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**ELECTION 2024: FASCISM
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SPECIAL ISSUE: FASCISM & TRUMPISM



Donald Trump walks past police in Lafayette Park after visiting outside St. John's Church across from the White House on June 1, 2020, in Washington. (AP Photo/Patrick Semansky)

ELECTIONS WON'T DEFEAT FASCISM, ONLY WE CAN!

American Party of Labor | Oct. 1, 2020

The greatest enemy of fascism is and always has been a united working-class movement!

The whole world watches the upcoming elections in the United States. While there are other powerful imperialist nations in the post-cold war world, the U.S. remains at its center. Speculation on the election directly affects the daily ebb and flow of investment in the global market, as capitalists consider the opportunities created by the over 1,000,000 lives lost during the COVID-19 outbreak and greater instability in the imperialist core. For Americans, the first term of Trump's presidency has greatly empowered the radical right-wing, seen the intensification of the oppression of immigrants, and the chipping away of basic bourgeois rights like voting. Right-wing violence against oppressed peoples has not only continued through the state's repressive forces, but also through the militant right wing movement that is emerging from the shadows of Charlottesville. In so many ways, this election casts a long shadow over the lives of everyone living in the United States.

There are many on the left that have decided that Trump must be defeated and that endorsements for Biden are the logical call to action. It cannot be denied that Trump must be defeated and that his presidency represents a grave threat to the working class in the US. But in this urgency, we cannot refuse to acknowledge the simple truth that these fascist policies and movements existed before Trump and will exist, stronger than ever, after Trump. There is no need for Trump to form a paramilitary group when the reactionary citizenry has been cultivated for generations upon generations into being that force. The police have been getting away with the violent suppression of oppressed peoples from the get-go. The American state, for all its talk about liberty of the private citizen, has no problem wielding great authoritarian power when it suits the needs of the ruling across, both at home and abroad. All the pieces existed before Trump, exist terribly under Trump, and will exist after Trump.

“Our lives as working people are too seriously imperiled to refuse to see, as the whole country did during this week's debate, that we lose in either case—without a real popular movement.”

No Communist group in the United States has a meaningful level of influence over public opinion. Yet, many organizations have thrown their hat into the ring of endorsement, committing themselves to the electoral cause. There is pragmatism behind this but not much else. One might even argue that a Communist group in the United States endorsing a candidate would hurt that candidate more than anything else. After all, the liberals hate the radical left, and Communists especially, many times more than they hate the right-wing and fascism, the attack on even the social democratic Bernie Sanders campaign shows this.

As the election looms over US political life, from the unemployment lines, to the immigrant detention facilities built by Obama and Biden and made a home for eugenics and family separation by Trump, to the wealthy suburbs Biden and Trump both focus their campaigning on, we say that the slogan of “defeat Trump” is insufficient. As Malcolm X said in 1964, and as the Bolsheviks argued in 1917, the ballot can be a tool for revolutionaries, one that shouldn't be ignored. But we should never, particularly as fascism grows in power in the United States, reduce our slogans to the old electoral games of “this election is too important.” Our lives as working people are too seriously imperiled by resurgent state and right violence to refuse to see, as the whole country did during this week's debate, that we lose in either case—without a real popular movement.

The Long Decay into American Fascism:

In the treatment of any disorder, it is necessary to get to the root cause of the disease. Treating the symptoms of the disease, while important, is not a cure, and will only provide temporary or partial relief to the sufferer. Trump is not the disease, he is a symptom of the disease, the festering rash the disease has brought up. The disease is capitalism. But, identifying the disease is not enough. It's also necessary to trace its pathology.

Fascism is nothing new in American political life. From the second generation Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s to Father Coughlin, the German-American Bund, and the Silver Shirts of the 1930s, to the American Nazi Party of the '60s and '70s to the Alt-Right of today, overtly fascist organizations and ideas have had a persistent presence on the

American political scene. What is new is how these groups and the ultra-reactionary ideology they represent have moved from the fringes and shadows to the center stage. It is evident that they have been encouraged and emboldened by the Trump presidency.

It must however be strongly stated that, while clear and open fascism has only recently crawled out from the cesspool into the light of day, fascist tendencies and the process of fascistization has been a feature of American society for decades. Fascism is the crisis of capitalism in decay. Fascism is the uniform put on by a capitalism that is no longer able to effectively manage the class struggle and continue ruling in “the old way.” It is the terroristic dictatorship of the most reactionary elements of finance capital. Seen in this light, fascism in the United States is not a question of this or that lunatic fringe group. Rather, it is part and parcel of the development of American capitalism in its final, imperialist stage.

The fusion of monopoly finance capital with the machinery of the state has been noted and commented on since the 1950s — the much vaunted ‘military-industrial complex’ assuming economic dominance. In the social sphere, there has long been an ongoing process of militarization in American life; with an increasing level of police violence and repression. Indeed, with the police presence in immigrant communities and communities of color taking on the aspect of an occupying army. On the ideological front, the Civil Rights, Women's, anti-war, and social change movements of the 1960s and 1970s triggered a conservative backlash that has continued to this very day. Reagan's presidency in the 1980s accelerated the attempt to undo many of the liberal policies enacted over the previous two decades. In the 1990s, both the ostensibly liberal Democratic Party and the overtly conservative Republican Party shifted to the Right. This rightward trend has not abated, it has intensified. This is ingrained in the very structure of American politics.

Thus, Trumpism must be seen as a part, and a particular manifestation of, this deeply rooted ongoing process.

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The Historic Crimes of the Trump Regime:

Yet, in tracing and understanding this history, we shouldn't lose track of the shifts and accelerations of criminality undertaken by the Trump regime. The crimes of the Trump government against the peoples of the United States are severe and innumerable. His response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been an utter failure, prioritizing profits over human health and distrusting scientists and experts in general, resulting in 200,000+ deaths. The coronavirus has disproportionately affected the African-American population, as well as causing untold deaths among Americans with no healthcare coverage, over 10,000,000 of which lost their insurance during the COVID-19 recession. Official figures of unemployment in the U.S. currently stands at over 30 million people, with no relief in sight except one pitiful \$1200 stimulus payment that barely covers one month of rent and living expenses for most U.S. citizens.

His government has been virulently racist and anti-immigrant from the start, and now U.S. policy manifests in ripping children from their parents and imprisoning them indefinitely into what must be called concentration camps. This atrocity is only compounded by the recent reports of forced hysterectomies within these detention camps, an outright genocidal action. The Trump regime has overseen a continuous erosion and rollback of the democratic rights of the people for self-expression, assembly, protest, and speech, through the use of murderous police terror and calls for violence against peaceful protestors, targeting of political opponents, and attempting to list the broad anti-fascist forces and Black Lives Matter activists as terrorists for opposing right-wing reaction and fighting for civil rights. All this points to a larger program of the suppression of dissent and the people's democratic rights.

"All the historians, all the experts, all the survivors of authoritarian regimes of the past, all the mass organizations, all the human rights groups, all the working poor of this country, and all the rest of the world, agree on this singular issue: we must be prepared to stop the rise of fascism in the United States at all costs."

On top of this, Trump himself has made plain his intent to destroy and sabotage the remaining vestiges of bourgeois democracy still remaining, intentionally withholding funding from the Postal Service to sabotage mail-in voting, giving speeches with false claims



of voter fraud designed to disenfranchise Americans, instituting a block of payroll taxes designed to defund and dismantle Social Security (primarily hurting the elderly and working poor), and openly stating he will "negotiate" to serve a third term in office, despite threats of impeachment and calls to abolish the Electoral College that permitted him to win the 2016 election in the first place. All this is part of a clear agenda by Trump to move toward becoming an autocratic ruler.

The Trump government is actively working to destroy what is left of human rights and constitutional bourgeois democracy in the United States, as well as roll back social programs for healthcare and public education, bodily autonomy through Roe v. Wade, the right to organize in a union, minimum wage and protection for workers, basic universal voting rights, all the while clearing the pathway for the wealthy owners of monopolies and corporations to seize more power in society than ever before, not to mention ignoring and aggravating the natural disasters from the existential environmental crisis of climate change. The racist oppression of immigrants and the sabotaging of democracy echo the fascism of the past. All the historians, all the experts, all the survivors of authoritarian regimes of the past, all the mass organizations, all the human rights groups, all the working poor of this country, and all the rest of the world, agree on this singular issue: we must be prepared to stop the rise of fascism in the United States at all costs.

The Unique Features of American Fascism, and Our Unique Responses:

Many left commentators have been slow to recognize this fascist progression in the US since 2016, because they conceive of fascism as a rational, objectively identifiable ideological movement. In 2016, when the American Party of Labor identified Trump as a proto-fascist, we were often attacked, and accused of reformism for not attacking Hillary Clinton enough. Leftists and liberals attacked us for flying a banner that equated Trump and Mussolini.

But we know that Fascism has historically moved in many different patterns and has its own character in each country it festers in. Instead of a pure aryan race, we have a more general white supremacy, replacing the Japanese Fascist desire for a Pacific empire we have American Exceptionalism and international hegemony supported by both blue and red. Yet all of these explicitly American concepts have a common theme, they are anti-rational manifestations of the general fascist desire to bring about a despotic dictatorship of the most chauvinist forces in the country and capital. There is little one can do to sway a white supremacist because the entire frame of mind relies on a rejection of reality, as the recent debate proved with little doubt. Due to this the standard political discourse falls short of removing Fascism from power. As Jean Paul Sartre argued of the fascists, "They know that their remarks are frivolous, open to challenge. But they are amusing themselves, for it is their adversary who is obliged to use words responsibly, since he believes in words. The anti-Semites have the right to play

Recognizing the threat of American fascism cannot blind us to the fact that the Democrats have time and time again proved either incapable or unwilling to combat that Fascist threat, in fact they have often aided their efforts in congress or directly with state sponsored violence against protestors and the rounding up of undocumented people to be sent to concentration camps. The time has long passed to "vote blue no matter who," this is the time to explicitly and intentionally build unity amongst all workers separate from bourgeois Institutions. Only we can save ourselves. As Malcolm X said in his famous "Ballot or the Bullet" speech, the time is now, not tomorrow, not next election, but now, to build a united front that delivers the demands of the workers not in the halls of power but on the ground in every city in this country.

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Building a Real Working-Class Alternative:

Given these historical circumstances and the challenges the US working class faces in the era of resurgent fascism, it is essential that we bring this united banner of solidarity against hate, real democracy, and universal access to healthcare, jobs, housing, and the tools necessary to live fulfilling lives to every corner of the country. It is the business of electoral reformists to conceive of the country as “red and blue states.” For too long the US left has lived exclusively in urban enclaves and favored national issues campaigns over local organizing.

“The US left is often quick to praise the work of the interwar CPUSA in organizing the south and black communities, but in contemporary practice often renounces the deep ideological struggle required to do such things, and refuses to redress themselves to the contradictions within the US working class, even sometimes refusing to acknowledge that US working class exists.” Everywhere reaction and hatred is, we must

be there to counter it with working class organization, journalism, and mutual aid. In Orlando, Alabama, New Jersey, New York City, and beyond, the American Party of Labor has found success in organizing through and allying with local working class organizations that bring a national program of working democracy and socialism. Stronger local organizations bring the great urgency of our platform to working people, and orient them with greater accuracy to the needs, worries, and demands of the working class.

In this era of electoral red, blue, and purple states, communists must intentionally cross those lines. In doing so, however, we have to be willing to speak to local people, address their concerns, and be willing to educate and discuss with those who hold reactionary positions. The US left is often quick to praise the work of the interwar CPUSA in organizing the south and black communities, but in contemporary practice often renounces the deep ideological struggle required to do such things, and refuses to redress themselves to the contradictions within the US working class, even sometimes

refusing to acknowledge that US working class exists. To defeat fascism, we have to face those influenced by the fascistization of US politics and discuss and educate them.

As fascism rises in the US, refusing to do the hard work of revolutionary organizing could prove a fatal mistake. For this reason, we say that we must defeat the rise of fascism with radical working class organizing, not just Trump, and not just with cynical, pragmatic, and “tactical” electioneering. More than anything else, we have to amplify the power of the workers of the world, who often feel powerless and blown about by fascist policy and anti-science fanaticism in 2020. We all felt and saw how alienated most of the country felt, both right and left, by the recent debate. That is the power of the socialist movement, to weaponize the discontent of the working class into organization and power. A national organization of working class people, deeply-linked with local organizations, can, like the revolutionary movements of the past, fundamentally remake society and vanquish fascism once, and for all.

“WHILE THE GERMAN FASCISTS CONTINUED GROWING STRONGER”

A POEM BY BERTOLT BRECHT, TRANSLATED BY SOFIA D.

Als der Faschismus immer stärker wurde in Deutschland
Und sogar Massen der Arbeiter ihm immer mehr zuströmten
Sagten wir uns: unser Kampf war nicht richtig.
Durch das rote Berlin gingen frech zu vierten und fünfen
Nazis, neu uniformiert, und erschlugen uns Die Genossen.
Aber es fielen Leute von uns und Leute des Reichsbanners.
Da sagten wir den Genossen von der SPD:
Sollen wir dulden, daß sie die Genossen erschlagen?
Kämpft mit uns in dem antifaschistischen Kampfbund!
Wir bekamen die Antwort:
Wir würden vielleicht mit euch kämpfen, aber unsere Führer
Warnen uns, roten Terror gegen den weißen zu stellen.
Täglich, sagten wir, schrieb unsere Zeitung gegen den Einzelterror
Täglich aber auch schrieb sie: wir schaffen es nur durch
Rote Einheitsfront.
Genossen, erkennt doch jetzt, dieses kleinere Übel, womit man
Jahre um Jahre von jeglichem Kampf euch fernhielt
Wird schon in nächster Zeit Duldung der Nazis bedeuten.
Doch in den Betrieben und auf allen Stempelstellen
Sahen wir den Willen zum Kampf bei den Proleten.
Auch im Osten Berlins grüßten Sozialdemokraten
Uns mit Rot Front und trugen sogar schon das Zeichen
Der antifaschistischen Aktion. Die Lokale
Waren an den Diskussionsabenden übervoll.
Und sofort wagten die Nazis
Sich bald nicht mehr einzeln durch unsere Straßen
Denn die Straßen zumindest sind unser
Wenn sie die Häuser uns rauben

While the German fascists continued growing stronger
And even from the workers drew more and more recruits
We told ourselves: ‘we must have fought it the wrong way.’
Through Red Berlin they went in rank and file, these Nazis,
in sharp new uniforms, murdering our comrades:
The bodies bore both banners: the Reichsbanner and ours!
So we told the comrades, the Social Democrats:
‘Will we stand by? while they murder us together?
Come fight with us in the Anti-fascist Front!’
The answer that we got:
‘We might have fought with you, but for our leaders warning us, that we not
fight by Red terror against white.’
‘Each day,’ we said, ‘our paper condemned individual terror,
but each day it wrote: ‘we can win only in alliance.’

Comrades, understand that this ‘lesser evil,’ which
year in, year out, has only kept you out the fight,
will soon mean stomaching and swallowing a Nazi rule.
But in the factories, and at the welfare lines,
we saw the will to fight most strong among the workers.
In Berlin’s Eastern district you greeted a Socialist
“We’re with the Red Front!”, who carried on his breast
the pin, the Anti-Fascist Pin, and came into the pub
overflowing up to bursting on discussion night.
So that since then the Nazis,
not one of them dare walk the streets out on his own;
the streets at least are ours,
Although the homes are theirs.

THE NATURE OF FASCISM



Bill Bland | Originally Published by Communist League of Great Britain in *COMbat* | 1976

This text, originally written as a clarification to the earlier “Theses on Fascism” published by the CLGB, simultaneously explains and clarifies a number of features of fascism, which give us a better bench-mark for what is fascist and what is not. First, it interrogates for which classes Fascism is useful (monopoly and non-monopoly capitalists), as opposed to simply the social base of fascism (the petty-bourgeoisie etc., those classes that tend to support fascism on idealistic grounds). Second, it interrogates the opportunism which destroyed anti-fascist resistance in Italy. Thirdly, the text clarifies the purpose of fascism, which is to allow the monopoly capitalist class to maintain state power when the distracting mechanisms of bourgeois democracy and counter-militant trade union leadership fails to restrict the spontaneous organization of the working class. Fascism is not a response specifically to the threat of communist revolution, and is generally resorted to between an increase in the consciousness/militancy of the working class and the development of a powerful communist party.

A careful reading of this text should allow any class-conscious worker to identify fascism with relative certainty.



For many years Marxist-Leninists accepted the definition of fascism made by the 13th Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International in December 1933:

“Fascism is the open, terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist and most imperialist elements of finance capital. Fascism tries to secure a mass basis for monopolist capital among the petty bourgeoisie,... also trying to penetrate the working class.”

– “Theses on Fascism,” 13th Plenum of ECCI

This definition is of value in distinguishing a fascist dictatorship from a military dictatorship representing the interests of the same reactionary class or classes, in that a fascist dictatorship makes use of an organised social base, particularly among the petty bourgeoisie.

At the same time, it must be remembered that this definition was made at a time when the Communist International was already dominated by concealed revisionist elements purging a left-sectarian tactical line, and was confirmed by the 7th Congress of the CI in 1935, by which time the revisionist leaders had partially thrown off their mask.

In considering this definition when drawing up its “Theses on the Anti-Fascist United Front” in late 1974, the Communist League was forced to note that fascist dictatorship had been installed not only in countries, such as Italy and Germany, where finance capitalism did not yet exist, but also in certain countries, such as Spain and Portugal, where the capitalist revolution had not yet been completed where political power lay in the hands of large landowners and comprador capitalists, and where the dictatorship was directed as much against the national capitalists and their revolutionary movement as against the working class.

For this reason the Communist league defined fascism more broadly than had been done by the ECCI, as

“the open terrorist dictatorship of a reactionary ruling class, exercised through a fascist political party having a mass base. . . Fascism seeks to build its mass base primarily among the petty bourgeoisie and lumpen-proletariat, but extended as far as possible into the working class proper and its organisations.”

– “Theses on the Anti-Fascist United Front,” CLGB

Even, however, when finance capitalist (imperialist) countries alone are considered, this definition differs from that of the ECCI. The latter presents fascism as the dictatorship of “certain elements” of finance capital, namely: “the most reactionary, most chauvinist and most imperialist elements of finance capital”. From the ECCI definition, therefore, it would follow that there are “other elements” of finance capital - “less reactionary, less chauvinist and less imperialist” elements - whose interests are not represented by the fascist dictatorship and who form a social base objectively opposed to fascism.

But the attempt to impose a fascist dictatorship is made - as will be discussed later - when the parliamentary façade of the capitalist state can no longer function in the interests of monopoly capital. At this time, therefore, the replacement of “parliamentary democracy” by a fascist dictatorship is objectively in the interests of monopoly capital.

At this time therefore, the replacement of “parliamentary democracy” by a fascist dictatorship is objectively in the interests of the capitalist class as a whole.

Indeed, if “parliamentary democracy” can no longer function in the interests of monopoly capital, once this had developed, it can no longer make capitalist society itself operate effectively.

Although there are contradictions between monopoly capital and non-monopoly capital, non-monopoly capitalists have a common interest with monopoly capitalists in maintaining the effective operation of capitalist society. At this time therefore, the replacement of “parliamentary democracy” by a fascist dictatorship is objectively in the interests of the capitalist class as a whole.

Of course, there are different levels of political consciousness among capitalists, as there are among workers - although the differentials are far less among the former than among the latter. Naturally, the more politically perceptive capitalists will realize the need, for them, for a fascist dictatorship earlier than their less perceptive colleagues, who may cling to faith in “parliamentary democracy”

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after the former have become well aware that their objective interests require its abolition. Certainly, it is necessary for the anti-fascist movement to take advantage tactically of any “anti-fascist” sentiments among capitalists for as long as these sentiments persist. But sooner or later reality forces subjective illusions to be cast off, and it would be the height of foolishness for the anti-fascist movement to base its strategy on capitalists whose subjective political consciousness lags temporarily behind their real interests. Strategically, the basis of an anti-fascist-united front must be those classes whose objective interests are adversely affected by fascism: the working class, the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, and elements of social classes belonging to social and national minorities.

Of course in a monopoly capitalist country the state - whether it takes the form of “parliamentary democracy” or a fascist dictatorship - represents the interests of the monopoly capitalist class, rather than those of the capitalist class as a whole. But it does not represent the interests only of “certain elements” within monopoly capital, as the ECCI definition would have it.

Hence, the Communist League defines fascism as: “the open terrorist dictatorship of a reactionary ruling class,” and in the case of a monopoly capitalist country, this is the monopoly capitalist class as a whole.

Resistance to Fascism In Italy:

The resistance of the Italian working class to fascism was made especially difficult by a number of factors:

Firstly, fascism in 1922 was a new international phenomenon and many people were deceived by its demagogic “anti-capitalist” propaganda into believing its claims to be a “revolutionary” movement - claims which were lent colour to by the adherence to fascism of many “revolutionary” anarcho-syndicalists.

Secondly, there existed no Marxist-Leninist party, following a scientific strategy and tactics and with mass influence among the working class, which could mobilise the class forces, against whose interests fascism was directed, into the only channel capable of successfully resisting the fascist offensive - the anti-fascist united front.

The open and concealed reformist leaders of the Italian Socialist Party advised the party's

members and supporters not to participate in organised resistance to fascism, but to “ignore” it - advice repeated almost word for word by the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany in the early 1930's and by the leaders of the British Labour Party today.

The Communist Party of Italy was formed only in January 1921 and had been unable to win significant mass influence among the working class before the coup of October 1922.

Although urged by the Communist International, of which the party was a section, to form a united front against fascism, the party was led at this time by a left-sectarian group, headed by Amadeo Bordiga which categorically rejected these correct tactics.

To the leadership of the CPI:

1) ‘Parliamentary Democracy’ and fascism were both forms of the dictatorship of monopoly capital, and a revolutionary party had “no interest” in defending the democratic rights and liberties possessed by the working class under the former; the task of a revolutionary party was “not to defend but to destroy”, parliamentary democracy;

2) Social-democracy, as manifested in the organisations of the Italian Socialist Party and the General Confederation of Labour, was “the main enemy” of the working class, and fascism should be resisted by directing the working class against social-democracy;

3) United Front tactics were “opportunist”; and to be strongly opposed as a “diversion” from the struggle for socialist Revolution,

4) where an organisation of resistance to fascism based on united front tactics sprang up spontaneously (like ‘the “People’s Commandos” formed in July 1921), this must be denounced as a “non-revolutionary” organisation and members of the party forbidden to join it.

In the circumstances of Italy in 1921-22, it is clear that successful resistance to fascism by the working class was being made impossible.

The circumstances in which the attempt by German monopoly to impose a fascist dictatorship ten years later was successful will be dealt with in a separate report. What must be noted here, however, is that by this time the leadership of the Communist International was in the hands of concealed revisionists who imposed upon the Communist Party of

Germany precisely those left-sectarian tactics which had been adopted by the Communist Party of Italy in 1921-22 and which had contributed to the victory of fascism in Italy at that time.

The Motives for the Imposition of Fascism:

Marxism-Leninism holds that the “normal” form of state in a capitalist country is that of “parliamentary democracy”:

“The logical form of bourgeois domination is precisely the democratic republic.”
– *Letter to Edward Bernstein, Mar. 24, 1884,*
F. Engels

The Communist League’s “Theses on the Anti-Fascist United Front”, therefore, correctly declare that, in a monopoly capitalist country: “The attempt by monopoly capital to impose a fascist dictatorship will be made at a time when ... “parliamentary democracy” ... (has become) an unsuitable form of state power for monopoly capital”. The Theses imply, however, that “parliamentary democracy” becomes an unsuitable form of state power for monopoly capital as a result of: “the development of the movement for socialist revolution, led by a Marxist-Leninist Party of the working class”. The report which follows, makes it clear that this formulation is only partly correct, and makes it clear that that “parliamentary democracy” may become an unsuitable form of state power for monopoly capital for reasons other than the development of the revolutionary socialist movement.

The theory that fascism was brought to power in Italy as a “preventive measure” directed against the “threat” of socialist revolution was a feature of fascist propaganda. One of the earliest books on Italian fascism, by Luigi Fabbri was entitled “La contro-rivoluzione preventiva”, (The Preventive Counter-Revolution). Even before the fascist coup of October 1922, *Librero Tancredi* told an election meeting in Turin on April 15th., 1921 that the fascist “Combat Groupe” had arisen because of:

“the violence of the Socialist and Communist Parties, which wished to destroy the values of the victorious nation and provoke revolution.”
– *Speech of April 15th., Librero Tancredi*

This theory was repeated by right-wing social-democrats. In a speech in Milan on September 10, 1922, *Camillo Prampolini*:

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“concluded that if the activity of himself and of his comrades had failed to prevent the onset of bourgeois reaction, the responsibility lies only with the supporters of revolution and of the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

– *“Speech of Sep. 10th”, Camilo Prampolini*

The large-scale backing of the fascist movement by Italian Big Business and its state began in October 1920. The process of bringing to power a fascist government was accomplished in three stages:

Firstly, using the fascist apparatus of force - with arms and officers provided by the army, and with the connivance of the police - to weaken the organisations of the working class and peasantry:

Secondly, transforming the fascist movement into a “respectable” political party and bringing it - through membership of the “National Bloc” headed by Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti, the “Old Fox” -- into the framework of “parliamentary democracy.”

Thirdly, through a combination of the processes of stages one and two, bringing about through the “March on Rome” of October 1922. the establishment of a movement dominated by the fascists which would proceed to replace “parliamentary democracy” by an open totalitarian dictatorship.

Was this large-scale backing of the fascist movement by Italian Big Business in October 1920 - October 1922 the result of a “threat” of socialist revolution?

In answering this question it must be noted:

Firstly; that the large-scale backing of the fascist movement by Italian Big Business began (in October 1920) after the Italian working class had suffered a serious defeat (the sellout of the occupation of the factories, in September 1920) which had left the whole working class significantly demoralised:

“The workers’ movement emerged from the struggle enervated and disillusioned.”

– *“Storia del partito popolare”, C. de Rosa*

Secondly, the defeat was followed by a serious decline in the strength of all workers’ organisations.

Thirdly, the trade union movement continued to be led by objectively counter-revolutionary elements;

Fourthly, the Italian Socialist Party continued to be led by objectively counter-revolutionary elements; and

Fifthly, the Communist Party of Italy - which might have been the vanguard party of the working class - was formed only in 1921; its influence within the working class was small; and it was led by left-sectarian elements, headed by Amadeo Bordiga, incapable of winning for the party mass influence among the working Class.

Clearly, if “parliamentary democracy” could no longer function in Italy in 1920-22 in the interests of monopoly capital, it was not because of the “threat” of socialist revolution. Mussolini himself admits this. Already in December 1920 he was writing of:

“.. the death-rattle of Italian bolshevism, which is mortally stricken.”

– *Article in “The People of Italy,” Dec. 31st 1920, B. Mussolini*

“To maintain that the bolshevik danger still exists in Italy is to mistake fear for reality. Bolshevism has been conquered.”

– *Article in “The People of Italy,” Jul. 2nd 1921, B. Mussolini*

“It is ridiculous at the present time to talk as if the Italian working class were heading for bolshevism. You all know that the state of mind of the working classes is fundamentally different from what it was two years ago.”

– *“Address to the National Council, Combat Groups” 12-13th July 1921, B. Mussolini*

Perhaps, therefore, the large-scale backing of the fascist movement by Italian Big Business in 1920-22 was not because “parliamentary democracy” could no longer function in the interests of monopoly capital. Perhaps, its motives were purely psychological...

“The occupation of the factories gave the bourgeoisie a psychological shock, which explains their fury and guided their successive steps. The sense of property and the authority of the industrialists was hit; evicted from their factories, they saw work going on, for better or worse, in their absence...”

After a few days of bitterness and uncertainty; during which their chief feeling was a deep grudge against Giolitti, who had failed to back them up, and had forced control of their industries on them by decree, their reaction

took the form of a fight to the death against the working class and the ‘liberal’ state...

The factories were haunted by evil spirits which must be exorcised... The evil spirits were to be exorcised by direct and violent action; the hour of fascism had come;...

The industrialists and landowners were livid with rage and ready for anything, willing to sell their souls for revenge. The bloodshed and the fires which were to destroy the offices of hundreds of working-class and socialist organisations and the homes of ‘red’ and even ‘white’ workers seemed to them the ritual of an atonement ceremony, necessary to purify the violated temple of property.”

– *“The Rise of Italian Fascism,” Angelo Tasca.*

But Marxist-Leninists understand that, the ideas which motivate people to take a certain course of action do not arise by chance, out of the thin air; these ideas reflect reality. And when members of the monopoly capitalist class have ideas sufficiently in common to motivate them to try to change the whole superstructure of society, then these ideas reflect not mere whim, but a conviction that their fundamental interests require such a change.

Tasca, in the passage cited above, hints at this when he refers to the anger of the monopoly capitalists that, during the occupation of the factories, the “parliamentary democratic” state had failed to protect their property.

But anger and thirst for revenge, are sentiments, which are soon dissipated. To carry through the carefully planned, long-term process of replacing “parliamentary democracy” (the “normal” form of state under capitalism) by a fascist dictatorship, the decisive strata of monopoly capital had to be convinced that this failure was not an isolated occurrence unlikely to be repeated, but was likely to be an intolerable feature of Italian society for a long time to come.

Parliamentary democracy” can function effectively in the interests of monopoly capital only when:

Firstly, the trade union bureaucrats can control the mass of the workers, can damp ‘down’ militancy and prevent this from manifesting itself in ways which seriously affect the profitability of monopoly capital; and secondly, when political parties serving the interests of monopoly capital and operating within the framework of “parliamentary democracy”

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retain the support of the masses of working people. Both these conditions had ceased in Italy in 1920, and their failure to operate increased over 1920-22.

Firstly, the reformist bureaucrats in the leadership of the trade union movement had failed to prevent the militancy of the workers from manifesting itself in September 1920 in a large-scale occupation of the factories which had caused very significant loss of profits to monopoly capital. True, these same bureaucrats - in conjunction with the leaders of the Italian Socialist Party had succeeded in selling out the occupation and securing a return to normal working with only minor concessions from the industrialists. But this sellout itself had gravely weakened the trade union structure appropriate to "parliamentary democracy". Sooner or later the workers would throw off their dispiritedness, and then these trade union leaders would be even less likely than in 1920, be able to damp down this militancy.

Secondly, the Italian Socialist Party, the principal party representing the interests of monopoly capital with mass influence among the working class, was in the process of disintegration. Its open and concealed reformist leaders had participated in the sell-out of the occupation of the factories, and so had shared in the loss of confidence among the workers suffered by the trade union bureaucrats. And after the breakaway of the left-wing to form the Communist Party of Italy in 1921, the party which they led was little more than a discredited rump, declining rapidly in membership and influence.

As Antonio Gramsci, who later became leader of the Communist Party of Italy, pointed out in October 1920:

"We are already seeing the decomposition of the Popular Party. . . Day by day, with devastating speed, the Socialist Party disintegrates and collapses."

– *The Communist Party*, A. Gramsci

From this he drew the conclusion that:

"Capitalism . . . no longer has a political party whose ideology... secures the continuance of a legal state on a broad base... The political power of capitalism can realize itself today only in a military coup d'etat and the attempt to rivet an iron nationalist dictatorship."

– *ibid*, A. Gramsci

Gramsci's analysis was confirmed in a statement by the Prefect of Florence in May 1921:

"There is such a continuous breakaway from the parties that both the PSI and the communists, and the union, will lose 90% of their numbers, and will be left with such a small number that they will no longer be able to do anything."

– *"Statement of March 1921," The Prefect of Florence*

Today, of course the revisionist Italian Communist Party has effectively replaced the Italian Socialist Party as a party objectively serving the interests of monopoly capital, appealing to and supported by the mass of the working class. But this development was, in 1920-22, too far in the future to be of use to monopoly capital.

In the circumstances existing in Italy in 1920-22, the decisive strata of Italian monopoly capital were correct in drawing the conclusion that "parliamentary democracy" could no longer be operated effectively in their interests, and that they must therefore try to replace it by what Gramsci calls "an iron nationalist dictatorship".

The Italian experience of 1920-22 bears out the Communist League's Theses on the Anti-Fascist United Front when they state that, in a monopoly capitalist country, "the attempt by monopoly capital to impose a fascist dictatorship will be made at a time when 'parliamentary democracy' has become an unsuitable form of state power for monopoly capital". It does not, however, bear out the implication made in the Theses that "parliamentary democracy" becomes an unsuitable form of state power for monopoly capital only as a result of: "... the development of the movement for socialist revolution, led by a Marxist-Leninist party of the working class".

It establishes that "parliamentary democracy" may become an unsuitable form of state power for monopoly capital for reasons other than the "threat" of socialist revolution. It establishes that, in this respect, the Theses on the Anti-Fascist United Front require revision.

The Threat of Fascism in Britain

The conclusion of the last paragraph has important implications for the British working class.

There is no "threat" of socialist revolution in Britain in the near future.

No matter what the level of spontaneous militancy which might develop in the British working class in the next period, this could not develop into a "threat" of socialist revolution in the absence of a vanguard Marxist-Leninist Party. Such a party will be built, but its construction cannot be brought about overnight.

Basing itself on the implication made in the Theses on the Anti-Fascist United Front that "parliamentary democracy" becomes an unsuitable form of state power for monopoly capital only as a result of: "the development of the movement for socialist revolution, led by a Marxist-Leninist Party of the working class"; the Communist League has tended to assume that there was little likelihood of British finance capital promoting and backing on a large-scale a fascist movement in the near future, with the aim of replacing "parliamentary democracy" in Britain by a fascist dictatorship.

The research embodied in the studies of the Italian experience of 1920-22 makes it necessary, as has been said, to revise this implication of the Theses, and so to revise the assumption that there is little danger of a serious fascist offensive in Britain in the near future.

In this connection it must be noted that the reformists in the leadership of the trade union movement were unable to damp down the militancy of a section of the working class in 1974 which defeated the attempt of the Conservative Government to impose wage restraint.

The Labour Government was brought into office, through the manipulation of "parliamentary democracy" by monopoly capital, and has succeeded, in cooperation with the reactionary leadership of the Trade Unions Congress, in for the moment, duping a majority of the workers into accepting wage restraint under the cloak of "combating inflation".

But the economic weakness of British monopoly capitalism, and its need to combat the real cause of inflation - namely massive state deficit financing by the creation annually of huge quantities of new money have compelled the Labour Government to begin the imposition of a programme of slashing state expenditure in fields which are not detrimental to monopoly

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capital, that is, particularly in the fields of the social services (although these will continue to be paid for by the working class). And they are supported in this programme, in the name of the infamous “social contract”, by those same reactionary leaders of the trade union movement.

This sell-out by the leaders of the Labour Party and the trade unions must, of course, in the long run seriously undermine the confidence which the mass of workers have, up to the present, retained in these leaders, as “representatives of their interests” - just as the sell-out of the occupation of the factories in Italy in 1920 seriously undermined the confidence of the mass of the Italian workers in the leaders of the Socialist Party and the General Confederation of Labour.

One temporary solution for British monopoly capital’s problem in this respect would be the formation of a new “left-wing” social-democratic party based on the revisionist Communist Party of Great Britain, broadened, perhaps, by the inclusion of the “left-wing” of the labour party and some sections of the trotskyite movement - which could replace the discredited Labour Party within the framework of “parliamentary democracy”, just as the revisionist Italian Communist Party has replaced the discredited Italian Socialist Party within the framework of Italian “parliamentary democracy”.

But already since March of this year - certain sections of monopoly capital are backing an alternative solution: the fascist movement.

The rise in unemployment and the cuts already made in the social services, have increased the possibility of building up already inculcated racial prejudices among the white majority of the population into an organised movement to lay the blame for the growing evils of decaying capitalism at the door of the black minority of the population.

Already in February the BBC screened a film made by the “British Campaign to Stop Immigration” (a cover for the fascist National Front) which was in violation of “The Race Relations Act”, nothing more than a tirade of racialist filth which openly boosted the National Front. And despite widespread protests and action in the courts, they insisted on screening the film for a second time.

... [section cut for space; the original article lists examples of rising racist violence with support from the liberal and conservative British press]

Enoch Powell followed up his earlier “rivers of blood” speeches, by a new tirade in which he spoke of areas where white people lived in “terror” of “black criminals”, and “warned that the spectre of guns” would soon make Belfast “an enviable place to live.”

The press gave “due” prominence to Powell’s speech under the headlines of “ENOCH’S SHOCKER” (*The Sun*), “IMMIGRANTS - HOW BRITAIN IS DECEIVED” (*Daily Mail*), “IMMIGRANT RACKET LEAK” (*Daily Express*).

A spokesman for the National Front was more than justified in saying that: “newspaper publicity was probably its greatest ally”.

There could, of course be no more dangerous illusion than to believe that, once decisive strata of monopoly capital have opted for fascism, that the state - the instrument of monopoly capital - could provide some form of resistance to fascism. On June 20th, the TV programme “This Week” revealed that members of the fascist paramilitary organisation “Column 88” had been allowed officially to become a unit of the territorial army and were receiving military training in the use of sophisticated weapons.

In the past ten years, despite the upsurge of racist propaganda, there have been no more than a dozen prosecutions under the existing legislation, and most of these were dismissed by the courts. Even in the most blatant case yet of defiance of the Race Relations Act, that of the Leamington fanatic Robert Relf, who was sent to prison for refusing to take down a racist notice in his garden, the press present him as a victim of bureaucratic intolerance and he was released from prison after a few week, without “purging his contempt”, on “health grounds”.

The new “strengthened” Race Relations Bill now passing through Parliament prohibits the refusal of membership in clubs to people on account of their colour, but it rejects, in the name of “freedom of expression”, the prohibition of written incitements to racist violence.

On June 24th. Home Secretary Roy Jenkins rejected demands; for the banning of the fascist National Front in the name of: “free speech and civil liberties”. (R. Jenkins: Statement of June 24th. 1976, in: “Morning Star”, June 25th). And on July 27th. he appealed on TV to people to “ignore” fascist provocations” -- his call being followed on the BBC by the allotment of 5 minutes peak viewing time to National Front

leader John Tyndall to call for the deportation of black residents from Britain!



Conclusion:

A section of British monopoly capital – as yet, only a section – has reached the conclusion that, by reason of the factors outlined in the previous section, “parliamentary democracy” is likely in the next few years to become inoperable in Britain in the interests of monopoly capital.

The threat of an attempt by monopoly capital to impose a fascist dictatorship is not, therefore, one which will become a reality, only when the revolutionary socialist movement in Britain, led by a Marxist-Leninist Party, has become a “threat” to monopoly capital.

The task of building an anti-fascist united front, which alone can defeat the attempt to impose a fascist dictatorship is thus an urgent one. It is one which must be carried out now, alongside that of building a new Marxist-Leninist Party.



AMERICAN PARTY OF LABOR
ALL POWER TO THE WORKING PEOPLE!

WILL DEMOCRATS SAVE US? ELECTION 2024: FASCISM IS AT THE GATES

Eris Rosenberg | Nov. 5, 2024

“The American workers will not follow the bourgeoisie. They will be with us, for civil war against the bourgeoisie... I also recall the words of one of the most beloved leaders of the American proletariat, Eugene Debs, who wrote in the Appeal to Reason, I believe towards the end of 1915, in the article “What Shall I Fight For” that he, Debs, would rather be shot than vote credits for the present criminal and reactionary war; that he, Debs, knows of only one holy and, from the proletarian standpoint, legitimate war, namely: the war against the capitalists, the war to liberate mankind from wage-slavery.”

--V.I. Lenin, *Letter to American Workers* (1918)

As the 2024 election cycle draws to a close, as Marxist-Leninists we again declare our opposition to the farcical circus that is bourgeois electoralism. We endorse no bourgeois candidates and support no arguments for lesser evil electoralism. Whether it is the bipartisan “civility” found in the 2024 Vice Presidential debate where fascist candidate J.D. Vance and run-of-the-mill imperialist Tim Walz patted each other on the back, Harris’ declarations that transgender healthcare is not of concern to her and that voters will have to accept her support for Israel’s genocide in Palestine, or the Democratic Party’s tactic of allowing the GOP to implement antisocial policies while quietly continuing those policies when their turn at the helm comes, we can find no shred of progress in capitalist power-sharing schemes.

Through the use of gerrymandering, lobbying, and mass media, the bourgeoisie deftly block any and all attempts at reformism. Aside from the historical example of political bargaining whereby the bourgeoisie, fearful of a revolution, grants concessions to the working classes under the banner of social democracy, we are left lacking in examples of meaningful change within the confines of liberal electoral politics. In fact, these concessions are typically wrapped in red tape and full of disqualifying clauses, in addition to being gradually stripped away by the states that do give them. To further illustrate the disparity of power between workers and capitalists, even liberal academics have acknowledged the futility



of voting in effecting change, declaring in academic terms that no democracy exists in the United States and that the average worker has near-zero influence on the political process. Thus, no matter which party wins at the ballot in a bourgeois dictatorship, the proletariat always loses. Marx said it best: every few years the people get the choice to decide which member of the ruling class misrepresents them.

It has been established that voting on the national level has little to no effect on addressing the issues faced by the working classes. That said, while it is our duty to not take the high-sounding, empty slogans provided by bourgeois propagandists at face value, we must grapple with their rhetoric to find what kernels of genuine intent lie behind the façade. To broadly dismiss all bourgeois messaging as mere posturing and to pretend that the status quo will hold forever is to engage in dogmatism, is to reject dialectical and historical materialism, is to mislead the masses and set back the cause of revolution.

“What would happen if capital succeeded in smashing the Republic of Soviets? There would set in an era of the blackest reaction in all the capitalist and colonial countries, the working class and the oppressed peoples would be seized by the throat, the positions of international communism would be lost.”

--Joseph Stalin, *Report at The Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I.*

To be clear: we are finally in the midst of a resurrection of the communist movement after decades of setback by Browderites, Khrushchevites, Marcyites, Eurocommunists, and all other colors of revisionists. But this

resurrection is not taking place in a bubble. The forces of the revolution are still in the process of growing their numbers, raising their level of education and militancy, and building trust with the masses, as we have seen with the record growth of the union movement and the heroism of the student movement in standing with Palestine. And while it is true that we are currently observing a crisis of the upper classes in the United States, questions remain about the preparedness of both the various communist parties to lead, as well as the masses’ preparedness to fight. Where are the large unions that can be mobilized for a general strike? Where are the soldiers who have prepared to throw their lot against their imperialist commanders? How many seasoned cadres do we have? And what level of discourse are mass organizations operating at? Workers’ organizations across the United States are dealing with a lack of infrastructure and rigor in organizing that should have been cultivated ten, fifteen, twenty years ago – and they are doing so under the encroaching storm clouds of fascism, impending world war, and climate collapse. A cursory examination reveals we need more time and twice as much effort on the part of every revolutionary to succeed. To allow a misstep in either theory or practice at this crucial stage would doubtless result in a defeat for the proletariat an order of magnitude worse than in the previous century. To use a phrase coined by the author Martin Empson for his book of the same name and adapted from Luxemburg’s famous quote: socialism, or extinction.

But it is not a mere matter of organizing and outreach – we must carefully consider

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our message to the masses while staying vigilant to avoid falling into error. The fundamentally incorrect position of declaring Harris to be equal to Trump would only serve to injure, and as implemented by some of our contemporaries, has already injured the relationship of the working masses to various communist organizations. To state that a craven dime-a-dozen imperialist politician represents the same kind of threat to the working class as a fascist demagogue is to insult the working class' intelligence and argue they are incapable of perceiving existential threats to their existence. What do we mean by this? Donald Trump represents the momentary leader of the openly reactionary bourgeoisie. He and his running mate have declared to the world their list of targets to violently remove from the American political scene: 20 million alleged undocumented people, legal immigrants of various nationalities, the "radical left," women who do not adhere to traditional gender roles, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community, among others.

He and his cohorts previously attempted to overturn the results of the 2020 Election, declaring intentions to pardon those convicted for their involvement on Jan. 6, 2021, and have threatened to contest the 2024 Election "violently" if they lose. These are not empty threats, as evidenced by two developments in particular: *Trump v. United States* (2024), and the former President and co. 's involvement with Project 2025.

In light of the above, the correct answer is neither to become a sycophant of the Democratic Party, which also represents the interests of our class oppressors and continues to enable unjust wars and genocide. Quite the opposite: it is a necessity that we double our criticisms of this compromising party given the false consciousness it pushes to the American workers, and emphasize the importance of building up independent proletarian political power. To quote Marx: "Even where there is no prospect of achieving their election the workers must put up their own candidates to preserve their

independence, to gauge their own strength and to bring their revolutionary position and party standpoint to public attention. They must not be led astray by the empty phrases of the democrats, who will maintain that the workers' candidates will split the democratic party and offer the forces of reaction the chance of victory. All such talk means, in the final analysis, that the proletariat is to be swindled."

We must scrutinize the correctness of our line with twice the effort, and double our organizing and education efforts. We must field our own candidates for greater public reach at every level of electoral politics, and build up instruments of proletarian culture and proletarian news outlets. We must combat the inheritance of the student movement's fixation on organizing exclusively on campuses; we must branch out and agitate directly among the working masses, among the unions, and among veterans. Time is of the essence, and we have a world to win.

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL!



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BEYOND BOOTS AND BANDANAS: ANTI-FASCISM IS IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE



Michael D. Petrucelli | Mar. 6, 2018

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. 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 bourgeoisie 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, and that most distinctly American historical fascist group, the Pinkerton thugs 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.

We have proven time and time again that we outnumber them, 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.”

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.



FOR AN AMERICAN MARXIST-LENINIST ANTI-FASCISM

American Party of Labor | Aug. 9, 2017

At the 21st *International Seminar on Problems of the Revolution in Latin America* hosted by the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Ecuador in Quito, the American Party of Labor presented a paper on the issue of fascism as one of chief concerns for contemporary Marxist-Leninists in the United States. The rise of fascism has indeed dominated left discourse in 2017 across tendency, as rapidly expanding anti-fascist movements have waged direct and indirect struggle against the forces of reaction from Berkeley in April to Charlottesville, Virginia next week. As the fight against fascism intensifies in the United States, it is of critical importance that Marxist-Leninists join this struggle in parties, unions, and local anti-fascist organizations, and advocate within these bodies for the Leninist methods and principles proven by the crucible of history.

This advocacy has not historically been sectarian, and Leninists were the originators of the multi-tendency popular front against fascism. Georgi Dimitroff's call for a united front at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International in 1935 deeply influenced American communists for decades. Jack Shulman, a seminal figure in American anti-revisionist Marxism-Leninism, fought for nearly two years in Spain side by side with social democrats and anarchists, and went on to fight alongside his countrymen against fascism in the U.S. Army. The Black Panther Party took up Dimitroff's rhetoric and call and organized their own popular front against American fascism at a conference of some 5,000 activists in Oakland in the summer of 1969. American Leninists have thus been ardent developers and practitioners of the united front, but like Shulman, Newton, Seale, and others, we cannot and should not abandon our principles of democratically centralist organizations dedicated to theoretical advocacy towards building a popular movement of all peoples. Many of the problems facing anti-fascist movements in the United States could be advanced with the greater participation of Leninist and labor activists within the movement, including countering the proliferation of disinformation, the lack of popular, working class participation, and a lack of diversity in tactics.

There has been an explosion of fake anti-fascist accounts and organizations made by fascists specifically to defame the anti-fascist movement, and activists, while making noble

efforts and collating lists of these fake accounts, have largely been unable to stop these fakes from reaching national levels of attention. Jesse Watters of Fox News interviewed the fascist troll behind "Boston Antifa" believing it to be an anti-fascist activist. A man shot himself in the leg counter protesting a non-existent anti-fascist event popularized by fascists trolls at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The pervasive resistance in anti-fascist circles to centralization makes it nearly impossible to articulate a consistent rebuttal and line to the public, and makes anti-fascist groups extremely vulnerable to fascist wrecking, government subversion, and infiltration. These are not new problems. Lenin and the Bolsheviks were slandered as German spies and infiltrated to the top of their organization, and the American Indian Movement and Black Panthers endured unprecedented government attacks under COINTELPRO. In an environment in which fascist wrecking and government sabotage is a given, militant leftists have to practically and theoretically implement security in proven ways. The union "freedom in discussion, unity in action" model, long tested by bosses and government alike in the United States, is a necessary Leninist contribution.

This aversion to centralization in the face of subversion manifests also in the now pervasive notion that working class anti-fascist movements do not need to concern themselves with theory or radicalizing working class populations beyond a few basic leftist principles. Under the guise of a united front against fascism, many advocate for an unprincipled unity that underestimates the significance of agitating amongst the working classes. This is a line of thinking Lenin deeply opposed: "The workers themselves wish to read and do read all that is written for the intelligentsia," Lenin argued in *What is to Be Done?*, concluding that "only a few (bad) intellectuals believe that it is enough 'for workers' to be told a few things about factory conditions and to have repeated to them over and over again what has long been known." The various grassroots anti-fascist groups, from the Young Patriots-influenced Redneck Revolt to the Antifa clubs emerging at local soccer matches, cannot opportunistically overlook the significance of political agitation amongst the working class in anti-fascist work. Anti-fascism has and always will be equal parts opposition and socialist agitation, and buttressing the former by abandoning the latter for greater public appeal underplays

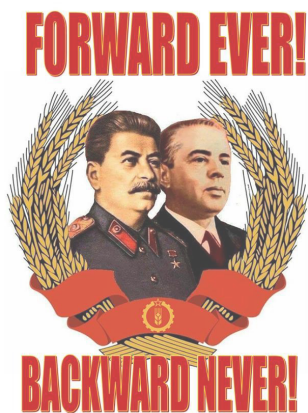
the working class desire for real alternatives and avoids the truly difficult work facing us. An anti-fascist movement will not succeed if it conceives of itself as separate from the Communist revolution, the theories that drive it, and the people who fight it.

A party that has a mutually discussed and unified platform that seeks to incorporate itself within the working class is a movement that can utilize a diversity of tactics. Lenin remarks in his *Guerrilla Warfare* that Marxism cannot "confine itself to the forms of struggle possible and in existence at the given moment only, recognising as it does that new forms of struggle, unknown to the participants of the given period, inevitably arise as the given social situation, changes". In the era of reemergent American fascism, the right is constantly evolving to its contexts. The anti-fascist movement must keep up, and to do this, it must be active in working class communities. For Lenin, "Marxism learns from mass practice, and makes no claim what ever to teach the masses forms of struggle invented by 'systematisers' in the seclusion of their studies." No one tactic, from physical confrontation to sabotage and protest, is sufficient to defeat fascism. The anti-fascist movement in the United States cannot be an armed wing of a politically vacant organization, nor an immobile "systematizing" one that refuses to participate until their "studied" expectations are met.

The rise of anti-fascism in 2017 has been one of the more encouraging developments in contemporary American politics. Anti-fascism must be a top priority for Leninist organizations in the United States, and advocating for democratic centralism, socialist agitation, and a diversity of tactics in this struggle will help in the construction of a Communist movement in the United States. The American Party of Labor has joined national and international anti-fascist struggles, from Portland and Chicago, to Texas, New Jersey, and Quito. In the spirit of Jack Shulman, Leninists must never forsake their principles, but always be willing to join with others in what Marxist-Leninist Dolores Ibárruri called in a farewell speech to the international brigades in 1938 "the cause of all advanced and progressive mankind."



TRUMP WINS; WE FIGHT ON, HARDER THAN EVER



American Party of Labor | Nov. 9, 2024

Donald Trump has been re-elected President of the United States. Although the election results for the U.S. House of Representatives have not yet been fully tabulated, the Republicans now have majorities in the Senate and the Supreme Court, and can be said to control all branches of the federal government.

Trump's re-election is yet another step towards open barbarism and the institutionalization of a reactionary form of politics representative of the general decline of the American capitalist system. Trump's victory opens a new period of potential violence against minorities, women, all marginalized peoples, and the working class at large, necessitating the organization of immediate resistance.

As some seem to have forgotten, Trump's previous term was marked by policies that served to enrich the capitalist class, caused setbacks in civil liberties, pursued imperialist geopolitical goals which are partially to blame for today's genocide in Gaza, and racist immigration regulations which ripped apart working-class migrant families. While the American people rejected Trump in 2020, as demonstrated by his loss in the popular vote, progressives have unfortunately failed to address the underlying material conditions which bolster Trump's popularity by settling for neoliberal candidates and policies which continue to drive increases in economic inequality and social degradation. At a time when many working-class Americans are living paycheck to paycheck, are stuck as permanent renters, and have seen real wage decreases among rising inflation and costs of living, it should be no surprise that they have broadly rejected the neoliberal policies of the Democrats and that so many refused to participate in the electoral process.

Key to fighting against this current iteration of reactionary politics is understanding that it has developed due to the increasing inevitability of crises within both society's economic base and social superstructure. American capitalism has long supported its continued growth and profit rate through the expansion of its markets globally, however in the current period of resistance to American imperialism, in addition to increased competition with other imperialist forces, American capitalism's ability to expand has become limited.

American capital simply cannot continue to manage its internal contradictions, as the need to continuously increase its profit margins leaves less surplus time and revenue to be devoted to maintaining the complex ideological apparatuses which previously built a false trust between the working class and the bourgeois system. As a result of this dissipation of its hold over social life, capital is resorting to simpler and more direct modes of repression and control.

But Trump provides no answers to these contradictions. His disastrous and fascistic economic and social policies are bound to destroy the American economy. His tariffs will hike up prices and his planned deportations will overextend the budget, cripple the labor pool, and create a humanitarian crisis.

With this understanding of the true weakness of the capitalist system's grip on control, the lesson that must be learned from the progressive movement over the last four years is the urgent need for organization and program. There is no longer any election to wait for, there is no longer any time for procrastination, and there is no room for compromise with the growing fascist cancer in this country. Bourgeois elections were never going to save the American working class, but in today's period of crisis these elections have also stopped buying us time.

Throughout the 2024 presidential campaign, many "progressives" sought compromise with reactionary sections of the population in an attempt to present themselves as "reasonable" and "rational," yet in doing so, shifted rightwards on key policies regarding immigration, foreign policy, social program spending, and countless working-class issues, in favor of bourgeois and petit bourgeois

interests. By capitulating in this way, they failed to present a true alternative to the current system which is destroying the lives of everyday people or the reactionary, nationalistic, and chauvinistic "solutions" of fascism. In the coming period of necessarily heightened resistance, socialists and progressives cannot back down to right-wing policy positions and goals.

Further, socialist and progressive forces must boldly present alternative solutions, which point to the contradictions of today's society as potential moments of rupture from this monstrous capitalist system. Between the vast build up in the capabilities of the productive forces over the last decade, with the development of technologies like AI in particular presenting the possibility for going beyond capitalist production more easily than ever before (but which, under the reign of the bourgeoisie, is instead being used to further exploit and disenfranchise workers), to the current state of social degradation which has destroyed people's trust in bourgeois institutions, we find a plethora of opportunities for organizing a real opposition to the barbarism of our oppressors. This real opposition can however only be created by abandoning the mediocre goals of liberalism, and the limits which parties like the Democrats have placed upon purportedly progressive movements.

In the face of Trump's victory, democratic-minded, progressive, and socialist forces must come together to relentlessly fight against fascism's rise everywhere it rears its head. Plainly stated, when the contradictions of capital show themselves and the workers radicalize, there must be a communist party present and prepared to meet them.

The American Party of Labor has previously stated that "no matter who wins, we fight on." These words are truer now than ever before. That is why we must organize and heighten our solidarity with workers, LGBTQIA+ people, immigrants, people of color, disabled people, and all other marginalized groups fighting for their rights and very survival.

The American Party of Labor will be on the front lines to combat any and all fascists in the ongoing struggle of class war, until the working masses ultimately deal the death blow to capitalism and reaction. That is our mission. All power to the working people!



Trump and Biden puppets with blood on their hands at a demonstration protesting RIMPAC in San Diego, Calif., June 30, 2024. (Tyrell/Cancel RIMPAC)

SUPPORT PALESTINE, PRIDE, AND THE AMERICAN PARTY OF LABOR!



The APL is hosting an ongoing fundraiser for Palestine.

100% of proceeds from our “Free Palestine” designs are being donated to emergency relief efforts in Gaza.

We have various other collections including original Pride designs, tributes to socialist leaders and theoreticians, and *Red Phoenix* merchandise and subscriptions.

In addition, we have original printed publications including our theoretical journal, *Marxist-Leninist Currents*; the annual journal of the ICMLPO, *Unity & Struggle*; and a limited selection of other books and journals.

All sales and donations go directly to our work. None of our members are paid from party funds. *No profits, ever!*

★ As a member organization of the ICMLPO, we send our party members to conferences, workshops, educationals, and work programs abroad.

★ We run Service to the People Programs where we provide necessary supplies to working-class families free of charge.

★ We self-publish our newspaper, theoretical journal, and tabling materials, and we voluntarily perform all of the labor required to do so.

Our work is funded by our own members and grassroots supporters, including *Red Phoenix* subscribers, donors, and shop customers.

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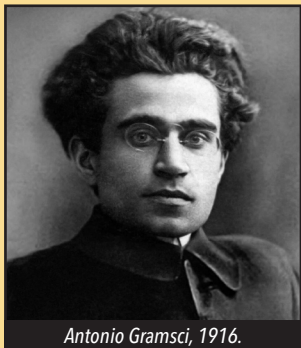
About the Red Phoenix

The *Red Phoenix* is the mass voice of the American Party of Labor, published online regularly and printed bimonthly. It is a newspaper dedicated to providing principled class-conscious insight on what is happening in the United States and around the world, along with analysis of important news, events, reviews, and commentary. The goal of the *Red Phoenix* is to provide a platform for working people of all kinds, without the biases and mitigation of corporate media.

The *Red Phoenix* is aimed at progressive-minded people, activists, workers, and all who are fighting in firm opposition to the war against the poor and the oppressed. Our political stances are taken from a revolutionary perspective and our writing serves as a medium of expressing that sentiment.

The *Red Phoenix* was founded in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crash, as a way to give a platform and voice for working-class people left outside popular media narratives. During the Trump presidential campaign and the George Floyd Movement, the *Red Phoenix* grew to have correspondents across the country interviewing workers, analyzing the resurgent labor movement, and agitating for a true workers' democracy. In our era of misinformation and rising fascism and union-busting, the need for true working-class stories, beyond the "blue and red" mythology, has never been greater.

You can help us with our work by subscribing, donating, or submitting your own articles for publication. Please visit us online at RedPhoenixNews.com



"The action of the mass of industrial proletarians and peasants is necessary for the defeat of fascism, for the class struggle with all of its consequences. Without a doubt the proletariat should and must use, in its struggle against fascism, the contradictions and the struggles that have developed within the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie. But without direct action fascism can never be brought down."

Antonio Gramsci (1891 – 1937)

"Neither Fascism nor Liberalism: Sovietism!" 1924

The *Red Phoenix* is published bimonthly by the American Party of Labor.

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To read more, subscribe, or contribute:

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American Party of Labor:



AmericanPartyofLabor.com

About the American Party of Labor

The APL is a revolutionary working-class organization. Our aim is to abolish the capitalist system and replace it with a socialist, working democracy, a system based on the principle laid out by Marx: "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need." There can be no true freedom or democracy when billionaires have more wealth than the bottom 90% of Americans.

An Anti-Revisionist, Internationalist Party: We are a dedicated anti-revisionist party, opposed to concessions to capitalists, and critical of all imperialist actions by the U.S., Russia, and China. The APL is a member of the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations (CIPOML), and the Resist U.S.-Led War Movement.

A Party of Working-Class People: The American Party of Labor is made up of workers fighting for workers' rights. Many of our members are in active union and unionization struggles, and we all do our political work after clocking out.

A Party of Equals: We are active in the fight for the rights of women, oppressed nations, the LGBTQIA+ community, and immigrants, and for the community control of police departments. In 2019, the APL was a founding member in the National Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression.

Forever Anti-Fascist: We uphold the anti-fascist legacy of the Marxist-Leninist movement. Members of the APL are active in movements against the Far-Right on college campuses, and the barbaric treatment of immigrants at the border.

Who can join? How do I get involved?

Every working person who is open to our plan for change, agrees with our Program and Platform, and is over the age of 18 is welcome to apply.

To look at our joining procedure, activity, membership FAQ, and more, please visit:

AmericanPartyofLabor.com

You can find everything that you should know about us here, and you can 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.

Why is Marxism-Leninism relevant in 21st century America?

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 see a problem with capitalism that could just be mitigated. Instead, he and his compatriots analyzed capitalism itself to understand how the system worked. Marx's ideas for revolution are based on that analysis and the experiences of the struggles in Europe of 1848. Solutions to the problems of capitalism can only be reached by understanding and observing the system itself, textured with the political reality of the country and historical struggles. This is why we think revolutionary history is worth talking about, and making part of our platform.

Regarding the regulation of capitalism and emergent social-democratic reform movements, it is not uncommon that capitalist states restrict the private sector for various reasons. The problem is that political power is still stacked in favor of the ruling class; they have every avenue and all the resources necessary to undo reforms and regulations. What truly led to the collapse of the socialist bloc was not that the pursuit of communism was too radical, but rather that these nations pursued market-style reforms until they had more or less become capitalist countries. As we have seen in the U.S., liberal victories are short lived.

Today, social-democratic movements would have us do much the same, 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. We cannot face climate change, resurgent fascism, police brutality, the exploitation of oppressed nations, and the threat of American imperialism around the world without a revolutionary, centrally organized movement.

Powered by Labor and made possible by contributions from workers like you.