



THE RED PHOENIX

NEWSPAPER OF THE AMERICAN PARTY OF LABOR

PEACE
★
EQUALITY
★
SOCIALIST
DEMOCRACY
★
ALL POWER TO
THE WORKING
PEOPLE!

AmericanPartyofLabor.org ★ Issue #3 ★ April 2018 ★ Suggested Donation: \$1.00



By: X. STEPHENS

On a rainy, dreary day, dozens and dozens of teachers, and other workers in solidarity from 3 or more counties lined the streets of the capitol and stood outside of the capitol building demanding better wages and conditions. Several speakers, including teachers and union representatives spoke passionately about what was going on with respect to the plight of the teachers; often drawing comparisons of company scrip and labor battles of the past.

After confirming a resolution had not reached between the unions and the state legislator, union leaders shouted to the masses of workers standing in the drenching rain the marching orders for the strike and so began the event that would (again) shake the state of West Virginia to its foundations. The central question surrounding this, is, quite simply - how did we get here? What occurred or didn't occur which pushed the teaching force within West Virginia to abandon the blackboards and join the pickets? To answer this and provide a comprehensive look at this situation we must go back to the teacher strike of 1990 which shutdown 47 of West Virginia's 55 counties for 11 days.

The year was 1990, the month was May and starting on the 6th, the familiar call of "STRIKE!" reverberated through these mountains once more. The teaching force, as represented by 47 counties, announced they were going on strike, prompting the then Governor and the West Virginia legislature to declare the action "illegal" and threaten the striking teachers with sanctions in the form of suspensions (without pay), outright dismissal and or the charging of teachers with misdemeanor crimes. Then-Attorney General Roger Tompkins while speaking to then-State Superintendent Hank Makorie, stated "There is no right to strike against the state. Thus, any strike or concerted work stoppage by public teachers of this state is illegal."

The primary point of contention between the superintendents and state legislature and the teachers and public employees were wages; the West Virginia Education Association, which represented 16,000 of the state's 22,000 public school teachers, quoted data from that time the average teacher pay within West Virginia was \$21,904, ahead of only Mississippi, though the state legislature had proposed a 5% raise a month prior to the strike. The WVEA contended that this simply was sufficient and demanded a higher raise with then-governor Caperton issuing a statement to the state legislature that no such discussions would take place until the unions "became calm and civil" which was code for ending the strike and the teacher force returning to work before a new deal for a higher raise percentage had been negotiated and finalized. Ultimately after 11 days a settlement would be reached between the state and the unions.

Following this to the present day strike we have seen 2 decades or more and more tax cuts for the wealthy at the ex-

pense of West Virginia's working class often making the material conditions for workers or specifically, teachers in this case, so exploitative that it leaves many concluding it is simply not economical or 'smart' on their part to stay, and move to neighboring states like Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee and so on. Overtime this has created the current vacancy epidemic which we're now seeing where there are 700 teaching vacancies all throughout the state. Additionally, on West Virginia teachers, public employees and so on do not have the same collective bargaining rights comparative to other states and very few trade unions providing representation.

Which leads up to the strike of 2018 - what caused teachers in all 55 counties to go on strike for 11 days and shut down the state? We see here again disputes between the teachers and public employees over wage raise percentages and better conditions and the state legislature and governor. By now a very familiar pattern continues on with Republican lawmakers continuously ranting and raving about how the state of West Virginia couldn't possibly pay for any increases in wages for teachers and public employees because the state "simply doesn't have the money." Mainstream media outlets while trying to provide a "fair and balanced" account of a story none of them actually care about, have parroted these narratives with no further explanation as to how, this could be or why this could be. The reason being that the state has, from strike to strike continuously drained the state coffers of public funding due to tax cuts for the corporations, businesses and the affluent at the expense of the ultimate West Virginian worker. Despite state legislature promises of a raised wages the cost of the teachers health insurance, PEIA or Public Employee Insurance Agency, would not only cancel out said wage increase but would also leave teachers in the negative effectively paying to teach. Several teachers throughout the pre-strike demonstrations talked about how they would work 2-3 jobs throughout the summer just to be able to get through another year of teaching. Again the state legislature would threaten the teachers and again an ultimate agreement between the state and teachers would be reached with another wage increase of 5%.

Closely following this communication workers working for the largest cable company in the state have gone on strike, also demanding higher wages and better conditions. In response the Frontiers company, according to the Charleston Gazette-Mail, had petitioned the Kanawha Circuit Court for an injunction to force the striking workers to return to work labeling the strike "rampant and unlawful behavior." Through this verbiage we can see a continuance of these corporations defaulting to incendiary and melodramatic rhetoric, demonizing the work force instead of trying to negotiate a legitimate settlement. The strike still ongoing.

It may seem irrational or perhaps, suicidal, for a state to implement, repeatedly and continuously, the deep slashing of corporate-business taxes all under the auspices of "making

West Virginia more competitive with other states." In effect this has no equated to any measurable increase in business either coming to or continuing to operate within the state but rather has been exclusively observed to equate to the private wealth accumulation of political-financial leaders - nothing more, most of whom do not even reside in West Virginia and lives elsewhere.

These policies/policy changes/policy terminations have come in the form reducing the corporate income tax from 9 to 6.5% starting from 2006 to date, the reduction of the groceries tax from 6% to 3% before scrapping the tax all together, scrapping of the corporate charter tax, alternative minimum tax, increased homestead exemption, and so on. Piece by piece, tax by tax, a bi-partisan (and I do stress, BI-PARTISAN here) picked away at virtually every tax policy in the state until the state went completely, and very literally bankrupt and to who's benefit was all this done? Did any worker legitimately benefit from any of this? Or was this all for the benefit of the state and federal managerial-capitalist class and their transnational, corporate partners?

Learning from these very clear lessons, both with respect to the entire history of labor struggle within the state of West Virginia and within the last 2 or 3 decades in particular, the limitations for qualitative change from the political establishment is glaringly clear. We have no choice but to continuously push for radical change and continued organization among the working class to pursue our class interests because it has been demonstrated by all parties and personalities within the liberal parties and administrations that the plight of the West Virginian worker is of no concern and the state is nothing more than a point of resource and wealth extraction by members of the American managerial-capitalist class, within and without the state, as well the transnational corporate entities. Now, more than ever, workers must push forward to the revolution.

INSIDE:

- PAGE 2: EDITORIAL / ANTI-FASCISM IS IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE
- PAGE 2: COMRADES! THIS WAY TO PROGRESS!
- PAGE 3: WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT?
- PAGE 4&5: RADICAL LEFT VIEWS ON GUN CONTROL
- PAGE 6: INTERVIEW - HOMELESS HOME BUILDERS OF AMERICA
- PAGE 7: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
- PAGE 8&9: TOWARDS A MARXIST THEORY OF ADDICTION
- PAGE 9: INTERNATIONAL ANTI-FASCIST YOUTH CAMP
- PAGE 10: SPENCER AND HEIMBACH'S FAILURES
- PAGE 11: MARX'S WORDS ALL AROUND YOU
- PAGE 12: AMERICAN PARTY OF LABOR INFORMATION



EDITORIAL - By: A. CASAL

PAY YOUR DUES, THEN YOU CAN CRITICIZE.

When your little "Maoist" group of ten twenty-something college students can call for a national action that draws 3 - 4 million participants, then you can "criticize" the Women's Marches.

There! I've gotten it out of my system.

I'm sick and tired of seeing "people who couldn't organize a bunch of hungry pigs to eat slop" -- as one friend put it -- attacking the Women's Marches.

Rather than doing what we communists are supposed to do when a mass movement is brewing, which is get involved in it and do as much as you can to give its participants a revolutionary understanding and direction; I'm seeing a lot of Facebook "revolutionaries" ripping on the Women's Marches from the safety of their computer screens and the self-righteous comfort of their ideological "purity."

There are valid criticisms to made of certain aspects of the "leadership" and organizing tactics of the Women's Marches, its watered-down Liberal content, ideological confusion, racial and class exclusionism, and Democratic Party control. However, when has this NOT been the case? I can tell you, from direct personal experience, that these same issues have plagued every movement for social change going back to the 1980s. I can also tell you that sitting back and pointing out the problems is not the answer.

The answer is putting your money where your mouth is, or putting your theory into practice, if you prefer, and getting into and becoming a part of these movements. Then doing the hard work of actually organizing people and exerting leadership.

In short, if your entire response to the Women's Marches has been to sit at home criticizing its failings; then, congratulations, you have done your bit to help keep the Left irrelevant and divided.

Besides, if your criticism includes the knit caps some people were wearing, your criticism is... wrong headed.

**COMRADES! THIS WAY
TO PROGRESS!**



BEYOND BOOTS AND BANDANAS:



**ANTI-FASCISM
IS IDEOLOGICAL
STRUGGLE**

By: M. PETRUCELLI

Anti-fascism is not a particular organization or a group. It is an ideological position, and one which must be carried out in practice to be more than it has been in the past. We engage in street confrontations and counter-protests because, as you will hear often if you hang around anti-fascists, "we can never let fascists have the streets." This is an absolutely correct thing to do, and under no circumstances should we stop meeting fascists in public, outnumbering them, and forcing them to either engage us or hide behind a police line. There is no need to espouse the usefulness of this tactic, but we have to understand what fascism is and how to fight it before it reaches the point where we must engage with them in the streets. What fascism is and what it is not are key aspects of understanding and combating fascism.

There are many people defining fascism and attempting to obscure the class basis of it. This has always been the case since the days of the Comintern and Otto Bauer [1]. The rising tide of fascism must be understood exactly for what it is. It is, and always has been as the Comintern defined it: an openly terroristic dictatorship of the bourgeoisie against the working class. It is the most hostile and chauvinistic elements of the bourgeois maintaining dominance. They recruit these other elements, the disparate classes which they trample on, to their cause through an appeal to the most base and violent national chauvinism imaginable.

It should be mentioned, and I think it is important to understand, that at no point should any person involved in anti-fascist work consider what I am about to say an attack. I value all of our work in the streets. I value the experiences that anti-fascists have and the tradition that I also stand as a part of as an anti-fascist. The tradition of combating fascism in the streets has always been a part of what must be done, from union battles against the American Legion [2], and that most distinctly American historical fascist group, the Pinkerton thugs [3] and their related organizations. We have traveled across the world to stop fascists whenever they arise, and we will not be stopping. But, we must also move to new methods.

Fascist organizations and youth rely on the harsh individualism of capitalism, the brutal reality of being alone in a society. They recruit from the proletariat and the lumpen to ensure that they have not just a base, but also loyal foot soldiers to serve bourgeois interests. They don't care for these people, and would gladly throw them in front of a bullet to cover their own skins, often play acting courage and in the heat of the moment showing themselves. They prove themselves to be bosses, as they always were, and not leaders as we must be. They stand behind a police line giving orders and making speeches while their foot soldiers get routed again and again across the country. They know that this manipulation will continue to work because they promise something that was denied under capitalism.

Community, and this, my dearest comrades, is where our battle with fascism must begin, the

streets are the final line. When they feel bold enough to take the streets, we must be bold enough to throw them back, but this is the last line of defense. We have to go beyond the boots and bandanas method, incorporate it, and prepare to utilize it when necessary. But first, we have to absolutely begin by building communities. We have to build neighborhoods and cities that are inimical to fascism not because they are solidly proletarian, after all, our class has been turned against itself before, but because it is a place where people are not isolated. Where people do not have to go seeking community and finding fascists with open arms looking to welcome them. Modeling ourselves after the old left, and the true inheritors of their legacy from the new left, the Black Panther Party we must strive to make these community programs both accessible and driven by needs which exist in our community. [4]

We have proven time and time again that we outnumber them [5], that we are stronger than them in the streets, but we must counter-recruit. Every time we manage to remove a member from the fascist ranks and return him to a staunch defender of his class and our communities we have won a victory. After all, Sun Tzu told us two things. The first, "Supreme excellence consists of breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting." this is the goal and obligation of anti-fascists as a whole. This is what the whole thing is about. We will break them before we ever take them to the streets, we will not risk ourselves and our bodies. If we are forced to the streets we will dominate but the objective is to avoid dangerous street battles. The second, and the only argument necessary for counter recruitment, "a wise general makes a point of foraging on the enemy. One cartload of the enemy's provisions is equivalent to twenty of one's own, and likewise a single picul of his provender is equivalent to twenty from one's own store." [6]

We will no longer be forced to fight fascists in a way that is narrowly devoted to street battles and displays of strength, after all, we don't want them to know how strong we are ever. Instead we will make neighborhoods where they have no connection, no pull, an no way to recruit. We will make neighborhoods where every anti-fascist can meet them in the streets when we must, but also know that our community will have our backs during the battle.

References

[1] https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/dimitrov/works/1935/08_02.htm#s2

[2] <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/writers/shaw-g/1943/06/legion.htm>

[3] <https://aflcio.org/about/history/labor-history-events/1892-homestead-strike>

[4] <http://classics.mit.edu/Tzu/artwar.html>

[5] <https://itsgoingdown.org/antifascists-won-battles-berkeley/>

[6] <http://classics.mit.edu/Tzu/artwar.html>

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT?

By: L. ZORFASS

For most reading this, the resistance to the invasion of Iraq will be in fresh memory. In 2003, a new anti-war movement had spawned in response to the invasion of Iraq. Beginning 15 years ago thousands took to the streets weekly to protest the invasion. Due to the resistance this precluded against the then current administration bred a certain acceptance of radical politics. The invasion of Iraq was so viciously condemned, the Bush Administration had been under an exorbitant amount of open and harsh criticism. All around the country, it felt like dissent was around every corner and so was the encouragement to embrace heterodox politics. Ten years later, this massive movement which gathered such a regular abundance of the citizenry is gone. There is still American military presence in Iraq. Attacks on foreign lands have only increased since the Bush years. Foreign intervention remains as strong as ever but also more supported than ever, even when the call for interventions are usually based on deception and outright falsehoods. So we have to ask, where did the anti-war movement go? Should it not have grown under these conditions? Perhaps we even have to ask if there was an anti-war movement at all.

At 17, 10 years ago, I was young angry naive radical-minded youth but hopeful and optimistic. I came from poor working-class parents. My father was a construction worker while my mother sold beds at a mall. For the most part, the only Jew where I lived in Virginia. These two things combined made me quite the outcast during those youthful years as many of my peers were the upper-middle-class children of Christian military officers, FBI and CIA agents, and other higher-ups in the Washington D.C. bureaucracy. But I digress. I was just coming into radicalism and serious political reading. Before I had been very into the Beatnik movement, Abbie Hoffman, and the Yippies. It was around 17 that I had begun reading Noam Chomsky and Cornel West. I had not yet begun to understand the world scientifically, that is to say as a Marxist-Leninist, but I knew I was on the left. The war was disgusting. Poverty and homelessness often brought me to tears. Not to mention my own scars of working-class life. It was also this time that I began to take up political actions which, in those days, were aplenty.

Living so close to Washington D.C. meant demonstrations all the time against the war. The climate was invigorating. Not only had I found myself surrounded by anti-war protestors but there was a radical feeling to it all. While many of the people who attended these rallies and marches were Democrats the connection between the war and profits were abound. Many will recall slogans like, "No Blood For Oil". The industrial-war machine itself was being brought



WHEN A WAR IS WAGED BY TWO OPPOSING GROUPS OF ROBBERS FOR THE SAKE OF DECIDING WHO SHALL HAVE A FREER HAND TO OPPRESS MORE PEOPLE, THEN THE QUESTION OF THE ORIGIN OF THE WAR IS OF NO REAL ECONOMIC OR POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE. - V.I. LENIN

into question. To me, this coincided with the anti-capitalist literature I had been reading. As far as I was concerned the anti-war movement also meant anti-capitalism, it meant standing against the state apparatus that had built around capitalism as this state lied to the American people to go to war. As far as I was concerned the people who I stood side by side with so many times, who I saw get arrested, who were willing give anything to fight against the war would always stand the against the Iraq war and all wars the United States may take up in the future. I was proven wrong on both assumptions by the Obama presidency.

It was a funny thing when Obama got elected. The Iraq war never ended even though Obama had assured his voters on the campaign trail that it was at the top of his agenda to do so. The withdrawal of troops did happen in 2011. However, 4,000-5,000 defense contractors remained and three consulates with a staff 1,000 remained. The war continued to be fought on the ground not by US troops, but by private hired ones. Throughout the Obama presidency, as commander-in-chief, Obama dropped 12,095 bombs on Iraq. The had been ended but greatly privatized. The war was privatized to the same military-industrial complex that hundreds of thousands had been protesting during the Bush presidency. The anti-war protests, surely, were to continue given these conditions, right?

Wrong.

The hundreds of thousands who came out almost weekly to protest the Iraq war decided to stay home during the Obama years. When Obama began drone bombing Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, and Afganistan the liberals decided that it was sad that people were getting bombed, thousands as a matter of fact, but that it was okay enough to stay in and rarely if ever mention it. "No Blood For Oil" now meant "out of sight, out of mind". Now that this symbol, Obama, was the one doing the war-making, it was okay. The war was now a war by the Democrats. Instead of emails of upcoming rallies against the war or private war machine I received emails from Democrat fundraiser and Obama speech parties. Millions did not take to the streets when it was revealed through leaked documents that Obama and Hillary Clinton as secretary of state had lied to the American people about going into Libya. Gaddafi was planning no genocide against his own people. The reason for the utter destruction of Libya was because a Pan-African currency was being planned, using Libya's massive gold reserves to back it up. When this information came to light during the end of the Obama presidency, which paralleled Hillary Clintons run for presidential office, most of those who stood ten years ago when the Bush administration took the same course of action to get into Iraq stayed home and continued support for Obama and Clinton.

While information on the tens of millions of dollars going into the destabilization of Venezuela came to light the liberals stayed home. When the Obama administration tried to coup Venezuela, the liberals stayed home. When Clinton oversaw the coup of Honduras, the liberals stayed home. The same liberals that stood against war and the search for profit that motivates it were now cheering it. American imperialism meant liberation, the intervention was to be a savior, and war could be very necessary. Now, as we live through the hell that is the Trump government, the liberals continue to support war and capitalism. Sure, the liberals will come out here and there to march against Trump but, they do not march against the continuing and growing rate of drone attacks. They do not come out in the streets against the billions of arms sold to Saudi Arabia, a country leading a genocide against Yemen with those very weapons. Many liberals are near cheering, if not cheering completely, for a war against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The



Obama years created a platform of normalized warfare for liberals, progressives, and other backhanded dealers.

Throughout all the Obama years, and now during the Trump years, the group of people in the United States who are always coming out to the streets against U.S. imperialism have been communists and workers. It was the communists who organized protests outside of the U.N., in D.C. and in cities across the country protesting the wars against Libya, Syria, and all other countries being destroyed by U.S. imperialism. When Obama came to speak at a Rutgers University graduation ceremony, the thralls of students who came out to protest Condoleezza Rice did not come out to protest Obama but cheered the invitation. It was only communists, The All Marxist-Leninist Union and the Paul Robeson/NJ Division of the American Party Labor who were to protest the imperialist speech. It has been the communists who face social ostracisation for defending the states and innocents destroyed by U.S. imperialism. It is the communists that protest the politicians who the politicians who call for war on behalf of the profits of the capitalist class, the ruling class. It has been the communists who protest and organize against the capitalist system that demands ever growing markets and profits, that demands war and imperialist conquest to fulfill this search of profits.

The liberals who once seemed so radical, left-wing, and revolutionary-minded now appear as pro-gay marriage neo-cons. Many defend the current neo-nazi movement the United States has cultivated for itself. Imperialism has become massively supported. Like the neo-cons under the Bush years, the liberals now tote of imperialism bringing freedom and liberation. This is because the liberals, who now claim to resist Trump, have always been reactionary and bourgeoisie minded. The anti-war movement of the Bush years was just a tactic for a Democratic victory in 2008. For the liberals, this may as well be a sports game.

But the communists stand strong against capitalism and imperialism. The communist numbers are growing. While the 17-year-old me who marched with liberals so many times over may never understand that I have studied the science of Marxism-Leninism and adopted it, that I will defend Stalin, or refuse pacifism, that 17-year-old would understand one thing: that imperialist war must be fought and brought to an end. To end it we must fight capitalism. And to end capitalism means standing against the Democrats and Republicans equally. It means fighting capitalism and imperialism no matter what which personality is sitting in the Presidents seat. It means we need a party, as the so-called "anti-war" movement proved nothing more than a spontaneous advertisement for the Democrats.

We will not die for not profits. We will not let others die for profits. We will always stand against imperialism. We will always stand against capitalism. We will organize. We will fight. We will win.

RADICAL LEFT VIEWS ON GUN CONTROLS

By: Q. Stafa

The following article expands on an earlier editorial written in the Red Phoenix nearly 6 years ago. In light of the recent white supremacist terrorist attack that claimed multiple lives in Parkland, Florida, it has become clear that further exploration on the subject of gun ownership in the United States is necessary.

The topic of "gun control laws" has become something of a grim and monotonous conversation in the United States. There is a practiced rhythm to the discussion, a waltz of rival idealisms stepping in sync through the same tired platitudes. On nearly every side of the discussion, including much of the radical Left, there is an unwillingness to engage on the subject in a concrete and material way. Because of this, progress has come despite theorizing and political development, and not because of it. It is my hope to better examine the material reality of firearms ownership and gun control laws in the United States with this piece.

At its most liberal ends, the gun ownership debate is largely framed through the lens of public safety against individualist rights. Our piece here (link to piece) discusses the fundamental issues with the way liberals conceive of the struggle. The long and short of it is that the presentation is equally disingenuous on both ends. We know that public safety and health are more endangered by capitalism than by firearms. It is the social alienation and toxic masculinity that runs unrestricted in capitalism that encourages mass murder, and firearms are a simple and relatively effective means of carrying out that task. We also find hypocritical the liberals who claim to want firearms to fight the encroachment of their government upon their civil liberties while singing praises of the police and objecting to kneeling protests at sporting events.

The numerous contradictions in these positions have been covered by a great many Leftist publications. There is thus no need to hash them out here. What is actually needed is a way for the Left to discuss the legitimate concerns of the masses which the liberals manipulate with their discussion. Because without concrete solutions or methods of analysis, vague promises of violent revolution come off as no less like empty promises.

The Historical Alternative:

As Communists who proudly uphold the legacy of Comrade Enver Hoxha and the People's Socialist Republic of Albania, our ideological forbears are a natural starting point for understanding the "correct" implementation of firearm policy. In socialist Albania, firearm ownership was not a right. It was an obligation. Nearly every home was given a firearm, and for reasons closely tied to the infamous so-called "bunkers" which dot the landscape of Albania.

The reasons for this were deeply political. Tiny Albania was an ideological powerhouse, but most certainly not a military or economic one. External military threats were a constant concern for the people of Albania. The Titoite revisionist clique in Yugoslavia were always eyeing Albanian land for an opportunity to expand and weaken their rivals. When Albania rose to challenge both Soviet social imperialism and Chinese social imperialism, it found itself in the cross hairs of the world's most prominent military powers.

The solution to their primary weaknesses, the size of their economy relative to their enemies and their ability to manufacture weapons, was compensated for by relying on Albania's greatest strength; It's people and their political unity. By the mid 1960's, Albania had abolished military ranks in its army. This was done in lock-step with its ongoing program to arm the public as part of a broader effort to make the people and army one. The "bunkers" were no less a part of this project. Should invasion come from any of their numerous enemies, comrade Hoxha worked hard to prepare every citizen for self-defense and the defense of the nation.

Those less versed in Albanian history may find it surprising, however, that this campaign was carried out in a nation which, much like the United States, was at the time struggling with a culture of violent misogyny, toxic masculinity, and an unhealthy attraction to vio-

lence. Socialist Albania waged a long cultural campaign against its infamous "blood feuds," the institutionalized reprisal violence which led to bloody spirals of murder. Revenge killings were seen as almost a pillar of Albanian justice in many places.

It was under the leadership of Comrade Hoxha that socialist Albania made tremendous headway in struggling against the blood feud practice. And this was due in no small part to the complete understanding of the blood feud phenomenon as a toxic part of Albanian culture, rather than reducing it to the issue of firearm ownership. Political education and correct political practice erased the roots of backwardness which encouraged the practice. The position of women in society was elevated. Women were brought into the workforce, men were ordered to do more domestic chores, social responsibility and the needs of the revolution were emphasized in day-to-day politics.

The active arming of the masses played into this. What the Albanian Party of Labor understood was that firearm ownership was not in contradiction with the health and safety of the people. Quite to the contrary, with so many enemies surrounding it, the spread of firearms was an integral part of building that safety. With this perspective in mind, socialist Albania turned firearm ownership into a vehicle for understanding civil responsibility and the interconnectedness of the working masses in socialist society. It was no longer rival clans building stockpiles. The Albanian working class were one, relying upon one another as comrades to defend themselves, their communities, and their revolution.

Unlimited Ownership?

Seeing this model presents interesting questions about some of the nuances with respect to gun control legislation. It's become increasingly fashionable for factions of liberals to advocate for "common sense gun ownership laws" to restrict their access. The debate moves away from the "furtherest ends" of the liberal ideological spectrum and into a debate about details and particulars that are most often resolved as patchwork laws passed at varying levels of government with varying restrictions.

The discourse is primarily divided into the camp concerned with things like gang violence and homicides relating to "economically motivated" crimes, and the mass shooting phenomenon. The former produces liberal-dominated discussions about economic progress and the need to "lift communities out of poverty," a process we know is impossible under capitalism. The latter usually opportunistically blames mental illness, contributing to unhealthy stigmas our society already has towards mental health in general.

The results speak poorly of these unguided efforts to control firearms. Despite restrictive gun laws in Chicago, the inconsistent application across the state has resulted in more movement of arms across state lines and into the sections of "ChIraaq" where firearm violence is most prevalent. The result is very little change in terms of firearm violence over time and further meandering conversations about drafting "better legislation."

By contrast, Socialist Albania took a very different view of gun ownership and its regulation. Because it was not a "right," the views of "earning" the privilege of gun ownership did not exist. Instead, it was a responsibility. Military training, usually held yearly, was a part of every Albanian citizen's life. The training was to prepare the Albanian people for defense of the homeland and covered not only the mechanics of firearm usage and ownership, but its political content as well. Thus, the Albanian Party of Labor "regulated" responsible firearm ownership in a way that empowered and elevated the people rather than selecting those "worthy."

This begs the question; If socialist Albania established a system that regulated firearms and ensured a level of responsibility, is such a system needed or desirable in the United States?

Understanding the Principle Contradiction

With all this in mind, we can review gun ownership issues in the United States in a more meaningful, concrete fashion.

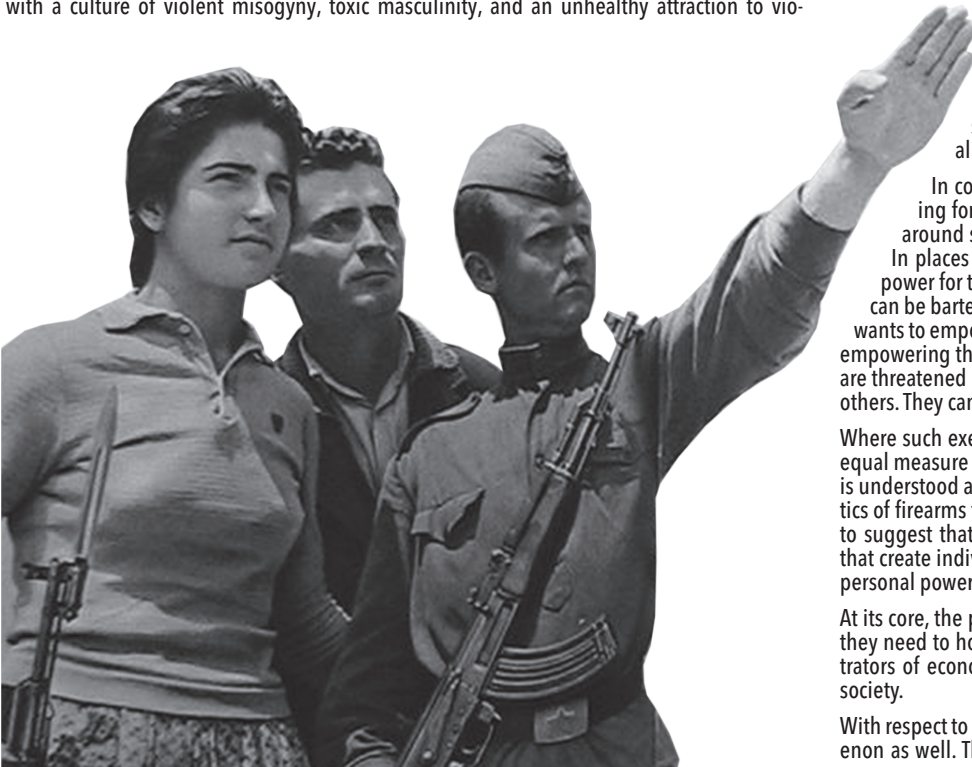
To begin with, we must break from the liberal view that gun ownership laws are an issue of "public safety" vs "individual rights." Socialist Albania showed the world that no such contradiction exists. Instead we must understand the issue of firearm ownership in the United States as one of individualism vs collectivism.

In contemporary US society, guns typically represent a few key interests. Discarding for a minute the hobbyist shooters, the discussion around guns typically center around self-defense and poverty. In both cases, the issue of firearms is one of power. In places where poverty is rampant, firearms are one of the most accessible forms of power for those who are disenfranchised. Because firearms are material, real assets, they can be bartered and traded. That produces an incentive to distribute power. The gun seller wants to empower whomever wants to get the gun because they receive money in return for empowering the buyer. With access to an immediate form of power, those whose livelihoods are threatened by a system they are powerless to change suddenly have a form of power over others. They can then leverage that power to secure their material needs.

Where such exercise of individualist power is common, the response is usually to arm up in equal measure to protect one's self. If robberies are common where you live, arming yourself is understood as a natural response to the need to protect yourself. But the same characteristics of firearms that make them desirable are still at play. There is a sizable chunk of evidence to suggest that households with more firearms are more likely to be robbed. More assets that create individualist power are a natural attraction, as they can either build up one's own personal power or be traded for money.

At its core, the problem remains individualist. It's about people who have no power that feel they need to hold on to whatever power they can. And this remains true for both the perpetrators of economic crimes and its victims, who are often rendered powerless by capitalist society.

With respect to mass shootings, the issue of individualist power is at the heart of the phenomenon as well. The motivations of mass shooters are somewhat varied, but there are several



common threads which tie them together. They are predominantly white and entirely male. Anti-social behavior is quite common, as is a fiercely individualist outlook.

More interestingly, the divergences say more about the political orientation of the phenomenon than the superficial commonalities. Yes, they were all white males. But the Columbine shooters and Sandy Hook didn't openly espouse white supremacy the same way Anders Breivik or Nikolas Cruz did. And yet the tactics used by the "apolitical" school shooters would find themselves discussed as legitimate tactics by figures on the far right such as Tom Metzger and James Mason. Thus we see that fierce individualism is something catalyzed within the far right, which is inherently opposed to the collectivist views of the radical Left.

It becomes self-evident here that the concerns over mental illness downplays one of the major issues of liberalism with respect to the gun ownership debate. Namely that it is primarily being employed to defend individualism, the true culprit.

The First Steps

Understanding the necessity for a collectivist view of gun ownership sheds light on the issues and gives us the ground to correctly analyze the options currently presented to us. Are there "common sense gun laws?" What does that term mean in contemporary US society? Can it be achieved?

In theory, yes there are "gun control laws" which could dramatically reduce the incidences of violence in the US. But as it stands, the US is unequipped to deal with them.

The US legal system with respect to firearms, at the moment, recognizes only a few sets of distinctions; Legal kinds of firearms, legal kinds of ammo, and qualifications for ownership. The qualifications for ownership proposed center around things like mental health and criminal background checks. The issue of mental health has already been discussed as a political red herring. The criminal background checks produce a different kind of problem. Namely, that criminal background check requirements do not deal with the political content of the crimes as we understand them.

By this we mean that usually firearm ownership is controlled by vulgar, simple criminal violation classifications. Felons can't own guns, for instance. The felonies themselves don't matter. Rarely are specific kinds of crimes targeted for firearm ownership bans. This is a problem for anyone who wishes to organize against the state. There is a very fine line of political convenience between "resisting arrest" and "assaulting an officer," and the difference in many states determines whether or not you are legally allowed to carry a firearm. The radical Left is then at something of a disadvantage under the current legal system.

In reality, if we wanted to ban firearms we would want specifically to look at the kinds of criminal infringements and pass judgments on those grounds. We would want to target those guilty of hate crimes and prevent them from owning firearms. We would want to target rapists and domestic abusers from owning firearms.

But the means to achieve this do not exist in the United States. Our criteria, the criteria which would explicitly target certain groups of people with certain ideologies, is directly at odds with the liberal system and what it represents. They would rather distort free speech to mean allowing any ideology to be expressed, however dangerous it may be to public safety. It bears repeating that according to liberalism, mental illness is sufficient grounds for not allowing firearms usage. The liberals too have particular targets in mind when it comes to disenfranchising rights. The difference is our targets actually are perpetrators of violence, unlike the mentally ill.

Additionally, the issue of power remains one of the major motivators of crime. As the capitalist system is the leading driver of disenfranchisement and poverty, it stands to reason that any amount of effort spent trying to pass laws which the system itself is opposed to would also not address deeper needs of the people. The needs which drive them to violent crime in the first place.

In short, while there are some firearm control regulations that in theory would control violence, none of the ones that could be implemented in the United States would actually improve our situation. The primary motivators remain. The perpetrators of the worst violent crimes will find new, more insidious means of achieving their goals, whether it's driving cars into protests, bombing buildings, or stabbing. All of which have tremendous precedence in the United States.

The Real Politics of Firearms

The sensible politics of Left policy towards firearms begins with understanding what the US Left is capable of. In this instance, we have no means of realistically initiating a national firearms policy or understanding what a collective view looks like at the national level. Simply put, the United States is far too individualist, and the radical/collectivist Left too fragmented, to enact sweeping change.

Nor can gun policy simply be ignored. The pervasive culture of violence in our society is a concrete factor of life. The frequency of mass shootings, the prevalence of gun violence in poor and working class communities, and the realities of police violence and police brutality make ignoring guns idealistic and outright lethal.

Instead, we succeed by subverting firearms to the cause of transforming people from individualists to collectivists. This is done at the individual collective level, which is where gun policy must be created and enforced. Each collective, having engaged in the task of working alongside the masses and understanding their needs, can begin to understand what role firearms and individualism both play in their immediate community. From there, the collective can take stock of their own capabilities and start to establish policies in their own work that demonstrate collectivist implementation of firearm ownership, if relevant.

What this looks like differs from place to place. This speaks to both the nature of the struggles the collective is engaged in and the material conditions already present wherever they work. For instance, gun policy for Chicago collectives will have a very different character than gun policy for collectives in rural Texas.

The trick, however, is not to let gun policy drive politics. The correct line is to let the material conditions and needs of the masses guide the collective's view on firearms.

For example, in places where violence between members of the masses is more common,



collectives need to establish what role their mass orgs play in combating the conditions that lead to violence. If their mass work programs lead to initiatives that combat drug addiction, the collective needs to examine and understand the role of firearms in their work. Are they treating people who rely on firearms to acquire or sell drugs? Are they operating in places where gun violence is more common? Are they protecting victims of violence at the hands of addicts? These factors all require a deep understanding of the collective's resources and will begin to shape what kinds of policy the collective needs to enact with respect to firearms.

Material reality and the needs of the masses, however, should not be conflated with "what sections of the masses feel about guns." Tailism begins where Leftists organize their firearms around liberal political sensibilities instead of the objective material conditions of their work. This can create sites of struggle at times where feelings are particularly strong, such as places where recent shootings occurred.

And struggle can often go both ways. In one example, a Leftist collective may organize in an area where Fascists are known to frequent, or have received threats of violence from Fascists. If the collective has sufficient experience and is prepared to use force, firearms may be a necessary form of deterrent against the threat of violence from Fascists. Though this may result in some struggle with some sections of the masses, it is a necessary struggle. Ignoring the material reality of the threat of Fascism only gives the Fascists a material advantage which could kill innocent people, the very thing which motivated liberals to push against open firearms in the first place.

By contrast, in areas where firearms violence is pervasive, collectives may have to create safe spaces where individuals are not allowed to enter with firearms. In this case, the safety of the masses is also primary, and may result in struggle from sections of the masses who feel they need firearms on their person to keep themselves safe.

In both instances, struggle is won and unity is achieved with a proper collectivist position. To appeal to their individualism is to concede principle, and thus failing in your primary goal of developing a collectivist method of analysis.

These struggles can build up on further struggles to continue to build and foster a collectivist understanding and analysis among the masses. With safe spaces established, with the masses defended against the most egregious possible sources of violence, it can become possible to discuss the role of proactive use of firearms. Open-carrying at rallies as a deterrent, for instance. Or at a food serving to deter police from harassing the mass organization. All the while examination of firearm policy abroad, like in the Mexican state of Guerrero or in Northern Ireland, can be explored less in theoretical, abstract terms and in concrete terms. It is here that a more comprehensive understanding of what a socially responsible gun culture can look like in the United States.

But in all instances, the nature of firearms must be clearly understood and put into the service of politics. Because for a collective to enact policies, it must have the power to do so. If it seeks to disarm individuals to create safe spaces, it must be prepared to both defend its people and deal with those who have firearms, something that rarely can be accomplished without the threat of force on one's own side. If it seeks to use firearms to discourage violence, it must be prepared to answer to possible escalations from enemies.

Conclusion:

Absent concrete means of enforcing meaningful, pro-working class policies, it is ultimately the responsibility of active collectives to adopt a leading role in responsibly engaging with our violent culture. Doing so means dispensing with its liberal views on gun control and gun ownership, forsaking the established idealist narratives on what should be done, and instead taking concrete steps to create the necessary change. By advancing a collectivist view through correct leadership, correct material analysis, and correct practice, individual collectives can start to have an impact on gun culture in their immediate locales and improve conditions in their communities.



INTERVIEW: THE HOMELESS HOME BUILDERS OF AMERICA



HE AND HIS PARTNER WERE STUCK LIVING IN A TENT FOR MONTHS AT A TIME, ONCE IN A CAR IN NORTHERN MI, THEN AGAIN IN WI. THIS IS A PICTURE OF JUST ONE OCCASION THEY WERE STRUCK HOMELESS.

By G. BOSHCKA

Imagine nearing retirement age after decades of hard work and chasing fruitless opportunities, growing up in a working class family with 7 siblings, mastering your trade young, and building the family house with your father by the age of 13; with more house additions from there.

Born and raised in Wisconsin, but having traveled all across the country to find work, he tried for the American Dream. From Texas to Michigan, Washington to Illinois, building houses with living areas that would become show pieces for the home owners and talking points of neighborhoods. Countless jobs performed on countless homes; dozens worth over a million dollars, with business initiatives in construction started, and dismantled, trying to make a living through the turbulent housing market of the 90's-2000's.

But these days he scrounges and tinkers; repairing electronics or small engines in effort to get by. Sometimes he sets enough money aside to buy enough broken electronics, or a motor for a bicycle, to produce something worth selling to purchase necessities. He has no home of his own, and over the decades he has seldom found friends generous enough to offer a roof while forced to live in a tent.

Time and again, despite making timely rent payments, a situation would unfold whereby hostilities develop: the lease expires, the remodeling he has done changes the value, and a personal storm of finance negotiation breaks loose with increasing month-to-month leasing until the final eviction. Or perhaps there's simply a change in the market making rent unaffordable.

In Wisconsin, there exists a 5-day eviction notice, but protest to unfair treatment has left this former leader in a construction company, journeyman, trim carpenter out in the cold. A broken verbal agreement over remodeling and an unfair eviction would usually mean finding housing - but this is impossible when your only references refuse to comply, you have no transportation other than a bicycle, you spend all your money on food without refrigeration, and "urgent" letters for public benefits are piling up at the post office, sometimes getting sent back demanding "proof of address."

Mastering your trade does little good when the trade leaves your body broken with barely anything to live on. Imagine reflecting on ruptured spinal discs, nerve damage, and calloused hands while being discarded by family for your work-induced disability, sleeping in a tent with your partner who suffers equal medical neglect and misfortune. This is just one situation faced by one American worker - there are millions of others facing similar struggles.

So, what does this worker think about the "ideal capitalist American system?"

Q: How long have you had problems working, or finding work due to chronic pain?

A: Around thirty years, but I always dealt with it. Muscle and back pain is part of the trade. It got bad around ten years ago, a wall fell on me, ruptured discs in my back - haven't been able to work like I used to, y'know?

Q: Do you think you would have continued the same line of work if you had access to proper medical care to address the pain?

A: I did continue! Regardless! I had no choice. Sometimes resorting to self-medication; homeopathy, marijuana - with s*** insurance they give you s*** care; one of those nutjobs tried putting me on anti-psychotics for ruptured discs in my back! Seizure meds for muscle pain! They don't give a damn unless you got the right insurance!

Q: Around what kind of wage would someone with your skill set be expected to make? Would it be a living wage in a stable market? Do you think that's fair compensation for the work?

A: Around \$35.00 an hour, depending. Around 25 years ago, the wage was more valuable and it was easier to budget and live on - since then the prices have hiked on the necessities. It would be hard to live comfortable on \$25-35 an hour nowadays, but back then it was alright. Millionaires made tons of money off the work I'd done for them, but I didn't complain at the time, I didn't think about it, I had enough to live on.

Q: Have you ever been evicted for something that is legal in another state?

A: It's been the same in most every state - the law is on their side. Even if the law "favors the tenant," the judge don't care

Q: If you were to put it into a percent, how much is your current income compared to when you were able to work?

A: Around 15-20% of what I used to earn.

Q: What kind of difference would nationalized public housing be for you?

A: It would make a world of difference! Basically half my stress would be gone! Those rich f***ers would live in a swamp and have every house empty if they could make a buck off it! They'd suck the scum out of the gutters and eat it to save a dime - and let everyone else go hungry!

Q: What sort of troubles do you have with transportation? How do you get around?

A: None! I have no transportation! I hardly get around. Can't have troubles getting around if you don't get around, can you? I have to bicycle to the bus stop, or ask a favor for a ride just to see the sh** doctor about once a month.

Q: In America, it's popularly emphasized that profit reflects social value - given the labor you've put into society, with 40 years of trying to work despite chronic pain, 20+ of steady work, do you feel fairly compensated for that labor?

A: Absolutely not! That would be ridiculous! Entertainers do NOTHING, investors do NOTHING, yet here I am! I feel like I've got at least a little bit of sweat equity in those million-dollar homes - why aren't they paying me when they pay their taxes?

Q: Do you think there's any hope for reform of the American system of democracy, between the Republicans and Democrats, or is there even a difference?

A: Between those two - it's seriously seeming pretty hopeless. The corporate pockets are too deep. Just look at the last election - they're not gonna change, as long as the corporations get their way. Then they let the Republicans get in charge because they both want the same thing, and they don't have to face the slack for it. There's posers, and powerless sincere people - but it's all corporate. They've been exposed, they're a corporate sham, everybody knows what they are, y'know?

Q: Are you affiliated with any political party or independent?

A: Independent.

Q: Do you think anybody who is not a war criminal deserves to suffer a chronic illness or disability while homeless?

A: I don't think there should be war to begin with - there's no reason for it. But, no. Nobody deserves this kind of stress. I wouldn't wish it on anyone except the f***ers who cause these things to happen. Those careless investors, the landowners.



"IT IS DIFFICULT FOR ME TO IMAGINE WHAT "PERSONAL LIBERTY" IS ENJOYED BY AN UNEMPLOYED HUNGRY PERSON. TRUE FREEDOM CAN ONLY BE WHERE THERE IS NO EXPLOITATION AND OPPRESSION OF ONE PERSON BY ANOTHER; WHERE THERE IS NOT UNEMPLOYMENT, AND WHERE A PERSON IS NOT LIVING IN FEAR OF LOSING HIS JOB, HIS HOME AND HIS BREAD. ONLY IN SUCH A SOCIETY PERSONAL AND ANY OTHER FREEDOM CAN EXIST FOR REAL AND NOT ON PAPER." J. V. STALIN

LET US BUILD THE PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY!

By: THE RED PHOENIX

Of "The entire party and country should hurl into the fire and break the neck of anyone who dared trample underfoot the sacred edict of the party on the defense of women's rights."

- Enver Hoxha, 1967

Possibly the first example of class stratification and exploitation in human history was the subjugation of women. In primitive communist society, there were no class distinctions, and women typically enjoyed the same respect and rights as men. The dawn of agriculture led to the subjugation of women and the rise of patriarchal society. Along with this came the division of humanity into classes, exploitation, and class struggle. For thousands of years, and in many parts of the world today, women have been, and often are, considered to be property. Even in some of the most progressive bourgeois nations, women face discrimination, super-exploitation, and objectification. Whether we speak of arranged marriage in those countries still languishing in near-feudal relations, or sexism in the most advanced nations, one fact remains, a fact which stands as an indictment of capitalist society for its utter failure to bring about equality and justice. That fact is simply that in almost any part of the world, being born female is to be born at a disadvantage, not a disadvantage decreed by nature, but by society.

Those who live in the liberal democracies of the West have often been guilty of focusing on the sexism which occurs in developing countries while ignoring their own faults, and apologists for some of the stricter varieties of Islam have often pointed out that the West does not respect women, instead it strips them of their dignity and turns them into commodities. In reality, both of these arguments are true.

In the West, open sexism seems even more prevalent than instances of open racism, and what is worse is that it is more likely to be tolerated. There are many people fighting and even risking their lives to bring about female equality in their

own countries, and while we express solidarity with many of them, we Americans must also look to our own society and root out sexism wherever we may find it. Should we fail to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our working sisters, we will have given up at least half of our strength.

In the interests of creating an environment of gender equality within the Party, the American Party of Labor has issued the following statement:

1. The Party strongly condemns discrimination against women in any form.
2. The Party also strongly condemns misogyny and the use of misogynistic language in reference to women.
3. The Party recognizes International Women's Day, the 8th of March, and seeks to have it recognized as a national holiday of a socialist America.
4. We demand women's right to organize militant feminist caucuses in the trade union movement, for the right of all our working class sisters to defend our interests as a class and as women.
5. We demand that women's right to organized self-defense be respected and strengthened in the light of the rise of fascist paramilitarism.
6. We demand that all attacks on women community leaders cease immediately and that all political prisoners be freed, including, but not limited to, the cases of Chelsea Manning, Assata Shakur and Rasmea Odeh.
7. We fully support the movement to defend and expand access to women's healthcare, including, but not limited to, the defense of Planned Parenthood, maternity rights and LGBT health centers.
8. We demand an end to police violence against queer women and oppressed nationality women; we support the defense and extension of democratic gains including, but not limited to, the defense of the Civil Rights Act and the

struggle for community control of the police which has its roots in the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense.

9. We demand a withdrawal of all U.S. military bases in foreign countries in the interests of all peace-loving women of the world. We stand in unconditional solidarity with the revolutionary women of Palestine, Colombia, the Philippines and all other communities besieged by U.S. imperialism. We demand the liquidation of all "visiting forces agreements," "labor export policies" and all other policies that facilitate imperialism, occupation, human trafficking and the domination of monopoly capital over the working women of the world.

10. The American Party of Labor wholeheartedly reaches out to working women from all over the world to join us in the struggle for the liberation of all humanity. The struggle for justice is inherently bound up with the struggle for gender equality. Our goal is a world in which we can stand shoulder-to-shoulder in equality, working for the common good of humanity.

Long Live International Women's Day!



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2018

By: THE RED PHOENIX

Today is a day of solidarity. Across the globe women of all nationalities, races, and creeds find themselves being massively exploited and abused at the hand of ruling class values. On International Women's Day, we must recognize the continued oppression of women. Century after century passes and women continue to be under the boot of patriarchal ruling class oppression. Year after year we continue to suffer while the ruling class divides us and destroys our movements with the enforcement of ruling class ideology and values.

In oppressed countries, the capitalists both domestic and foreign abuse women on a scale unforeseen. In sweatshops women and children are worked to the bone for almost no pay, producing a surplus value of over 350% on average. While working as near slaves to capitalist production, women are constantly and openly sexually abused and assaulted without hope for justice. In some countries working women in who are raped are often forced to marry their rapist or suffer jail time for speaking out against a man. Sex trade and slavery are at an all-time high. The term "women's rights" can hardly be uttered. Between the never-ending drive for higher and higher profits and an unrestricted brutal patriarchy, our sisters in the international working class need our solidarity more than words can describe.

Here in the developed capitalist countries, women continue to face exploitation and abuse as well. Women continue to make less than men for equal work. The rise of the fascist right-wing, the "alt-right," has targeted women as an enemy that has made too much progress.

Toxic masculinity, machismo, etc., which is cultivated and culturally distributed by the ruling class, continues to drive misery into the life of women. Domestic abuse, sexual assault, and high levels of exploitation go on without justice. Representation is on the terms of the ruling class and only accepted when in line with ruling class values. The relative freedom of women in the developed world is tied to the tether of ruling class patriarchy.

Yet, in the face of these oppressions, the ruling class continue to interfere with the women's movement. Liberal feminism drives a stake into the heart of the women's liberation. Symbolism and money are seen as the means of liberation. The protest is reduced to standing naked in public, covered in paint, to be mocked at by the misogynists that are supposed to be protested. Freedom is seen as the image of the woman capitalist, who abuses women in the same way that male capitalists have. The liberal feminist movement is often found to be exclusive to upper-middle-class white women. Women of color time and time again are ignored. The fact that women of color are often exploited and abused at higher levels than white women are ignored by the liberal "feminists."

The time for a real movement of working women is needed. The hypocritical symbolism of liberalism as deterred the women's movement. It has replaced action with symbols, representation for a check, and freedom for the right to exploit as ruling class men do. We emphasize today on Working Women's Day because it is labor that unites us. While in different parts of the world women may face harder conditions, it is labor that allows us to connect. While women of color are in a more destitute position than white women, it is labor that unites us. It

is also labor that unites us with the advanced elements among working men, it unites us with the struggles of the LGBTQ+ community. Wage-slavery is the uniting force amongst all strata of oppressed people. It is by uniting against the capitalist-imperialists that we will see true liberation. The division and exploitation created and distributed to the population by the ruling class, these capitalist-imperialists, have been created and distributed to maintain their power while keeping us powerless. To defeat sexism, misogyny, toxic masculinity, and inequality we must defeat their parent: capitalism.

Working women unite! Working people unite! Death to capitalism! Death to the imperialists! We have nothing to lose but our chains!



TOWARDS A MARXIST THEORY OF ADDICTION

By: Michael P. and Mike B.

Over the course of recent years, a trend has developed with respect to heroin and opioid addiction in America. In 2016, drug overdose was the leading cause of accidental death in the United States, due largely to dramatic increases in the abuse of prescription painkillers as well as heroin and fentanyl.¹ Along with those who suffer in the grip of addiction to these powerful substances, families, friends, and entire communities have borne the agony of the public health crisis known as America's "opioid epidemic."



Fentanyl is a synthetic opiate - or opioid - that is much more powerful than heroin. Its increased availability and use has led to a spike in overdose deaths in recent years.

Media accounts often note that the opioid addiction transcends all traditional social boundaries including race and class, sounding an alarm that the problem has escaped the segregated confines of the country's inner cities and urban centers, encroaching upon the once-insulated ranks of the suburbs and wealthy communities. To be sure, the present opioid epidemic affects individuals and communities far and wide, but the crisis has had its most profound impact upon the poor and working classes, claiming lives, destroying communities, and compounded the systemic problems of poverty and inequality in America.²

The opioid crisis is not the first such substance-related crisis to ravage the poor and working classes in America. Class antagonisms - exacerbated by racism in its most deep-rooted, institutional forms - emerged as a prime factor in the stigmatization of addiction in America during the 1920s under Prohibition and further with the formation of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics under Harry Anslinger in 1930.

The crack cocaine epidemic, which was facilitated and perpetuated by the United States government at many different levels, ravaged American inner cities throughout the 1980s and well into the 1990s. The rise of crack cocaine production and trafficking stands as a powerful example of lumpenism³ in the service of capitalism. That is, the most powerful of psychoactive substances are also those that are most addictive and cheaply produced. Thus, the rise of methamphetamine and fentanyl production and trafficking in the decades subsequent to the advent of crack cocaine is due in large part to the production of these drugs evolving into a highly profitable cottage industry in which costs remain low and demand is consistently high and ever-increasing.

Whether lumpenism in the service of capitalism in the production of "street drugs," or the pharmaceutical industry, which even by the government's own admission has been the single most aggressive entity in the manufacture and distribution of highly addictive drugs, it is indisputable that it is capital that drives and exacerbates drug problems in America.

Capitalism as the Invisible Hand of Addiction

The contradictions of capitalism do not just promote addiction; they are at the very root of it. The wealthy enjoy preferential and timely access to hospitalization and treatment services as the costs of potentially lifesaving treatments soar beyond the reaches of underinsured and uninsured people. Government funds are poured into interdiction and enforcement efforts, perpetuating the "War on Drugs," as those in power mull cuts to social services and healthcare assistance. America's military demands more money to mount campaigns of death and destruction abroad while the government abdicated its responsibility to address preventable deaths at home.

The reality of the situation - the reality of addiction - is that it is capitalism laid bare. The formalities and pleasantries behind the creation of capital are laid to rest and all that is left is the most simple capitalist idea: consume until you are destroyed. This is effectively the core contradiction of capitalism. Rosa Luxemburg famously provided the option of socialism or barbarism, but in our era of addiction and environmental ruin, for ourselves, family, friends, comrades, and world, the proposition is socialism or death. The capitalist uses up, breaks, and destroys the body until those who are afflicted are left with only one choice, and that is death.

At the core of the addiction problem is the capitalist belief in the commodification of everything. Whether that thing is a human body or a product both of these are simply another commodity for capitalism to consume, profit from, destroy, and dispose of ultimately. The conversion of the human body is exemplified in the treatment of the addict. The addict is viewed as a profit source on all ends. They produce wealth for the black market bourgeoisie and for prison owners alike, serving up the profits of addiction to purveyors of human suffering.

The capitalist core of addiction is the simple fact that products must be constantly reproduced in order to make them valuable, and it is not an idea ultimately, it is simply fact. Planned obsolescence has nothing on a capitalist product which once used is ultimately going to be replicated as it is needed immediately again. The expenditure of the product begs for another usage of the product. This reproduction allows for super profits on a scale that a legal business could scarcely imagine, and yet, we know that those who are most often attacked are not the black market bourgeoisie. Those profiting off dime bags and twenties sold on a corner are not the root of this. Profiteers in drug cartels in distribution schemes work hand in hand with imperialist governments to maintain a stranglehold allowing them to inflict violence as they see fit.

Many perceptions of addiction and strategies for treatment draw heavily from bourgeois morality and metaphysics. While religion, reform, and idealistic solutions are put forth by petty bourgeois, criminal, and liberal elements, only the proletarian line has the potential to truly address the problem of addiction. To this end, we will fully explore three options in the present struggle: the petit bourgeois line, the lumpen line, and the proletarian line.

Common Errors in Thought: The Ultra Left Line

Ultra leftists love revenge fantasies and their method for dealing with drug addiction is no different. These sentiments are often echoed after we lose yet another person to drug addiction or suicide during recovery; "Kill your local heroin dealer." The rallying cry of these individuals and groups is not to fix the fundamental contradictions that create drug dealers, alienation,⁴ poverty, escapism, but to kill the dealer and leave the root of the cause.

This line is ultra left in theory, right in practice. It is an idea that would make a fascist blush, that we ignore the poverty and

war on the poor which drives addiction and instead decide to attack the lowest levels of an organizational structure. This is not Marxism-Leninism in practice. It is in effect a return to the Reaganite war on drugs and as has always been the case with the ultra left is built on commandism⁵ and a failure to properly apply Marxism. It is not the duty of a revolutionary to knock in doors and crack skulls, and it is simply "boots and bats" anti-fascism continued on to a revolutionary organization.

We do not seek to moralize or to judge, we are not a puritanical religious organization. The ultimate understanding we must come to is that drugs are turned to as a result of capitalist alienation. Drug dealing is turned to as a result of poverty. When survival is on the line, decisions must be made and families must be fed, we must stop treating victims of class war as its perpetrators. When we decide that Reaganite lines are correct we effectively abandon our position as revolutionaries and will fall to revisionism at best, and at worst, mayhem and death on a grand scale.

Common Errors in Thought: The Lumpenpolitics Line

The lumpenpolitics⁶ line tells us that drug dealers are in fact proletarian, and while this is often true, there is a reality which underlies this and this line ignores that. We should not embrace every reactionary idea that a worker holds because they are a worker. We are not proletarian fetishists; we are revolutionary socialists and understand the root cause and development of why these things happen. We do not seek to integrate incorrect ideas into our correct ones. We seek to correct incorrect ideas through struggle.

This line comes from a sense that the only people actually taking care of their neighborhood, putting food on the table and keeping the lights on must be a good person as long as they take care of their neighborhood. It's centered upon an idea that "protecting me and mine" is good. This development is logical and easily defeated through correct lines and careful application of Service to the People. We know that this idea is incorrect as destruction of another



"Presentation of the lumpenproletariat" (1907)

community for the benefit of your own is never going to be more than mutually assured destruction. What you do to protect your community at the expense of others will see itself replicated in your own.

We do not seek to supplant this line simply through revolutionary theory but to do so directly by attacking its cause, to make it so that this line is no longer one that can logically be held in any neighborhood because the necessity does not exist for drug dealers to provide for a community. Workers' parties must become not only social institutions, but friends to the community. We are here to ease the burden of workers and show them our sincerity not through our words but through the fact that we can effectively supplant capitalist institutions. Our dual power⁷ will not come from some sort of soft speech and no action. We absolutely must put into practice our lines.

AFTER SPENCER AND HEIMBACH'S FAILURES, A RECOMMITMENT TO REFUSING ALL PLATFORMS FOR FASCISTS

By: J. PALAMEDA

The last several weeks saw two major victories for the emerging anti-fascist forces in the United States. First, on March 5th, Richard Spencer's talk at Michigan State University faced overwhelming opposition, with elements of the Traditionalist Worker's Party being driven off from the event, leaving a paltry audience of approximately a dozen people for Spencer's hour-long reflection on the victories of the tiki torch rally and the "bit of a disaster," in his words, that took the life of Heather Heyer in Charlottesville. The complete failure of the Alt-Right to secure a platform for speech at Michigan State elicited Spencer's now widely circulated admissions that "antifa is winning," and that spreading genocidal rhetoric on college campuses was no longer "fun." Days later, on March 13th, Matthew Heimbach, leader of the Traditionalist Worker's Party, after failing to support Spencer at Michigan State, was arrested for a sordid brawl involving his top spokesman, father in law, and former TWP member Matt Parrott. The two got into an altercation over Heimbach sleeping with Parrott's wife that spilled out into a Wal-Mart parking lot. As of March 14th, The Traditionalist Worker's Party website has been taken down, and there are numerous reports that the party is beginning a "rebranding" campaign much like Vanguard America after their member, James Fields, murdered Heather Heyer in Charlottesville.

These victories provide an occasion for anti-fascists in America to reflect on the course of our movement against fascism, white supremacy, and Nazi apologism, and on which approaches and tactics work and which do not. From Berkeley and Austin to Chicago and Charlottesville, anti-fascists across the country have made impressive progress in consolidating, expanding, and developing diverse movements. Alongside physical removal, anti-fascists have built community support programs, aid programs, and educational initiatives, methods the APL has endorsed previously on the Phoenix. Antifa is "winning," in Richard Spencer's words, because this diversity in tactics is united by a shared principle across anti-fascist crews, parties, and sects: that fascists should be given no platform for speech and growth on college campuses or anywhere else. If anything can be taken from the defeat of Spencer and the Traditionalist Worker's Party in Michigan, it is that there can be no debate with fascists. Communists must reject the liberal and revisionist notion that dialogue or public debate with fascists provides any positive benefit for our movement against capitalism and fascism. Richard Spencer and the TWP withered under a no-platform campaign, but as these forces reorganize themselves, adapt, and reemerge to threaten our communities once again, it is essential that anti-fascists continue to build the anti-capitalist movement side-by-side with a strict dedication to no-platforming fascists.

The APL and other anti-fascist organizations' dedication to no-platforming is not shared by all elements on the left. Dugin-sympathetic "anti-imperialists" often highlight perceived shared grievances between "populist" movements and socialists, and claim that open discourse between the Alt-Right and Left might produce a positive coming together. Caleb Maupin's "Students and Youth for a New America," co-sponsored one such event in the summer of 2017, in which Maupin "debated" virulent Charlottesville fascist Augustus Invictus. The shared ground Maupin and Invictus had for such a debate, per the SYNA post announcing the event, was an opposition to "the pseudo-left of middle class activists who obsess with identity politics" which "is off putting to many working class Americans." There is a principled, Marxist critique of identity politics as a liberal corruption of liberation struggles, but Maupin and his supporters instead attack it in reactionary terms and in the



same way as fascists. Maupin openly states that the left "panders to blacks," and "what pronouns people are called" a clear invocation of white-chauvinist identity politics, but it is not identified as such by him because for both fascists and Duginites, "identity politics" is used exclusively to attack minority groups while they pursue an identity politics that normalizes and glorifies white american chauvinism.

Such debates and the ideology behind them also reveal a fundamental misunderstanding about the goal of fascist discourse in socialist spaces. As identified by Palmiro Togliatti, the famous Italian Marxist-Leninist, and several other critics of fascist development, fascists enter left discourse to corrupt it and reorient it towards a Strasserite opposition to capitalist hierarchy down racial and ethnic lines. The history of fascism tells a story of violence against the left and corruption of class analysis when that violence fails. There can be no uncorrupted common ground with fascists, and those who continue to attempt to find it only amplify Nazi voices for no substantive gain for the movement against capitalism and fascism. It is not an error only Maupin and other Duginites make, the PSL's Brian Becker invited noted antisemite and holocaust denying fascist Alberto Garcia Watson (and several other far right guests) to speak on his podcast and openly shared common ground with him, and others have encouraged more open dialogue with fascists.

Opposition to such staged debates, interviews, and dialogues with advocates for genocide is not a question of purity, but of what tactics work and what tactics do not. A remarkable event on the ground in Michigan on March 4th revealed with little doubt the function and honesty of fascist rhetoric, and why we as activists must refuse to interact with it in any way. Moments after assaulting leftists and failing in their objective to reach Richard Spencer's talk, Heimbach entreated a liberal urging calm to debate (at about the 5:20 mark and onwards in this video). Heimbach can be heard preaching about the right of his community to oppose capitalists, that he did not hate the man he was talking to, and that the disagreement could be resolved peacefully. In moments, Heimbach went from roman-salute throwing Nazi assaulting leftists to a tame moderate seeking peace and common ground. The progression is key: when violence failed, the fascists sought common ground by shifting from yelling racial epithets to rendering themselves as

concerned citizens. This is why anti-fascists say without doubt that fascist rhetoric is violence and must be stopped at all costs. If violence can work, they will use it, when it cannot, they resort to candied words. It's a method that is hardly new or unique to Heimbach or even the TWP. The Atomwaffen Division, a group of violent Nazis responsible for multiple murders, similarly have resorted to Strasserite, "anti-capitalist" rhetoric in the wake of several damning articles from mainstream media outlets and public bans from popular social media. This has been the strategy of the alt-right on college campuses across the country as well: violence if possible, poorly attended events protected by police if it is not. Anti-fascists have found success not in engaging the alt-right on these terms, but in silencing them before that rhetoric can produce enough fascists such that common ground debates are no longer necessary.

The failure of Spencer's college tour, the Traditionalist Worker's Party's turbulent fall into rebranding, and the growth of anti-fascist forces after the election of Donald Trump and the events in Charlottesville are encouraging developments. But these fascists, as history tells us, will come back in new and more deadly ways. The fight is far from over, as TWP and Alt-Right elements retreat to muster their forces to emerge once again as threats to all progressive people in the United States. These fascists use debate as a platform to pursue violent campaigns against people of color, LGBTQ+ communities, leftists, and countless others. If the first few months of 2018 show us anything as anti-fascists, it is that no-platforming works, and to prevent the further spread of fascist violence when they emerge once again to prominence, we must double-down on our commitment to implement it alongside a growing movement for peace, equality, and socialist democracy. The American Party of Labor calls for all left forces within the United States to continue their campaign to deny all platforms for fascists, reject the liberal and revisionist myth of the shared space or "marketplace of ideas," and join or support militant efforts to silence fascist events across the country.

AMERICAN PARTY OF LABOR . ORG
PEACE, EQUALITY, SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY
ALL POWER TO THE WORKING PEOPLE!

EXAMPLES OF MARX'S WORDS AROUND YOU TODAY

By: M DERUITER

Many of the things that Marx and his followers have given us in their various works can be seen happening today in the world around us. A person just has to look no further than the daily headlines of the many news outlets to come face to face with these examples.

*"In these crises, there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity - **the epidemic of over-production**. 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 civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce. The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property. The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. 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. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented."*

- Karl Marx, The Communist Manifesto

Traverse City farmer: Dumping perfectly good cherries is rotten

Keith Matherly, Detroit Free Press Published 11:41 p.m. ET July 28, 2016 | Updated 11:55 a.m. ET July 29, 2016

Detroit Free Press HOME NEWS SPORTS BUSINESS AUTOS ARCHIVE



f CONNECT TWEET in 7 LINKEDIN COMMENT EMAIL MORE

A Traverse City tart cherry farmer is leaving 14% of his crop this year to rot on the ground to comply with an industry marketing agreement intended to keep cherry prices stable. And he's not happy about it.

A frustrated Marc Santucci, who grows about 30 acres of cherries on his 80-acre Traverse City farm, put a photo of the dumped cherries, thick on the ground, on Facebook Tuesday — and the photo had been shared nearly 38,000 times as of Thursday afternoon.

Santucci posted with the photo. "But, we have to dump the ground to rot. Why? So we can allow the import of rom overseas! It just doesn't seem right."

Said limitations on the amount of cherries he can sell are price of cherries."

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

MARKETS | COMMODITIES

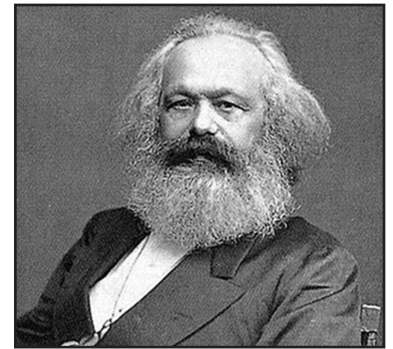
America's Dairy Farmers Dump 43 Million Gallons of Excess Milk

Spilled milk hits highest in decades, as prices drop and supplies bulge; putting more butter in McMuffins and cheese in tacos

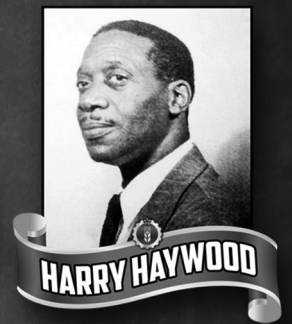
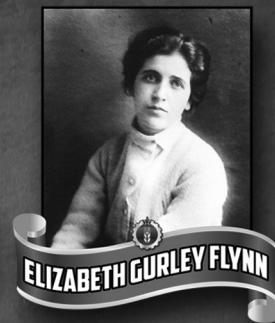
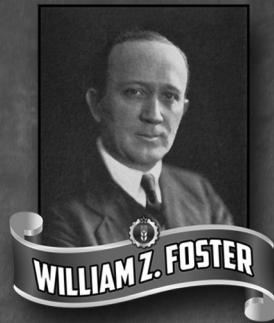
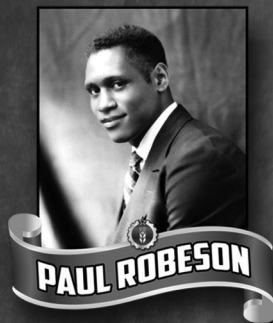
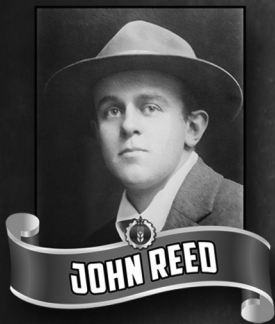


Farmers Dumping Millions of Gallons of Milk Amid Glut

U.S. dairy farmers are dumping tens of millions of gallons of milk in the midst of a supply glut which has also resulted in warehouses full of cheese. WSJ's Kelsey Gee explains how restaurant chains are stepping in to help farmers on Lunch Break with Tanya Rivero. Photo: Sean Proctor for The Wall Street



PEACE, EQUALITY, SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY



ALL POWER TO THE WORKING PEOPLE! AMERICANPARTYOFLABOR.ORG

PEACE, EQUALITY SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY & All Power To The Working People!



AMERICAN PARTY OF LABOR .ORG

The American Party of Labor is...
a revolutionary working class organization. Our aim is to abolish the capitalist system and all its horrors by replacing it with socialism, a system based on the principle laid out by Marx, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work." This is the first phase toward the higher phase of communism, defined by the principle "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."



"Life without ideas deserves nothing. There is no greater joy than to fight for them." - Fidel Castro

Why is Marxism-Leninism the Best Answer? Can't We Regulate Capitalism or Try to Create Some Kind of Third System That Isn't Fully Communist or Capitalist?

One must understand there is an important fundamental difference between Marxism and other so-called anti-capitalist or "third way" theories. Marx, unlike many thinkers of his day, did not just see a problem with capitalism and start proposing an alternative system. Instead, he and his compatriots analyzed capitalism itself to understand how the system worked. Marx's ideas for revolution are based off of that analysis, not ideas he dreamt up on his own. Solutions to the problems of capitalism can only be reached by understanding and observing the system itself, not by dreaming up some wonderful Utopian alternative. As for regulating or restraining capitalism, this has been done many times before.

Oftentimes the governments of capitalist states must restrict the private sector for various reasons. The problem is that political power is still stacked in favor of the ruling class, and if you slap regulations on big business, they have every avenue and all the resources necessary to see those regulations overturned in the long run. What truly led to the collapse of the old socialist bloc was not that these countries followed Marxism-Leninism, which was ultimately too radical, but rather quite the opposite- that these nations all came under the impression that they needed more and more market style reforms, until they had more or less become capitalist countries.

Nowadays, ideas such as "21st century socialism" would have us do basically the same thing, if not less - regulate capitalism, nationalize some industry, and try to maintain a welfare state- without expropriating the ruling class, without giving the nation a clear direction for the future, and worst of all, without putting the working class in power. This kind of idea can only lead to temporary gains for the workers.

How is the American Party of Labor Different than Other Socialist, Communist, or Left-Wing Parties or Organizations?

First of all, the main difference is that we see the solution to the problems of the working class in revolution and the seizure of state power by the working class and its political organizations. The methodology by which we strive for revolution is Marxism-Leninism—that is, the scientific methodology of social/economic revolution first devised by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, and contributed to by figures such as Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin and the late Albanian leader Enver Hoxha. This does not mean, however, that we look at these figures the way religions look at their own prophets, nor do we see their every written word as some kind of Holy Scripture or their every action as blameless and divine.

That being said, we critique their actions from the Marxist methodology of historical dialectical materialism, analyzing actions and events in their historical context, taking into account the benefit of hindsight and trying to avoid idle speculation about what could have been if certain events had or hadn't happened, etc. Because we uphold the general line of these figures, from Karl Marx to Enver Hoxha, we consider ourselves "anti-revisionist," and it is in this way that we differ from most communist parties or organizations in the United States.

Who Can Join? How Do I Get Involved?

Every working person who is sick of being abused by capitalism, is open to our plan for change, agrees with our Program and Platform, who lives in the United States and is over the age of 18 is welcome to join.

We recommend that you check out our publications page to get a more in-depth look at the Party. Another good place to look is our online library. The cornerstones of our Party are the works of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin, and Enver Hoxha.

You can find everything that you should know about us here, and you can join online or contact us and connect to members in your area.

If we don't have a presence in your city, we'll get to know you and help you establish one.

Legalize Workers, No to Raids & Deportations!

Jobs & Income Now!

Increase Access To Education & Services!

Nationalized Healthcare!

End All Current Illegal Wars Of Aggression!

Equal Rights, Pay & Housing For All Regardless of Race, Religion or Sexual Orientation!

Abolish Profit Made By The Exploitation Of Labor!

The Red Phoenix is published bi-monthly by The American Party of Labor.

American Party of Labor
P.O. Box 30232
Chicago, IL. 60630-0232

<http://AmericanPartyofLabor.org/>

Editorial Board: Victor Vaughn, Mike Bessler, Alfonso Casal, Mike DeRuiter, Sebastian Lemba, Leonard Zorfass.

Managing Editor: Leonard Zorfass.

Staff: Polina Brik, Garit Boshcka, Kevin Connolly, John Palameda

Labor donated.

Our General Line.

1. The American Party of Labor comes from and represents the American working class. From time to time and place to place there may be individuals who are admitted to the Party who do not have a working class background, or are not currently considered to be working class by Marxist-Leninist ideology and principles. Such individuals are exceptions to the general rule, as they have in effect transcended their class through conscious application of Marxist-Leninist ideology.

2. The American Party of Labor maintains that value in society is produced by human action within the material world. That is to say, value is created by the consumption of labor power. The working classes, which have only their labor power to sell for their daily sustenance, therefore make production possible. We call for the reorganization of society to provide the means of production to the working class to be administrated either under an elected or selected management or collectively through a council system.

3. The American Party of Labor demands the abolition of private property and that all means of production be in the hands of the working class. Profit under capitalism is extracted surplus value from the consumption of labor power and constitutes a theft from the working class by the capitalist ruling class. Under our system, the working class will be paid the full value of their production less the necessary deductions to support the state and its various cultural, economic and social support projects.

4. The American Party of Labor demands that all oppressed nations within the context of the American Empire, including, but by no means limited to, Indigenous peoples, Native Hawaiians, Guamanians and Puerto Ricans (within the context of Puerto Rico), be given national self-determination as to whether or not they wish to remain in the American socialist state, which shall be constructed on the remnants of the United States. We call for the end of the so-called commonwealth system in all U.S. imperial possessions. The nations in these political organizations should either choose to become a U.S. state or an independent country.

5. The American Party of Labor demands the cancellation of all current debt held by developing countries to the U.S. These loans were not made with the intention of helping the people of these countries, but rather to enslave those countries with debt.

6. The American Party of Labor is a party against all imperialism. We are opposed to all wars of aggression on the world stage and all other threats of war and military intervention. We call for the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops from abroad. We stand shoulder-to-shoulder with all occupied peoples and with all nations living underneath neo-colonial regimes. We call for the end of foreign aid to Israel, Colombia and other outposts of capitalist and imperialist aggression.

7. The American Party of Labor is an internationalist party. All peoples around the globe struggling for their emancipation from their own systems of exploitation are our allies. We extend our hands to all revolutionary organizations guided by Marxism-Leninism worldwide and to national liberation movements of exploited peoples of all countries because our cause is one and the same.

8. The American Party of Labor demands the U.S. withdrawal from NATO and other imperialist alliances.

9. The American Party of Labor stands fully against the militarization of the U.S.-Mexican border. It supports the rights of immigrants and the ending of neo-liberal policies in other countries, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, that drive sustenance farmers off their lands and to the United States due to a lack of economic opportunity in their native countries.

10. The American Party of Labor has a more generalized list of our demands and positions in a separate document called the Party Platform.