

Defend North Korea Against U.S. Imperialism!

MAY 31—Seizing on the March 26 sinking of a South Korean warship, the *Cheonan*, off North Korea's west coast, the Barack Obama administration and U.S. imperialism's junior partners in Seoul have sharply escalated their threats and provocations against North Korea. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, touring Asian capitals, denounced the incident as an "unacceptable provocation"

by the North. South Korea's right-wing president, Lee Myung-bak, announced that his government is cutting off nearly all trade with North Korea and pressed for a United Nations Security Council resolution that could result in new sanctions. The U.S. and South Korea announced joint naval exercises, to be held in June, that would include training to intercept North Korean merchant ships

accused of carrying "banned cargo."

As Marxists, our attitude regarding this affair is determined not by claims of who was responsible for the sinking, the cause of which is shrouded in mystery, but by *class* considerations: Despite being saddled with a nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy, North Korea is a workers state based on the overthrow of capitalist rule. It is in the vital interest of the

proletariat internationally to stand for the unconditional military defense of North Korea against the capitalist South, U.S. and Japanese imperialism, and also against internal capitalist counterrevolution. This includes defending North Korea's development of nuclear weapons capacity.

The U.S. imperialists have tried to
continued on page 8

Defend the Palestinians! Down With Blockade of Gaza! Zionist Massacre at Sea



AFP



Reuters

Left: Injured victim of May 31 Israeli commando attack on Turkish ship *Mavi Marmara*, pictured above leaving Istanbul on May 22. Right: Attack in international waters killed at least nine people.



AFP

JUNE 1—"This was murder." These three words, spoken by Greta Berlin of the Free Gaza Movement, captured the horror perpetrated by elite naval units of the Israeli Zionist state when they descended from Black Hawk helicopters onto a civilian ship in international waters and began blasting away at its 700 passengers, mainly Turkish citizens, in a pre-dawn raid yesterday. At least nine people aboard the Turkish *Mavi Marmara*—the lead ship in a six-ship "Freedom Flotilla" carrying medicine, construction supplies and other goods to Gaza—were killed and dozens injured. Survivors of the attack were hauled off to prison in Israel or deported. We demand that the prisoners be freed, now!

The passengers aboard the aid flotilla were carrying out a courageous act of defiance of the Israeli embargo of the

Gaza Strip, imposed in 2007 in order to collectively punish the Palestinian population for voting the Islamist Hamas into power. Gaza was already little more than a huge concentration camp, surrounded on all sides by an electrified fence, the sea or a fortified border with Egypt. But the embargo vastly deepened the misery of the 1.5 million people of Gaza, who now overwhelmingly rely on paltry food packages from United Nations relief agencies for survival. Israel slaughtered upwards of 1,300 Gaza residents—many of them women and children—beginning in late 2008, as round-the-clock air assaults followed by a ground invasion of over 10,000 troops reduced much of the

Gaza ghetto to ash and rubble. And just today, an Israeli airstrike killed three people in Gaza.

The Israeli government has denounced the flotilla participants as "violent extremists" and "terrorists." The chauvinist capitalist rulers of the Zionist garrison state deem any defense of the subjugated Palestinian people as "terrorism." In this, they also take a cue from their American imperialist patrons, whose "war on terror" has been used—by the U.S. and other capitalist governments—to justify massacres and state terror against the oppressed around the world. In fact, the so-called "terrorists" in the flotilla included European parliamentarians and a

retired U.S. diplomat as well as prominent authors and filmmakers. Israeli claims that the commandos opened fire only after being attacked by passengers are countered by numerous eyewitness accounts and belied by video taken at the time of the assault. In any case, as Greta Berlin put it, "People had the right to defend themselves against soldiers armed with machine guns."

From San Francisco and New York to Europe and the Near East, people took to the streets in outrage over the massacre. The Spartacist League is joining in the protests, as are sections of the International Communist League in Europe. In Istanbul, Turkey, demonstrators tried to storm the Israeli consulate. We say: Down with the starvation blockade of Gaza! Defend the Palestinian people! All Israeli troops and settlers out of the Occupied Territories, including East Jerusalem!

Unrestrained terror against the Palestinians by the Israeli ruling class and its fascistic "settler" auxiliaries has always been

continued on page 7



All Israeli Troops, Settlers Out of the Occupied Territories!

On Haiti and Polemics

Massachusetts
15 May 2010

Workers Vanguard has often stated that Haiti has virtually no working class. I think it is important to be clear exactly what this means. Preliminarily, I did some research on www.economywatch.com/economic-statistics/country/Haiti and www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm#econ.

Haiti does have a working class but it is very small and objectively weak. The assembly sector employed over 100,000 workers in the mid-1980s, but due to an embargo in the 1990s, it decreased to under 20,000. The number is likely far less after the recent earthquake which leveled many of the factories. What proletariat exists, is largely in the apparel industry, which accounts for nearly 1/10th of the GDP. The apparel industry is largely unskilled and low profit. What's largely missing in Haiti is a proletariat employed in basic infrastructure, core industries

(coal, steel, electricity, transport, etc.) or high profit industries like auto or electronics. It has legalized unions, largely under the influence of Aristide populism, with not much of a left and nothing that comes close to a Trotskyist party. In a country of 9 million, with rampant unemployment and poverty, the social numbers and weight of the proletariat is marginal, limiting its ability to effect change through strikes, protests or revolution.

The key to Haiti, as you point out, lies in the Haitian diaspora (which employs many skilled workers and whose remittances account for nearly 25% of Haiti's GDP), the much stronger proletariat in neighboring countries, and the powerful proletariat in the imperialist centers.

This should not imply discounting the inhabitants of Haiti from playing a more direct role in shaping their own destiny and sparking struggles elsewhere. This should also not discount the possibility

that the economy and social composition of Haiti may change in the future from imperialist investment, although this is uncertain given the global recession and at best would result in transforming Haiti into an even bigger sweatshop.

Haiti has a militant history, including the 1791 slave revolution. It has a history of political instability and there is currently a lot of anger at the government, which could spill over into protests against imperialist troops. It would be wrong to expect mass protests in the midst of the ruins and social collapse, but it would also be wrong to refuse to call for such protest, in Haiti and internationally. The exact nature of the protest would depend on the circumstances and the emphasis of the demands may differ, but the guiding light for Haiti and the rest of the neocolonial world remains permanent revolution.

Joel

* * *

12 May 2010

To the Editor, *Workers Vanguard*

The SL's support for the U.S. takeover in Haiti was shockingly inconsistent with all your previous practice, but your self-criticism failed to consider the internal cause for so sudden and outrageous a lapse. In my opinion as a decades-long subscriber to WV, this cause is not reformist contamination but the solipsism by which you have sought to shield yourselves from it.

The symptoms of this excessive inward focus are not at all diagnostic of incipient reformism—i.e. too-great openness to the engulfing mainstream. These symptoms are: a dismissive or hostile attitude to critics, press coverage of your "own" and of feuds with rivals beyond all reasonable proportion to their world-historic significance and the drive to distinguish the organization from rivals at any cost. Thus, where your bête-noir epigones the IG put a minus, you had to put a plus. Loss of perspective turned essential political polemic into a crusade against an enemy, justifying any and all arguments.

These deformations constitute a sad abdication of the valuable revolutionary leadership you could and should provide. You've been walking on one edge of the tightwire between being true to principle and open to others. Please take this oppor-

tunity to seek a proper balance.

Yours for the revolutionary party,
R. Freed

WV replies:

We thank both our readers for their contributions. As we noted in repudiating our former social-imperialist position supporting the U.S. imperialist troop presence in Haiti, our correction lays the basis for political rectification (see "Repudiating Our Position on Haiti Earthquake—A Capitulation to U.S. Imperialism," WV No. 958, 7 May). However, we do not agree that what R. Freed calls "the drive to distinguish the organization from rivals," i.e., our practice of polemicizing against other leftist groups, is at the root of this betrayal of principle.

In repudiating our line on Haiti, we did not relinquish the struggle against fake socialists whose oppositional activity is firmly within the bounds of pressuring the capitalist state, preferably as administered by the Democratic Party. Nor are we about to accommodate outfits such as the Internationalist Group (IG), which sometimes likes to dress up its tailing of Latin American nationalists and militant-talking union bureaucrats with "Marxist" phraseology. As the ICL statement noted, the problem was that "instead of simply exposing the IG's Third Worldist fantasies, we concentrated in our polemics on zealous apologies for the U.S. imperialist military intervention, a position to the right of the IG." To renounce polemical struggle would be to renounce the fight for a Leninist vanguard party—the necessary instrument for leading the proletariat in socialist revolution—and to descend into wretched "family of the left" politics and its inevitable corollary, class collaborationism.

As James P. Cannon, the historic leader of American Trotskyism, stated in 1966, "If we disagree with other people, we have to say so! We have to make it clear *why* we disagree so that inquiring young people, looking for an organization to represent their aspirations and ideals, will know the difference between one party and another. Nothing is worse than muddying up differences when they concern fundamental questions" ("Don't Strangle the Party," reprinted in *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 38-39, Summer 1986). ■



TROTSKY

For a Socialist United States of Europe

As Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin explained, there can be no capitalist European superstate or any lasting agreements among the imperialist bourgeoisies, which are nationally based and inevitably come into conflict with each other in the drive for profits and new areas of exploitation. As shown by the financial crisis wracking the European Union, economic and political agreements among the imperialists, which are first and foremost aimed against the working class, are inherently

unstable, portending renewed conflict among rival capitalist states. The only road to ending capitalism's boom-bust economic cycles and its threat of new imperialist wars presaged by trade war is that of international proletarian revolution, which will lay the basis for transcending the outmoded nation-state through the construction of a world socialist economy.

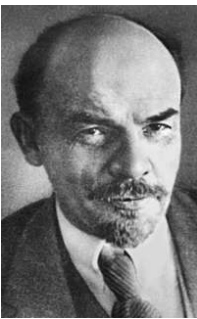
From the standpoint of the economic conditions of imperialism—i.e., the export of capital and the division of the world by the "advanced" and "civilised" colonial powers—a United States of Europe, under capitalism, is either impossible or reactionary.

Capital has become international and monopolist. The world has been carved up by a handful of Great Powers, i.e., powers successful in the great plunder and oppression of nations....

A United States of Europe under capitalism is tantamount to an agreement on the partition of colonies. Under capitalism, however, no other basis and no other principle of division are possible except force. A multi-millionaire cannot share the "national income" of a capitalist country with anyone otherwise than "in proportion to the capital invested" (with a bonus thrown in, so that the biggest capital may receive more than its share). Capitalism is private ownership of the means of production, and anarchy in production. To advocate a "just" division of income on such a basis is sheer Proudhonism, stupid philistinism. No division can be effected otherwise than in "proportion to strength," and strength changes with the course of economic development.... Under capitalism the smooth economic growth of individual enterprises or individual states is impossible. Under capitalism, there are no other means of restoring the periodically disturbed equilibrium than crises in industry and wars in politics.

Of course, *temporary* agreements are possible between capitalists and between states. In this sense a United States of Europe is possible as an agreement between the *European* capitalists...but to what end? Only for the purpose of jointly suppressing socialism in Europe, of jointly protecting colonial booty *against* Japan and America, who have been badly done out of their share by the present partition of colonies, and the increase of whose might during the last fifty years has been immeasurably more rapid than that of backward and monarchist Europe, now turning senile.

—V.I. Lenin, "On the Slogan for a United States of Europe" (August 1915)



LENIN

The ILWU and TWIC

30 May 2010

To the editor:

The front-page article "Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!" in *Workers Vanguard* No. 958 (7 May) rightly exposes how the misleaders of the West Coast International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) collaborated with the capitalist state in the implementation of the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program. According to Homeland Security statistics, a whopping 35,000 maritime transportation workers have been disqualified under TWIC (and thus forced from their jobs), in addition to the unknown tens of thousands who dropped out of the workforce in order to avoid the risk of prosecution or deportation under TWIC "anti-terror" repression. Meanwhile, TWIC's immigration and criminal background checks have been imposed on twice the number originally projected by the government—a total of over 1.5 million workers.

While the front-page article pointed out that the ILWU bureaucracy called for "fair" implementation of the TWIC program, it's worth noting that some *two months after* the government's national compliance date of 15 April 2009 for TWIC cards, an ILWU Longshore Division Caucus meeting voted "to seek the abandonment of the TWIC program altogether" (*Dispatcher*, July/August 2009). At the same time, the union's pro-capitalist

bureaucracy made it clear it had no intention of challenging the racist rulers' prerogative to wield their state power against the working class in the name of national security. So the Caucus cited as the reason for after-the-fact opposition to TWIC that "it does not actually improve port security" (see "Protest Conviction of Aaron Harrison! 'War on Terror' Frame-Up of Black Longshoreman," WV No. 949, 1 January).

As *Workers Vanguard* advocates, for the unions to become instruments of defense of the multiracial working class *against* the exploiting capitalist bosses and their government requires a political fight for a new leadership based on a class-struggle program whose purpose is to fight for a workers party and a workers government.
J. K.

MEMORIAL MEETING

A memorial meeting
in honor of
our comrade Joe Verret
will be held in Los Angeles
on June 12.

For more information, call
(213) 380-8239.

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Ray Bishop

EDITOR: Alan Wilde

EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Elizabeth Johnson

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

EDITORIAL BOARD: Barry James (managing editor), François Donau (production manager), Blandine Hauser (letters editor), Bruce André, Bonnie Brodie, Jon Brule, Ed Clarkson, Paul Cone, Michael Davison, George Foster, Liz Gordon, Walter Jennings, Jane Kerrigan, James Robertson, Joseph Seymour

The Spartacist League is the U.S. Section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Workers Vanguard (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and skipping the last issue in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116. E-mail address: vanguard@tiac.net. Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/22 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

The closing date for news in this issue is June 1.

No. 960

4 June 2010

Remember Aiyana Stanley-Jones

Detroit Cops Kill Seven-Year-Old in Her Home



Family photo

She went to sleep with her grandmother in her family's home. Her father covered her with her favorite blanket before he retired for the evening. It was her last night. Her name was Aiyana, she was seven years old, and she was fatally shot by Detroit police in the early morning hours of May 16.

The cop killing of this black girl was no aberration, but in fact a particularly grotesque and stark example of the state of siege that now defines life in Detroit, especially for its black population. The cops, including members of the "Special Response Team" (SRT, Detroit's SWAT outfit), raided Aiyana's home in military fashion, supposedly to arrest a homicide suspect. The cops threw a flash grenade through a window, stormed the house and shot the child. Aiyana's grandmother, Mertilla Jones, testified at a news conference: "Soon as they hit the window, I hit the floor and went to reach for my granddaughter." Jones said that she saw the light leave her eyes: "I knew she was

dead" (*New York Times*, 21 May). An attorney for the family, Geoffrey Fieger, noted that he had seen videotape showing that "a percussion grenade device was thrown through the front window and a shot was fired immediately from the outside from the porch" (CNN.com, 17 May).

The video exists because the cops busted into the house with an A&E (Arts and Entertainment) television crew filming for *The First 48* reality show in tow. The video is now the property of the Michigan State Police, who have been charged with "investigating" the cops' action. All this promises is the usual whitewash of one arm of the racist capitalist state by another. In fact, so desperate were they to cover up the killing that police *arrested the grieving Mertilla Jones* and held her for nearly 12 hours that Sunday, subjecting her to drug testing and a chemical test to detect any presence of gunpowder on her hands! Only afterwards was the name of the SRT officer who shot Aiyana leaked. Fieger has filed lawsuits

in U.S. District Court and Wayne County Circuit Court claiming civil rights violations, gross negligence and conspiracy by police to hide the facts of the case. Aiyana's family deserves any recompense it seeks for its unspeakable loss.

Home invasions by the cops—unannounced, with weapons drawn—were already routine in Detroit. After one cop was killed and five others wounded on May 3 in an early morning raid on an abandoned house on the city's East Side, police spokesmen and black Democratic mayor David Bing ratcheted up calls to "fight crime" through jacking up police operations. The bosses' media did their part in whipping up an "anti-crime" frenzy. Tension was palpable, the result horrific.

This was only the immediate backdrop for the killing of Aiyana by the cops. Vicious racist police repression is the daily reality for the oppressed black masses of this devastated city. The auto industry once employed millions in the U.S., and the heavily black unionized

workforce in Detroit was a vanguard of some of the most militant labor struggles in the country. It was Motor City, with comparatively decent wages won through hard struggle. The mass of black auto workers also represented a vital link between the power of the organized proletariat and the impoverished ghetto masses. Today, the auto industry and its union presence have been decimated by the capitalist owners of industry, abetted by a cravenly class-collaborationist union bureaucracy. This has left the city a hell-hole of mass unemployment and desperate poverty, its black population all the more vulnerable to the repressive powers of the capitalist state (see "Reporter's Notebook: Devastation in Motor City," WV No. 929, 30 January 2009).

Not only in Detroit, but throughout inner cities and former industrial concentrations across the country, the economic whip of unemployment has been augmented by the vast expansion of police

continued on page 11

In Face of NYC Transit Layoffs TWU Tops: Lieutenants in Capitalists' "War on Terror"

Pleading poverty on the heels of the capitalist financial meltdown, state and municipal governments across the country are cutting services to the bone, imposing sweeping layoffs and attacking pensions. This anti-labor offensive began at the top, when early last year the Obama White House showered hundreds of billions on its Wall Street patrons and engineered the bailout of Chrysler and GM by tearing up union gains won through decades of hard struggle. Now Democrats and Republicans alike at all levels of government are gunning for the public workers unions.

In New York City, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is slashing bus and subway routes and threatening mass layoffs, with over 200 subway station agents already out of a job, 275 more holding pink slips and 750 other transit workers facing the ax. Station agents play a vital role, from helping subway riders navigate the system to finding lost children and calling ambulances for the injured and ill. The leadership of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 ought to be mobilizing the rank and file against the MTA bosses and their government higher-ups to fight for these jobs and for free mass transit. Instead, besides their usual practice of begging capitalist politicians in Albany and Washington for mercy (and, now, for more stimulus money), the Local 100 tops are pleading that station agents provide a "first line of defense" in

March 4: TWU Local 100 president Samuelson, with PBA cop "union" head Pat Lynch on his right, at rally for transit jobs.



the government's "war on terror."

This is as grotesque as it is dangerous. The "war on terror" is an all-purpose fiction pushed by the bloody U.S. ruling class to justify invasion and mass murder abroad and a vicious clampdown on the rights of the population at home—in the first place immigrants, but also black people and the labor movement. Unions and unionized workers have been *targets* of the "war on terror" from the outset. In December 2001, the leader of striking teachers in Middletown, New Jersey, was vilified as a "representative of the Taliban" and the strikers were clapped into jail. As we wrote at the time, "This should be an alarm bell to the entire labor movement about what the bosses' jingoist 'national unity' means" ("228 NJ Teachers Jailed for Striking," WV No. 771, 28 December 2001).

On March 4, the Local 100 bureaucracy staged the first of several rallies against the layoffs where the "war on terror" theme has been played to the hilt. Recently elected Local president John Samuelson invited onto the stage capitalist Democratic Party politicians and Police Benevolent Association head Pat Lynch, as his predecessor Roger Toussaint regularly did. Lynch gave his stamp of approval to the TWU tops' campaign to enlist station agents as "anti-terror" auxiliaries to the cops. No wonder: It's the job of Lynch and his cop "union" to enforce "law and order" against blacks, immigrants and the unions. Lynch has no place on the TWU's rostrum! Cops out of the unions! Samuelson even appealed directly to the Chair of the U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security, Mississippi Democrat Bennie Thompson,

to pressure the MTA bosses to keep the station agents on the job as "eyes and ears" for the bosses' state (*Transport Workers Alert*, April 2010).

Acting as lieutenant in the reactionary "anti-terror" crackdown is second nature for Samuelson, who is, after all, a former prison guard. Only weeks before the TWU's 2002 contract deadline, he complained about subcontractors employing immigrant day laborers who do not undergo background checks, ranting, "We don't know if they have a criminal background or anything about them." This racist bigotry is poison for the labor movement, and not least for the TWU with its integrated membership that includes workers from all parts of the world.

As part of the pro-Democrat, pro-imperialist AFL-CIO bureaucracy that supports the "war on terror," the TWU tops are hardly alone. Many union bureaucrats collaborated with the government in the implementation of the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program. In the name of "port security," TWIC requires port workers to undergo background checks and acquire identity cards to work. Since being rolled out in April 2009, it has caused a de facto purge of *tens of thousands* of port workers. Black and Latino workers, many of whom had been caught up in racist "war on drugs" dragnets in the past, have been especially hard hit by TWIC.

In one of his final writings, revolutionary Marxist Leon Trotsky observed: "The labor bureaucrats do their level best in words and deeds to demonstrate to the 'democratic' state how reliable and indispensable they are in peacetime and especially in time of war" ("Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay," 1940). Trotsky emphasized that to "turn the trade unions into the organs of the broad exploited masses and not the organs of a labor aristocracy" requires the "*complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state.*" And that requires forging a new, class-struggle leadership. ■

For the Right of Independence!

Colonial Referendum in Martinique and French Guiana

The following article is translated from *Le Bolchévik No. 191 (March 2010)*, newspaper of the *Ligue Trotskyste de France*, section of the *International Communist League*.

LE BOLCHEVIK

Referendums were held on January 10 in the colonies of Martinique and French Guiana. The purpose was to promise greater autonomy under the terms of Article 74 of the French Constitution. The French state organized this referendum in order to promote a “renewed relationship with metropolitan France,” as French president Sarkozy put it. A large majority in both countries voted “no,” with just over half the registered voters participating.

The plebiscite had been announced in the wake of last year’s protracted general strikes in Martinique and Guadeloupe, which targeted the main capitalist exploiters (in many cases the “*békés*,” descendants of the former slaveholders) and the French state, including its local satraps. The primary aim of the strikes was to ease the growing poverty and racist oppression of the majority of the population of these colonies. They exposed before the eyes of the world the hypocrisy of the French bourgeoisie, which veils its imperialist greed behind speeches about “human rights.” These strikes showed once again, especially to the multiethnic proletariat in France, that hard class battles must be waged to resist the capitalists’ attacks and repression. This was the context for Sarkozy’s referendum on autonomy, the purpose of which was to refurbish French imperialism while trying to sidetrack what remains of the militant struggle into colonial legal double-talk.

If a “yes” vote had won, it would have been followed by years of negotiations between the French state and its political agents in the Caribbean in order to work out a law which would make a few adjustments to the administrative regulations. Then this law would have been submitted to the French parliament. Among the possible new “powers” would be things like having anthems and flags, along with greater powers of local taxation, more control of public-sector hiring (in other words, Martiniquan jobs for Martiniquans) and a few additional measures regarding the economy and the environment. Decisions relating to state power (the courts, the police, defense, currency, etc.) would remain in Paris. Announcing the referendum, Sarkozy played the little Bonaparte, declaring: “As long as I am president of the Republic, the question of Martinique’s independence will not be posed.” And “Martinique is French and will remain so.”

Participation in the voting was relatively high for a vote of this sort, but 45 percent of registered voters still gave it a miss. Many people expressed the fear, which is more acute than ever in this period of economic crisis and high unemployment, that if the referendum passed it could mean the loss of French colonial status and European Union membership, and thus the loss of remaining social gains, forcing the majority of the population into even greater poverty. The media also reported on some Martiniquan workers who rejected the referendum, saying

that it had nothing to do with their daily struggle to survive—they knew very well that the nationalist and social-democratic politicians who advocated a yes vote just wanted a greater say in how to exploit the workers. As we wrote in *Le Bolchévik* [see “French Caribbean Colonies Shaken by General Strikes,” WV No. 937, 22 May 2009]:

“Some leading nationalists in both Guadeloupe and Martinique often express their desire for the transfer of much of the state administration to a locally run body which could slash social benefits. According to the nationalists, these benefits make their agriculture and tourism uncompetitive against other Caribbean islands. But right now the nationalists are not emphasizing the struggle for independence—their program is rather to grab for themselves the profits from colonial

there is against it: they fully understand that following independence under capitalism, the imperialist oppressors would try to reduce their standards of living even further.

This is why proletarian internationalism and the fight for socialist revolution in the U.S., France and other advanced capitalist countries must be the basis of our program to end colonial oppression and exploitation in the French colonies once and for all. This is all the more important given the small size of the proletariat in the French Caribbean (which is essentially employed in construction and in basic services such as transportation and trash removal; there is also a thin layer of agricultural workers on the plantations). The social power of the



Corbis photos



Martinique, 13 February 2009: Farm workers (above) block access to industrial area during general strike, while protester (left) holds sign reading “Black Code,” referring to slavery.

exploitation which for centuries have been pocketed by the *békés*.”

The question posed by the January 10 referendum was whether one was for or against an empty shell—i.e., greater so-called “autonomy.” The position of the LTF was for abstention. We were also against voting yes or no in the plebiscite that followed two weeks later, where it was a question of deciding for or against a fusion of the regional councils and general councils in Martinique and in French Guiana. None of these referendums offered anything positive to the working class.

Our starting point is defense of the right of self-determination for the French colonies. As intransigent opponents of French colonialism, which in the Caribbean was based on slavery, we would be in favor of independence. But we are against any forced independence, and we do not presently demand the immediate independence of Martinique, French Guiana or other colonies, notably because today the vast majority of the population

proletariat from Guadeloupe and Martinique is mainly to be found in France; this émigré proletariat represents a living link for socialist revolution in France and the Caribbean.

Our position on the national question stands in the revolutionary tradition of Lenin’s Bolsheviks. For the Bolsheviks, federation and autonomy fundamentally accept continued colonial capitalist domination. Lenin said: “A reformist change is one which leaves intact the foundations of the power of the ruling class and is merely a concession leaving its power unimpaired. A revolutionary change undermines the foundations of power. A reformist national programme does *not* abolish *all* the privileges of the ruling nation; it does *not* establish complete equality; it does *not* abolish national oppression *in all its forms*. An ‘autonomous’ nation does not enjoy rights equal to those of the ‘ruling’ nation” (“The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up”). Lenin wrote, also in

1916: “The right of nations to self-determination implies exclusively the right to independence in the political sense, the right to free political separation from the oppressor nation” (“The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination—Theses”).

Combat Ouvrier Gives “Left” Proletarian Cover to Nationalists

The Marxist position has nothing to do with capitulation to nationalism or with the crass reformism of Combat Ouvrier (CO), Lutte Ouvrière’s fraternal group in Martinique. CO admitted the obvious when it wrote in its 19 December editorial that “for this referendum campaign, what is striking is that they [the politicians of Martinique] did not commit themselves to anything at all; they did not even pretend to promise anything! This shows that tomorrow they really intend to administer the new status solely in the interests of those who own and run Martinique!” But barely a few lines further on, CO is implicitly supporting a yes vote in the January 10 referendum! On what basis? They claim that the workers and poor (who apparently, unlike CO, don’t understand anything) were supposedly for greater autonomy under Article 74; so in solidarity with these toilers, CO went along with a yes vote. They argue further that this measure would allow “us” to put more effective pressure on the local bourgeois executive and to obtain decisions which are “in favor of the toiling and poor layers”:

“However, if some form of local power is created after the vote on Article 74 or 73 in the referendums of January 10 and 24, that would have the advantage for us of having close at hand all these politicians who are responsible for attacks against the workers and poor. The seat of that power will be closer and we will be able to go there when we want to hold them accountable.

“Therefore we members of Combat Ouvrier understand that some workers may want to see this change in Statute 74 passed and lead to a form of local power....

“Therefore we feel in solidarity with the workers who want to vote in favor of the birth of this form of local power....

“From now on we have to realize that we will have to closely watch these politicians and other dignitaries in the exercise of that power and be ready to hold them accountable at any moment, so that as often as possible decisions are taken a little more in favor of the toiling and poor layers.”

What touching faith in the colonial state apparatus, the exploiters’ instrument for repressing the exploited! And this comes right after the brutal repression of the general strikes, as they are gearing up determinedly to take back the main gains of those struggles. CO’s position coincides with that of its Martiniquan partners in the February 5 Collective (K5F, the February 2009 general strike committee), which includes the CGTM union in which the influence of CO is well known. The president of K5F, Philippe Pierre-Charles, is the leader and founding member of the Socialist Revolution Group (GRS), which is associated with the New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA). The GRS openly called for voting for Article 74, but “without illusions”—in other words, voting for this colonial fraud while knowing perfectly well that it goes against the interests of the workers and poor. The support that Combat Ouvrier & Co. gave to the referendum charade

Lutte Ouvrière’s Municipal Antics

The following article is translated from *Le Bolchévik* No. 192 (June 2010).

In 2007, [the reformist group] Lutte Ouvrière (LO) mobilized its members for the following year’s municipal elections, insisting on the importance of getting some municipal representatives. At the end of 2007, by a majority of 97 percent, LO’s party congress adopted a resolution stating:

“Getting some municipal councillors elected is extremely important for our political influence. These elected officials are a means of rooting ourselves in a city and the axis that our local activities can orbit around....

“The conclusion is that we should try to field slates in the maximum number of localities. However, that will not stop us from examining and being open to all proposals for alliances, which we will consider depending on the situation, the local relationship of forces and the possibilities for getting elected that these alliances could really open up to us. Indeed, we have no interest in making alliances on a program of agreements with possible allies if that does not get us some people elected, or even prevents us from getting people elected, and all the more so since we have the means to run independently.”

—*Lutte de Classe* No. 109, December 2007

In other words, LO was ready for any dirty deal to obtain positions on municipal councils and told its members that it was going to try to negotiate for positions on “left” slates. LO went to beg the Socialist Party [SP], which in most cases said flatly no. But the PCF [French Communist Party] often accepted them on its slates, after making sure that LO would be loyal to the future municipal majority. LO eventually ran on the slates of the bourgeois mayor of Belfort, a fiefdom of [bourgeois politician Jean-Pierre] Chevènement, who served as minister of police under [former SP prime minister Lionel] Jospin.

So far, LO has more than proven that it is a reliable partner for a municipal popular front. We don’t know of any instances when LO voted against a budget. LO national spokesman Nathalie Arthaud, a member of the CP-led municipal majority running Vaulx-en-Velin (in the Lyon suburbs), justified voting for the budget “in the name of LO” during the municipal council meeting on 25 March 2009:

“Of course we are going to vote for the budget presented by the municipal majority, because we are in solidarity with the proposed orientations and choices, whether they are expressed in educational policy, support to associations, rates applied to services rendered or general orientation. The municipal majority is concerned about responding to the needs of the population and especially the underprivileged population, and for us that is essential. Beyond some disagreements on details, we share this majority’s basic choices.”

—Minutes of the Vaulx-en-Velin Municipal Council, 25 March 2009

In spite of LO’s concerns that having municipal councillors was “extremely important for our political influence,” the political influence of these municipal councillors did not reach the pages of the weekly *Lutte Ouvrière*, which has barely

breathed a word about their performance: to our knowledge, LO wrote about them briefly three times in the space of two years. That’s why a 19 February article mentioning them takes on a very particular importance for judging their municipal politics.

The article is about Bagnolet—a municipality in the Paris suburbs—which has been controlled by the CP for decades. Bagnolet is also where an LO regional leader, Jean-Pierre Mercier (also a union bureaucrat in the PSA automobile factory at Aulnay), was elected on the slates of CP mayor Marc Everbecq in 2008. The article recounts the forcible eviction, on the mayor’s orders and in the middle of winter, of the tenants of an apartment building occupied in part by African workers. This time LO condemned the racist eviction, contrary to what they did in 2005 in a similar case in the town of Aubervilliers, which was run at the time by the CP (see our article in *Le Bolchévik* No. 173 [September 2005]). LO solidarizes with the victims of the Bagnolet eviction and denounces the propaganda

sarily racist (whether in the hands of the PCF and LO or not). It is precisely for this kind of thing that LO is useful to the PCF mayors. The message that LO thus helps to get across is that of course you cannot run a town administration without breaking a few eggs, but in the last analysis there is always somebody in the municipal majority who will come and warm your heart (if nothing else) when you are out on the street and it’s snowing.

LO itself accurately described its conception of municipal work as reformist: “By definition, neither municipal work nor trade-union activity can be revolutionary; they are reformist” (*Lutte de Classe* No. 110, February 2008). LO deliberately confuses two things. One is the question of administering capitalism at the municipal level by taking part in a municipal council majority—and thus taking responsibility for what running capitalism entails, i.e., inevitably, racist discrimination in public housing; “personnel management,” including the mayor’s office laying off city workers; reducing the number of elementary school classes; cutting back childcare;

[English-language edition No. 61, Spring 2009]. The article documents Lenin’s intransigent struggle, even though the Third International itself had come to questionable conclusions on the question of municipalism at its [1920] Second Congress. Denouncing the bourgeoisie’s institutions of local government, the resolution on parliamentarism stipulated that “to counterpose them to the organs of the state is theoretically incorrect. They are in reality organizations similar to the mechanism of the bourgeois state.” However, the resolution wrongly allowed Communist parties to hold municipal executive office.

The bourgeois state must be destroyed by a workers revolution based on new organs of power—workers councils—unconditionally opposed to the bourgeois order at all levels, national, regional and municipal. So it should be evident that the working class cannot reach this understanding if its revolutionary element itself participates in the institutions of bourgeois power, even municipal ones. From this principled opposition to executive

Right: French cops evict African immigrants who sought refuge in gymnasium after being kicked out of their apartments in Paris suburb of Bagnolet, February. Far right: Protest against the evictions.

DAL photos



of the town administration, which, indeed, does not hesitate to use every racist cliché in order to justify its action, calling the victims smugglers, drug dealers and pimps.

A naive reader, taking LO’s recent hypocritical rhetoric about “communism” at face value, might expect LO to denounce all its past capitulations to the PCF mayor and break its pact with the devil of bourgeois municipalism. Absolutely not! On the contrary, LO’s article states:

“A support committee was set up for the evicted people, with the Right to Housing Committee and other organizations. LO’s municipal councillors in the town participated in its creation. And the evictees were quite happy to find members of the municipal majority at their side, able to condemn the dirty tricks, even when they came from City Hall.”

In other words, LO went to the victims of the municipal government, openly declaring itself part of the very municipal council majority that was evicting them! Under these conditions, LO’s support amounted to reassuring the evictees that they really should not infer from this that the administration of capitalism is neces-

raising local taxes; setting up “neighborhood police” and police stations; etc. The other is winning an election as a revolutionary proletarian *opposition* in order to denounce administering capitalism.

For Marxists, however, this is a fundamental difference—a difference of principle. More than 150 years ago, Karl Marx insisted that you cannot take hold of the capitalist state—which is an apparatus of oppression made up of armed bodies whose role is to maintain the dictatorship of capital—in order to make it serve the interest of the working class. This is true for the central government, and it is equally true at the lowest level of the state, the municipal level. Thus, the mayor has police powers within his territory; mayors, including PCF mayors, are the direct representatives of the capitalist state at the municipal level.

That is why Lenin always opposed municipalism, notably during the elections to the local (municipal) dumas in April 1917 in Russia. We recommend to our readers the article in the current issue of our international journal *Spartacist*

offices of the bourgeois state flows the fact that Marxists cannot run for such posts without risking conferring legitimacy upon them in the eyes of the workers. Therefore we refuse on principle to run for executive office, be it the election of the mayor and his deputies by the municipal council or the election of the president of the republic by universal suffrage. We also refuse to seek to be a part of a parliamentary or municipal majority that takes on executive responsibility.

In contrast, for nearly 40 years LO has never failed to run a candidate for president. In 2008, they took a further step by “getting their hands dirty” at the municipal level. In fact, it is the logic of reformism to set about administering capitalism starting at the municipal level. Our perspective, on the other hand, is international socialist revolution. That perspective begins by opposing LO’s bourgeois municipalism and must end with the dictatorship of the proletariat, which will eliminate the organs of bourgeois repression at all levels, including the municipal. ***Down with executive offices of the capitalist state!*** ■

served to give credence to Sarkozy’s “reforms” and his attempts to refurbish the image of French colonial domination.

Given the crushing defeat of the “yes” camp in the January 10 referendum, CO tried to distance itself from its initial position of “solidarity” with the imaginary workers who “may want to see this change in Statute 74 passed.” They claimed in a press release published in *Lutte Ouvrière* (but not in *Combat Ouvrier*) that “We of Combat Ouvrier gave no advice on how to vote, because we didn’t want to sanction the past, present and future actions of politicians who do not care about the interests and aspirations of the workers. This consultation was a phony choice!”

This capitulation to petty-bourgeois nationalism is nothing new for CO. In Guadeloupe they are part of the LKP

[January-February 2009 general strike committee] in the name of “*tous ensemble*” (united struggle). This organization is a combative popular-frontist coalition, which includes the workers movement but also a whole series of petty-bourgeois nationalist and cultural organizations. At bottom, the LKP represents the program of bourgeois nationalism. Its popular-front nature is determined not only by the organizations that constitute it but also by its program. For example, many of the 149 demands the LKP put forward during last year’s strikes were supportable, including the demand for a raise of 200 euros per month for all low-paid and minimum-wage workers, as well as demands for a large-scale program of public housing construction and a real public transportation system. However, many

other demands—such as giving preferential treatment to local capitalists over other capitalists (“priority and ease of access to the market and to public assistance for Guadeloupean businesses”)—underline the bourgeois-nationalist nature of the bloc, which addresses itself to “the people of Guadeloupe, workers, peasants, artisans, retirees, unemployed, *businessmen*, youth” (our emphasis).

In France the task of the revolutionary party is to mobilize the workers on the side of oppressed nations and for their right to self-determination. In Guadeloupe and Martinique, the crucial task is to break the hold of nationalist false consciousness. The fact that CO participates as the “far left” component in the LKP and the February 5 Collective goes precisely in the opposite direction: CO gives

petty-bourgeois nationalism a left cover. In France LO uncritically applauds CO’s work in the LKP and K5F, and so on. But LO’s class collaboration in France is no less criminal—for example, calling on the working class to vote for the Socialist Party’s Ségolène Royal in the 2007 elections (“without illusions,” of course) and participating in municipal councils to administer capitalist austerity at the local level alongside the Communist Party as well as ecologists, “alternative” candidates, supporters of Chevènement [a bourgeois politician] and others. Thus they are an obstacle to the class independence and revolutionary consciousness that are indispensable to the fight for socialist revolution and to putting an end to the colonial yoke and the heritage of slavery in the Caribbean. ■

Puerto Rico: Hands Off Campus Strikers!

For more than five weeks, students at the University of Puerto Rico have been on strike to protest budget cuts, tuition hikes and moves by the government to privatize university services. The strike began on April 21 at the main Río Piedras campus in the capital city, San Juan, and spread across the island, paralyzing the eleven-campus public university with its enrollment of 65,000. In an effort to break the strike, riot cops surrounded the main gates of Río Piedras on May 14 to deny food and water to students occupying the campus. But hundreds of the students' supporters broke the blockade, tossing bags of food and bottles of water over the heads of the police.

The strike has received wide support among workers, teachers, and community organizations in Puerto Rico and among student groups, intellectuals and others internationally. On May 18, a coalition of Puerto Rican public employees unions carried out a one-day strike in support of the students' demands. As the *Miami Herald* (23 May) observed, "Not since Puerto Rico rallied to chase the United States Navy out of Vieques a decade ago have so many different social sectors rallied around a single cause." The strike is

taking place against a backdrop of widespread anger and discontent throughout the island over government austerity measures, mass layoffs of public employees and rising unemployment. Last October, a one-day general strike and mass rallies protesting austerity measures paralyzed San Juan.

Puerto Rico remains a colony of U.S. imperialism, and it is ultimately Washington that holds the whip hand over the Puerto Rican masses. It is crucial for the U.S. working class to stand in solidarity with the striking students and the embattled unions. ***Victory to the student strike! For the right of independence for Puerto Rico!***

We print below a May 29 letter by the Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—addressed to Puerto Rico governor Luis Fortuño protesting a recent brutal police attack against student strikers and their supporters.

* * *

The Partisan Defense Committee vigorously protests the police assault on students, trade unionists and independence



Indymedia

Students occupy Río Piedras campus in April in first week of island-wide University of Puerto Rico strike.

advocates who protested at the Sheraton Hotel in San Juan on May 20 in support of the University of Puerto Rico campus strike. Shock Forces (Fuerzas de Choque) agents brutally attacked protesters with tasers, clubs, tear gas and pepper spray. Dozens were injured, including Central Labor Federation president Luisa Acevedo, Puerto Rican Labor Federation president José Rodríguez Báez and Hostosian National Independence Movement co-president Julio Muriente. Police arrested Public Buildings Union member Miguel Angel Ramos Linn and students Gabriel Muriente Pastrana, Angel Santiago Díaz and José Pérez, who was hospitalized after police tased him several times.

The PDC demands that no legal charges or reprisals be brought against the strikers and their supporters. The University

of Puerto Rico strike was provoked by your government's draconian budget cuts and efforts to privatize university services, as well as threats to limit tuition waivers for students and to increase summer tuition. Earlier this month, police blocked deliveries of food and water in an unsuccessful attempt to starve out strikers at the Río Piedras campus, and the father of one striker was arrested for trying to deliver food. The PDC joins the Puerto Rican trade unions, students and professors in the U.S., Mexico, Canada, Spain and Venezuela, and prominent individuals like Cuban singer Silvio Rodríguez and Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano, as well as the Cuban government, who have solidarized with the strike.

Hands off student protesters and trade unionists! ■

Letter on Prison Hell

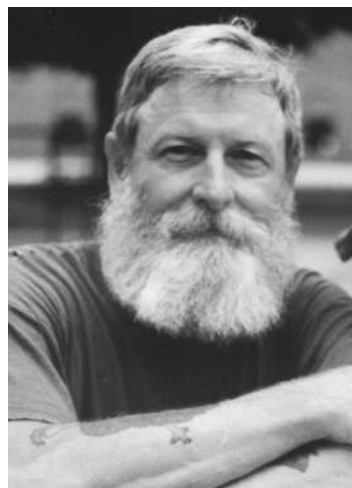
We print below an April 8 letter to the Partisan Defense Committee from Tom Manning. Manning and Jaan Laaman are the last two members of the Ohio 7 still in prison and are recipients of the PDC class-war prisoner stipend program. The Ohio 7 were members of the United Freedom Front, a radical group that took credit for bombings that targeted symbols of U.S. imperialism, including military and corporate offices, in the late 1970s and '80s (see "Ohio 7: Fighters Against Imperialism, Racism," WV No. 741, 8 September 2000). The PDC has long defended the Ohio 7, including during a 1989 trial on trumped-up "seditious conspiracy" charges. From the standpoint of the working class, their actions against U.S. imperialism and racist injustice were not crimes, and these courageous activists should not have served a day in prison.

In 1987 Manning was convicted in a second frame-up trial for the 1981 shooting of a New Jersey state trooper, and the government is determined that he die in prison, as did fellow Ohio 7 defendant Richard Williams in 2005. Manning has spent years in lockdown in some of the worst hellholes of the prison system, including USP Marion (Illinois) and USP Florence ADMAX (Colorado), a sensory deprivation unit of steel and concrete, with no sound and minimal human contact, designed to break prisoners. ***Free Jaan Laaman and Tom Manning! Free all class-war prisoners!***

* * *

Dear PD folks,

This evening your mailing found me again—at yet another prison. I'm now at the USP#1 Coleman, Florida. Hav-



4struggleimag

Tom Manning

ing been moved on March 15th and 16th from West Virginia to Maryland, to Harrisburg, PA., to Oklahoma City, OK., to West Virginia again, and finally to Tampa, Florida, a two hour bus trip out here to the Coleman Correctional Complex. Site of at least five federal prisons. I'm into my fourth week of sitting in the hole—waiting for S.I.S. (internal security) to decide whether they want me at their great place here.

With my arthritis and artificial joints (3) I don't travel as well as I once did, especially with all the air conditioning at full blast on all those planes and buses, and here in the hole (SHU), where there is no sunlight (windows blocked by steel) and plenty of damp cold air. All this coming after two months being denied any pain meds. By the time they pulled me off the bus here, I felt like they pulled me out from under it. After nine days here, I finally got some pain meds. So I'm doing alright in that, even though I was without them for the last two days due to organizational disorganization. The Struggle Continues!

When the bus I was on arrived at Harrisburg Airport, and fell into line with dozens of other prisoner transport buses and vans, out in the cold wind in a remote corner of the tarmac, where the area was transformed into an impromptu, yet much practiced, transfer junction, with lines of

chained and shackled prisoners, by the hundreds, being assembled in the cold with flimsy paper jump suits of different colors, (like paper Dr. Dentons) depending on which prison each group came from. Brown, blue, orange, yellow, white, tan—to be reloaded onto other buses or vans, or to await the arrival of the BOP airliners. All surrounded by armed guards meeting and greeting each other, sipping hot coffee or whatever from their thermoses, dressed in their insulated bulky outdoor gear. Boots, jackets, hoods, etc. while we stood there by the hundred, by the hours, shivering so bad one couldn't control it. Couldn't will it away or ignore it.

This is just one transfer junction of this remote corner of Pennsylvania. And I was thinking—if any other so-called First World European country were to move this many prisoners as I was seeing there, at this time and place, it would make world news. Yet this is just one locale. How many more locales was this happening in/at this time or on any given day?

A star trek type sample of slave caravans crisscrossing the edges of the Sahara, or gathering on West African shores. At least they weren't tossing the dead and dying overboard as they did in the middle passage.

From five a.m. Monday till eleven p.m. Tuesday I had a total of three hours without blackboxed handcuffs, bellychain and leg shackles and got two and a half hours sleep. All the time thinking, "it could be worse..."

Anyway, thank you for telling us of Mumia's struggles and Lynne's. And thank you for the money order, as usual. It's much appreciated. All things considered.

The Struggle Still Continues!
Tom Manning
No Justice, No Peace!

NOTICE

Workers Vanguard skips alternate issues in June, July and August. Our next issue will be dated July 2.

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S. Local Directory and Public Offices

Web site: www.icl-fi.org • **E-mail address:** vanguard@tiac.net

National Office: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, (212) 732-7860

Chicago Box 6441, Main PO, Chicago, IL 60680, (312) 563-0441
chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: Sat. 2-5 p.m., 222 S. Morgan (Buzzer 23)

Los Angeles Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta., Los Angeles, CA 90029, (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: Sat. 2-5 p.m., 3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215

New York Box 3381, Church St. Sta., New York, NY 10008, (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net
Public Office: 1st and 3rd Sat. of every month, 1-4 p.m., and by appointment, 299 Broadway, Suite 318

Oakland Box 29497, Oakland, CA 94604, (510) 839-0851
slbayarea@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: Sat. 1-5 p.m., 1634 Telegraph, 3rd Floor

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA

Toronto Box 7198, Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X8, (416) 593-4138
spartacan@on.aibn.com

Vancouver Box 2717, Main P.O., Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2, (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

Thrown Back in Prison

Free Vanunu! Let Him Leave Israel!

On May 23, Mordechai Vanunu, the whistle-blower who spent 18 years in prison for exposing the extent of Israel's nuclear arsenal, began serving a three-month prison sentence that stems from his December 29 arrest for meeting with a Norwegian woman in Jerusalem. Despite serving his entire prior sentence, Vanunu remains barred from talking to non-Israelis and going near airports, ports and embassies, subject to 24-hour surveillance and prevented from leaving the country.

Following his December arrest, Vanunu was sentenced to six months of "community service" in overwhelmingly Jewish West Jerusalem. Fearing his life would be threatened by right-wing Israelis who consider him a "traitor," Vanunu requested that his sentence be served in predominantly Palestinian East Jerusalem. When the court rejected his request, Vanunu declined to carry out his community service. On May 11, he was sentenced to prison once again.

The vindictive, blood-soaked rulers of the Zionist state will not rest until Vanunu, a former technician at the Israeli nuclear weapons facility in Dimona, is



Reuters

Jerusalem: Defiant Mordechai Vanunu, escorted by Israeli prison guards as he leaves court, 29 December 2009.

forever silenced for having revealed that Israel had upwards of 200 nuclear warheads. This arsenal, built up with the active support of the French and then the U.S. imperialist powers, was enough not only to incinerate every Arab capital but to bomb major cities in the Soviet Union as well.

Vanunu was born to a Sephardic Jewish family that emigrated from Morocco to Israel, where he experienced discrimination at the hands of the

European-derived Ashkenazi establishment. As a student at Beersheba's Ben-Gurion University, he joined protests against Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon and actively fought for the rights of Palestinian and Bedouin students. Fed up with the Israeli garrison state, Vanunu left the country in 1986 and later converted to Christianity while in Australia.

In 1986, he was kidnapped in Italy by the Israeli Mossad secret police, thrown

into a desert prison in Ashkelon and sentenced by a secret military court. In prison, Vanunu was given the kind of treatment Israel's rulers reserve for those they deem "subhuman"—the Palestinians imprisoned within the electric fences that surround Gaza, those confined behind the concrete walls and checkpoints of the West Bank, the thousands who languish in Israel's prison torture chambers. He spent more than eleven years in solitary confinement, entombed in a six-by-nine cell in a high-security complex built for Palestinians.

When Vanunu walked out of prison in April 2004, he said that he was "proud and happy to do what I did." He was arrested later that year and, in 2007, he was sentenced to another six months' imprisonment. He remains defiant, declaring before he was dragged away to his cell last month, "You didn't get anything from me in 18 years; you won't get anything in 3 months. Shame on you, Israel." Defenders of the Palestinian people and opponents of capitalist repression everywhere must take up the call to free this courageous opponent of Zionist terror and demand that he be allowed to leave Israel.

Massacre...

(continued from page 1)

a given. But in recent years, Israel's rulers have also made a point of targeting Western supporters of the Palestinians. In 2003, two activists of the pro-Palestinian International Solidarity Movement (ISM) were killed at the hands of Israeli forces: 23-year-old American Rachel Corrie was crushed by a bulldozer as she tried to stop the demolition of a Palestinian home, and 21-year-old British photojournalist Tom Hurndall was shot in the head by Israeli troops as he tried to protect children in Gaza's Rafah refugee camp. Yesterday in the West Bank, Emily Henochowicz, a 21-year-old American, had her left eye blown out by troops as she protested against the *Mavi Marmara* massacre.

Not surprisingly, the Israeli massacre has provoked condemnation from numerous governments, not least the Erdogan regime in Turkey, an unofficial sponsor of the flotilla. These same capitalist regimes have shown themselves equally as capa-

ble as the Israeli bourgeois rulers in perpetrating atrocities against ethnic, religious and national minorities. As for the imperialists, Britain and France laid the basis for the continuing misery of the Palestinians and other peoples of the Near East in the period between the two world wars, when they brutally suppressed anti-colonial uprisings and set one people against another.

For its part, the Democratic administration of President Barack Obama refuses even to slap Israel on the wrist. Washington has been the chief arms supplier to the Zionist state for decades, shelling out several billions of dollars a year. On the eve of the Israeli blitzkrieg in Gaza, then-presidential candidate Obama made clear in a visit to Israel that his administration would continue to give the Zionist state a blank check for its anti-Palestinian terror.

A prominent chant at the May 31 New York protest was: "Obama, it's past time—stop Israeli war crimes!" But the Obama administration is not about to stop Israeli war crimes or, more to the point, its own. Under both Democratic and Republican administrations, it is U.S. imperialism that is the main enemy of the world's workers and oppressed masses. Today it continues to perpetrate massacres against the peoples of Afghanistan and Pakistan on a regular basis. And only months after Washington seized on the earthquake in Haiti to send in 20,000 troops to re-occupy that tiny and impoverished black country, the government of Jamaica carried out a police massacre of dozens of slum dwellers in Kingston at the behest of the U.S. rulers. Down with U.S. aid to Israel! U.S. imperialists—hands off the world!

Israel's attack on the civilian aid flotilla serves to underscore the futility of attempts by various reformist leftists to lobby the "democratic" imperialist powers to pressure Israel to tamp down its murderous repression. Suppression of the Palestinian people has been intrinsic to the Zionist cause from its inception in Europe in the latter half of the 19th century, as it set itself the ersatz messianic mission of conquering "a land without people for a people without a land."

Notwithstanding the intentions of some of the earliest socialist-minded Jewish immigrants in Palestine, what the Zionist project has always meant in practice was the driving out of one people from



EPA



WV Photo

May 31 protests against murderous attack on Gaza aid ship: Istanbul (top), New York City.

the land and its replacement by another. Decades of land-grabbing were followed by the mass expulsion of Palestinians in 1947-48 and the ghettoization of those Arabs who remained in the new state of Israel. The conquest of the Occupied Territories in 1967 fueled dreams of a "Greater Israel" and the further displacement of Palestinians in Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank, which is now surrounded by a wall and riddled with military checkpoints. The right-wing government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu includes such figures as Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, who openly advocates "transfer"—the genocidal expulsion

of all Palestinian Arabs.

American anti-Zionist academic Norman Finkelstein captured something when he described Israel, in a May 31 interview with Russia Today TV, as "a lunatic state with between two and three hundred nuclear devices that is threatening war daily against Iran and against the Hezbollah in Lebanon." It is notable that the massacre on the Turkish ship came only two weeks after the U.S. and Israel denounced a deal brokered by Turkey and Brazil to provide Iran with fuel for its nuclear reactors. While Washington seeks to beef up the imperialist economic

continued on page 8

SPARTACIST

NUMBER 61 ENGLISH EDITION SPRING 2009

Down With Executive Offices of the Capitalist State!

Marxist Principles and Electoral Tactics

PAGE 4

Against Apologists for the Treachery of the POUM, Then and Now

Trotskyism vs. Popular Frontism in the Spanish Civil War

PAGE 24

Women and Revolution

Women Workers and the Contradictions of China Today

Defend China Against Imperialism, Counterrevolution!
For Workers Political Revolution!

PAGE 64

Gérard Le Métell, 1959–2007.....3

AUSTRALIA...\$2 BRITAIN...£1 CANADA...C\$3 IRELAND...€1.50 SOUTH AFRICA...R3 USA...US\$1.00

Spartacist (English edition)
No. 61, Spring 2009
\$1.50 (64 pages)
Spartacist is sent to all
WV subscribers.
Order from/pay to:
Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO
New York, NY 10116

North Korea...

(continued from page 1)

crush North Korea ever since capitalist/landlord rule was overthrown there following World War II. At that time, gigantic social upheavals swept the Korean peninsula, facilitated in the North by the presence of the Soviet Army. This resulted in freeing that part of the country from imperialist domination and establishing proletarian, collectivized property relations.

Under the aegis of the UN, the U.S. and its imperialist allies devastated the peninsula in the Korean War of 1950-53, killing some three million people in an effort to crush not only the social revolution in Korea but also the Chinese Revolution of 1949. Following a massive Chinese military intervention on the side of the North, the war ended in a stalemate at the 38th parallel. Ever since, U.S. imperialism has maintained a strong military presence in the South, helping to prop up a series of murderous military regimes for more than three decades. More recently, due to its economic development, South Korea has been able to modernize its own military, enabling the U.S. to reduce its forces. Nevertheless, some 26,000 U.S. troops remain stationed in South Korea as a dagger pointed at both the militant South Korean working class and the North Korean bureaucratically deformed workers state, whose very existence is a reminder to Washington of its failure to “roll back Communism” in East Asia. All U.S. troops out of Korea now!

Whatever actually happened on the night of March 26, it is clear that the “official” story stinks. After first downplaying North Korean involvement, and then claiming that the ship may have been sunk by a mine dating from the Korean War, U.S. and South Korean officials took nearly two months to issue their report (yet to be made public) claiming that a North Korean torpedo was responsible. When a member of the investigation team asserted that it appeared that the *Cheonan*’s sinking was an accident and that evidence allegedly implicating the North had been tampered with, prosecutors called him in for questioning and the Defense Ministry demanded that the National Assembly eject him from the investigation for “arousing public mistrust” (*Bloomberg Businessweek*, 29 May).

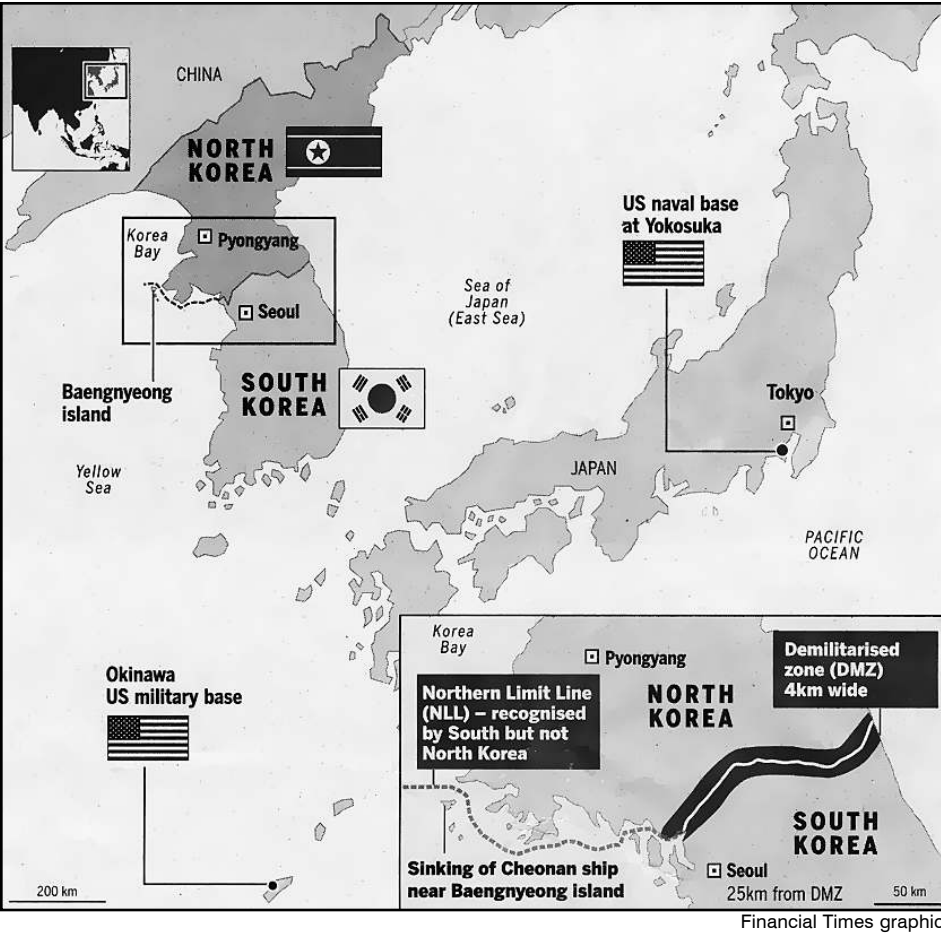
Meanwhile, as reported by the North Korean Central News Agency (28 May), a military spokesman for the Pyongyang regime denounced the incident as “a fabrication and charade orchestrated by the south Korean puppet authorities.” Indeed, South Korea’s “investigation” has about as much credibility as Washington’s declarations following the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident, which was fabricated in order to escalate the dirty U.S. war against the Vietnamese workers and peasants. And who can forget the bogus U.S. claims that Saddam Hussein’s Iraq had “weapons of mass destruction,” which served as the pretext for the U.S.-led 2003 invasion.

But even if the North Korean navy did sink the *Cheonan*, it would have been an act of defense against repeated provocations by the U.S. and South Korea.

The location where the ship went down, slightly to the west of Baengnyeong Island, is in an area that for years has been a staging ground for South Korean provocations against the North. Less than ten miles from North Korea’s west coast, Baengnyeong Island is closer to North Korea’s capital, Pyongyang, than any other portion of South Korean territory. The waters off the island were separated off from North Korea by the “Northern Limit Line,” a totally artificial “border” that was uni-

joint military exercises between the U.S. and South Korea, as this would force the North to be in “constant preparation for war” and further devastate the economy. The Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the social-patriotic Japanese Communist Party (JCP) joined in the reactionary chorus, with the JCP denouncing North Korea’s “unlawful and violent military action” (*Akahata*, 22 May).

Japanese prime minister Yukio Hatoyama, who had run for office promising that the U.S. military base in Okinawa would be removed, last week pointed to “the situation on the Korean peninsula” and the need for a “deterrent force” as



Map indicates that South Korean ship sank right off coast of North Korea and points to U.S. military bases in neighboring Japan.

laterally drawn by the U.S. occupiers following the Korean War and never recognized by the North. That imperialist maneuver served its purpose. In 1999, a North Korean ship went down, with 20 sailors lost, after being hit by South Korean fire. In 2002, North Korea suffered at least 30 casualties from a firefight with Southern warships. And last November a North Korean patrol boat was heavily damaged, with at least one sailor killed, after South Korean vessels fired thousands of rounds of ammunition. Notably, the incident involving the *Cheonan* was preceded by military exercises involving some 26,000 U.S. and South Korean troops just south of these same waters.

Imperialist Japan, which carried out a particularly vicious 40-year colonial occupation of Korea that ended with Japan’s defeat in World War II, has fully backed the provocations against North Korea. Japanese media are replete with calls for

reasons for agreeing to keep the U.S. base. That decision sparked a renewed uproar in Japan, where thousands have repeatedly protested against the U.S. presence in Okinawa, and impelled the SDP to leave the coalition government. As revolutionary opponents of U.S. imperialism, we demand the removal of all U.S. bases and troops from Japan, which constitute a particular threat to the North Korean and Chinese deformed workers states. The Spartacist League/U.S. joins with our comrades of the Spartacist Group Japan in proclaiming: Smash the counter-revolutionary alliance of U.S. and Japanese imperialism through workers revolution on both sides of the Pacific! Not a penny or a man for the bourgeois military!

The greatest menace to the workers and oppressed of the world is U.S. imperialism, whose rulers have not only acquired the means to destroy the world several times over but have carried out nuclear

holocaust, incinerating some 200,000 Japanese people in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Obama’s recently released “Nuclear Posture Review” continues to target North Korea for a nuclear strike by labeling it a violator of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In the face of such threats, it is not only rational but necessary for North Korea to continue its development of nuclear weapons and adequate delivery systems to deter imperialist attack.

The defense of the North Korean and other deformed workers states is undermined by the rule of their nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies, whose policies are encapsulated in the dogma of “building socialism in one country.” Opposing the fight for international proletarian revolution, the privileged bureaucracies instead pursue a futile quest for “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism. So far, despite intense pressure from the U.S., Chinese premier Wen Jiabao has refused to condemn North Korea for the sinking of the *Cheonan*. But in 2006 and again in 2009, the Chinese Stalinist regime criminally voted for sanctions against North Korea in the UN Security Council following missile tests by Pyongyang. The 2009 sanctions encouraged UN member states to inspect North Korean cargo vessels and airplanes “suspected” of transporting military materiel.

Likewise, Beijing has treacherously sought to pressure Pyongyang into resuming the “six-party talks”—involving the U.S., China, Japan, Russia and the two Koreas—aimed at disarming North Korea. Beijing’s craven appeasement of imperialism not only imperils North Korea but dangerously undermines the defense of China itself—the main target of the imperialists’ drive for capitalist counterrevolution.

The extreme nationalism of Kim Jong Il’s nepotistic regime similarly undercuts North Korea’s defense. The Pyongyang Stalinists have long called for “peaceful reunification” with the South—a recipe for reunification of Korea on a capitalist basis. Many South Koreans feel a sense of solidarity with the North based on strong nationalist sentiments fed by a century of Japanese and American imperialist overlordship. Indeed, it is reported that a quarter of the population does not believe Seoul’s line on the *Cheonan*. But Korea is divided along *class* lines. Korean nationalism, promoted by both the North Korean bureaucracy and the South Korean left, serves to tie the powerful and combative South Korean proletariat to its own ruling class. We fight for the *revolutionary* reunification of Korea, through socialist revolution in the South and workers political revolution in the North.

The defense of China and North Korea, as well as the Vietnamese and Cuban deformed workers states, is inseparable from the fight for socialist revolutions in the advanced capitalist societies, importantly for Asia in the industrial powerhouse of Japan, and in the belly of the U.S. imperialist beast. The International Communist League dedicates itself to forging the proletarian vanguard parties needed to carry out this task. ■

Massacre...

(continued from page 7)

embargo against Iran, Israel continues to talk openly of bombing the country. Such threats underline that Iran needs nuclear weapons to defend itself against the imperialists and their junior partners.

Israel/Palestine is a prime example of the genocidal logic of bourgeois nationalism, particularly as played out in the context of its interpenetrated peoples. The national emancipation of the Palestinian people—including the right of all refugees and their descendants to return to their homeland—necessarily entails workers revolutions to shatter the Zionist state from within and to sweep away the neighboring capitalist ruling classes of Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, which themselves lord it over sizable Palestinian populations. Only within the framework of a socialist federation of the Near East will the national rights of both the Pales-

tinian Arab and the Hebrew-speaking peoples, as well as of the Kurds and myriad others, be ensured.

Notwithstanding the growing entrenchment of ultra-chauvinist and religious reaction among sections of the Hebrew-speaking population and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism within the Palestinian and other Arab populations, the countries of the Near East are class-divided societies. Notably, Egypt has witnessed a rising tide of workers protests and strikes in recent years. In the face of massive sympathy among Egyptians for the Palestinians, the regime of Hosni Mubarak, which has ruled under a state of emergency for decades, actively collaborates with the Zionist rulers in enforcing the blockade of Gaza.

The solidarity among the peoples of the Near East with the oppressed Palestinian people must be directed toward proletarian revolution against their own rulers, who, whether bourgeois nationalists or Islamic traditionalists, are fundamentally instruments of Western imperi-

alism. Revolutionary struggle in Iran and the Arab countries would serve in turn to aid in breaking the Hebrew-speaking working class, which includes a large number of downtrodden and impoverished Sephardic Jews, from the intoxication of Zionist chauvinism. Meanwhile, fully one-fifth of the population of Israel consists of Palestinian Arabs who have been subjected to blatant discrimination since the birth of the Zionist state in 1948.

The class interests of the workers of Israel lie in smashing the Zionist capitalist state and sweeping away their exploiters. But for this to happen, the *class* principle must prevail. What is necessary is the forging of multinational, multiethnic Marxist workers parties throughout the Near East, built in opposition to all forms of nationalism and religious fundamentalism. Such parties are the indispensable instruments to lead a successful fight for socialist revolution, which, on an international scale, can finally open the door to human equality and liberation. ■

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

NEW YORK CITY

Class Struggle and the Origins of Marxism
Saturday, June 12, 3 p.m.

Lenin’s Fight for a Vanguard Party
Saturday, June 26, 3 p.m.
299 Broadway, Suite 318
(Take 1, 2, 3 to Chambers St.; 4, 5, 6 to Brooklyn Bridge-City Hall; R, W to City Hall.)
Information and readings:
(212) 267-1025 • nysl@tiac.net

Visit the ICL Web Site:
www.icl-fi.org

Imperialist EU...

(continued from page 12)

by Schröder. But this is just a debate over which course is better for German imperialism.

At any rate, Merkel and Schäuble, unwilling for Germany to act as Europe’s “paymaster” any longer, are united in the aim of having Germany emerge a winner from the economic crisis. Many commentators fear that their course is acutely endangering the EU and the euro. The arrogance of Merkel & Co. bespeaks German imperialism’s newfound self-confidence, causing the rest of Europe to fear ominous developments to come. As “Madam No!” Merkel seemingly had her way at the EU summit and was hailed at home as the new “Iron Lady”—a reference to former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, who made her name through her all-out war against the trade unions in the 1980s and subsequent destruction of Britain’s manufacturing sector.

But this acclaim and the deal whereby Greece would have been forced to pay market interest rates—which would have driven Greek indebtedness sky-high forever—did not persist for long. French president [Nicolas] Sarkozy got together with Italian prime minister [Silvio] Berlusconi and European Central Bank head [Jean-Claude] Trichet and worked out a different deal, guaranteeing initial loans to Greece at an interest rate of 5 percent. And Schäuble agreed to this in a conference of the finance ministers. *Financial Times* (13 April) columnist Wolfgang



Berlin: German Trotskyists raise sign reading: “Down With Police Terror in Greece! For Workers Protests!” at 2008 protest.

Münchau noted: “As long as the credits are paid back, with this contract more funds will be flowing from Athens to Berlin than vice versa.”

And it’s toward Berlin that the transfer of wealth has been steadily proceeding. When French finance minister [Christine] Lagarde criticized overly low wages in Germany, which she blamed for imbalances in the EU, she was greeted with a wave of outrage from Germany’s ruling class and its literary hacks. However, in the 10 March *Frankfurter Rundschau*, Heiner Flassbeck and Friederike Spiecker advanced arguments similar to Lagarde’s: “Greece and all of southern Europe need a leveling-out [of wage levels], because they, rightly, did not participate in German wage-slashing over the last ten years. This leveling-out must occur in the medium term; otherwise the euro can’t be preserved, no matter how long, how hard or by which institution the thumbscrews are applied to the Greeks.” They go on to complain, “With the assistance of the [European] Central Bank, German policy doggedly refuses to reflect on the actual source of balance-of-payments disparities—Germany’s policy of slashing wages.”

While these “imbalances” do genuinely exist, appealing to the German government and the capitalists to pay higher wages, as the SPD and Die Linke [Left Party] similarly do, is utterly delusional

—it’s like convincing sharks to become vegetarians. With this crisis the German bourgeoisie feels the wind in its sails and intends to extract even more profits out of the workers of Germany and Europe. The only way to oppose this is hard class struggle.

EU: From Anti-Soviet Alliance to Imperialist Consortium

As proletarian internationalists, we communists are opposed on principle to the EU, which is dominated by the imperialist powers Germany, France and Britain. The EU exists centrally to advance the interests of these imperialists and their junior partners and to employ the stronger dependent states such as Greece and many East European countries as their manufacturing backyard. Since the mid 1990s, the EU has served increasingly as a means for totally excluding refugees and immigrants, who are either left to drown in the Mediterranean or held in detention camps reminiscent of concentration camps, to be shipped back as rapidly as possible to the hellish conditions in countries exploited or directly destroyed by imperialism.

But the EU is itself a fragile formation exposed to continuous tensions stemming from the disparate national interests of the European imperialists, which threaten to split it apart. Nor can it be otherwise. Although the productive forces have long since expanded beyond a national framework, capitalism is a system resting essentially on nation-states: each of the various national capitalist classes needs its own state to push through and defend its interests at home and abroad. This contradiction is, indeed, one of the causes of the last two world wars. And hence the supposed goal of political union or a European super-state is necessarily an empty utopia. Even the free-trade alliance of the EU is threatened in the present crisis due to the imbalances inevitably created by rapacious capitalism. As the Russian revolutionary V.I. Lenin, a leader of the first successful workers revolution, wrote in August 1915:

“Of course, *temporary* agreements are possible between capitalists and between states. In this sense a United States of Europe is possible as an agreement between the *European* capitalists...but to what end? Only for the purpose of jointly suppressing socialism in Europe, of jointly protecting colonial booty *against* Japan and America.”

—“On the Slogan for a United States of Europe”

The origins of the European Union go back to the 1950s, when the West European imperialists under U.S. leadership attempted to stabilize their alliance against the Soviet Union through closer economic cooperation. Issuing out of the October Revolution of 1917, the Soviet Union remained a workers state—based on the expropriation of the capitalists and the collectivization of the means of production—despite its degeneration, which commenced in 1924 with the appropriation of political power by the bureaucratic caste led by Stalin. This is why we Trotskyists unconditionally defended the Soviet Union militarily, and this is why the imperialists always desired to destroy it, wanting to regain unimpaired access for their capital into East Europe and the Soviet Union and to be able once again to exploit the peoples living there.

Our opposition on principle to both NATO—the military alliance against the Soviet Union—and the EU and its predecessors derived from our unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union, the DDR [East Germany] and the other deformed workers states of East Europe. The character of the EU underwent a change with the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, when the anti-Soviet aim of the EU disappeared. To assert their own interests more effectively vis-à-vis their U.S. rivals, Germany and France—themselves rival imperialist powers—sought to improve their coordination and, among other things, to maneuver with capitalist Russia.

In 1989, shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, then French president [François] Mitterrand made French acquiescence to German reunification dependent



Getty



Reuters

Above: Workers protest in Athens on May 4 against austerity measures. Right: German chancellor Angela Merkel with Greek premier George Papandreou at March 25 EU summit in Brussels.

on the two countries’ agreement on a common currency. This was supposed to help avert the danger of a newly strengthened Germany going it alone and to prevent confrontations between the two “partners.” Additionally, it would be a weapon in the currency war against the international hegemony of the U.S. dollar. From this the euro emerged. But the unity between these two imperialist powers is itself fraught with conflict, as demonstrated by the disputes over shifting production sites and mass firings at Airbus, the Franco-German-dominated airplane manufacturer and defense concern, in the early spring of 2007, as well as by French finance minister Lagarde’s criticism of export-fixated German industry. Supported by British imperialism, the U.S. is attempting to slow down or prevent the consolidation of such a competing imperialist bloc.

The Euro and German Imperialism

The attitude of the German bourgeoisie toward the introduction of the euro was mixed to negative, since it saw the danger of ceding sovereignty rights while obtaining a currency that would tend to soften. In particular, the experience of the catastrophic inflation of the 1923 crisis seems to have put a permanent stamp on the German capitalist class. Only four years after the German bourgeoisie had barely averted being overthrown by proletarian revolution in 1918-19, thanks to the betrayal of the SPD and USPD [Independent Social Democratic] leadership, in 1923 the [right-wing] Cuno government sought to shift the costs of [World War I] reparations to French imperialism

onto the working class and the lower middle classes by stoking inflation. The result was an intensifying crisis that provided the best chance so far for the German working class to take power into its own hands through socialist revolution—by that time the KPD [German Communist Party] had become a mass party anchored in the proletariat. But the revolutionary leadership of the KPD had not sufficiently broken with the politics of the SPD and allowed the chance to pass.

The price demanded by Germany for introduction of the euro was far-reaching concessions from other members of the euro zone that would guarantee the euro’s hardness. Thus no political pressure was to be put on the European Central Bank; the “Stability Pact” [part of the basis for launching the euro] stipulates that new indebtedness of a country cannot exceed 3 percent of the gross domestic product and provides for massive penalties should this figure be exceeded.

Ironically, however, it was Germany under Schröder that was the first to violate this treaty and then used its power to avoid having to pay the fines. Now, with Greece and potentially other countries as well in a much more dangerous situation, Germany is mustering all its forces—and there is not a trace of solidarity with an EU “partner.” The chauvinist campaign against Greece is being set in motion so as to prevent the German working class from hitting on the idea of placing blame for the crisis at the feet of the capitalist system and its own rulers. The workers movement in Germany must mobilize in solidarity with Greek workers and all the other victims of the EU imperialists—

continued on page 10

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

☐ \$10/22 issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist* and *Black History and the Class Struggle*) international rates: \$25/22 issues—Airmail \$10/22 issues—Seamail

☐ New ☐ Renewal

☐ \$2/6 introductory issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist*)

☐ \$2/4 issues of *Espartaco* (en español) (includes Spanish-language *Spartacist*)

☐ I would like to contribute \$ _____ to the production of *Workers Vanguard*.

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Apt. # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ E-mail _____

960

Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Imperialist EU...
(continued from page 9)

after all, they'll be confronted with similar attacks in the immediate future. The witchhunt against Greece also serves to split and weaken the multiethnic working class in Germany.

SPD: "Social Demagogy" for German Imperialism

Sigmar Gabriel, the chairman of the SPD, a bourgeois workers party, sang the same tune as the government, blaming Greece and rejecting financial support. To the question of whether Germany should aid Greece, he replied (Bild interview, 5 March):

"Yes. But not by sending money to Athens. This would be wrong and irresponsible! Because we'll be going into debt ourselves for this or would have to cut back on educational and social spending. This would mean: the weakest among us would have us bleed for the gamblers and speculators—an absurd notion!"

As for the poor "bleeding for the gamblers and speculators," the SPD/Green government in 1998-2005 used all its power to drive this forward. For example, by eliminating the tax on sales of equity shares, it freed capital that had been tied to industry and enabled speculation in the financial markets, among other things.

Assuming something of a left face, Gabriel seeks to divert attention from this: "We must fight this 'plague of locusts' and finally pull the plug on the speculators." What a mockery, coming from a party that was in power for 13 years and made the rich infinitely richer and plunged millions of workers and their families into bitter poverty. It was precisely Schröder's Agenda 2010, the Hartz reforms [supposedly freeing up the "frozen" German labor market] and the loosening of regulations on hiring temporary workers that opened the path to more power for the "gamblers and speculators," who are not "American," but are to be found in the Frankfurt bank towers and in the central offices of big German corporations.

The last great act of the Grand Coalition of the CDU and SPD was helping the banks get out of the fix their drive for profit had gotten them into. For this, the capitalists' government had hundreds of billions of euros to spare, "expropriating" the banks' massive debts, so that the country's working class is now paying them through taxes. The superprofits that the banks are making again stem from surplus value created by Greek, East European, German and other workers, which the capitalists are appropriating.

Left Party: For an EU with a Social Sugarcoating

The completely social-democratic Left Party solidarized with the protests of the trade unions and oppressed in Greece against the starvation program imposed by the EU...on paper. (The Left Party came into existence through a fusion of the ex-Stalinist [East German] Party of Democratic Socialism with trade unionists and leftists in the West who were dissatisfied with the SPD.) However, it

did not carry out solidarity actions through its base in the trade unions. For the Left Party, "solidarity with Greece" really has nothing to do with class struggle against the German bourgeoisie but only with admonishing it to carry out a "more social" policy. Thus, in a February 26 statement, [Left Party parliamentary spokesman] Ulrich Maurer worried about the cohesion of the capitalist EU and of capitalism itself: "If the gambling continues, a chain reaction is preprogrammed in other countries. Weak countries in the euro zone like Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Italy have chalked up debts of 524 billion euros with German financial institutions. The results would be incalculable." He then calls on Germany to stand in the forefront in assisting Greece.

In a March 5 press release, the Left Party introduced its positive program:

"Chancellor Merkel must finally rein in the speculators. The Left Party demands a reform of the euro zone: the EU must launch euro loans so as to reduce the risk premium for Greece, the European Central Bank should purchase Greek state

other instruments will be brought to the fore to advance these interests, above all protectionism—which is on the advance—or, ultimately, imperialist war once again. The solution for Europe's working class lies not in the deceptive "unity" of imperialist/capitalist nation-states but in the Socialist United States of Europe.

The Left Party has again and again made clear that it is committed to bourgeois democracy. In a further significant expression of its underlying loyalty to capitalism, the Left Party leadership distances itself from the DDR deformed workers state, where industry and the banks were nationalized. The question of whom nationalization benefits is inseparably linked to which class rules. Thus Commerzbank was "partially nationalized" and Hypo Real Estate wholly nationalized so as to rescue these for the capitalists. In France and Italy, industries have often been controlled by the state, which did not make them any less exploitative. In the [1938] Transitional Program, Trotsky explains how our calls for



Left: German tanks in front of the Acropolis during WWII Nazi occupation of Greece. Right: NATO jets, part of imperialists' Cold War arsenal directed at Soviet Union.



bonds to break the power of the speculators and the rating agencies. To avoid this sort of crisis in the future, corporate taxes should be harmonized Europe-wide and a Foreign Economic Stability Pact adopted."

The demands addressed to Merkel to rein in speculators or hurry to the aid of Greece may sound nice but proceed from the false assumption that capitalism is rational and can be steered, and that the German bourgeoisie is not driven by profit. So this is all a dangerous illusion. The Left Party then comes to the conclusion that it simply wants a more social EU, where the effects of capitalism are not so extreme. "Europe needs its own monetary fund, one that will explicitly not take the IMF as its model.... The Left Party will support a European Monetary Fund only if it breaks with this policy" (March 8 press statement). That is putting sheep's clothing on the EU capitalist wolf so as to reconcile the working-class base of the Left Party with the EU and prevent it from waging class struggle against the EU and the German capitalists.

This "social Europe" does not exist. The "welfare state" in West Germany owed its existence to the struggles of the working class and the existence of the DDR and the Soviet Union, which impelled the German bourgeoisie to surrender part of its profits. With the destruction of the DDR and the Soviet Union, the German bourgeoisie views this "welfare state" as simply too expensive. What we are seeing in the EU are the centrifugal forces of the various nationalisms that are driving the EU apart—and the euro zone even more so. This will continue.

On the one hand, the EU is a bloc directed against its imperialist rivals, the U.S. and Japan. On the other, it is an instrument of the European imperialists, first and foremost the German imperialists, to exploit the working class of Europe more effectively. It will exist only as long as it serves this aim. Otherwise

nationalization differ from those of the reformists à la the Left Party. The phrase "charlatans of the popular front" refers to those who want to forge capitalist coalition governments with the participation of bourgeois workers parties like the SPD or the Left Party:

"In precisely the same way, we demand the expropriation of the corporations holding monopolies on war industries, railroads, the most important sources of raw materials, etc. "The difference between these demands and the muddleheaded reformist slogan of 'nationalization' lies in the following: (1) we reject indemnification; (2) we warn the masses against demagogues of the People's Front who, giving lip service to nationalization, remain in reality agents of capital; (3) we call upon the masses to rely only upon their own revolutionary strength; (4) we link up the question of expropriation with that of seizure of power by the workers and farmers. "The necessity of advancing the slogan of expropriation in the course of daily agitation in partial form, and not only in our propaganda in its more comprehensive aspects, is dictated by the fact that different branches of industry are on different levels of development, occupy a different place in the life of society, and pass through different stages of the class struggle. Only a general revolutionary upsurge of the proletariat can place the complete expropriation of the bourgeoisie on the order of the day. The task of transitional demands is to prepare the proletariat to solve this problem."

The Left Party is also striving to administer capitalist society in North Rhine-Westphalia. What is required in order to be permitted to do this is demonstrated by Berlin's SPD/Left Party government. In 2002 the PDS (now the Left Party) was brought into the government so as to save the Berlin Bank Company (of which the City of Berlin is incidentally the majority owner) from bankruptcy with guarantees of over 21.6 billion euros. The Berlin government disposed of the profitable parts, now leaving the State of Berlin to pay off the 9.7 billion in losses at the expense of Berlin's workers, pensioners,

children, etc. It is throwing these billions to the capitalists, just as the CDU, SPD and FDP [Free Democratic Party] are doing on a national scale.

We communists oppose on principle any participation in capitalist governments. As Rosa Luxemburg explained, when socialists join the government of a capitalist state, this does not transform it into a socialist government but rather transforms the socialists into bourgeois ministers who are permitted to administer the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie (see "Down With Executive Offices of the Capitalist State! Marxist Principles and Electoral Tactics," Spartacist [English-language edition] No. 61, Spring 2009).

DGB Leadership: Class Collaboration for "Production-Site Germany"

Anyone commenting a bit critically on governmental policy toward Greece makes the point that the "wage moderation" of the last few years has contributed to the "imbalances" in the EU and the



Publication of the Spartacist-Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands \$10 airmail, one-year subscription includes Spartacist (German edition)

Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Publishing Co. Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Moving?

To receive Workers Vanguard without interruption please let us know at least three weeks before you move. Send your new and old address to: Spartacist Publishing Co. Box 1377 GPO New York, NY 10116

from the trade unions, but a large-scale breakthrough was prevented. It was only the SPD/Green government under Schröder and Fischer that achieved this breakthrough, resulting in a “revival” of the German economy. That government also carried out the first war deployment of the German army since World War II.

With the Hartz laws and the lifting of restrictions on subcontracted labor and short-term wage contracts, the SPD and Greens effectively instituted a nationwide low-wage sector, one that has also been exerting pressure on the wages of permanent employees for a long time now. When hundreds of thousands of subcontracted workers were fired at the outset of the crisis and the short-term contracts of workers were not renewed, [metalworkers union] IG Metall scarcely lifted a finger in their defense. The trade-union bureaucracy sees its clientele as being mainly workers on fixed contracts, whose jobs are supposedly being saved through this sellout of the weaker parts of the working class. But in fact these assaults are also impacting core workforces, albeit with some delay. What’s necessary is class struggle to rebuild the unions. ***For a fight to organize the unorganized! Equal pay for equal work! For an end to the division between permanent employees, contracted workers and workers on short-term contracts! One company, one union, one wage scale! For a class-struggle trade-union leadership!***

The “upsurge” of the German economy in the last few years was paid for by the working class through enormously increased exploitation. This was carried out with the active support of the Social Democratic trade-union bureaucracy, which accepted, basically without a fight, one wage reduction after another and a massive worsening of working conditions. This took place, and continues to take place, under the pretext of “preserving jobs” as part of the framework of the nationalist campaign for “Production-Site Germany” [maintaining Germany as a manufacturing center].

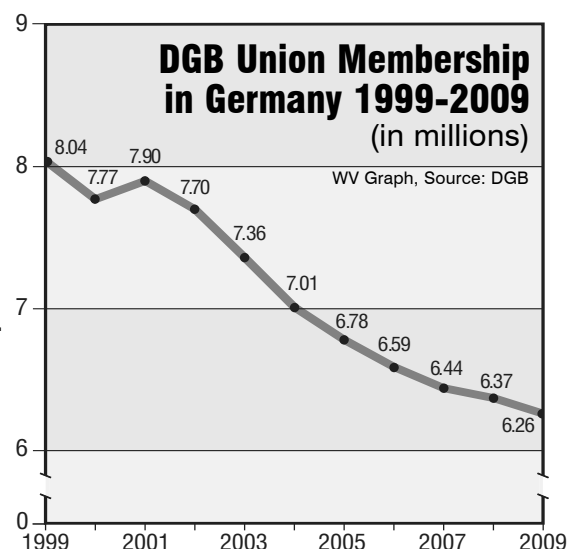
The nadir, at least for now, of this tragedy of sellout and betrayal can be seen in this year’s wage contract negotiations in the metalworking industries and in public service. IG Metall did not even present a wage demand and immediately obtained a contract with vague promises and clauses rolling back workers’ gains. Following a warning strike, [public employees union] Ver.di called for mediation and accepted a lousy deal that can only mean a further drop in real wages. This is having a negative effect on union membership: the number of [union confederation] DGB members fell from eight million in 1999 to 6.26 million in 2009. Feeling themselves challenged, the union tops are attempting to bureaucratically silence leftist oppositionists in the unions.

The Social Democratic trade-union leadership is attempting as far as possible to stifle all struggles in embryo, since it fundamentally shares the nationalist conception and lie that what is good for the employer is also good for the workers. This includes conspiring with the bosses to improve by hook or by crook the “competitiveness” of the given firm, i.e., the



Bloomberg

Left: Production line at Mercedes Benz plant in Sindelfingen, near Stuttgart, Germany. Social-democratic union tops helped oversee drastic decline in union membership.



bosses’ rate of profit. At the beginning of December, the bureaucrats’ strategy came to a dead end, as workers at Daimler’s Sindelfingen plant began protests against the transfer of 60 percent of [Mercedes] C-Class production to [the German city of] Bremen and 20 percent to the U.S. Rightly fearing loss of their jobs, they struck effectively for several days. But the thrust of the struggle was nationalist and protectionist. Thus one banner stigmatized the Daimler Executive Board as “vaterlandslose Gesellen” [“men without a fatherland”]; the underlying tenor was that Mercedes had to remain “German” and the C-Class in Stuttgart.

A deal was made that would supposedly guarantee the Sindelfingen jobs, with production of the SL roadster being shifted from Bremen to Sindelfingen. This led to protests and strikes in January by Daimler workers in Bremen, who demanded that production of the SL roadster remain in Bremen. These struggles

nationalist campaign against the transfer of 20 percent of the C-Class to the U.S. Nor can they do anything else, since they basically share the conception of “co-determining” what is produced where. This is nothing but wretched co-management and class collaboration: “Critical fellow workers...demand that the transfer of the C-Class must be stopped.” Thus in its report on the Bremen strikes, the 23 February *Alternative* fails to mention that these were directed against the transfer of the SL roadster to Sindelfingen.

The questions of what and where to invest will be a matter of concern for the workers when they rule and the plants belong to them through the expropriation of the capitalists. Wanting to “co-determine” today only chains the workers to their own exploiters and divides them—country against country, plant against plant, young against old, etc. What is required instead is a struggle of class against class—one based on international

ing of the workweek at full pay! But to achieve the right to work for everyone, trade-union struggle alone is insufficient—capitalism must be overthrown worldwide through socialist revolutions.

For Class Struggle Against German Bourgeoisie and Capitalist EU!

In reality, the current conflicts demonstrate that the EU is an imperialist bloc that will sooner or later break apart over its contradictions, and opposition to the EU from an internationalist perspective is very necessary indeed. ***Down with the EU and racist Fortress Europe!***

As is the case at Daimler, in many industries in Germany, Turkish, Greek and German workers as well as workers from the former Yugoslavia have been working side by side for decades. They must be mobilized in the fight against the German capitalist class, as well as the EU dominated by it, if they are to defend themselves, the Greek working class and the workers of Europe. The German capitalists profit endlessly by driving Greek workers into misery. They are planning the same thing here, especially once the elections in North Rhine-Westphalia are over. The main hindrance to fighting this program is the social-democratic misleaders, whether from the SPD or the Left Party, who act as the doctor at the sickbed of capitalism.

The multiethnic German working class, with its various components from Mediterranean lands, the Balkans and East Europe—with often more militant class-struggle traditions—possesses the organic links to support the struggles of Greek workers, of Turkish and Kurdish workers in Turkey as well as of workers in many other countries. Above and beyond this, a joint internationalist struggle here in Germany would be seen as a beacon to the working class of East Europe and worldwide to take up the struggle against increasing exploitation and oppression. Such a struggle could mark the beginning of the end for the EU imperialist alliance and introduce a struggle for the Socialist United States of Europe, which would eliminate exploitation, racism and national oppression in an internationally coordinated planned economy! Central to this is the reforging of the Fourth International as world party of proletarian revolution, the task the International Communist League has set for itself. ■



Olympia/Action Press

Racist “Fortress Europe”: Italian police seize refugee ship in Sicilian port of Catania, April 2006.

were praised by oppositional trade unionists like those of “Alternative” and virtually the entire left, without the slightest criticism of the nationalist thrust or the divisions between workers in the various plants.

The Berlin *Alternative* (8 December 2009), a Daimler workers’ newspaper, states: “The goal must be to mobilize co-workers in all plants comprehensively to preserve all jobs.” While this is correct, *Alternative* maintains total silence on the

solidarity that also includes American workers and puts an end to the playing off of workers from various localities and companies against each another. IG Metall can support the struggle to organize workers in Daimler plants in the non-union U.S. South through waging class struggle against the Daimler bosses in Germany, thereby breaking the downward spiral of wages. What is necessary is a fight ***for distributing work to all hands at full pay! For a radical shorten-***

Detroit...

(continued from page 3)

powers and prisons, first under the “war on crime” and especially later with the “war on drugs.” Beginning in the 1980s, the racist “anti-drug” campaign fueled a historic rise in the prison population. From about 40,000 people incarcerated for drug offenses in 1980, there has been a ***more than twelve-fold increase*** to over 500,000 today, with black people accounting for more than 60 percent of the total.

The mass incarceration of blacks and also Latinos was overseen by Republican and Democratic presidents alike and enforced at every level of the government, including by Detroit’s Democratic Party city administrations, from Coleman Young to David Bing. Black Democratic

politicians like Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton early on placed themselves in the forefront of this racist drive. Now Barack Obama, like George W. Bush before him, has used the pretense of a global “war on drugs” to expand U.S. imperialism’s military presence around the world, to back death squads in Colombia and to jack up racist anti-immigrant repression along the Mexican border. We say: Decriminalize drugs—down with all laws against “crimes without victims”!

Now, in an effort to divert anger in Detroit over the killing of Aiyana Stanley-Jones, Democratic Congressman John Conyers Jr. has requested that the Department of Justice launch an investigation. But if the Feds step in, it will be to rehabilitate the city cops so that they can better go about their job, which is to terrorize black and poor neighbor-

hoods and repress labor struggle. This system of racist capitalist repression—cops, courts and prisons—cannot be reformed to serve the interests of the exploited and oppressed. The only way to get rid of cop terror is the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist profit system, for which the gangs in blue are the front line of defense.

Meanwhile, the grieving family invited Sharpton to give the eulogy for Aiyana. Obscenely, Sharpton used the occasion to ***blame the victims*** of murderous cop terror. This former FBI fink intoned: “I’d rather tell you to start looking at the man in the mirror. We’ve all done something that contributed to this.”

The embattled masses of Detroit don’t need to look at “the man in the mirror”—they need the mobilization of the multiracial working class at the head of the oppressed in struggle against police

violence, chronic unemployment, austerity, crumbling hospitals and schools. They need a militant union leadership to turn around the one-sided class war that has been ruthlessly waged by the capitalist rulers. They do not need capitalist Democratic Party politicians who parade themselves as friends of workers and minorities and then turn around and pimp off their misery and their tragedies. They need a revolutionary workers party to lead the struggle against black oppression—the cornerstone of American capitalism—which can be eradicated only through socialist revolution. Justice and equality can be accomplished only by smashing the capitalist state, expropriating the bloodsucking capitalists and establishing workers rule. This is the fight to which the Spartacist League is dedicated. ■

German Trotskyists Say: Solidarity with Greek Workers

Financial Crisis Rocks Imperialist EU

European leaders agreed in mid May on an almost \$1 trillion package of credits for Greece and other heavily indebted European Union (EU) countries, clearly expecting that committing such an unprecedented sum would calm jittery financial markets. Instead, capitalists worldwide became even more fearful that, with a number of

SPARTAKIST

EU governments groaning under the weight of huge deficits, European banks with large holdings of Greek and other government debt might be facing crippling losses. With global financiers cutting back on lending within the euro zone, many industrial companies and even banks are increasingly finding their sources of credit cut off. This all raises the spectre of a full-blown financial crisis in Europe that could potentially trigger a renewed economic downturn worldwide.

Capitalist rulers across Europe—especially in the most debt-ridden countries like Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain—are determined to make workers pay for the growing economic crisis. The austerity measures that governments are trying to ram through include slashing the wages of public-sector workers, gutting pensions and jacking up sales and other taxes.

Workers have not been taking these attacks lying down. Greece has had a total of five one-day general strikes so far this year, with another projected for sometime in June to coincide with the debate in parliament on a bill to slash pensions. On May 27, hundreds of thousands demonstrated across France as strikes against a government plan to raise the retirement age delayed flights, closed schools and interrupted train traffic. In Spain, a public sector strike has been called for June 8, while in Italy the six-million-strong CGIL union federation has announced a nationwide stoppage for June 25. This rising line of working-class struggles points to the need to forge revolutionary parties that can lead the proletariat, at the head of all the oppressed, to sweep away the bankrupt capitalist order.

We reprint below an abridged translation of an article published in *Spartakist* No. 183 (May 2010), publication of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

* * *

Trade unions in Greece carried out two nationwide general strikes on February 24 and March 11 in response to assaults on wages and pensions by the nationalist



Reuters photos

Above: Line in front of government job center in Madrid, Spain, January 5. **Below:** Private and public sector unions protest in Marseille, France, against threat to raise minimum retirement age, May 27.



government headed by George Papandreou of PASOK [Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement]. The Greek government is carrying out a program dictated in large part by the European Union and imperialist Germany, the dominant power in the EU. The Greek ruling class is, however, not just a minion of the EU; it is also using this opportunity to smash the power of the Greek trade unions and enrich itself even more blatantly. As to supposedly shifting the burden of the crisis onto “high incomes” through new tax rates,

with which PASOK wants to calm the anger of the poorer layers of the Greek population, *Manager Magazin* (24 February) reported on the response of the Greek bourgeoisie: “Capital Flight: Greeks Transferring Billions to Safe Havens.”

Here in Germany, the bourgeoisie has unleashed a chauvinist campaign with blanket accusations that Greece had been living “beyond its means” and had engaged in “lies” and “deception” regarding the Greek budget deficit, etc. Josef Schlarmann, chairman of the CDU [right-wing

Christian Democratic Union] association for medium-sized industry, went so far as to suggest that the Greek government should sell “uninhabited islands” and other state property to cut its deficit. This was seized upon by [the tabloid] *Bild* and turned into a campaign that ran for weeks. In an expression of the German bourgeoisie’s imperial arrogance, EU members Greece, Spain and Portugal as well as Italy and Ireland—increasingly hard-hit by the economic crisis—have been chauvinistically stigmatized with the acronym “PIGS.”

Germany has traditionally viewed the Balkans in particular as its backyard, with the peoples of the region forced to toe the line or else directly suffer the jackboot of German imperialism. In World War II, German imperialism occupied Greece and Yugoslavia, employing the bloodiest means in its efforts to suppress the heroic resistance. And at the beginning of the 1990s, German imperialism played a key role in promoting counterrevolution by goading the peoples of the Yugoslav deformed workers state into bloody internecine, nationalist wars. In 1999, the SPD [Social Democratic Party]/Green government under [Gerhard] Schröder and [Joschka] Fischer along with its NATO allies participated in the U.S.-led war against Serbia, establishing an occupation regime in large parts of the former Yugoslavia. Now economic means are being employed in an attempt to force Greece, an “ally” and EU member, to cooperate and squeeze the last drop of blood out of the Greek working class and oppressed. **German army out of the Balkans!**

The last few weeks have been dominated by power struggles in the German government and the EU over how to deal with the catastrophic situation. Finance Minister [Wolfgang] Schäuble suggested setting up a European monetary fund in order to avert such catastrophes in the future. But Chancellor [Angela] Merkel, fearing Germany would ultimately be stuck with the bill, was averse to this plan, instead suggesting that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) deal with Greece. *Der Spiegel* (22 March), on the other hand, cites Schäuble stating that “the American-dominated IMF [is regarded] as an extension of U.S. foreign policy and has no business in the euro zone.” Reflected in the government debate is the continual argument over whether German foreign policy should orient toward the U.S., as desired by the “Atlanticists,” or toward a more independent course leaning on Russian support, as openly promoted

continued on page 9

For a Socialist United States of Europe!