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Trump Pardons and Promotes Open White Supremacy

Fight Back Begins — But Will It Be Enough?

by RAY LIGHT

Our immediate response to Donald Trump's surprise Electoral College victory in the U.S. Presidential Election last November, was to point out that, at least in the short run, a Clinton/Democratic Party victory would have been even tougher on the working class and oppressed peoples *in the rest of the world*. We encouraged the revolutionary forces around the world to take advantage of this window of opportunity to deal effectively with U.S. President Trump and the U.S. Empire. But we also pointed out that a President Trump would be even tougher on the workers and the oppressed nationalities *within the U.S. multinational state itself*. Going forward, we relatively few proletarian revolutionaries and consistent anti-imperialist fighters in the USA would need to mobilize a much more serious and militant struggle among the oppressed and exploited sectors of the U.S. population against the U.S. state apparatus than has been seen in many years.

Hillary Clinton represented the interests of Wall Street Imperialism in general and had shown, as First Lady, as U.S. Senator and especially as President Obama's Secretary of State, that she was one of the most bloodthirsty defenders of the U.S. Evil Empire anywhere. Remember, in particular, her vicious role in the toppling of Jose Manuel Zelaya, the elected President of Honduras, and her role in the brutal imperialist invasion and overthrow of the Gadhafi government in Libya as well as her gleeful and chilling words about the cold-blooded murder of Gadhafi.

But the Trump presidential campaign, while touting populist and isolationist messages against the never-ending and ever-expanding U.S. wars in the Middle East and elsewhere, had openly spread white supremacy and its "first cousin," great nation chauvinism, *domestically*. This latter issue underscores the significance of

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Heather Heyer: A New Martyr in the Struggle For Black-white Unity and Social Justice

by PAT KELLY

On August 12th in Charlottesville, Virginia, Heather Heyer was murdered and 19 other counter-protesters were injured when a young pro-Nazi white supremacist deliberately drove his car into a crowd of peaceful demonstrators. Sister Heyer and hundreds more were

there to oppose a march by white supremacist and neo-nazi forces. The reactionaries were there protesting the decision to take down a statue of Robert E. Lee. A 32 year old white woman from nearby Ruckersville, Virginia, Heather Heyer, a bartender, waitress and paralegal, marched in unity with her Afro-American brothers and sisters and many others to oppose the reemerging white supremacist violence inspired by the Trump regime.

Susan Bro, Heather's mother, told *Rolling Stone* magazine that "My child's famous Facebook post was 'If

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Do you know who said it??

"Civil Rights: What black folks are given in the U.S. on the installment plan, as in civil-rights bills. Not to be confused with human rights, which are the dignity, stature, humanity, respect and freedom belonging to all people by right of their birth."

Hint: The brilliant combination of humor, pain and, most of all, profound truth in this quote was no accidental occurrence for this prominent public figure. His social commentary was especially valuable during the 1960's high tide of Afro-American national liberation struggle helping to point the way toward freedom.

—Still stumped? See page 14 for the mystery answer.

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Trump's previous years-long irrational campaign on Obama's origins, his birthplace, birth certificate, etc, a chauvinistic campaign which the bourgeois "liberal" corporate media dutifully and respectfully reported without ever seriously challenging Trump and holding him accountable. Trump's birther campaign promoted the idea that Obama is a "foreigner" linked to all immigrants "taking U.S. workers jobs," "non-whites and non-Europeans are taking over the USA," etc, etc. (This "birther" campaign also brought together Trump and Arizona's "wild man" sheriff Joe Arpaio.)

In the 2016 presidential campaign (addressing mostly white folks), Trump blamed Obama/Clinton for every problem the working people and the 99% have faced since the economic crisis of 2008 had arisen; he even lightly criticized Wall Street. And since Clinton actually *did* represent the Wall Street ruling class, the main culprit in this crisis period, the more she talked and offered herself as a continuation of Obama, the more Trump seemed, at least, to be a change from the "dark and foreign devil" desperate white voters already "knew."*

When Trump assumed the presidency, not only did he *not* slow down his white supremacist and great nation chauvinist campaign; it was *now intensified* by his considerable presidential powers. Even after his two efforts at Muslim bans thus far were blocked by the courts, and he was caught on telephone tape telling the Mexican president that, if he cooperates with building "the Wall" at the Mexican border, Trump will secretly get the U.S. taxpayers to pay for it, and even though

*In 2008, Roger Stone, Trump's long time political guru, told the *New Yorker*: "Politics is not about uniting people. It's about dividing people and getting your 51%."

(Heather Heyer: New Martyr continued)

you're not outraged, you're not paying Attention." In *Huffington Post*, "She always had a very strong sense of right and wrong, she always, even as a child, was very caught up in what she believed to be fair." "Heather was not about hate, Heather was about stopping hatred ... Heather was about bringing an end to injustice."

Despite her profound grief Susan Bro gave a very positive and inspiring eulogy by saying "So, remember in your heart, if you're not outraged, you're not paying attention. And I want you to pay attention, find what's wrong, don't ignore it, don't look the other way, you make a point to look at it, and say to yourself, what



he persists in making very public and sustained criticisms of the openly white supremacist Attorney General he himself appointed to head the Justice



Attorney General Sessions & Pres. Trump

Department, former Alabama Senator Jeff Sessions (for not covering Trump's ass regarding the ongoing FBI investigation), and even after the public exposure of the blatantly illegal "after the fact" *late registration and admission* by both General Flynn, Trump's first National Security Adviser, and Paul Manafort, his former 2016 presidential campaign chairman, that *each had been working as a paid agent for a foreign power*, and even after Trump's "repeal and replace Obamacare" fiasco involving the Republican-led Congress, — despite all this and more turmoil, drama and intrigue in his administration — *his reactionary and desperate base has stayed with him*. For, the poisons of white supremacy and great nation chauvinism are as "American as Apple Pie."

And this poison has only been strengthened over the past sixty years of U.S. imperialist hegemony leading to U.S. Empire and now to its Decline. Even though real wages in the USA have stagnated since the early 1970's, the U.S. imperialist ruling class has placated, appeased and retained the loyalty of most of the U.S. population largely on the basis of white supremacy and great nation chauvinism. That is, most of us had come to expect U.S. world domination as *our natural right* — "Middle East oil belongs to us," "*we* are entitled to a comfortable life at the expense of the peoples of the rest of the world," "we're number one!"

(contd. on p. 3)

can I do to make a difference? And that's how you're going to make my child's death worthwhile." "*I'd rather have my child, but by golly, if I got to give her up, we're going to make it count.*"



The working class and oppressed peoples in the USA need to resist and defeat the Trump-inspired drive toward fascism on the road to workers power! Let's make the martyrdom of Heather Heyer count!

(Fight Back Begins continued)

On this basis, George H.W. Bush could set up Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, to invade Kuwait, then wage war on Iraq when Saddam went into Kuwait; and George W. Bush could unilaterally attack Iraq with a brutal “shock and awe” bombing campaign and then invade and occupy Iraq and capture and kill Iraqi President Saddam Hussein; and Barack Obama (with Hitlerite arrogance) could order Moamar Gadhafi, the forty year leader of sovereign Libya, to get out of Libya, then lead an unprovoked invasion of Libya and murder Gadhafi, — all these criminal acts, with barely any protest from the U.S. population!



Moreover, white supremacy and great nation chauvinism does not only infect the *white* U.S. population. The Obama-led imperialist coalition that overthrew Gadhafi, brought chaos to Libya, the most progressive African economy. This U.S.-led invasion sparked an immediate hysterical anti-Black African chauvinistic campaign against the large number of immigrant workers then residing in Libya, driving them out of the country and back to Mali and other African countries south of Libya, severely disrupting their societies and making them vulnerable to old-style (U.S.-backed) French colonial military occupations which soon followed. Like most of the U.S. population, the Afro-American people were virtually silent on this Obama/Clinton-led frontal attack against the African continent.

Thus, when the systemic murder by police forces across the USA of Afro-American men and youth became thoroughly documented with help from the widespread dissemination and use of camera-phones and internet, the Afro-American people as well as their supporters emerging in the “**Black lives matter movement**” have remained almost universally *silent* on the connection between the police repression of the Afro-American people at home and the unending U.S. imperialist wars being waged since 2001 under Democratic and Republican presidents alike against black and brown peoples throughout the Middle East and North Africa and virtually every other country and region that possesses large oil and natural gas reserves. *Indeed,*

*black and brown and other lives also matter outside the state boundaries of U. S. imperialism.**

* * * * *

On the evening of August 11, 2017, the long anticipated and well organized “Unite the Right” demonstration descended on the quiet college town of Charlottesville, VA, home of Thomas Jefferson’s University of Virginia, the state’s flagship university. That evening a menacing torchlight march through the town “recalled the horrifying imagery of the Ku Klux Klan” (*Time Magazine*, 8-28-17) of the past. The motley combination of right-wing extremist groups present in Charlottesville on that evening and the following day included the local sponsoring organization, Unity and Security for America, advocating immigration policies that favor whites, and Vanguard America which calls itself the “face of American fascism” and promotes slogans such as “free yourself, white man.” It also included outright pro-German Nazi, pro-Hitler fascists, many inspired by current European fascist groups like Golden Dawn in Greece and the neo-Nazi Nordic Resistance Movement. Also included were Identity Europa, espousing white separatism, and the League of the South, brandishing Confederate flags. Perhaps most influential was the “alt-right” movement largely organized over the internet by college-educated, well dressed suburbanites, wearing Donald Trump-like golfing attire.

In the August 12th demonstration the next day, among the overtly fascist slogans were a *new* anti-Semitic taunt, “Jews will not replace us,” as well as an *old* Nazi chant– “Blood and Soil” which, as *Time* reported, “had been silenced in 1945 with American blood on German soil.” (*ibid.*, p. 30) Legitimized by President Trump’s raw, nasty and unapologetic chauvinism, and fueled by the continuing economic hardship of many white people under the Trump Regime, the Charlottesville gathering was the largest mobilization of open proponents of white supremacy in decades.

Fortunately, the ugly and intimidating presence of the White Supremacists in one of the more enlightened
(contd. on p. 4)

*During the high tide of the Afro-American national liberation struggle in the mid and late 1960’s, there was growing solidarity with revolutionary Cuba and other countries and peoples fighting for their liberation from the yoke of U.S. imperialism on the part of SNCC and a broad cross-section of other civil rights and black power organizations. Even M.L. King, Jr. during the last full year of his life opposed the U.S. war against the Vietnamese people and condemned the U.S. government as the main perpetrator of violence in the world. In Vietnam, along with the heroic national liberation struggle that was defeating the U.S. militarily, the second main reason for the U.S. government pulling out in defeat was the growing Afro-American revolt within and against the U.S. military itself!

(Fight Back Begins continued)

oases in Virginia was protested by significant numbers of folks from Afro-American based groups such as Black Lives Matter as well as predominantly white left-wing groups of anti-fascists, Latino forces and other opponents of white supremacy. This was a quite positive response, even an *excellent* one, given the menacing character of the white supremacist mob. Moreover, apparently, among these progressive forces was the Redneck Revolt, a seemingly mature group of young white people mainly based in Appalachia. They seem to have taken the responsibility to provide legal and restrained but armed defense for the protesting Afro-Americans and other anti-fascists. Given the pro-white supremacist sentiments of many police there, the presence of Redneck Revolt apparently helped to keep the anti-fascist folks relatively safe for most of the day.



However, as the anti-fascist protesters were beginning to disperse, a Hitlerite youth murderously drove his car into a portion of the departing group, injuring 19 people and killing Heather Heyer, a 32 year old white Virginian fighter for social justice and opponent of white supremacy. (See brief article in tribute to this martyr starting on the front page.) Sister Heyer was evidently a woman of the people. Typical of young U.S. folks today, she worked several jobs: as a paralegal, waitress and bartender. Moreover, her serious commitment to the struggle against white supremacy was echoed in the powerful and principled reaction of her mother, Susan Bro, to her martyrdom. The grieving mother praised her daughter's generous and fair character and called on all of us to pay tribute to her daughter by getting more involved and committed to the fight for justice.

The seriousness of sister Heyer (and her mother), the Redneck Revolt and other white, Black, Latino and other forces challenging the white supremacists in Charlottesville is a welcome and much needed development. In the several days following the Charlottesville confrontation, there were protests in solidarity with the progressive Charlottesville protesters in cities and towns all over the USA. In Boston, MA a small white supremacist demonstration was overwhelmed by a massive counter-protest of progressive forces who routed the Klan-Nazi demonstrators. In Baltimore, the mayor ordered all Confederate statues

taken down in the middle of the night and this occurred without incident. Afro-American and other anti-fascist forces in Durham, NC pulled down a Confederate statue "without permission." And Confederate statues were vandalized in cities from Louisville, KY to Tampa, FL.

Meanwhile, President Trump essentially did a wink-wink vacillating response, talking out of both sides of his mouth in the first several days following the Charlottesville events, ensuring that his base did not feel criticized by his "critical comments" regarding the KKK, the Nazis, the murder of Sister Heyer, etc. The President clearly gave his continued blessing and support to white supremacy and the various movements promoting this tyranny. David Duke, the former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, tweeted his appreciation to President Trump for his "honesty and courage to tell the truth" about Charlottesville. But Trump's response was too blatantly reactionary even for some of the CEO's on Trump's two big business advisory councils. After a string of corporate CEO resignations, on August 16, Trump preemptively dissolved both these advisory councils.

If anyone serious still had any question about where Trump stood on white supremacy, two weeks later they had their answer. On August 25, Trump gave a presidential



pardon to Joe Arpaio, the infamous former sheriff of Maricopa County in Arizona. Tellingly, as described by *The Washington Post's* Philip Bump, the pardon was for "a law enforcement official who was ignoring a federal court order and, as a result, was convicted of a misdemeanor." Bump observed: "one message from the Arpaio pardon is precisely that Trump sees his evaluation of the boundaries of legality as superior to the boundaries set by the legal system." The Constitution gives him that absolute power to provide presidential pardons—at least unless and until he is impeached. Bump continued, "He can pardon anyone for any federal crime at any time—even before the person actually faces any charges..." But, given his bourgeois fascination with the Democratic and Republican "battles," Bump focuses most of his article on the implications of such a "surprising" utilization of pardon power to speculate about possible obstruction of the current investigation by Special Prosecutor Robert Mueller of Trump's personal and/or campaign connection to the Russian government.

Indeed, *The Washington Post* and other Democratic Party-leaning and liberal bourgeois corporate media, with their focus on the Democratic/Republican Party "shadow boxing," are covering up or "whitewashing" the following *grim reality*: Arpaio was convicted of

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contempt of court after being told to stop racially profiling Hispanics in his county but continuing to do so anyway. This utter contempt for the court of law, by a law enforcement official ignoring the federal court order, was met with the completely appropriate contempt of court misdemeanor conviction. ***President Trump's pardon serves as a green light not only for rogue sheriff Arpaio but for the armed authorities of the state apparatus at all levels of government all over the USA to carry out martial law against Latinos, immigrants and non-immigrants alike, Muslims and all other "foreigners" and Afro-Americans and all peoples of color!***

This is the most important ramification of Trump's pardon. It unleashes a powerful armed force of white supremacy and great nation chauvinism across the land.

* * * * *

CONCLUSION:

The response of progressive and anti-fascist forces within the USA to the renewed open white supremacist assault has thus far been positive. This has been particularly true in Charlottesville, VA and in its immediate aftermath.

Certain other points can be drawn from this article.

1. President Trump is today spearheading the spread of white supremacist and great nation chauvinist poison. And he is a deserving and appealing object for rallying anti-fascist mobilization and struggle.
2. The chauvinist poison that helped produce the Trump presidency has been generated by the unceasing oppression of the Afro-American people in their Black Belt homeland under slavery and Jim Crow as well as in the U.S. North under vicious monopoly capitalist exploitation and oppression of the stateless Afro-American national minority during the past one hundred years and more. The U.S. occupation of much of Mexico led to the similar super-exploitation of Mexican "migrants" as well.
3. The history of the twentieth and twenty-first century USA and even earlier is also filled with terrorist attacks and super-exploitation against the immigrant working class—from the Irish, Italian, Jewish, Slavic, and Southern Europeans in the earlier years to the Puerto Rican then other Latino peoples, African, Caribbean, Filipino and other immigrants today.
4. Exacerbating this process, has been the hegemonic imperialist power of United States imperialism globally for the past sixty years, generating constant great nation chauvinist poison and violence into this society that has become the heartless heartland of the U.S. Empire.

5. A Leninist vanguard political party of the working class at the national and international level is required to provide the discipline, organization and vision to defeat U.S.-led imperialism.
6. Moreover, the Democratic Party and the Republican Party are the political duopoly by which Wall Street imperialism rules here. The most immediate danger to the rise of a powerful movement against white supremacy in the USA today is the existence of petty bourgeois democratic illusions about the Democratic Party being an important ally of such a movement. Indeed, the current "hopes" of liberals, and radical "left" anarchist and right opportunist forces about the FBI special investigation into alleged Russian government meddling in the 2016 presidential election could well derail the promising new anti-fascist and anti-imperialist motion in the USA. Illusions about the Democratic Party lead to a serious underestimation of the depth and destructiveness of our imperialist enemy. They lead to support of the U.S. Empire against our best friends and comrades around the world.
7. Comrade Lenin wisely taught us, "Imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism." More than that, Lenin and the Great October Socialist Revolution showed us the way forward to defeat imperialism one hundred years ago. It was only the abandonment of Leninism for "quick and easy" solutions that led to the sad state of world affairs today.

A successful movement against white supremacy and for social justice for all can only win in the USA over the long run under the leadership of *the international working class*. One important task for this new U.S. movement is to seek and build unity with the rest of the international working class and the oppressed peoples of the world against our common enemy, imperialism, headed by U.S. imperialism.

***Let's Swell the Ranks of the
Fighters Against U.S. Fascism!***

***For Afro-American National Liberation and
Workers Power in the USA!***

***In the Spirit of the
Great October Socialist Revolution,
Long Live Leninism-Key to Our Victories!***

“On Rebuilding an Anti-Imperial Movement in the US”

(Address to ILPS, Solidarity and Fightback Conference, Toronto)

by CINDY SHEEHAN



On August 6th, 2005, I and about six-dozen other activists marched down Prairie Chapel Road in Crawford, TX to confront then president George Bush about why my son, and so many others, had to die in Iraq. A few days earlier, I had heard him say that my

son and the other US troops who had died in Iraq and Afghanistan died for a “Noble Cause.” I was determined to confront Bush and force him to define what was that “noble cause?”

“What Noble Cause?” became the rallying call of the antiwar movement that summer. And the month-long peace vigil we held in Crawford at Camp Casey (named for my son) sparked a renewed interest in antiwar activism not just in the US, but around the world.

I was an activist neophyte in those days and unbeknownst to me, forces loyal to the Democrat party (in fact, a few Democrat elected officials) came out to Camp Casey that summer to redirect the righteous anger against Bush and his wars into just another “Get Out The Vote for Democrats.” In 2006, Nancy Pelosi and her branch of the War Party soared to victory on the backs of the antiwar movement, then promptly stabbed us in those same backs. Pelosi even promised me in ‘05 and ‘06 that if I, and the power of the movement, helped get Democrats back in the majority in the 2006 midterm elections, they would help us “end the wars.”

The 2006 midterm elections in the US seriously damaged the antiwar movement. For the same forces that had come to Camp Casey in the summer of 2005, now blocked non-partisan forces in the antiwar movement from holding large marches in Washington DC because we would “embarrass the Democrats.”

This is essentially the problem with any movement in the US, but especially an antiwar/anti-Empire movement: most people who are “woke” here in the US, are only “woke” as far as they think that their wing of the War Bird, either Democrat or Republican, is better and that if only we could get Candidate A elected, or get one of the wings of the War Bird back in power in Congress, then things would be better. Of course, I understand that sentiment because that’s where I was a decade ago.

So, with that brief history of why we are essentially screwed in the movement and why billions of people on this planet are in danger of losing their homes, limbs, and even lives by the viciousness of the US Empire, the answer to rebuilding an antiwar/anti-Empire movement in the US is to dump the Democrats: #DemExit. In my opinion, it’s not about being part of the neoliberal Bernie Sanders’ wing of the Democrat Party. The “Our Revolution” movement is not my revolution, your revolution, or the revolution of oppressed peoples around the world, but a “revolution” only as far as another failed and wrongheaded tactic to GOTV for Democrats. As a matter of fact, I hear from very reliable sources who went to the recent badly and dishonestly named, “People’s Summit” in Chicago that there was not one mention of the wars and how if any positive social changes are to be made, the Empire must not just be overcome, but crushed to dust.

Why just the Dump the Democrats? Well, the one thing I was hopeful about when Trump was selected by the capitalists and imperialists who are really in charge of the US, was that maybe now, people would protest the continuing US wars. Of course, Republicans mostly don’t even pretend to be against Empire or capitalism, but most Democrats do fake oppose wars.

However, even though there have been some large protests since Trump was selected, there have been no large antiwar protests.

That’s why I was so pleased to be invited to this event—for me, to be legitimate revolutionaries, we must, obviously be opposed to the US Empire, police state violence, other repressions, and capitalism. Democrats do so-called wedge issues very well. Both wings of the War Bird know how to whip up hysteria and inflame fear over social divides, but they are similarly also very good about using the bourgeois media to distract us from the core issue: the United States of America murders, in cold blood, people every day and the imperial wars are not only illegal, immoral, and unnecessary, but they are racist and very profitable for the imperialists.

So, comrades, I am very interested in continuing this conversation.

The October Revolution and the Issue of War and Peace

by RAY LIGHT

“Marxism is not pacifism. It is necessary to fight for a speedy end of the war. But only through a call to revolutionary struggle will the ‘peace’ demand gain proletarian content. Without a series of revolutions, the so-called democratic peace is a petty bourgeois Utopia.”
—Lenin (*Socialism and War*, August 1915, p. 248)

Through all three Russian revolutions that culminated in Bolshevik-led Soviet power (1905 and 1917), the Lenin-led Bolshevik policy on war and peace was the pivotal issue leading to ultimate victory.

I. The Russo-Japanese War, the Revolution of 1905 and its Defeat

According to the authoritative *History of the CPSU(B)* [Hereafter referred to as the *History*]: “In 1900, tsarist troops together with Japanese, German, British and French troops suppressed with unparalleled cruelty an uprising of the Chinese people directed against foreign imperialists. Even before this the tsarist government had compelled China to surrender to Russia the Liaotung Peninsula with the fortress of Port Arthur. Russia secured the right to build railways on Chinese territory. A railway was built in Northern Manchuria—and Russian troops were stationed there to protect it. Northern Manchuria fell under the military occupation of tsarist Russia. ... Its annexations in the Far East brought tsardom into conflict with another marauder, Japan, which had rapidly become an imperialist country and was also bent on annexing territories on the Asiatic continent. ... In January 1904, without declaring war, Japan suddenly attacked the Russian fortress of Port Arthur and inflicted heavy losses on the Russian fleet lying in the harbor.” This was the beginning of the Russo-Japanese War.

The tsarist government thought that the war would help strengthen its political position both in Asia and in relation to the growing revolutionary working class movement in Russia itself. But the Russian army, poorly trained and equipped and commanded by incompetent and corrupt generals, suffered defeat after defeat. The Japanese captured Port Arthur. Subsequent Russian army defeats culminated in the battle of Mukden where the tsarist army was routed as 120 thousand of their 300 thousand men were killed, wounded or taken prisoner. Finally, in the Straits of Tsushima, the majority of the tsarist fleet sent from the Baltic to relieve Port Arthur was sunk or destroyed. Tsarist Russia had clearly lost the war and was compelled to conclude an ignominious peace with Japan.

According to the *History*: “The Mensheviks, including Trotsky, were sinking to a position of defending the

‘fatherland’ of the tsar, the landlords and the capitalists. The Bolsheviks, headed by Lenin, on the other hand, held that *the defeat of the tsarist government in this predatory war would be useful, as it would weaken tsardom and strengthen the revolution.*” (*ibid*, p.59, my emphasis) The tsar had tried to use the war to stifle the revolution. Instead it hastened the outbreak of the revolution. The tsarist defeat in the Russo-Japanese war exposed the rottenness of tsardom to the masses. As Lenin wrote, “The fall of Port Arthur meant the beginning of the fall of the autocracy.”

In December 1904, there was a huge, well-organized strike in Baku, led by a Bolshevik Committee. The strike was victorious and the resulting collective agreement concluded between the oilfield workers and the owners



Baku Oil Workers Strike

was the first of its kind in the history of the working class movement in Russia. On January 3, 1905 a strike began at the Putilov Works, the largest plant in St. Petersburg. It soon became a general strike and the tsarist government decided to crush it before it could build any more momentum.

On January 9, under the leadership of a priest named Gapon, a tsarist agent-provocateur, over 140 thousand people gathered in the streets and marched *unarmed* to the Winter Palace to present the tsar with a petition containing urgent demands. The Bolsheviks had participated in the preparatory meetings helping to broaden and deepen the mass demands, but warned the petitioners that they would be fired upon. Many workers still believed the tsar would help them. They carried portraits of the tsar, and church banners and chanted hymns. When the Bolsheviks proved unable to prevent the unarmed demonstration, dedicated as they were to the people, they joined it.

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Instead of welcoming the marchers, Tsar Nicholas II ordered his troops to fire on the workers and their families. Over a thousand were killed and two thousand more were wounded. Many Bolsheviks were among the victims. It became known as “Bloody Sunday.” But the workers of the whole country protested the tsar’s bloody crime and many learned the lesson that they would have to struggle to win their rights. That evening Barricades began to be erected in working class districts. After that event, strikes took on a more political character and sporadically even led to armed struggle against tsarist troops.

The strong workers movement, with a spreading peasant movement, combined with the military reverses in the Russo-Japanese war to influence the armed forces. Tsardom began to totter.

In October 1905 about one million industrial workers alone took part in a general strike that brought the life of the country to a standstill. This compelled the tsar to issue a Manifesto that “promised” the people civil liberty, freedom of conscience, speech, assembly and association. He promised to extend the vote to all classes of the population. It was a fraud by which the tsar tried to buy time, while police-controlled thugs beat up and killed Jewish people, advanced workers, intellectuals and students to sow division among the people. In this stormy period of the October general strike, the working class forged a new weapon, the *Soviets* of Workers Deputies. They were set up in nearly all working class centers. Attempts were also made to set up Soviets of Soldier and Sailor Deputies and even some Soviets of Peasant Deputies. The Soviets acted as a governmental power. For without legal authority they introduced freedom of the press and an 8-hour work day, called for tax resistance and confiscated government funds for the revolution.

The advancing revolutionary situation led to the armed uprising of December 1905. But it was defeated by the tsarist autocracy. Plekhanov and other Mensheviks

criticized the armed uprising; they claimed that success could be achieved by peaceful methods of struggle. On the contrary, Lenin said, we should have taken up the armed struggle more resolutely. He explained to the masses that “a fearless and relentless armed fight was indispensable.” (cited in the *History*, p. 91)

Among the factors responsible for the defeat of the 1905 Russian Revolution, were two that involved the intervention of international capital. According to the *History*: “The tsarist autocracy received help from the West-European imperialists in crushing the revolution of 1905. The foreign capitalists feared for their investments in Russia and for their huge profits. Moreover, they feared that if the Russian Revolution were to succeed the workers of other countries would rise in revolution, too ... The French bankers granted a big loan to the tsar for the suppression of the revolution. The German kaiser kept a large army in readiness to intervene in aid of the Russian tsar.” (p.102, *History*)

The *History* continues: “The conclusion of peace with Japan in September 1905 was of considerable help to the tsar. The defeat in the war and the menacing growth of the revolution had induced the tsar to hasten the signing of peace. *The loss of the war weakened tsardom. The conclusion of peace strengthened the position of the tsar.*” (*ibid.*, p. 102, My emphasis)

The timing of the peace treaty between the tsar and his Japanese foe was a “godsend” for tsardom. For the most intensive and advanced revolutionary activity occurred during the October 1905 through December 1905 period. *Imperialist “peace” enabled the tsar to wage war on his people, to concentrate his military force on the brutal crushing of “his subjects,” of the working class and peasant uprisings.*

Workers and peasants throughout Russia and the oppressed nations on its borders continued to advance their struggles for a few years *after* the vanguard forces in the most important and core working class districts and cities had already been militarily defeated. But the key point remains: While the tsarist army was engaged in an imperialist war against other imperialist powers, the revolutionary war of the workers and peoples of Russia against the tsarist autocracy broke out and advanced. Once the tsar was “at peace” with his imperialist rival, Japanese imperialism, the Russian masses were crushed by the tsar, aided by international imperialism.

Lenin observed that three years of Revolution provided more valuable experience for the revolutionary proletariat and its vanguard party than thirty years of peaceful development. Among the most important lessons learned by the Bolsheviks were that the proletarian class was capable of leading the revolution and that its one really powerful ally was the Russian peasantry. Also, from the 1905 Revolution the Bolsheviks

(contd. on p. 9)

learned that the petty bourgeois forces/parties such as the Social-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks would desert to the bourgeois Cadet party which itself would link to the tsarist autocracy and imperialism. All this was to be very valuable for the second and third Russian Revolutions, both of which took place in 1917.

II. The First World War (1914-18) Leads to the Second Russian Revolution (Early 1917), the Overthrow of Tsardom and the Establishment of the February Bourgeois Government in Russia

In the midst of World War I, a seemingly endless imperialist war, the modest but serious mass demand for “peace” objectively served as the most cutting-edge urgent and militant call to Proletarian Revolution.

The period of Stolypin Reaction that followed the defeat of the 1905 Revolution, was swept away in a tide of nation-wide working class indignation at the massacre of Lena Goldfield workers by tsarist gendarmes during an economic strike in 1912. All of a sudden the Russian working class was back in militant struggle with militant solidarity against the tsarist autocracy. By July 1914, the Russian working class was beginning again to erect barricades and exhibiting the signs of an impending 1905 style revolutionary crisis once again. This time, however, the first imperialist world war stopped this forward motion.

At about the same time as French President Poincare came to St. Petersburg to discuss the impending war with the Tsar, the tsarist government declared a general mobilization. On August 1 (New calendar), 1914, Germany declared war on Russia. Russia was now in the war.

Long before, Lenin had foreseen this inevitability. He observed that the uneven development of capitalism proceeds by leaps. Imperialist states were shifting positions of relative strength. There arose a striving for a redivision of the world and spheres of influence in 1914.

It was no accident that Russia entered the war as part of the British and French-led Entente. The Triple Entente of these three major powers had been formed in 1907. Furthermore, “before 1914 the most important branches of Russian industry were in the hands of foreign capitalists, chiefly those of France, Great Britain and Belgium, that is, the Entente countries.” (*History*, p. 177) Moreover, profits from Russian industry flowed chiefly into French and British banks. Finally, “all these circumstances, in addition to the thousands of millions borrowed by the Tsar from France and Britain in loans, chained tsardom to British and French imperialism and converted Russia into a tributary, a semi-colony of these countries.” (*ibid*, p. 177)

While Russia went into the war to improve its position, to gain new markets, to make war profits and to crush the Russian revolutionary movement using false patriotism, Tsarist Russia was not ready for war. Its industry lagged behind the other major powers. Tsardom’s mainstay was the Black Hundred big landlords. They and the Russian imperialists strongly supported the tsarist autocracy. The party of the liberal bourgeoisie, Constitutional-Democratic Party, the Cadets, made a show of opposition. But they unreservedly supported tsarist foreign policy.

From the beginning of the war, the petty-bourgeois parties, the S-R’s and the Mensheviks, using Socialist verbiage, helped the bourgeoisie conceal the predatory imperialist character of the war from the Russian masses. Like their German counterparts, the Russian petty bourgeois opportunists now took on a social-chauvinist character. Each social chauvinist party called for the workers of “their” country to kill their working class brothers and sisters in other countries in defense of “their” fatherland. Of all the parties in Russia, only the Bolsheviks remained faithful to proletarian internationalism; only they firmly fought against the tsarist autocracy, against the landlords and capitalists, against the imperialist war.

Indeed, among all the Social-Democratic Parties of the Second International, the Russian Bolsheviks alone retained their proletarian internationalist principles in the face of the tremendous pressures to surrender to chauvinist war hysteria and “patriotism.” This, despite the fact that at several conferences preceding the war excellent internationalist resolutions were passed. Most notably, at the Basle Congress of the Second International in 1912, the Social-Democratic parties declared that workers of all countries considered it a crime to shoot one another for the sake of increasing the profits of the capitalists. Yet when the war broke out, these same parties, having failed to sufficiently fight against opportunism and its link to the bourgeoisie of their respective countries over the “peaceful” years of their existence, proved, in the crisis, to be traitors to the working class and servants of the bourgeoisie.

The *History* reports: “On August 4, 1914, the German Social-Democrats in parliament voted for the war credits; they voted to support the imperialist war. So did the overwhelming majority of the Socialists in France, Great Britain, Belgium, and other countries. The Second International ceased to exist. Actually it broke up into separate social-chauvinist parties which warred against each other.

“The leaders of the Second International betrayed the proletariat and adopted the position of social-chauvinism and defense of the imperialist bourgeoisie. They helped the imperialists hoodwink the working class to poison it with the venom of nationalism. Using the defense of the fatherland as a plea, these social-traitors began to incite the German workers against the French workers,

(contd. on p. 10)

(Great October Socialist Revolution continued)

and the British and French workers against the German workers.” (*ibid.*, p. 179)

In essence, the Social-Democrats promoted class peace with their own bourgeoisie and warfare against their working class brothers and sisters. The Bolsheviks, by contrast, advanced the policy of **“the defeat of one’s own government in the imperialist war”** and they promoted the slogan **“converting the imperialist war into a civil war.”** *In opposition to the petty-bourgeois, social-democrat opportunists the Bolsheviks promoted peace among the workers and peasant toilers of the world and a united working class war against the imperialists, and their monarchist allies. They promoted fraternization of front-line troops on the battlefield from opposing sides, an increasingly frequent occurrence which greatly scared the bourgeoisie.*



Fraternization of Russian and German soldiers-1917

Given the primitive, feudal pre-capitalist character of tsardom on the one hand, and the clear, principled internationalist work of the steeled and tested Bolsheviks, already possessing valuable revolutionary experience, on the other, it is no wonder that the Russian soldiers and sailors were profoundly influenced by the powerful internationalist Bolshevik revolutionary message of overthrowing the Tsarist government to stop the brutal imperialist war.

World War I was raging on and mountains of corpses were piling up on both sides. The Russian army, in particular, suffered extremely heavy casualties. As junior partner among the Entente powers and with a massive population, Russia provided the main cannon-fodder for the British and French-led imperialist coalition in the war against the German-led imperialist enemy coalition. The cannon-fodder character of the Russian soldiers and sailors, was true of the Russian army under Tsar Nicholas, the tottering feudal monarch. The tsarist army suffered defeat after defeat. It lacked guns, shells and even rifles. Meanwhile, the more efficient, well-armed German artillery rained lethal shells on the tsarist troops.

Moreover, tsarist generals and ministers secretly worked on behalf of the German side and/or, like the tsarina, had close German connections. The Russian imperialist bourgeoisie was getting worried about

tsardom’s capacity to carry the war on effectively. Even their British and French imperialist masters got behind the Russian bourgeoisie’s plan to engineer a palace coup. The Tsar was now politically isolated.

The opportunist S-R’s and Mensheviks tried to channel the masses into supporting the liberal bourgeoisie by having a procession of workers march to the Duma on February 14, 1917, its opening day. But the working class masses followed the Bolsheviks and went instead to a demonstration. On February 18, a strike at the Putilov Works occurred. On February 22, most big Petrograd factories were on strike. On International Women’s day, February 23 (March 8), at the call of the Petrograd Bolshevik Committee, working women came



out in the streets to demonstrate against starvation, war and tsardom. A city-wide strike movement supported the women’s day action. By February 25 the whole of working class Petrograd had joined the revolutionary movement. The political strikes in the districts merged into a general political strike of the whole city. The next morning the political demonstration began to assume the character of an uprising. On February 25 the Tsar gave orders to the Commander of the Petrograd Military Area to put a stop to the disorders in the capital by tomorrow.

Instead, on that day a Company that was part of a Battalion of the Pavlovsky Regiment fired not on the workers but on squads of mounted police engaged in a skirmish with the workers! Workers and soldiers who had joined the revolt began to arrest tsarist ministers and generals and to free political prisoners. The troops went over to the side of the workers and this decided the fate of the tsarist autocracy. News of the victory in Petrograd spread to other towns and to the front and workers and soldiers everywhere began to depose the tsarist officials. The February bourgeois democratic revolution had won!

But the workers and peasants were about to get a rude awakening! As the *History* explains, “Soviets arose on the very first days of the revolution. The victorious revolution rested on the support of the Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies. The workers and soldiers who rose in revolt created Soviets of Workers’

(contd. on p. 11)

and Soldiers' Deputies ... While the Bolsheviks were directly leading the struggle of the masses in the streets, the compromising parties, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, were seizing the seats in the Soviets, and building up a majority there. This was partly facilitated by the fact that the majority of the leaders of the Bolshevik Party were in prison or exile ... while the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were freely promenading the streets of Petrograd. The result was that the Petrograd Soviet and its Executive Committee were headed by representatives of the compromising parties: Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. This was also the case in Moscow and a number of other cities. ...

"The armed people – the workers and soldiers – sent their representatives to the Soviet as to an organ of power of the people. They thought and believed that the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies would carry out all the demands of the revolutionary people, and that, in the first place, peace would be concluded.

"But the unwarranted trustfulness of the workers and soldiers served them in evil stead. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks had not the slightest intention of terminating the war, of securing peace. As to the revolution and the revolutionary demands of the people, the SR's and Mensheviks considered that the revolution was already over, and that the task now was to seal it and pass to a 'normal' constitutional existence side by side with the bourgeoisie. ... On February 27 (March 12) 1917, the liberal members of the Fourth State Duma, as a result of a backstairs agreement with the S-R and Menshevik leaders, set up a Provisional Committee of the State Duma ... And a few days later, the Provisional Committee of the State Duma and the S-R and Menshevik leaders of the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, acting secretly from the Bolsheviks, came to an agreement to form a new government of Russia — a bourgeois Provisional Government, headed by Prince Lvov, the man whom, prior to the February Revolution, even Tsar Nicholas II was about to make Prime Minister of his government.(!) The Provisional Government included ... as the representative of the 'democracy,' the Socialist-Revolutionary Kerensky. And so it was that the S-R and Menshevik leaders of the Executive Committee of the Soviet surrendered the power to the bourgeoisie." (*History*, pp. 193-194)

Crucially, when the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies learned of this rotten deal, despite the protest of the Bolsheviks, the majority formally approved it! Fundamentally, lack of sufficient political experience regarding the honeyed words of the opportunists as well as lack of clarity on the opportunists' minor role in the actual victorious struggle as well as their already settled deal with the bourgeoisie and above all the mass desire that this easier path of least resistance

would meet their needs helps explain why the victorious workers and peasants voluntarily surrendered power to the bourgeoisie.

Thus, a new state power arose in Russia, a bourgeois government. For the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was an organ of the alliance of workers and peasants against the tsarist regime as well as an organ of their power. The result was "a peculiar interlocking of two powers, of two dictatorships: the Provisional Government representing the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies representing the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry. The result was a dual power.

As the *History* sums up this period: "The Bolshevik Party was confronted with the task of explaining to the masses of workers and soldiers, who had been intoxicated by the first successes, that the complete victory of the revolution was still a long way off, that as long as the power was in the hands of the bourgeois Provisional Government, and as long as the Soviets were dominated by the compromisers — the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries — the people would secure neither peace, nor land, nor bread, and that in order to achieve complete victory, one more step had to be taken and the power transferred to the Soviets." (*ibid.*, p. 197)

III. The Road to Victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution: from Bourgeois Power to all Power to the Soviets: Peace at Last! As the Bolsheviks End Russian Participation in the First World War

Guided by a Leninist understanding of the depth of the imperialist system's stamp on the first world war, the Bolshevik Party was not thrown off by the ability of the bourgeoisie in collaboration with the petty bourgeois opportunists to steal the fruit of the overthrow of the three hundred year old Romanov Dynasty from the workers and peasants, the Soviets and the Bolshevik Party itself. For Lenin and the Bolsheviks understood that the modest demand for "peace" in the midst of the Imperialist World War would remain the most cutting-edge urgent and militant call for Proletarian Revolution on the part of the Russian working class and peasantry including their class brothers in the Russian Army who would continue to be led to slaughter under the new bourgeois provisional government!

Shortly after his return from exile to Petrograd to directly lead the Bolsheviks in what became the final six months leading to the successful October Revolution, Lenin delivered a lecture in May 1917, weighing in on the question of war and revolution. (Later published in pamphlet form as *War and the Workers*)

Lenin observed: "The real politics of both groups of great capitalist giants—England and Germany, who with their allies are contending against each other—the politics before the war—must be studied and understood as a

whole. ... these politics show us only one thing: ceaseless economic rivalry between two great world giants, two capitalist systems. On the one hand there is England, a state which owns a great part of the globe; the wealthiest state in the world; which created this wealth not so much by the labor of its workers as by the exploitation of vast colonies, by the vast power of the English banks ... three, four or five banks, stand at the head of all the other banks ... controlling in such a way that we can say without exaggeration: there is not a spot on the whole globe that this capital has not laid its heavy hand on; there is not a patch of land that is not enmeshed by a thousand threads in the net of British capital. ... This is the main thing in the economic policy of England and the economic policy of France, concerning which the French writers themselves ... (for example, ... Lysis) wrote several years before the war: 'France is a financial monarchy; France is a financial oligarchy; France is the usurer of the whole world.'

"On the other hand, opposed to this group, mainly Anglo-French, stands another group of capitalists, even more predatory and more piratical—a group which came to the capitalist feasting board when all the places had been taken, but which introduced into the struggle new methods of developing capitalist production ... which transformed the old capitalism ... of free competition, into the capitalism of gigantic trusts, syndicates and cartels. This group introduced the principle of state capitalist production, uniting the gigantic forces of capitalism with the gigantic forces of the states into one mechanism, and amalgamating tens of millions of people in a single organization of state capitalism. This is the economic history, this is the diplomatic history of a number of past decades which no one can get away from. It ... leads us to the conclusion that the present war is also the product of the politics of the classes which are now at grips in this war; the politics of the two great giants who long before the war had enmeshed the whole world, all countries, in their nets of financial exploitation ... *They had to come into collision because, from the point of view of capitalism, the redivision of this rule became inevitable.*" (pages 9-10, *War and the Workers*, my emphasis)

It was on this basis that Lenin concluded: "This war can be brought to an end only by means of a workers' revolution in several countries. Meanwhile, we must prepare for this revolution, help it along. As long as the tsar conducted the war the Russian people, in spite of their hatred of war and their determination to secure peace, could do nothing against it except prepare for the revolution against the tsar, and overthrow the tsar. And it was so. History confirmed this for you yesterday, and it will confirm it for you tomorrow. ... The revolution is beginning to change the war from the Russian side. The capitalists are still continuing the war; and we say: the war cannot stop until the advent of a workers' revolution in several countries, because the people who want this war are in power." (pp. 29-30, *War and the Workers*)

Elsewhere in the same lecture, Lenin pointed out, "There is no easy way out of this terrible war. Fighting has been going on for three years. You will either go on fighting for ten years or agree to make a difficult and severe revolution. There is no other way out. We say: the war which was started by the capitalist government can be brought to an end only by a workers' revolution." (*ibid.*, p. 31)

By the end of May 1917, a Petrograd Conference of Factory Committees was held and the Bolsheviks had already achieved the support of three-quarters of the delegates. However, the same day that Conference ended, the First All-Russian Congress of Soviets met in Petrograd. The Bolsheviks were still a minority in the Soviets; they had a little more than 100 delegates at this congress compared to the 700 or 800 Mensheviks, S-R's and others. But there was a mass Bolshevik-led campaign being conducted in the working class districts of Petrograd for a demonstration and presentation of demands to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets. In an attempt to head off the demands and channel the revolutionary sentiments of the masses, the Executive Committee decided to call a demonstration for two weeks off. The demonstration of June 18, 1917 revealed the growing revolutionary spirit of the masses and their growing confidence in the Bolshevik Party. "The slogans displayed by the Mensheviks and S-R's calling for confidence in the Provisional Government and *urging continuation of the war* were lost in a sea of Bolshevik slogans. Four hundred thousand demonstrators carried banners bearing the slogans: 'Down with the war!' 'Down with the ten capitalist ministers!' 'All power to the Soviets!'"

"It was a complete fiasco for the Mensheviks and S-R's, a fiasco for the Provisional Government in the capital of the country." (*ibid.*, p. 211)

Nevertheless, the Provisional Government received the support of the First Congress of Soviets and persisted with the imperialist policy. On that very day, obeying the wishes of the British and French imperialists, the Provisional Government drove the soldiers at the front to take the offensive. A successful offensive would put a stop to the revolution, they reckoned. But the soldiers were worn out, had no confidence in their officers and had a shortage of shells. Failure of the offensive was a foregone conclusion.

According to the History: "The news of the offensive at the front, and then of its collapse, roused the capital. The indignation of the workers and soldiers knew no bounds. It became apparent that when the Provisional Government proclaimed a policy of peace it was hoodwinking the people, and that it wanted to continue the imperialist war." (p. 212) Moreover, it was now apparent that the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviets was trailing in the wake of the Provisional Government.

(contd. on p. 13)

(Great October Socialist Revolution continued)

Petrograd exploded as the revolutionary indignation of the Petrograd workers and soldiers boiled over. Separate demonstrations grew into a huge general armed demonstration demanding the transfer of power to the Soviets. The Bolsheviks opposed armed action at that time as they considered the army and provinces were not yet ready to support an uprising in the capital. But when it proved impossible to keep the masses from demonstrating, the Party participated with the aim of lending it a peaceful and organized character. Reactionary military units were brought out and the streets ran red with the blood of the demonstrators. After suppressing the demonstration, the Mensheviks and S-R's in alliance with the bourgeoisie and Whiteguard generals attacked the Bolshevik party organization. The peaceful period of the revolution had ended, for now the bayonet had been placed on the agenda.

The Bolsheviks were right to hold off decisive action against the government until the workers, soldiers and peasants in the rest of the country were prepared to support the workers and soldiers of Petrograd.

In the flush of the Bolshevik-led Soviet victory in Petrograd, the capital of the country, on October 25, 1917 (November 7) the Bolsheviks issued a manifesto "To the Citizens of Russia," announcing that the bourgeois Provisional Government had been deposed. **On that date this year we will be celebrating the hundredth anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution (GOSR).**

Late that same night, after political power in the capital had passed into the hands of the Petrograd Soviet, the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets opened. The Bolsheviks secured an overwhelming majority at the congress as the opportunist forces of the Mensheviks, Bundists and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries (S-R's), including forces that had been part of the bourgeois government just overthrown, had no hope of prevailing in the Second All-Russian Soviet Congress and walked out after issuing a statement attacking the October Revolution. The Congress of Soviets condemned the Mensheviks and S-R's and welcomed their departure, declaring that, thanks to the withdrawal of the traitors,

the congress had become a real revolutionary congress of workers' and soldiers' deputies. The congress proclaimed that *all power had passed to the Soviets!*

"Peace, Land and Bread" were the Bolshevik slogans projecting the aims that excited and inspired the working class, the peasantry and the soldiers and sailors of Russia to "storm the heavens" and to persevere in the Great October Socialist Revolution.

The very next night, November 8, the Second Congress of Soviets adopted the *Decree on Peace*.*

The Decree on Peace issued by the brand new Soviet government was in conformity with the Bolshevik political line on the question of war and peace worked out by Lenin in close connection with the actual historical experience of the Russian and international working class.

Accordingly, the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets, in the *Decree on Peace*, "called upon the belligerent countries to conclude an immediate armistice for a period of not less than three months to permit negotiations for peace. While addressing itself to the governments and peoples of all the belligerent countries, the Congress at the same time appealed to 'the class-conscious workers of the three most advanced nations of mankind and the largest states participating in the present war [World War I], namely, Great Britain, France and Germany.' It called upon these workers to help 'bring to a successful conclusion the cause of peace, and at the same time the cause of the emancipation of the toiling and exploited masses of the population from all forms of slavery and all forms of exploitation.'" (*The History of the CPSU(B)*, page 229)

CONCLUSION:

The Decree on Peace, immediately implemented by the Bolshevik-led new Soviet power, was the fruit of the October Revolution. It was *the beginning of the end of World War I*. The Russian soldiers left the battlefield and came home.

*The Second Congress was quite busy that night. In addition to the Decree on Peace, the Congress also issued the *Decree on Land*, proclaiming that "landlord ownership of land is abolished forthwith without compensation." By this decree the peasantry received from the October Revolution over four hundred million acres of land that had formerly belonged to the landlords, the bourgeoisie, the tsar's family, the monasteries and the churches. Moreover, the peasants were freed from paying rent to the landlords; and all mineral resources, forests and waters became the property of the people. Finally, they formed the first Soviet government, the Council of People's Commissars, consisting entirely of Bolsheviks. Lenin was elected Chairman of the first Council of People's Commissars.



(Great October Socialist Revolution continued)

The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, subsequently negotiated by the Soviet power with Germany, was extremely difficult to accomplish because the Russian army had effectively ceased to function. It was made all the more difficult by Trotsky's revolutionary posturing. The *History* reports: "The treachery of Trotsky and Bukharin cost the Soviet Republic dearly. Latvia, Estonia and Poland passed into German hands and the Ukraine was severed from the Soviet Republic." (p. 238) But Lenin and the collective leadership insisted that it be signed.

The signed Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, at last delivered peace to the Russian masses. The fulfillment of this promise by the Bolshevik-led Soviet government was crucial to Soviet survival for decades to come. It was tangible proof that the Russian workers, peasants and soldiers had found a political party they could trust. It provided a respite in which Soviet power could be consolidated. Soviet Russia at peace was able to utilize the continuing world war, the sharp contradictions within the imperialist camp, to organize a Soviet economic system and to create a Red Army.

All too soon, the Soviet Red Army was called upon to heroically defend the Workers and Peasants Government against the Foreign Imperialist Intervention and Civil War (1918-1920), as the imperialist powers united in alliance with the old tsarist military forces in an unsuccessful attempt to drown the Workers Revolution

in blood. One key to the Soviet Red Army victory was the widespread Bolshevik-inspired fraternization with the foreign imperialist troops with whom they were confronted. For the imminent workers revolutions in Austria, Germany and other countries were strengthened by contact with the Red Army and this development frightened the imperialist rulers.

Thus, Lenin proved correct that the first imperialist war could only be brought to an end by a workers revolution in several countries.

A generation later, the Soviet Red Army and the entire Soviet people would be called upon again to defend the Soviet land. This time, in World War II, the German Nazi invasion of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was the most powerful military invasion in modern history. U.S. General Douglas MacArthur admitted, "The scale and grandeur of the [Soviet] effort mark it as the greatest military achievement in human history." (*Labor's Untold Story*, p. 333)

The workers and peasants of Russia (and then the USSR) never allowed the Bolshevik Party-led Soviet Power that had delivered "peace" out of the imperialist slaughter of World War I to be defeated in war!! Such was the strength of the October Revolution and Leninism on the question of war and peace.

**Still stumped?! See answer below
to front page mystery quotation.**

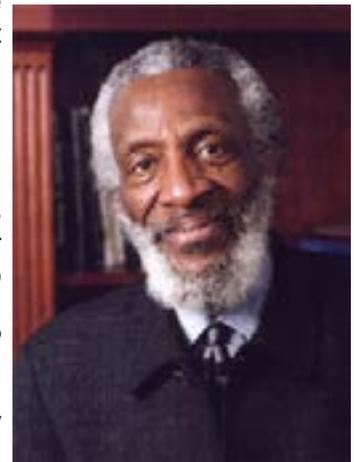
Legendary civil rights activist and comedian **Richard Claxton "Dick" Gregory** was a pioneering force in political satire during the 1960's who parlayed his career as a stand-up comic into a life of social and political activism. A profound critic of the U.S. government's role in the repression of the Afro-American people and the U.S. war on the Vietnamese people, this outstanding thinker ran for mayor of Chicago in 1967 against Richard Daley and the Democratic Party machine. He also conducted a write-in campaign for U.S. President in 1968, clearly the people's champion in a race that "featured" Hubert Humphrey and Richard Nixon.

Dick Gregory had the courage of his deep and profound convictions; he was arrested dozens of times and beaten in the Birmingham jail in freedom's cause. He was a friend and contemporary of Medgar Evers, Malcolm X and Reverend M. L. King, Jr. — all assassinated and martyred in the cause. In fact, Mr. Gregory's incisive commentary, laced as it was with humor may well be what saved him from being

murdered as well. He died on August 19th at the age of 84.

The brilliant scientist, Neil deGrasse Tyson, wrote: "Comedian Dick Gregory always told it like it is. Our laughter was fuel to fight for justice in an unjust world. RIP 1932-2017."

As white supremacy and great nation chauvinism are once again on the march in the heartland of the U.S. Empire, we have an urgent need for new Dick Gregorys to inspire new victories for the oppressed and exploited of the earth.



—the Editor

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* * * * *

*“The great appear great to us
Only because we are on our knees:
Let us rise.”*

— Camille Desmoulins

Revolutionary Organization of Labor (ROL), USA is a revolutionary working class organization that fights for working class power and the elimination of all human exploitation. ***Ray O’ Light Newsletter*** is the regular publication of ROL, USA. We believe, with comrade Lenin, that the working class “... needs the truth and there is nothing so harmful to its cause as plausible, respectable petty bourgeois lies.” In the spirit of Karl Marx who taught that “our theory is not a dogma but a guide to action,” we welcome your comments.

Comradely the Newsletter Staff,

Ray Light, Editor

Pat Kelly

Carl Pappos, Production Coordinator

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