against bloody state repression. At the same time we stand in political opposition to this bourgeois-populist movement, which is closely allied to Pheu Thai and is defined by its support to, and from, the billionaire telecommunications mogul Thaksin. The Red Shirts' aims and politics are counterposed to the interests of the workers and rural toilers who have rallied behind it (see, "For a Workers and Peasants Government in Thailand!" *Australasian Spartacist* No. 211, Summer 2010/2011).

In contrast to this principled class line, Ungpakorn, and his pseudo-Marxist cheerleaders internationally, enthusiastically promote the Red Shirts. In doing so, they reinforce deadly illusions in the capitalist state by pushing the liberal reformist lie that, with enough pressure from the masses, the state can be forced to reorder its priorities in the interests of the working class and oppressed. Following the elections, Ungpakorn wrote, "It will be up to the Red Shirt movement to push the Government into making more radical reforms rather than doing secret and dirty compromises with the Military and the elites." Calling on the new PT government to "start to build a welfare state," he counsels that money for state subsidies such as cheap, government-subsidised rice "should

come from taxing the rich and drastically cutting the Military budget" (redthaisocialist.com, 6 September). The blood-drenched Thai military stands at the core of the capitalist state, along with the police, courts and prisons. This state exists to defend the rule of the Thai bourgeoisie. It cannot be reformed but must be shattered and replaced by a workers state.

For a Trotskyist Party, Tribune of the People

In semicolonial countries like Thailand, the role of bourgeois-nationalist governments, including that of Yingluck's Pheu Thai, is to ensure the exploitation of the masses and the plunder of resources to strengthen the power and the profits of the local bourgeoisie and their imperialist masters. In doing so they act to ruthlessly enforce the capitalist order. During the election campaign PT pledged to reinforce "drug suppression," with Thaksin ominously promising to "eliminate the drugs problem within 12 months" (*The Nation on Sunday*, 24 April). The Thaksin government's savage "war on drugs" resulted in some 3,000 extrajudicial killings by the police and military. Such campaigns mean general state repression against anybody deemed "undesirable," serving to regiment and intimidate the masses and directly threaten the working class. Similarly, Thaksin's bloody campaign against the Malay Muslim minority in the south also meant the slaughter of many. "Emergency rule," introduced in three southern provinces by the Thaksin government in 2005, was extended by the outgoing Vejjajiva government this July. The Thai working class must defend the Muslim minority against the ongoing state repression, without giving any political support to the Islamists. Fighting for full democratic and national rights, it must demand that the Thai military and security forces get out of the southern provinces.

The antagonisms between the Red Shirt and Yellow Shirt camps that have dominated Thai politics over the past few years reflect the divisions within the ruling class over how to deal with the fundamental contradictions of Thai capitalist society. With its strong, modern industrial sector based on massive imperialist investment resting alongside an impoverished rural and urban petty bourgeoisie, Thailand is a classic case of combined and uneven development. The growth of industry has created a modern industrial proletariat with immense social weight and potential social power. Women, deeply oppressed in the predominantly Buddhist Thai society, form a large majority of heavily exploited factory workers. Millions of workers in Thailand barely eke out an existence, with immigrant workers from Burma, Laos and Cambodia facing the worst conditions of all.

It is necessary to struggle for the Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution. In countries of belated capitalist development, such as Thailand, the democratic aspirations of the masses can only be met through the dictatorship of the

continued on page 9

Capitalism in Crisis: Karl Marx Was Right

We Need an All New Ruling Class—the Workers!

The following article is reprinted from Workers Vanguard No. 985 (2 September), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

In 2007-2008, the world was plunged into an economic crisis unrivaled since the days of the Great Depression. The con men on Wall Street whose financial swindles were central to this collapse were bailed out to the tune of trillions of dollars. The working class, black people, Latinos, the poor, the sick and the aged have been made to foot the bill, losing their jobs, homes, pensions and virtually anything else that makes life remotely livable. Today, one in six people in the U.S. are unemployed, with the average time out of work close to ten months. Forty-five million people are on food stamps, an increase of 34 percent over the past two years. Those who still have a job are being sweated to work harder for lower wages. In racist America, it's all the worse for black people and Latinos, who were among the main victims of the banks' subprime mortgage scams. One-third of black and Latino households have no net worth, with many underwater in debt. The capitalist authors of this ruin have, in the meantime, made out like bandits.

During the "jobless and wageless recovery" of the past two years, corporate profits have broken all historic records. This comes on top of the enormous enrichment of the wealthiest 1 percent of the population, who more than doubled their share of the national income in the past three decades. The government's "welfare for the rich" schemes have boosted financial speculation, artificially driving up the price of stocks, while the already rotting productive capacity of U.S. capitalism goes through the floor. With the U.S. economy overwhelmingly based on consumer spending—and with the vast majority having no money to spend—this whole house of cards is crashing down again as the economy spirals into a double-dip recession.

For over a month, the stock market has been on a wild roller-coaster ride of panicked buying and selling. Among the detonators of this panic were concerns that the Democratic president of the United States, Barack Obama, had lost control of the imperialist "ship of state" to a pack of

to let the Teabaggers promote the austerity agenda, would now like them to get out of the way. Not only are they undermining the blue-blood status of Treasury bonds, they're making our political system look foolish on a world stage. But when you use odious and/or lunatic agents, there is

countries announced even more savage austerity.

Meanwhile, Britain was exploding in anger ignited by the cop killing of a young black man [see article, page 12]. From London to other cities, thousands took to the streets in an upheaval fueled by vicious spending cuts and job slashing. The *London Guardian Weekly* (19 August) warned: "Together, the global imbalances, the manic-depressive behavior of stock markets, the venality of the financial sector, the growing gulf between rich and poor, the high levels of unemployment, the naked consumerism and the English riots are telling us something. This is a system in deep trouble, and it is waiting to blow."

In Europe, austerity has been met with strikes and protests, at times massive, in defense of workers' livelihoods. But the workers' struggles are hamstrung by their reformist misleaders, who accept the inevitability of capitalist austerity while merely pleading that the blows be softened.

In this country, tens of thousands of unionists and their supporters came out in protest early this year against Wisconsin Republican governor Scott Walker's union-busting law tearing up the collective bargaining rights of public workers unions. With public workers unions everywhere threatened with obliteration, the Wisconsin protests inspired workers across the country who saw them as the beginning of a fightback against the one-sided class war targeting organized labor. But the bureaucratic misleaders of the AFL-CIO worked overtime to squelch any move toward actually using labor's strike weapon, channeling the anger of the ranks into support for the Democratic Party with a petition campaign to recall Walker and a number of Republican state legislators.

The decades of betrayals by these labor fakers have encouraged the U.S. rulers in the arrogant belief that they can get away with doing anything to the working class, the poor and most everyone else without provoking any social struggle. But the rulers and their labor lieutenants cannot eliminate the class struggle which is born of the irreconcilable conflict of interests between labor and its exploiters. The same conditions that grind down the workers can and will propel them into battle against the capitalist class enemy. This was seen in the midst of the Great Depression, when, at a brief upturn in the economy, workers began to engage in hard-fought battles to organize industrial unions in this country.

The sit-down strikes, mass pickets and other actions that built the CIO were ignited by the 1934 San Francisco general strike and mass strikes in Toledo and Minneapolis the same year. All of those strikes were led by reds. It was to head off the threat that class battles would challenge capitalist rule that New Deal social programs such as Social Security were implemented. Following World War II, Cold War red purges in the unions drove out



July 30: CWA union members rally in New York a week before Verizon phone company strike.

deranged Republican Tea Party yahoos. Liberal Democrats and others raged that the Republicans were holding America "hostage" by refusing to raise the debt ceiling unless they got trillions in spending cuts and no rise in taxes for the rich. But it was the Democratic Party president himself who manufactured the myth that the "world's only superpower" was about to default on its debt like some impoverished Third World country. Even if they didn't have the money—which they do, and plenty of it—they "can always print money," as former Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan put it.

Obama's purpose in this charade was not much different from that of the Republicans, as he pushed for a "grand bargain" of massive austerity through slashing more than \$4 trillion from so-called "entitlement" programs like Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security over the next decade. His sop of closing a few tax loopholes for the rich was about all the Democrats could choke out to try to maintain the fraud that they are the "friends" of the little guy. And they even caved on that one.

Nonetheless, the recklessness of the Republicans has disturbed Wall Street and even their own party establishment. As Doug Henwood put it in his *Left Business Observer* (21 August): "Wall Street, the Fortune 500, center-right Dems, non-insane Republicans—who've been happy

always what the CIA types call a 'disposal problem'."

The madness of the Republican Party "Tea Baggers" is merely an extreme expression of the depravity of America's capitalist rulers, who have no other way out of the economic crisis—a crisis of their own making—than to further starve the poor, bust the unions and drive down wages. As the political servants of the same capitalist class, the Democrats are increasingly incapable of even putting a phony "kinder, gentler" facade on the cruel inhumanity of imperialist rule.

It Is Desperately Necessary to Fight!

While Congress was gridlocked over the "debt ceiling," the imperialist masters of the European Union (EU) were in emergency session to come up with another bailout of Greece—in reality, a bailout of the investments of French and German bankers on the backs of the Greek working class. Then it looked like Spain and Italy might go belly-up as rising interest on their government bonds was freezing them out of money to keep their economies afloat. After EU and IMF bailouts of Greece, Ireland and Portugal totaling hundreds of billions of dollars, the European Central Bank started spending tens of billions more to buy up the bonds of Spain and Italy and drive down interest rates, while the governments of those two

A Spartacist Pamphlet

Karl Marx Was Right

Capitalist Anarchy
and the
Immiseration of the
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For Workers Revolution!
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socialists and Communists, including the Stalinists who had channeled workers' discontent into support for Roosevelt's Democratic Party.

Today, there are no longer avowed socialists with a significant base in the unions. But even in the absence of militants inspired by such political convictions, radical leaders will arise and they will be no less militant. Renewed labor battles will lay the basis for reviving and extending the unions, with a new, class-struggle leadership coming to the fore. For the workers to prevail against their exploiters, they must be armed with a Marxist political program that links labor's fight to the struggle to build a multiracial workers party that will do away with this entire system of wage slavery through socialist revolution. *Fight, don't starve! Those who labor must rule!*

The Bourgeoisie: An Unfit Ruling Class

In the *Communist Manifesto*, written more than 150 years ago, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels identified the key contradiction of capitalist society, which lies at the root of repeated economic crises. On the one hand, under capitalism production is socialized. But the means of production remain the private property of a few, who appropriate the wealth that is produced by workers' collective labor.

The boom-bust economic cycles are direct products of the capitalist system of production for profit. Capitalists invest in expanding productive capacity on the assumption that the additional output—autos, houses, etc.—can be sold at the existing rate of profit, at least. However, during periods of expansion the average rate of profit tends to fall. This situation eventually creates a crisis of overproduction, as capitalists produce more goods and services than can be sold at a satisfactory rate of profit. Thus there is the repeated spectacle of masses of workers losing their jobs and being thrown into destitution because *too much* has been produced. As described by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*:

"Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed; and why? Because there is too much civilization, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce.... And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones."

Marx and Engels underlined that the rise of capitalism and the destruction of the feudal order represented a historic advance in the development of the productive forces—science, industry and technology. Yet capitalism in turn became a fetter on the further development of those productive forces. Out of the destitution and destruction produced by capitalism's inevitable economic crises, the means of production came to be monopolized by fewer and bigger conglomerates. Their ever-growing need for investment funds and other financing led to the domination of finance capital, that is, of banking goliaths.

By the late 19th century, capitalism reached its ultimate, imperialist stage. The capitalists in the advanced industrial countries were driven to wage wars to redivide the world in order to plunder markets and secure spheres of exploitation in less-developed countries. In their competition for world domination, the imperialist powers engulfed the peoples of the world in the barbarism of World Wars I and II, as well as waging countless wars in colonial and semicolonial countries.

The utter irrationality of capitalism reached new depths in the epoch of imperialism. While industrial capitalists continued to concentrate on the production of

goods for sale (commodities), the machinations of the giant financial institutions took on unheard-of proportions. As revolutionary Marxist leader V.I. Lenin explained in his 1916 study *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*:

"Although commodity production still 'reigns' and continues to be regarded as the basis of economic life, it has in reality been undermined and the bulk of the profits go to the 'geniuses' of financial manipulation. At the basis of these manipulations and swindles lies socialized production; but the immense progress of mankind which achieved this socialisation, goes to benefit...the speculators."

A case in point is the U.S. bourgeoisie, which for decades has shunned investment that would expand and modernize its decaying industrial capacity or repair the country's crumbling bridges, roads, power lines and levees. Instead, it has squandered much of the economic surplus appropriated through the exploitation of labor on a succession of speculative binges. And in fact it was rampant financial speculation



Athens, 28 June: Greek workers protest government attempt to make workers pay for capitalist crisis.

in the housing industry that triggered the current economic crisis.

In Europe, such financial swindles have sharply accentuated the contradictions inherent in the European Union, an unstable consortium of rival capitalist states. At the heart of the EU's contradictions is the fact that the maintenance of a common currency requires a common state power. That is simply not possible under capitalism. The International Communist League long ago debunked the illusion that the EU could lay the basis for a capitalist United States of Europe. In a statement on the Maastricht Treaty, which laid the basis for the euro, the ICL wrote:

"Since capitalism is organised on the basis of particular national states, itself the cause of repeated imperialist wars to redivide the world, it is impossible to cohere a stable pan-European bourgeois state. A European imperialist 'superstate' can be achieved only by the methods of Adolf Hitler, not those of Jacques Delors, the French social-democratic architect of Maastricht."

—"For a Workers Europe—
For Socialist Revolution!"
WV No. 670, 13 June 1997

Only the conquest of state power by the proletariat can lay the basis for a socialist United States of Europe and a rationally planned economy.

As proletarian revolutionary internationalists, we have always opposed the EU as an imperialist trade bloc. Dominated by capitalist France and Germany, the EU's purpose is to increase their competitive edge against their imperialist rivals in the U.S. and Japan through the increased exploitation of the working class of the EU countries. As the price of entry, the weaker EU states were locked into the euro. Now they are going down, scrambling to meet their debt obligations by driving the working class into the ground. It couldn't have been otherwise.

In 1848, Marx and Engels indicted the bourgeoisie as "unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society" because "it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery." If the bourgeoisie of that time was unfit to rule, the imperialist rulers today have long passed their sell-by date.

An Empire in Decline

Beginning with the 1898 Spanish-American War, the capitalist rulers of the rapidly developing U.S. set out to conquer the world, seizing Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines for their own plunder. When they emerged as the dominant imperialist power following World War II, the U.S. imperialists boasted of the beginning of the "American Century." But by the 1970s, they were seeing their dominance challenged by the rising economic might of Germany and Japan. With its treasury drained by the long, losing war against the Vietnamese workers and peasants, the U.S. was no longer the world's undisputed capitalist powerhouse. This

bureaucrats let Reagan get away with it, crucially by refusing to call out other unions to shut down the airports. This defeat helped usher in a wave of broken unions and busted strikes.

Like Obama today, Reagan manufactured a debt crisis in order to destroy social programs. The "war on poverty" programs enacted to buy social peace in the inner cities following the mass ghetto upheavals of the 1960s were increasingly shredded. But it took Democratic president Bill Clinton to finally eliminate "welfare as we know it." Acting on Reagan's racist demagoguery about black "welfare queens" living off the back of "hard-working taxpayers," Clinton abolished Aid to Families with Dependent Children for impoverished single mothers and their families.

Reagan had run a huge deficit spending program, slashing taxes for the rich while borrowing massively from Japanese and German bankers as well as oil-rich Arab sheikdoms. The overriding purpose was a huge military buildup for U.S. imperialism's Cold War drive against the Soviet Union. Despite its bureaucratic degeneration under Stalin, the Soviet workers state continued to embody the main social gains of the 1917 Russian Revolution. The imperialists were determined to reconquer this vast territory—one-sixth of the planet—for their exploitation.

In 1991-92, the capitalists achieved their counterrevolutionary aim of destroying the world's first workers state. Coming into office on the back of this "victory," Clinton promised that the "peace dividend" would revitalize the economy by reducing the massive government debt. But the "dividend" was largely channeled into an orgy of speculative investment in telecommunications and Internet services, the so-called dot-com boom of the mid-late 1990s. That bubble burst in 2000-2001, ushering in another recession.

Clinton's neoliberal Democrats were followed by the Republican neo-cons of the George W. Bush administration. These nuclear cowboys invaded Afghanistan and Iraq to send a message to the rest of the world that the U.S. remained militarily the top dog on the planet. These wars and occupations were financed through foreign borrowing, while the filthy rich got a tax cut that outdid even the free lunch they got under Reagan. Then the housing-price bubble of the early-mid 2000s burst in 2007-2008, touching off a global financial crisis. Today, we have Barack Obama lamely responding to Standard & Poor's reduction of its AAA rating of U.S. treasury bonds by declaring that the U.S. has "always been and always will be a triple A country." The stock market responded by taking a \$2 trillion nosedive.

After the Soviet Union's counterrevolutionary destruction, it appeared that the

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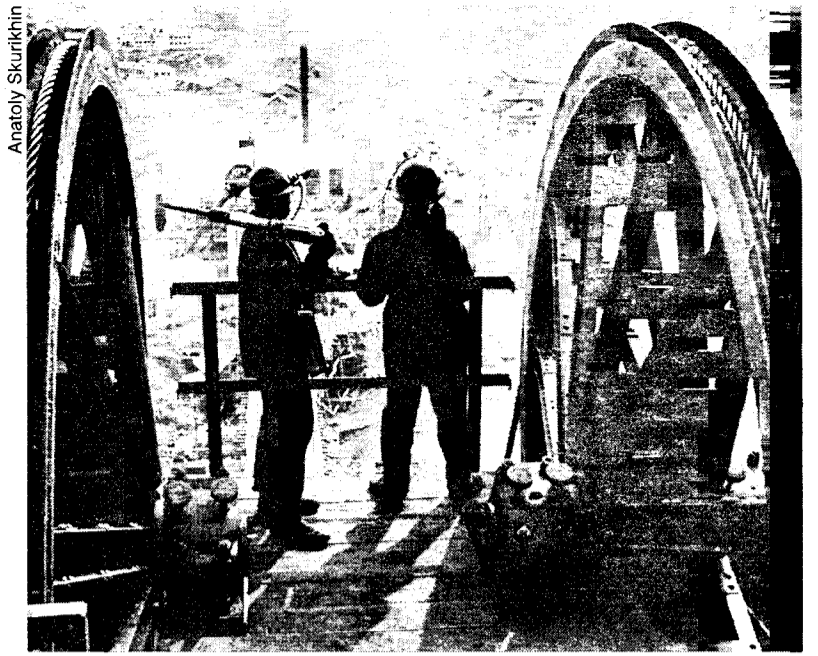
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Bachmann

1934: "Hooverville" shantytown in Seattle (left); new pit opened in Soviet Union's Kuznetsk coal field. USSR's planned economy boomed as capitalist U.S. was mired in the Great Depression.



Anatoly Skurikhin

Crisis...

(continued from page 7)

U.S. imperialists were successful in the quest they had begun almost a century earlier to be the masters of the world. But even as the U.S. has achieved unrivaled military supremacy, its domestic industrial base has continued to corrode. To some in the haughty U.S. ruling class, the decline of the country's economic might is bereft of any explanation—besides being contrary to "God's will." In consequence, a wing of the American bourgeoisie has seemingly gone totally insane.

Even by the lights of their own party's establishment, the current crop of Republican presidential candidates has gone off the deep end. On the campaign trail in Iowa, Texas governor Rick Perry accused the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Ben Bernanke, of treason for "printing more money to play politics," threatening "we would treat him pretty ugly in Texas." Perry, a dangerous reactionary, is here going after a Republican appointee of the Bush administration whose "soft money" policy has in fact been a boon for the bourgeoisie. By driving real interest rates down below zero, the Fed is essentially paying financial capitalists to borrow from the government—and then invest the money for a profit!

A week before Perry entered the race, he was the star of a 20,000-strong Christian fundamentalist revival meeting where he asked God to save the U.S. economy. Rival presidential candidate Michele Bachmann fervently believes that she and other good Christians are to be gathered in the air to sit at the right hand of God during what some call the coming "Rapture." In their deranged worldview, Perry and Bachmann have much in common with the mad miracle monk Rasputin, who advised the Russian tsarina in the dying days of the brutal and rotted-out Tsarist Empire. Obama hopes to ride back into the Oval Office as the "sane" alternative, one who can more effectively implement a bipartisan drive to slash every remaining social program that reflects an impulse not to see masses of starving,

homeless people in the streets.

There is no question that the current Republican candidates are lunatics. But their lunacy is the reflection of the dangerous irrationality of the U.S. imperialist order. Just as the decadent, crazed and corrupt court of the tsars was swept away by the Russian Revolution, we Marxists are determined to build the revolutionary internationalist party that can lead the workers in overthrowing the decaying rule of American capitalism.

For an International Socialist Planned Economy!

The reformist left pleads that the government "tax the rich" to provide the money for jobs, education, welfare for the poor and other beneficial programs. This refrain was recently taken up by multi-billionaire Warren Buffett in a *New York Times* (14 August) op-ed column titled "Stop Coddling the Super-Rich." In response, a Fox TV business analyst denounced Buffett, one of the world's wealthiest financial profiteers, as a "socialist"! Actually, it is the fear that the masses might revolt that concerns Buffett, who opined: "Americans are rapidly losing faith in the ability of Congress to deal with our country's fiscal problems. Only action that is immediate, real and very substantial will prevent that doubt from morphing into hopelessness. That feeling can create its own reality."

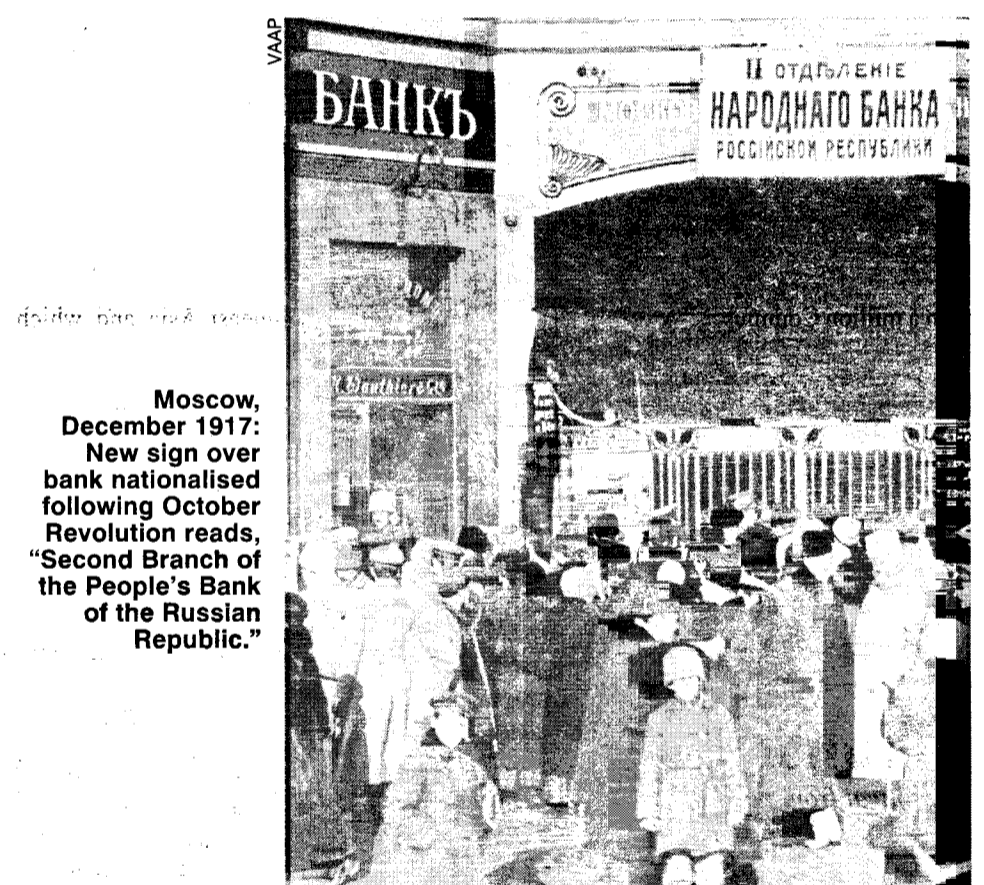
Amid a sea of millions of unemployed, the corporations and banks are sitting on mountains of cash. But you aren't going to get your hands on it by appealing to the tax authority of the capitalist state, whose purpose is to guarantee and defend the interests of the bourgeoisie. To resolve their debt crisis, state and local governments are slashing pensions for retirees to pay off bondholders. To "make the rich pay," the working class has to smash the rule of the bourgeoisie!

In an ideological climate conditioned by the imperialists' proclamations that the destruction of the Soviet Union proved Marxism to be a "failed experiment," the prospect of proletarian socialist revolution might appear implausible. But the collectivized economy in the Soviet Union worked! Despite its isolation in a world dominated by imperialism, the Soviet

Union, arising from deep backwardness and the destruction of world war, civil war and imperialist intervention, became an industrial and military powerhouse.

Now, two decades after counterrevolution destroyed the Soviet degenerated workers state, many in Russia hark back to when they were guaranteed a job, education, housing, health care and vacations, regretting that they were taken in by the myth of capitalist "democracy." What undermined the collectivized economy, and ultimately laid the basis for the destruction of the Soviet Union itself, was

U.S. treasury bonds, which, among other things, are used to finance the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. As Trotskyists, we stand for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese deformed workers state against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. At the same time, we understand that the defense and international extension of the remaining gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution require a proletarian political revolution to replace the Stalinist bureaucrats with a revolutionary internationalist leadership and a regime of workers democracy.



Moscow, December 1917: New sign over bank nationalised following October Revolution reads, "Second Branch of the People's Bank of the Russian Republic."

the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy, which robbed the workers of their political power and vainly sought to appease the imperialists by selling out workers' struggles in other countries.

Today, the deep economic crisis in the capitalist countries contrasts sharply with the situation in China, where the industries central to production are collectivized. At the same time that the U.S. and European governments have been bailing out the financial capitalists while making the workers pay, Beijing has massively channeled investment into developing infrastructure and productive capacity. Faced with a growing number of strikes and protests, the regime has increased the income of workers and peasants. However, China's Stalinist regime undermines the social gains of the 1949 Revolution by conciliating imperialism and promoting "market reforms" that strengthen internal counterrevolutionary forces. In its "partnership" with world capital, the Beijing bureaucracy is subsidizing American imperialism through its huge investment in

As we wrote in our article "Wall Street Nightmare Stalks Working People" (*WV* No. 921, 26 September 2008):

"You can solve a lot of problems with 'domestic cash transfers'—make life livable for workers, blacks, Latinos, jobless, homeless, welfare mothers, drug users, etc. And we communists intend to do so. But you have to first smash the power of the bourgeoisie. For that you need to 'build a workers party, one that doesn't 'respect' the property values of the bourgeoisie, a party that says to the exploited and oppressed: we want more, we want all of it, it ought to be ours, so take it. And when we have the wealth of this country, we will begin to build a planned socialist economy on an international scale. Then we can right some historical wrongs and crimes and pay off some debts left over by our rulers, like some tens of billions of dollars to the Vietnamese and others whose countries have been maimed under the passing treads of American tanks. As for 'compensation' to the people who have driven the United States to ruin, we can offer to those who don't get in our way that they will live to see their grandchildren prosper in a truly humane society." ■

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Thailand...

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proletariat. The conquest of power by the proletariat, with the support of the poor and landless peasant masses, can only be consolidated through extending the revolution internationally, particularly to the advanced capitalist countries. This perspective requires building a Leninist-Trotskyist party to mobilise the proletariat, standing as a tribune of the people, against all wings of the Thai bourgeoisie in the struggle to overthrow the exploitative capitalist system through socialist revolution. For a workers and peasants government in Thailand!

Cliffite Drummer Boys for Imperialism

Ungpakorn broadcast his unprincipled call for a vote to Pheu Thai in a 15 June post on his website:

"Normally, no socialists should ever call for a vote for a capitalist party in any election. To do so would risk making the kind of mistakes that the Stalinists used to make when they adopted the Popular Front strategy, building alliances with the bourgeoisie and making anti-working class concessions. But it is my opinion, that in the coming general election in Thailand, socialists have no choice but to call for a vote for the Peua Thai Party. Peua Thai is a thoroughly capitalist party."

Ungpakorn talks of socialist principles only to trample on them. It takes some *chutzpah* for him to lecture against the Stalinists' popular-front strategy...while peddling the same kind of class-collaborationist betrayal. The call for a vote to Pheu Thai, contrary to Ungpakorn's cynical disclaimer that "We make no concessions to Peua Thai in doing so," only serves to tie workers and the oppressed to the brutal Thai bourgeoisie. The deadly consequences of such class collaboration were played out in Indonesia in 1965-66 with the military-led massacre of more than a million Communists, workers, peasants and ethnic Chinese. This catastrophe was a direct product of the support by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) to the capitalist government of the "progressive" Sukarno. Politically disarmed by the PKI's "joint unity" course, the proletariat was unable to defend itself when the generals, backed by imperialism, struck to behead the PKI.



Daniel Cuthbert

Women factory workers form significant component of Thai proletariat, the social force capable of overthrowing bloody Thai capitalist rulers.

Of course, supporting bourgeois forces in elections is nothing new for the Cliffite International Socialists and its offshoots. It flows from their reformist program of working within the bounds of capitalism. In Australia, the competing Cliffite groups, Solidarity and Socialist Alternative, repeatedly call on workers to vote for the small-time capitalist Greens party, especially in order to pressure the Australian Labor Party. Grotesquely, a leader of the Zimbabwean Cliffites was elected to parliament in 2000 as a representative of the right-wing, pro-imperialist bourgeois party, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), and the group supported the MDC leader in the 2002 presidential elections.

It is also no accident that Ungpakorn should call for political support to a representative of the viciously anti-communist Thai bourgeoisie, whose state has served as a bastion of counterrevolutionary terror within southeast Asia and which today plays an integral role in the U.S.-led imperialist military encirclement of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state. In fact Ungpakorn's support to PT is in line with his reformist claptrap that capitalist Thailand needs "economic Democracy where the people decide on investment and production. This is the true Democracy of Socialism. It is a million

miles from the Stalinist dictatorships of North Korea, China, Laos, Vietnam or Cuba" ("The Red-Yellow Class Struggle for Democracy," 20 January).

Here, Ungpakorn stands firmly in the anti-Communist traditions of the Cliff tendency, which began in Britain in 1950 with the late Tony Cliff and his followers, renegades from Trotskyism. Ensnared in the British Labour Party, and bowing to the pressures of Cold War I hysteria, Cliff and his supporters capitulated to British imperialism and refused to defend the Soviet Union, China and North Korea against imperialist attack during the Korean War. The "theoretical" justification for adopting this pro-imperialist program was Cliff's claim that the Soviet Union, which at the time was a bureaucratically degenerated workers state, had become "state capitalist" some 20 years earlier.

Ever since, the Cliff tendency has been a loyal servant of capitalist democracy and an anti-Marxist opponent of the revolutionary workers movement and all those countries where capitalism has been overthrown. Throughout the anti-Soviet Cold War II 1980s they stood with the imperialists against the Soviet Union. They sided with the woman-hating, CIA-funded Islamic fundamentalist *mujahedin* cutthroats against the liberating forces of the

Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan and championed the anti-Semitic, anti-abortion reactionary Solidarność—the chosen instrument of the Vatican, Wall Street and Western social democracy for capitalist counterrevolution in Poland. They celebrated the Yeltsin/Bush capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union in 1991-92, which ushered in mass unemployment, starvation and nationalist fratricide. Today they back the imperialists' counterrevolutionary drive against China and the remaining deformed workers states.

The overturn of capitalism in China, North Korea, Cuba, Vietnam and Laos are victories for the world's working masses. However, in the absence of the working class fighting as a contender for power in its own name under the leadership of a revolutionary, internationalist party, these overturns resulted in bureaucratically deformed workers states. Resting atop the collectivised property forms are parasitic, nationalist regimes similar to the Stalinist bureaucratic caste in the former Soviet Union, which usurped political power from the working class in a political counterrevolution in 1923-24. Just as we defended the Soviet degenerated workers state, the ICL stands for the unconditional military defence of the remaining deformed workers states against imperialism and internal counterrevolution despite the bureaucratic misleaders who undermine the social overturns and are an obstacle to their international extension. We fight for proletarian political revolutions to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies, and establish governments based on genuine workers councils and an internationalist program. This requires forging Leninist-Trotskyist parties.

Workers in Thailand must be won to the defence of the remaining deformed workers states if they are to successfully liberate themselves from the capitalist rulers. Fighting for a socialist federation of southeast Asia, and linked to the struggle for proletarian revolution in the imperialist heartlands, the creation of a workers and peasants government in Thailand would reverberate throughout the region and beyond. Our model is the October 1917 Russian Revolution led by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party, which established the world's first workers state and was a beacon for the oppressed around the world. For new October Revolutions! For world socialist revolution! ■

Unions...

(continued from page 2)

unions, including "corruption" investigations such as the one now targeting the Health Services Union. Similarly we oppose the legal actions launched by competing factions in the Electrical Trades Union, centred on Victorian "left" union official Dean Mighell and national secretary Peter Tighe. By inviting the bosses' courts into union affairs, the union bureaucrats legitimise the very state whose institutions, such as the witchhunting ABCC, are conducting war on the unions. Down with the ABCC! State out of the unions! Unionists must clean their own house!

The Fight for Revolutionary Leadership

Together with the pro-capitalist ALP parliamentarians, the bureaucratic caste of trade-union misleaders is based on an increasingly thin layer of privileged workers. This caste is bought off by the crumbs obtained from the profits generated by Australian imperialist exploitation abroad. As such they act in general to subordinate the interests of the working class to the bourgeoisie. However, under pressure from the union ranks, they are at times forced to lead struggles against the capi-

talist rulers' attacks. Unions are the basic defence organisations of the working class against the capitalist exploiters. Where there is no union, there is no organised force to resist the relentless drive by the bosses to increase profits at the expense of workers' livelihoods and lives. Despite their rotten Laborite leadership, any refusal to defend the unions against the bosses' attacks is class treachery.

Thus, we warn against the dubious Socialist Equality Party (SEP), whose supporters were trawling the 8 September rally with a leaflet calling on workers to organise "independently from the trade union apparatus, though [sic] the formation of rank-and-file committees." What these political bandits mean by this is spelled out in their January 2010 "Statement of Principles," which brands the trade unions "reactionary" and calls on workers to rebel "against and break with these corrupt organisations," declaring that unions "in no way represent the working class." By conflating the trade unions with their misleaders, the SEP line up behind the bosses' anti-union attacks and provide an apology for strike-breaking.

Counterposed to the SEP, who spit on the trade unions, and the reformists who hang off the coat-tails of the union misleaders, we Trotskyists are for a resolute political fight against the Laborite tops, in

the process of building a class-struggle leadership. Rebuilding the unions as fighting organisations able to take on and defeat the bosses' union-busting offensive will necessitate a serious, politically-organised fight against Laborite nationalism and reliance on the capitalist state. This is inextricably linked to the fight to forge an internationalist revolutionary workers party committed to the struggle for socialist revolution to end the whole system of capitalist exploitation. The way out of the endless boom-and-bust cycles

of the capitalist system was shown by the 1917 Russian Revolution, when the workers took power, seizing the banks, factories and mines from the capitalist class, and established a proletarian state based on an internationalist program. Only when the capitalist system is destroyed root and branch on a global scale through victorious revolutions and an internationally planned, collectivised economy is established will the material basis for the elimination of all poverty and exploitation be laid. ■

Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Club Classes

MELBOURNE

Saturday 15 October, 3 p.m.
The Degeneration of the Russian Revolution

Saturday 19 November, 3 p.m.
Trotskyism: What It Isn't and What It Is

New International Bookshop
Trades Hall, corner Victoria and Lygon
Streets (Victoria St entrance), Carlton
Information and readings: (03) 9654 4315
spartacist@iprimus.com.au

SYDNEY

Saturday 22 October, 1 p.m.
Marxism and the National Question

Saturday 12 November, 1 p.m.
For Socialist Revolution Throughout the Near East!

Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts
280 Pitt Street, Sydney
(near Bathurst Street corner)
Information and readings: (02) 9281 2181
spartacist@exemail.com.au

England...

(continued from page 12)

the Labour Party government, British imperialist armed forces were in the forefront of the bloody occupations of neo-colonial Afghanistan and Iraq. Under the present Tory-Liberal coalition government, British imperialism is playing a leading role in the NATO terror bombing of oil-rich Libya. Mocking Cameron's lying claim that NATO bombs are "protecting civilians" and upholding "democracy," Qaddafi's deputy foreign minister urged Cameron to step down on the grounds that "violent repression of peaceful demonstrations by police" showed that "Cameron and his government have lost all legitimacy" (London *Daily Telegraph*, 11 August). At the outset of the bombing, the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) issued a statement calling on workers around the world to take a stand for military defence of semicolonial Libya against the imperialist attack (printed in *WV* No. 977, 1 April).

The flames that engulfed English cities lit up the grotesque class inequality and racist oppression that are endemic to British capitalism. While venal Conservative and Labour spokesmen pontificate against the evils of "looting," everyone knows that the capitalist rulers are guilty of looting the country's wealth. The City of London is an international citadel of finance capital whose gleaming office towers represent the opulence that is generated by the grinding exploitation of the working people. Not far from the City are some of the poorest districts in London, where a large percentage of minorities are concentrated. When boom turned to bust, the banks were bailed out (and the gigantic bankers' bonuses were protected) at massive cost to the taxpayers. Now, at Cameron's instigation, local coun-



Cops arrest man in south London as revolt spreads in city's impoverished neighbourhoods, 8 August.

cent, Haringey local council, which covers Tottenham area, closed most of its youth clubs. One youth remarked, "At least we had somewhere to go. Now we walk down the streets, we get pulled over by police. There is nothing here for us" (London *Guardian*, 29 July).

There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts!

In looking at the British "justice" system today, one does not have to be a Marxist to see what class it serves. No one has been arrested from the Metropolitan Police—truly one of London's most dangerous armed gangs—which has been exposed for receiving hefty sums of cash (in plastic shopping bags) from the gang of Rupert Murdoch & Co. Intimately connected to these outfits, Tory and Labour politicians howl against the "criminality" of anyone who helped himself to a pair of sneakers or a bottle of water. The politicians' hypocrisy

But leave the greater villain loose
Who steals the common off the goose."

Or, as Friedrich Engels, co-author with Karl Marx of the *Communist Manifesto*, aptly wrote in his 1845 book, *The Condition of the Working-Class in England*, the majority of offences against property arise from some form of want because "what a man has, he does not steal." With the masses being driven to rioting by the increasingly abject conditions of their lives, the Spartacist League/Britain suggests, as an immediate measure, that the government *give the "looters" £10,000 each and let them go!*

Rioting, however, can do nothing to eliminate the grinding poverty of Britain's working class. As the Spartacist League/U.S. wrote when Los Angeles exploded following the 1992 acquittal of the cops who beat black motorist Rodney King nearly to death, the looting there was "indeed understandable, but won't do anything to eliminate the entrenched poverty of America's inner cities.... *The point is not to seize articles of consumption but to expropriate the means of production. And that takes a leap in consciousness and organization to do away with the capitalist order*" (*WV* No. 551, 15 May 1992).

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP), followers of the late Tony Cliff, ludicrously equates looting with the expropriation of the means of production—i.e., the seizure and collectivisation of industry, the banks, etc., by the proletariat. The SWP writes: "Karl Marx was exactly right when he talked about expropriating the expropriators, taking back what they have taken from us. That's what looting by poor working class people represents and in that sense it is a deeply political act" (*Socialist Worker*, 13 August). The idea that looting offers a solution to the grinding poverty, racism and oppression besetting black and Asian communities shows that the SWP will mindlessly cheerlead for anything that moves, no matter how far removed from socialist consciousness it may be. But the bottom line for these reformists is to refurbish Labour's image, which they do with calls to "Jail the Tories, not young people" (*Socialist Worker*, 20 August) and by hailing what they call a "rising against Tory Britain" (*Socialist Worker*, 13 August).

Riots are an expression of despair, often including ugly incidents of indiscriminate attacks on individuals. The killing of three young Asian men in Birmingham by a car driven straight at them is a heinous crime. The racial tensions between blacks and Asians during the riots were an outgrowth of the "divide and rule" policies the British rulers apply to divide the proletariat and weaken its struggles, as they did historically to maintain their Empire. In an effort to defuse those tensions, Tariq Jahan, father of one of the victims, courageously appealed for calm, saying, "I lost my son. Blacks, Asians, whites—we all live in the same community." He added: "Step forward if you want to lose your sons. Otherwise, calm down and go home—please."

There is an urgent need for the working

class and oppressed to struggle against the relentless attacks on their livelihoods. The question is how. The current deepgoing economic crisis is part and parcel of the normal workings of the capitalist system. There will be no end to the misery, poverty and repression that afflict the vast majority of the population short of the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist order and the establishment of rule by the working class. The SL/B seeks to forge a multiethnic revolutionary workers party—a Leninist-Trotskyist party—based on a programme for international socialist revolution.

Mobilise Workers' Social Power!

Britain is the latest country in Europe to be swept by major unrest, reflecting seething anger among the working classes against relentless attacks on their living standards. Particularly in Greece, the working class has waged major class battles, including several general strikes in recent years, but the impact of these struggles has been undermined by the reformist misleaders of the working class, who accept the need for austerity as a solution to the economic crisis. In Britain, the fact that the pent-up fury against the government's attacks on the working class is being dissipated in outbursts of rioting testifies to the low level of class struggle over the past two decades. This is due in no small part to the failure of the trade-union bureaucracy to mount any effective struggle against austerity and job cuts, allowing the capitalist rulers to ride roughshod over the working people.

Trade-union membership in Britain today is concentrated among low-paid workers in the public sector, with minorities heavily represented. The membership of the rail unions in London Underground and the national railway network, as well as the civil service and postal unions, is multiethnic. Together, these unions have considerable social power. Transport workers in London for example, have the power to bring the city to a halt, including its precious financial district. But mobilising that power requires a political struggle against the reformist trade-union bureaucracy, which is tied to the Labour Party and to the racist capitalist order.

It is through the intervention of Marxists into class and social struggles that a revolutionary workers party will be forged. Such a party would champion the interests of all the oppressed, fighting against racism and other manifestations of chauvinism. An integral part of building this party is the fight for a class-struggle leadership in the trade unions. In Britain today, such a leadership would appeal to disaffected youth by waging a fight for jobs, through demands such as a shorter working week with no loss in pay. A class-struggle leadership would demand union control of hiring and union-run job training and skills programmes to recruit minority youth into the workforce and into the unions. The task of a Leninist party is to bring about the necessary change in consciousness in the proletariat, leading to the understanding that a society run in the interests of the working people—with jobs for all and a decent standard of living—cannot be achieved within the framework of capitalism.

From the point of view of Britain's working class and oppressed minorities, it makes little difference whether the government is Tory or Labour, historically the social-democratic vehicle that tied the working class to the capitalist order. When the riots erupted both parties (as well as the Liberal Democrats) vied to be seen as the best defenders of the police. Not a single Labour MP—neither the so-called "lefts" nor the handful of black MPs—condemned the cops who killed Mark Duggan. Far from it: Labour spokesmen attacked the government from the right, denouncing the planned cuts to the police budget. Labour Party leader Ed Miliband said, "Police on our streets make our communities safer and make the public feel safer" (BBC, 11 August).

AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST



Derry, 1972: British troops occupying Northern Ireland round up "suspects" in crackdown against Catholic minority.

cils have begun proceedings to evict families of "rioters" from public housing, while work and pensions secretary Iain Duncan Smith proposed withdrawing benefits from those convicted.

"There Is Nothing Here for Us"

The rioting spread so dramatically because, on top of decades of grinding poverty affecting whites as well as blacks and Asians, the working people are being fleeced to pay for the current economic crisis. Nearly a million people aged 16 to 24 are unemployed. Youth joblessness overall has reached almost 20 per cent and is almost 50 per cent for black youth. Official figures for riot-affected areas such as Hackney, East London, show 44 per cent of children living in poverty.

A growing number of youth are being cast out of productive economic life and dubbed Neets—"not in employment, education or training." The government tripled tuition fees in higher education and abolished the Education Maintenance Allowance, a small stipend that enabled poor youth to attend college, sparking militant student protests last December. Faced with cutting its budget by 75 per

is indeed rich in light of the recent scandal over Members of Parliament (MPs) making taxpayers shell out for the upkeep of their second homes, not to mention the cost of your "duck island" or cleaning out the moat at your country estate!

People accused of involvement in "rioting" are being thrown into prison on ludicrously trivial charges. Two white youths were sentenced to four years in prison for having (jokingly) summoned friends on Facebook to a "riot" that never happened. In Brixton, a black neighbourhood in South London, one person got a six-month sentence for stealing bottles of water worth £3.50. In Manchester an alcoholic who had just been released from prison and had only £4 in his pocket was sentenced to 16 months for taking a box of doughnuts from Krispy Kreme. The truth is that in poor neighbourhoods such as Tottenham, there isn't much to steal.

The blatant class bias of capitalist "justice" in Britain today recalls the 17th-century English poem protesting the enclosure (i.e., theft) of common lands that were being privatised by the rising bourgeoisie:

"They hang the man and flog the woman
Who steals the goose from off the common

Tottenham's black Labour MP, David Lammy, ranted to the press about the "totally unacceptable" behaviour of the rioters, voicing only the mildest criticisms of the cops who gunned down Mark Duggan. Nevertheless, Lammy, who symbolises a very small layer of middle-class blacks, was subjected to an outrageous racist tirade by reactionary historian David Starkey on BBC television. Black MP for Hackney Diane Abbott, once regarded as a Labour "left," chimed in with the "law and order" brigade, calling for curfews to help "regain control of the streets." Labour's backing for the racist cops is not new: When he was London mayor, Labour's Ken Livingstone was unwavering in his support for the police who in 2005 brutally killed Brazilian electrician Jean Charles de Menezes, deemed a "terrorism suspect." Mark Duggan was killed under the Metropolitan Police's "Operation Trident," which supposedly targets "gun crime" among blacks. This operation was begun under Labour home secretary David Blunkett, in consultation with William Bratton, the former police chief of New York and other major U.S. cities whom David Cameron proposes to employ in London.

Minorities and the 1984-85 Miners Strike

The link between class struggle against the capitalist state and the fight against racial oppression seems remote today, but this was not always the case. It is not an accident that the last major assault by the state on Britain's predominantly black and Asian inner-city areas took place in 1985, the same year as the defeat of the heroic miners strike. For more than a year of bitter class war, miners and their families had defended themselves against an army of police sent by Margaret Thatcher's Tory government to occupy the coalfields. In the course of the strike, powerful bonds were forged between the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and black and Asian minorities. While blacks and Asians saw in the (predominantly white) miners union a powerful force battling against the state and became enthusiastic supporters of the strike, many miners became convinced of the importance of combating racial oppression.

The defeat of the NUM dealt a severe blow to the workers movement in this country, the effects of which—from accelerating deindustrialisation to gutting the unions—are still felt today. For minority communities, the strike's defeat also had grave ramifications. In the space of a few weeks, the cops staged racist provocations that sparked explosions of anger in major black and Asian neighbourhoods. A police provocation in September 1985 in Birmingham's Handsworth was followed weeks later by the police shooting of a black woman, Cherry Groce, in Brixton, sparking a revolt there. Shortly afterwards, Liverpool's Toxteth area also erupted. When the police invaded Broadwater Farm on 7 October 1985 in the aftermath of the racist cop killing of Cynthia Jarrett, they got more than they bargained for. As residents defended their communities in a raging battle lasting several days, one cop was killed. For this, three innocent youth—Winston Silcott, Engin Raghip and Mark Braithwaite—served years in prison as the result of a police frame-up.

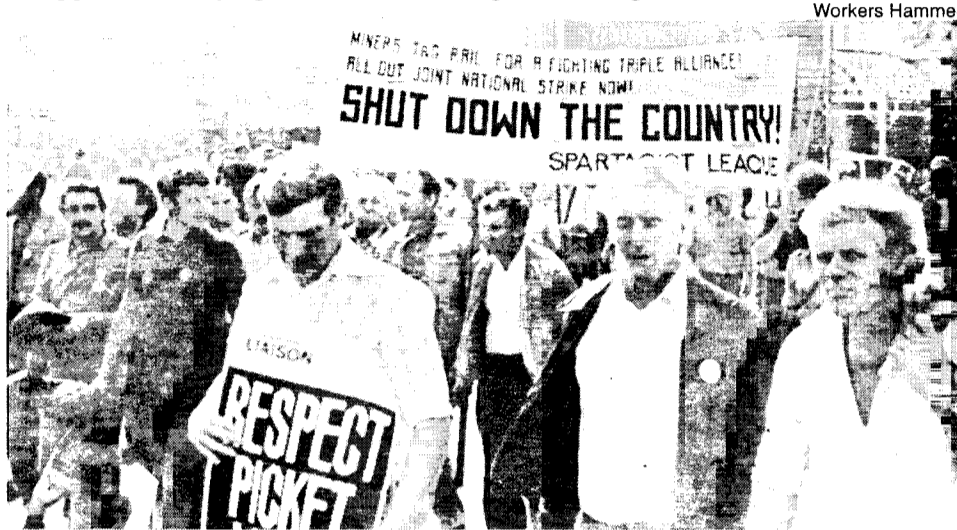
Following the revolts in Handsworth and Brixton, the SL/B noted that in the aftermath of the miners strike, Thatcher was intent on teaching a bloody lesson to the black and Asian population that had warmly supported the miners, warning that this would mean escalating racist attacks. The article stated:

"The Spartacist League has fought to tap the sense of unity between minorities and trade union militants kindled in the miners strike, as part of our perspective of building the multiracial revolutionary workers party which will be a tribune of all the oppressed. We have fought to mobilise the integrated Birmingham labour movement for defence of the Handsworth community against the cop



John Harris/IFL

September 1984: Cops and picketers clash during heroic British coal miners strike (top); Spartacist League/Britain at Brighton march calls for class-struggle solidarity against union-busting Thatcher government.



Workers Hammer

terror. The same is needed in Brixton and elsewhere. Protest strike action by London's heavily black and Asian Tube and bus workers, for example, could make the racist bosses put a halt to their reign of terror in Brixton. But that takes a political struggle against the racist, pro-capitalist labour misleaders."

—Workers Hammer No. 73, October 1985

It wasn't mainly the repression by the viciously anti-union Thatcher government that ensured the defeat of the miners strike. The Labour Party leadership under Neil Kinnock and the Trades Union Congress bureaucracy were openly hostile to the strike. Particularly responsible for the defeat were the "left" trade-union leaders who failed to strike alongside the miners. This includes the dockers union leaders, who sent their members back to work twice during the miners strike. A few years later, the dockers union itself was decimated. The trade-union "lefts" were wedded to the Labour Party, to "gradual change" through Parliament, and hence to the capitalist order.

When the black Labour leader of Haringey council, Bernie Grant, voiced the simple truth that the cops who invaded Broadwater Farm got "a bloody good hiding," he was widely denounced, including by the Labour leadership. Grant later apologised, but he remained popular among blacks until his death in 2000. Although he was regarded as a troublemaker by the Labour Party leadership, Grant served Labour's purpose, notably in 1993 when he helped prevent an explosion of rage from "getting out of hand" following the death of Jamaican woman Joy Gardner at the hands of cops who had seized her for deportation. Above all, Grant played his part in fostering illusions among black youth in Labour, the party that had introduced racist virginity tests for South Asian women entering Britain when it was in office in 1974-79.

The unfettered financial boom that characterised the Thatcher years went hand in hand with the destruction of manufacturing jobs, which continued throughout Labour's years in office. Among those thrown onto the dole queues were the descendants of immigrants from former Caribbean and Indian colonies brought over to do low-paid work in times

of labour shortage, particularly after World War II. Not only the former coal and steel producing areas but also the textile manufacturing towns of Oldham and Bradford, which employed thousands of Asian workers, became wastelands of chronic unemployment and poverty.

For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

Today Labour is lurching towards right-wing populism, which is inherently racist, competing with the fascist English Defence League (EDL) for the allegiance of backward white workers. In recent years, Labour leaders and trade-union bureaucrats have embraced the slogan "British jobs for British workers," historically a rallying cry of the fascists that became prevalent during reactionary strikes against foreign workers on construction sites in 2009. The reformist Socialist Party (SP), section of Peter Taaffe's Committee for a Workers' International, wholeheartedly supported these strikes. We categorically denounced these actions and underlined the need for defence of immigrant workers. We pointed out that a class-struggle leadership in the unions would start from an internationalist framework, organising immigrant workers into the unions and collaborating with workers across national boundaries.

In keeping with its long record of supporting the police and prison guards, the SP echoed the Labour leaders during the hoopla over the recent riots, sympathetically quoting a spokesman from the Metropolitan Police Federation bemoaning the low morale among cops due to the government's intended cuts (socialistparty.org.uk, 8 August). Harassment by cops—lyingly depicted by the SP as fellow workers—has now reached the point where black people are 26 times more likely than whites to be stopped and searched by police in England and Wales, according to a study by London School of Economics and others.

The number of deaths, particularly of black people, in police custody is staggering. In March, reggae artist Smiley Culture (David Emmanuel) died during a police raid at his Surrey home, with the cops making the incredible claim that he stabbed himself to death. The same month, Kingsley Burrell Brown died from injuries sustained in the

course of being committed to hospital under the Mental Health Act by police in Birmingham. Last month, 21-year-old Demetre Fraser supposedly "committed suicide" by jumping from the 11th floor of a high-rise block in Birmingham when confronted by police. In a single week in August, three people died at the hands of police: 27-year-old Dale Burns died in Cumbria when police subjected him to shocks from a Taser gun and pepper spray; black 25-year-old Jacob Michael died after being pepper sprayed in Cheshire; 53-year-old Philip Hulmes died in police custody in Bolton.

The racist backlash against "looters" has emboldened the EDL, which smelled an opportunity to mobilise vigilantes in some of the riot-hit areas. Under previous Labour governments, the EDL had drawn strength from the "war on terror" that primarily targeted Muslims, as well as from the relentless anti-immigrant campaigns. The EDL is a deadly threat to blacks as well as to Asians, against whom it has staged numerous racist provocations in the past and threatens to do again in East London on 3 September. And make no mistake: these fascists pose a direct threat to the entire working class, as potential shock troops to be deployed against rising class struggle. It is the task of the workers movement to stop them in their tracks.

As distinct from the liberals and reformists who lead Unite Against Fascism, we oppose calls on the capitalist state to "ban the fascists." It is not hard to see why. In response to the planned EDL march in East London and an anti-fascist counter-demonstration, Home Secretary Theresa May has banned all demonstrations in five London boroughs for a period of 30 days. As Workers Hammer No. 209 (Winter 2009-2010) declared, EDL provocations "must be met with massive protest centred on the trade unions mobilised for defence of Muslims, immigrants and all the intended victims of the EDL scum." The article continued:

"It is in the interests of the multiethnic working class as a whole to combat these racist terrorists. We call for trade union/minority mobilisations to stop fascist provocations. At the same time, as Marxists we make clear that the decaying capitalist system breeds the social conditions in which the fascists thrive and therefore the struggle against fascism is inseparable from the fight for socialist revolution."

Out of the social struggles that will inevitably be waged by workers and minorities will arise a new generation of militant leaders. What's needed is a party dedicated to the task of leading the working class to power. This requires socialist revolution to overthrow the entire capitalist order. Fundamental change in the interests of the working people can only come about through revolutionary internationalist class struggle, which must shatter the framework of capitalism worldwide. Socialist revolution will lay the basis for rationally planned economies based on production for need, not for profit, and for a qualitative development of the productive forces, opening the road to the elimination of poverty and the creation of an egalitarian socialist society. ■

WORKERS HAMMER

Israel "celebrates" founding by slaughtering Palestinians again

For a revolutionary workers revolution
For a socialist federation of the world

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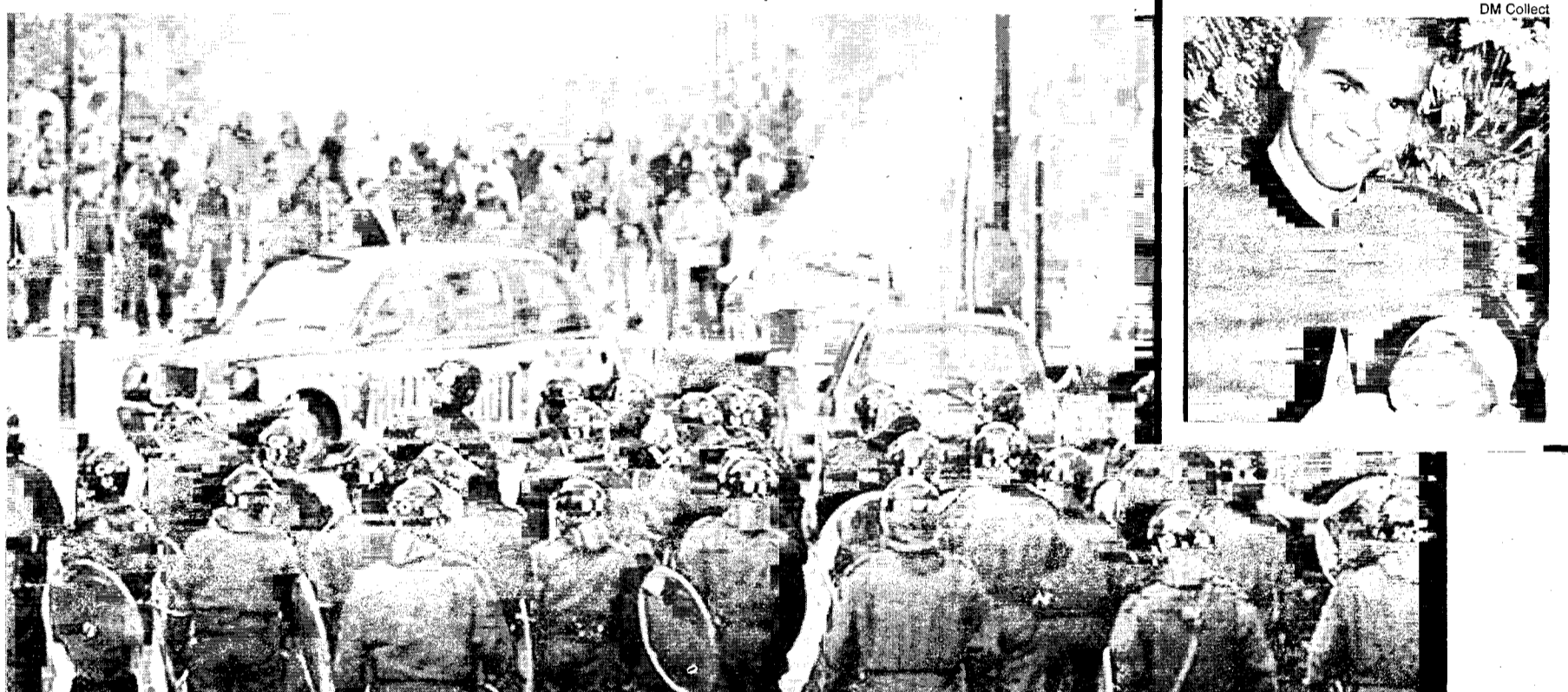
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Capitalism Loots Wealth Made by Working People English Cities Erupt Over Racist Cop Killing, Austerity



August 8: Youth in east London confront riot cops on third night of upheaval following racist police killing of Mark Duggan (inset). Reuters

The following article is reprinted from Workers Vanguard No. 985 (2 September), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

LONDON—On 4 August, the cops shot and killed a young black man, Mark Duggan, in Tottenham, North London. Contrary to police disinformation circulated at the time, Duggan did not fire any shots. But that did not stop the press from branding the victim as a “gang member” killed in a “shootout” with police. The family of Mark Duggan, a father of four, were given almost no information about his death. Instead they were told to wait for the results of an inquiry by the Independent Police Complaints Commission, known among blacks as the police cover-up commission. Two days after Duggan was gunned down, his family members took part in a protest of some 300 people at a Tottenham police station demanding information, but none was given. Reportedly, police attacked a young woman demonstrator, knocking her to the ground.

There is a limit to the endurance of minority youth, who have been treated like criminals since the time they could walk. For black and South Asian youth in this country, degradation at the hands of the cops, including the relentless use of “stop and search,” is calculated to underline the message: you have no rights whatsoever.

Free All Arrested for “Looting”!

The killing of Mark Duggan was one atrocity too far. Anger exploded. Tottenham erupted in flames in scenes reminiscent of the riots in Tottenham’s Broadwater Farm housing project in 1985, which followed the police killing of a black mother.

Little of substance has changed in the lives of black people since that time. This time around, the revolt in Tottenham ignited a mass of social tinder at the bottom of British capitalist society. Rioting spread like wildfire to other areas of London and to parts of Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool. Black, Asian and white youth took to the streets to give the finger to the police, the government and a society in which they manifestly have no stake. For four days, riots by the impoverished and dispossessed swept cities and towns. Britain was exposed to the world as the racist, class-divided hellhole it is.

The arrogant rulers of decaying British capitalism have long regarded workers and the poor, and especially their black and Asian components, as merely an “underclass” deserving neither of education nor training, worthy only of state repression. In an attempt to deny that the

cause of the riots is entrenched economic hardship, exacerbated by his government’s savage budget cuts, Conservative (Tory) prime minister David Cameron blamed the riots on “moral decay” and “criminality pure and simple,” insisting that they “were not about poverty.” Vowing to hunt down and jail “suspects,” Cameron seized the opportunity to massively strengthen repression. A vast police dragnet has so far arrested some 2,000 people, on any and every pretext, using information gleaned from trawling social networking sites and CCTV footage (and of course hacking phones). Television news has shown endless footage of gangs of cops brutally smashing down doors of people’s homes to arrest “suspects.”

Shredding any semblance of “due process,” the police are charging suspects before compiling evidence and opposing bail for the majority of those arrested. Cases involving minor offences that would normally result in a reprimand and would not even go to the lower magistrates’ courts are being referred to the Crown courts, which have greater sentencing powers. The vast majority of those arrested are

being jailed, regardless of the alleged offence or of any previous convictions. Such a blanket policy of incarceration will vastly increase the numbers of

people with criminal records which, for many youth, particularly blacks and Asians, is enough to ensure that they never work in their lives.

The draconian measures meted out in the aftermath of the riots are an escalation of the type of harsh repression meted out to students protesting against education cuts last year. The message from the capitalist rulers to the working class and the oppressed is clear: meekly accept the relentless attacks on jobs and living standards, or else! It is in the direct interests of the working class, especially the trade unions, to oppose these police-state measures and to demand that all charges be dropped against those arrested. **We demand: Immediate release of all those arrested and jailed for “looting”!**

Prominent politicians are calling for the use of plastic bullets and other weapons that the British state has historically deployed against the oppressed Catholics of Northern Ireland. The same capitalist ruling class that is brutally cracking down on dissent and opposition at home is engaged in imperialist subjugation abroad. Under

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