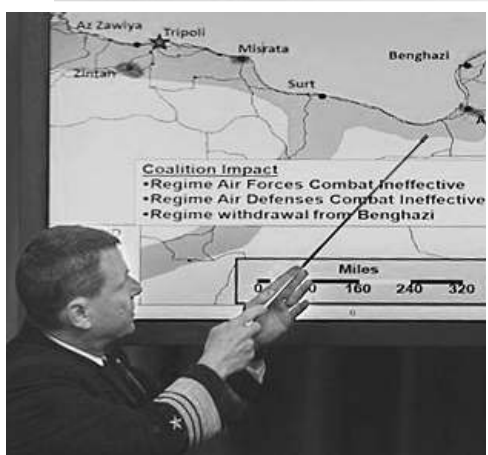


War Against Qaddafi's Libya: Imperialist Terror and Lies

MARCH 29—For the past week and a half, U.S., British and French imperialist forces have pounded the semicolonial country of Libya with a brutal air bombardment and sea-based missile attacks. In attacking the military defenses of bourgeois strongman Muammar el-Qaddafi's regime, the imperialist coalition is attempting to clear the way for the Libyan opposition—a motley bunch that includes monarchists, tribal leaders, Islamists, CIA assets, defecting military officers and former regime officials—to advance toward territory held by Qaddafi.

Barack Obama and his French and British allies self-righteously proclaim that their military intervention into this oil-rich country is for the purpose of “protecting civilians”—the cover provided by a resolution of the United Nations Security Council. The U.S. military, parroted by its agents in the bourgeois press, routinely lies that the “precision” strikes have singed nary a hair on the head of a civilian. Just three days into the air war, Libyan villagers were shot by U.S. Marines retrieving a pilot whose jet crashed outside Benghazi. The civilian toll is sure to mount with the continuation of operations, now under NATO command. Once again, the imperial presidency has launched a war without Congress voting to declare war; the last time the White House thus adhered to the Constitution was in World War II. Asked whether the U.S. mission, which Obama refrains from calling a war, will be over by the end of the year, Defense Secretary Robert Gates replied, “I don't think anybody knows the answer to that.”

As noted in the International Communist League statement printed below, what



Getty (inset), Reuters

Bomb attack on Libya, March 20. Inset: March 24 Pentagon briefing, as imperialists continue to pound away in support of their front men in anti-Qaddafi opposition.

had essentially been a civil war between Qaddafi's Tripoli-centered bourgeois regime and an imperialist-backed opposition based in the east of the country—a conflict in which the proletariat had no side—became subordinated to imperialist military intervention with the start of the bombing on March 19. In the present conflict, the workers of the world have a side: military defense of semicolonial Libya

against imperialism and the opposition forces, which are acting on the imperialists' behalf. As revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin explained in *Socialism and War* (1915): “If tomorrow, Morocco were to declare war on France, or India on Britain, or Persia or China on Russia, and so on, these would be ‘just,’ and ‘defensive’ wars, *irrespective* of who would be the first to attack; any socialist would wish the op-

pressed, dependent and unequal states victory against the oppressor, slaveholding and predatory ‘Great’ Powers.”

Imperialist Brigands, Media Flacks

An official of the North Korean bureaucratically deformed workers state made the utterly rational statement that Libya's dismantling of its nuclear weapons program had made it vulnerable to military intervention by the West (*New York Times*, 24 March). Thanks to that intervention, which began eight years to the day after the U.S.-led “shock and awe” assault on Saddam Hussein's Iraq, the rebels have recaptured much of the territory they had earlier lost to the Libyan government. Nevertheless, as we go to press, Qaddafi's forces have repulsed the rebels' attack on his hometown of Surt.

Just as the *New York Times* retailed Washington's lies about Iraqi “weapons of mass destruction,” the capitalist press is demonstrating again over Libya that truth is the first casualty of war. Lurid tales—none verified—of a mass slaughter of Libyan civilians in the east were wielded as the *casus belli*. The same *Times* editors who retail the line that the Western attack is about defending helpless people were the ones who did Washington's bidding by knowingly suppressing the fact that Raymond Davis, the man arrested in Pakistan earlier this year for killing two men, was working for the CIA.

The imperialist powers did not get where they are by protecting civilians, but by slaughtering those standing in the way of their quest for profit and world domination—and by providing money, arms and “advisers” for their colonial and

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Defend Libya Against Imperialist Attack!

The following statement was issued on March 20.

The International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) calls on workers around the world to take a stand for military defense of semicolonial Libya against the attack begun yesterday by a coalition of rapacious imperialist governments. The French, British and U.S. rulers, in league with other imperialist governments and with the blessings of the sheiks, kings and military bonapartists of the Arab League, wasted not a moment in acting on the green light given by the United Nations Security Council on Thursday to slaughter countless innocent people in the name of “protecting civilians” and ensuring “democracy.” French air strikes

were quickly followed by U.S. and British missile attacks, while Egypt's military regime is providing arms to the Benghazi opposition forces. From Indo-

Statement of the International Executive Committee of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

china and the Korean peninsula to the U.S.-led occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan today, the “democratic” imperialist rulers wade in the blood of millions upon millions of their victims. Recall that Britain and France historically carried out untold massacres in the Near East, Africa and the Indian subcontinent in order to pursue their colonial subjugation of those areas. Recall that Italy, now providing the use of its air bases for the attack, is responsible for the deaths of up to half the population of Cyrenaica in eastern Libya during its colonial rule prior to World War II.

Prior to the current attack, the conflict in Libya

had taken the form of a low-intensity civil war, heavily overlaid by tribal and regional divisions, between the Tripoli-centered government of strongman Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi and imperialist-backed opposition forces concentrated in the country's eastern areas. *Workers Vanguard* No. 976 (18 March), newspaper of the U.S. section of the ICL, noted that “Marxists presently have no side in

this conflict.” But as the article continued: “In the event of imperialist attack against neocolonial Libya, the proletariat internationally must stand for the military defense of that country while giving no political support to Qaddafi's capitalist regime.” The civil war in Libya has now been subordinated to the fight of a neocolonial country against imperialism. Every step taken by the workers of the imperialist countries to halt the depredations and military adventures of their rulers is a step toward their own liberation from capitalist exploitation, impoverishment and oppression. *Defend Libya*

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On Laos

24 January

The latest issue of *Workers Vanguard* (No. 972) reprints an article [“Thailand: For a Workers and Peasants Government!”] from *Australasian Spartacist* (No. 211) that inexplicably characterizes Laos as a “deformed workers state”. It is my understanding that Laos, like Cambodia, never became a deformed workers state due to its extreme economic backwardness, almost nonexistent proletariat, devastation under US imperialist bombing, and anti-working class Stalinist leadership.

Joel

27 January

To the editors,

I think you owe the readers an explanation why you never before (to my knowledge) considered Laos a workers state.

H. F.

28 January

I read a WV article last nite on the situation in Thailand. In the article, it states that there is some sort of deformed

workers state in Laos. I have never read anything about this in the past, including in the WV, which I have been reading closely for decades. Could the WV elaborate on this, as I think that readers would be interested in learning about this. By the way, the article was very good.

N. B.

WV replies:

After internal discussion, a recent gathering of the International Communist League codified that Laos is, and has been since the victory of the Indochinese Revolution, a bureaucratically deformed workers state. The Pathet Lao guerrilla insurgents gained state power in Laos several weeks after the 30 April 1975 seizure of Saigon, capital of South Vietnam, by the forces of the Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam and the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front. The liberation of Saigon marked the victory of the Vietnamese Revolution against U.S. imperialism and its South Vietnamese puppet regime.

After the Pathet Lao took power, the

Spartacus Youth League, then the youth organization of the Spartacist League/U.S., wrote: “With its predominantly feudal and even pre-feudal tribal relations of production, a Laotian state established by the Stalinists would tend to lean on and take on the social character of the neighboring more advanced Vietnamese and Chinese deformed workers states” (*Young Spartacus* No. 33, June 1975). In power, the Laotian Stalinists went on to establish a regime based on proletarian property forms, in conjunction with Vietnam. We explained two years later in “Cambodia: Peasant Stalinism Run Amok” (WV No. 180, 4 November 1977) that what happened in Laos was akin to Soviet Central Asia and Mongolia in the decade following the October Revolution, where peasant and nomadic societies were absorbed into the Russian economy. However, in subsequent years we failed to codify this understanding.

Laos is based on a collectivized economy but ruled by a nationalist bureaucratic caste under the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party. While in recent years the Stalinist regime has enacted a series of “market reforms” following the examples of China and Vietnam, the class character of the state remains the same.

Trotskyists unconditionally militarily defend such workers states—which also include China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba—against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. We also fight for proletarian political revolutions to oust the parasitic, nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies, whose program of “socialism in one country” undermines the defense of the workers states and means conciliating the imperialist powers that are intent on their destruction. In the case of Laos, which has only a tiny proletariat, this perspective is integrally tied to the fight for political revolution in Vietnam as well as China. In all cases, development toward socialism is dependent on proletarian revolution in the imperialist centers, such as Japan and the U.S.

Under Pol Pot’s Stalinist Khmer Rouge, Cambodia fared differently than Laos. As the U.S. imperialists were being routed

in Vietnam, Pol Pot, at the head of a peasant army, seized control of neighboring Cambodia, which had also suffered years of U.S. carpet bombing and destruction. We initially characterized Cambodia as a deformed workers state while noting that “the contradictory character of Stalinism was nowhere more graphically revealed than in the actions of the victorious Cambodian peasant army marching into Phnom Penh not to liberate the poor and working people but rather to brutally impose an immediate and total depopulation of the city” (WV No. 72, 4 July 1975).

Indeed, Pol Pot’s murderous horror brought Cambodia to the brink of extinction, razing the cities, destroying the tiny proletariat and forcing virtually the entire population into barely disguised labor camps at the most primitive subsistence level. As we later wrote: “Pol Pot’s Cambodia was never a workers state, even deformed.... The ideology of Pol Pot & Co. was the antithesis of the program of communists for whom industrialization and technological progress lay the material basis for the free and full development of human potential in a socialist society of plenty for all” (WV No. 692, 5 June 1998).

In the winter of 1978-79, Vietnam, seeking to end Khmer Rouge border attacks, invaded Cambodia, liberating the Cambodian people from the death grip of Pol Pot’s forces. Washington, in its vindictive drive to punish Vietnam for the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Indochina, seized on this invasion to side with the Khmer Rouge. For more than 10 years, Vietnamese troops defended the People’s Republic of Kampuchea against the CIA’s murderous Cambodian allies. However, in 1989 Soviet leader Gorbachev, in his treacherous and futile drive to appease imperialism, joined the imperialists in pressuring his Vietnamese ally to cut a deal with the Khmer Rouge. In September 1989, the last detachment of Vietnamese troops left Cambodia, opening the way for the return of the imperialists and the king. Cambodia is a bourgeois state under a constitutional monarchy.■



TROTSKY

On Defense of Dependent Countries Against Imperialism

As the U.S., France and Britain lead the murderous bombing campaign against semi-colonial Libya in the name of “protecting civilians,” social-democratic groups beat the drums for the Libyan “opposition,” the imperialists’ front men on the ground. Writing on the need for proletarian revolution to rid the world of imperialist war, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky insisted that the working class must militarily defend oppressed nations under imperialist attack and excori-

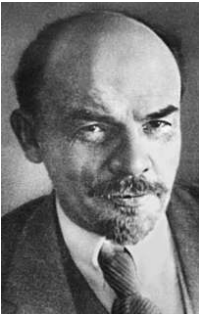
ated the League of Nations, predecessor to the United Nations under whose imprimatur the war against Libya was begun.

Capitalist brigands always conduct a “defensive” war, even when Japan is marching against Shanghai and France against Syria or Morocco. The revolutionary proletariat distinguishes only between *wars of oppression* and *wars of liberation*. The character of a war is defined, not by diplomatic falsifications, but by the class which conducts the war and the objective aims it pursues in that war. The wars of the imperialist states, apart from the pretexts and political rhetoric, are of an oppressive character, reactionary and inimical to the people. Only the wars of the proletariat and of the oppressed nations can be characterized as wars of liberation....

The League of Nations is the citadel of imperialist pacifism. It represents a transitory historical combination of capitalist states in which the stronger command and buy out the weaker, then crawl on their bellies before America or try to resist; in which all equally are enemies of the Soviet Union, but are prepared to cover up each and every crime of the most powerful and rapacious among them. Only the politically blind, only those who are altogether helpless or who deliberately corrupt the conscience of the people, can consider the League of Nations, directly or indirectly, today or tomorrow, an instrument of peace....

Whoever directly or indirectly supports the system of colonization and protectorates, the domination of British capital in India, the domination of Japan in Korea or in Manchuria, of France in Indochina or in Africa, whoever does not fight against colonial enslavement, whoever does not support the uprisings of the oppressed nations and their independence, whoever defends or idealizes Gandhism, that is, the policy of passive resistance on questions which can be solved only by force of arms, is, despite good intentions or bad, a lackey, an apologist, an agent of the imperialists, of the slaveholders, of the militarists, and helps them to prepare new wars in pursuit of their old aims or new.

—Leon Trotsky, “Declaration to the Antiwar Congress at Amsterdam” (July 1932)



LENIN

Union vs. Management in NYC Transit

20 March 2011

I have worked for New York City Transit for nearly 10 years and I have found that although my job is enjoyable, I dislike the bureaucracy from both management and the union. When I first started working for MTA I was excited to be part of a union and a company that I felt was vital to New York City. I quickly learned that I didn’t work for a company that supported you as a worker and that the atmosphere was definitely union against management mentality. Mistakes are disciplined by money being taken out of your pockets (days in the street). Management send their watchdogs on the roads to make sure that you’re doing your job and I often found that any wrong move could get me unpaid days. I realized that it clearly was a union vs. management environment (my first experience in a situation like this) and as a train operator I of course sided with the union. In 2005 we went on strike to fight against an attack on our pension and I like many other of my fellow workers were ready to stay out for as long as necessary to get what we felt was right for us. Unfortunately our union leaders sold us out and sent us back to work without a contract. I felt lost, helpless and angry at my union and my job because I was ready to sacrifice everything including my family for a struggle; and the leadership that I trusted to represent me had betrayed me. Now here I am in 2011 still working for the MTA and although I was angry at my union for years after the

strike, I realize that my union is my home and I will always stand by the union. I read about how Gov. Cuomo (Democrat and supposed friend of labor) and the capitalists speak about how union workers are somehow overprivileged. If I were to retire today my pension would be about 35k per year. I really would like to know how that is living some kind of high life. Let’s not forget that due to the amount of steel dust and noise that I’m subjected to on a daily basis, the quality of my life after retirement may not be so well. Many of my co-workers have died a few short years after working in transit which is often an environment that is very unsafe and hazardous. It is so clear that capitalists are out to attack the proletariat as there is little mention of how Barack Obama (leader of the Capitalist regime and Democrat) continues to bailout companies and send out his war machine overseas with billions of dollars. The bourgeoisie will tell us that these things are necessary to keep the economy from crashing and protecting our country from terrorism. I now see that the only way to get the change that we need to see is class struggle and a fight for a workers government.

P.

WV replies:

We thank P. for writing to us. Regarding the 2005 strike and its aftermath, we refer readers to our article, “TWU Local 100 Tops Sign No-Strike Pledge” (WV No. 926, 5 December 2008).■

WORKERS VANGUARD

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The closing date for news in this issue is March 29.

No. 977

1 April 2011



The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

Salute Heroic Japanese Nuclear Workers



Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency

Workers in control room at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, March 23.

The Partisan Defense Committee sent the following statement of solidarity to the Federation of Electric Power Related Industry Workers Unions of Japan on March 19.

The Partisan Defense Committee salutes the heroic members of your union who are risking their lives in an effort to control the dangerous situation at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant following the earthquake and tsunami. The PDC is a class-struggle legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League/U.S., which, along with the Spartacist Group Japan, are sections of the International Commu-

nist League (Fourth Internationalist).

The valor and dedication of the Fukushima Daiichi workers stand in sharp contrast to the parasitism and greed of the owners and managers of TEPCO [Tokyo Electric Power Company] and their unofficial spokesmen in the government. They have endangered the population with their obfuscation and mismanagement. For the capitalists in every country and every industry, the overriding concern is their profits and not the safety of the workers or the interests of society as a whole.

All of this underlines the urgent need for trade-union control over safety and all

Stop Deportation of Chilean Leftist Victor Toro!

A March 2 ruling by Assistant Chief Immigration Judge Sarah Burr in New York has put the life of exiled Chilean leftist Victor Toro in danger. The ruling denied political asylum and ordered the deportation of the 68-year-old Toro, who suffered imprisonment and torture under the U.S.-backed military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet. In 1976, Toro was expelled from Chile and declared “dead,” leaving him stateless and unable to obtain identity papers. Evading Pinochet’s murderous agents abroad, Toro arrived in the U.S. in 1984 and became a well-known community activist in the South Bronx, where he assisted immigrants and the poor as well as battered women and people with HIV/AIDS. In 2007, he was arrested on an Amtrak train during an anti-immigrant sweep. The labor movement, the left and immigrant rights groups must join in opposing his deportation and demanding that he be granted political asylum.

In 1974, the year following the coup led by Pinochet that overthrew the popular-front government of Salvador Allende, the military regime arrested Toro, who became a mine worker in the late 1950s and later a founder of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR). The MIR was targeted by the military junta as part of a bloody wave of repression that included wide-

spread “disappearances” and torture and the slaughter of over 30,000 union militants, leftists and others. His wife, Nieves Ayress, a U.S. citizen, is also a survivor of torture in Pinochet’s dungeons.

In arguing for Toro’s deportation and denial of his appeal for political asylum, Homeland Security lawyers repeated claims made in CIA documents at the height of the 1970s repression in Chile that the MIR was a “terrorist organization.” This false and sinister argument, equating leftist political activity with terrorism, magnifies the danger to Toro should he be returned to Chile. Judge Burr ruled that Toro is not eligible for political asylum because he should have applied before 1997, while Pinochet was serving as the head of Chile’s armed forces under the “democratic” government that succeeded his regime in 1990. As noted in legal papers filed by his lawyer, Carlos Moreno, Toro “has made sworn statements against members of the Chilean military who committed human rights violations,” making him to this day “a target of members of the Chilean military who although not governing the country nevertheless retain a great deal of power.”

Victor Toro’s lawyer filed a notice of appeal on March 17. **Asylum now for Victor Toro! No deportation! ■**

working conditions at every level. If the labor of those who toil is to serve the interests of society and not the bottom line of the bosses, it is necessary for the working class to take power and rule on the basis of a collectivized planned economy.

We intend to circulate this message to organizations within the workers movement internationally and encourage them to likewise extend their support.

* * *

The PDC urges trade unions and other organizations to send their own letters to the union in solidarity with the nuclear power workers at the Fukushima plant—

known as the “Fukushima 50”—some of whom have already been hospitalized. Messages can be e-mailed to: icemjaf@blue.ocn.ne.jp. The PDC has contributed \$500 to the union and urges others to make their own contributions. The information for wiring funds is as follows. Bank Name: Mizuho Bank, Ltd.; Swift Code: MHBKJPJT; Branch Name: Shiba Branch; Branch Address: 5-34-7, Shiba, Minato-Ku, Tokyo 108-0014, Japan; Account Name: Nihon Kagaku Enerugi-Kouzhan Roudoukumiai Kyougikai; Account Number: 054-3316103. Please state “Earthquake” on the wire transfer form. ■

Black Mother Jailed for Getting Kids into Decent School

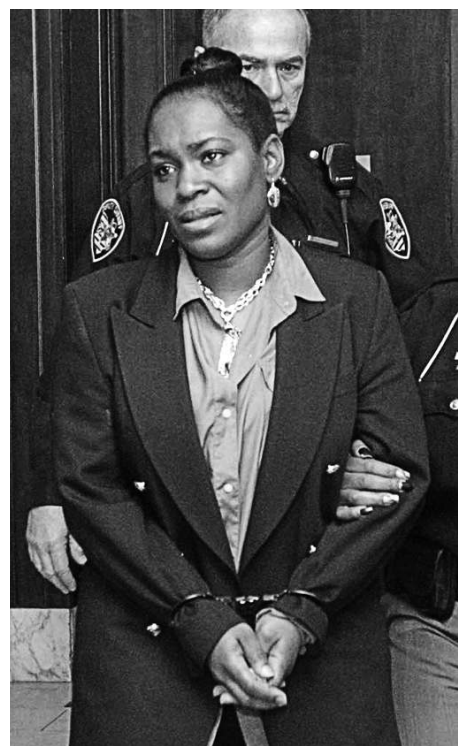
Ohio

In a stark illustration of black oppression in America today, Kelley Williams-Bolar, a single black mother from Akron, Ohio, was jailed in January for the “crime” of sending her two daughters to a better school. In 2006, Williams-Bolar claimed residency of her children with her father, with whom they lived part-time following the burglary of her public housing apartment and to whom she attempted to grant power of attorney over the children. By declaring her children resident a mere three miles away, she gained access for them to the suburban Copley-Fairlawn school district, which is 75 percent white and has received a state designation of “Excellent with Distinction.” The schools that Williams-Bolar’s daughters would otherwise have attended,

which are over 90 percent black, were designated as “Academic Watch” and “Continuous Improvement”—one and two levels above absolute bottom.

As part of a multi-year effort to crack down on “theft of services,” the Copley-Fairlawn district had Williams-Bolar and her children trailed by a private detective. Initially, they attempted to get her to pay back “tuition” (i.e., fees for out-of-district students), as they had with 47 other “offenders,” largely black. In her case, that amounted to more than \$30,000. When she refused, she was dragged into court and sentenced to an outrageous ten years in prison—later reduced to ten days, with two years’ probation and 80 hours of community service. The felony conviction could prevent Williams-Bolar from attaining her teaching degree, which she was only a few credits away from completing at the time of her sentencing. **Rescind the conviction of Kelley Williams-Bolar!**

More than 50 years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, the American public education system is still separate and unequal. Despite the victories of the civil rights movement in confronting legal segregation, the *de facto* segregation of black people endures as a structural feature of the American capitalist system. While the Democrats are promoted by the trade-union bureaucrats and black liberal spokesmen as a “lesser evil,” they serve the interests of America’s rulers just as much as the Republicans. Obama’s “school reform” policy—spearheaded by Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, whose résumé includes closing some 60 Chicago schools—is nothing but a single massive assault on public schools and teachers unions (see “Obama’s War on Public Education,” WV No. 967, 22 October 2010). When asked about Williams-Bolar’s case, Duncan decried a situation “where children have one option” and called for expanding charter schools, which attack



Akron Beacon Journal

January 18: Kelley Williams-Bolar being led out of Summit County court after receiving jail sentence.

teachers, attack unions, further privatize education and further increase segregation.

Indeed, Akron demonstrates what “school choice” really means: those with the means have choice, and those without the means have the choice to take what they’re given—or else. The degradation

continued on page 4

Australia Floods

Capitalist Greed and Neglect

The following article is reprinted from Australasian Spartacist No. 212 (Autumn 2011), newspaper of the Spartacist League of Australia, section of the International Communist League.

**Australasian
SPARTACIST**

During January large areas of Queensland, almost a third of Victoria, as well as parts of northern New South Wales and South Australia were awash with devastating floods produced by one of the strongest La Niña events ever recorded. Hardest hit was Queensland where at least thirty-five died and thousands were left homeless. While large areas of Brisbane were inundated, those living in the Lockyer Valley in southeast Queensland experienced the terror of what has been described as an “inland tsunami” as an unstoppable torrent of water crashed through everything in its path.

While natural disasters inevitably inflict havoc, the extent of the death and devastation in Queensland was a product of capitalist greed and neglect. The Bureau of Meteorology gave repeated advance warnings to the Queensland government that the east coast would suffer torrential down pours this summer, yet nothing was done. Now controversy rages over the state Labor government’s administration of Wivenhoe Dam near Brisbane, which was built in the aftermath of the 1974 Brisbane floods. Despite the repeated flood warnings, water levels at Wivenhoe were allowed to reach dangerous heights. On 11 January the situation had become so precarious the dam administrators were forced to release more than the volume of water in Sydney Harbour into the already swollen Brisbane River, thus contributing to the flooding of the city.

According to reports in Murdoch’s *Australian* newspaper, in 2006 the state government skimped on a necessary safety upgrade of Wivenhoe Dam in order to save tens of millions of dollars. This penny-pinching in effect *reduced* the flood-mitigation capacity of the dam by up to 20 per cent. This is hardly surprising. In search of the quick buck, and refusing to build adequate infrastructure, one Queensland government after the next has had no policy for limiting development on flood prone locations or for constructing levees to protect towns most under threat. Alongside this, the Queensland government has embarked on massive union-busting privatisations of infrastructure, from rail to wharves, in order to help enrich their capitalist “mates.”

Julia Gillard’s federal Labor government aims to pay for flood reconstruction by slashing spending and imposing a new tax that will target large sections of the working class. Meanwhile the parasitic insurance companies have scrambled to deny payouts, absurdly claiming that what

happened in Brisbane was not a “flood” but a “rising river.” With the usual capitalist government double-speak about “transparency,” the premier of Queensland, Anna Bligh, announced a royal commission-style “inquiry” into the handling of the floods. Such state inquiries are not only designed to amnesty the capitalist rulers and their governments but in this case have also served to deflect the anger and despair of flood victims into safe channels. Throughout the crisis the bourgeois media bombarded the population with “national unity” rhetoric thick with eulogies to a mythical “Aussie spirit” while



Woman in Lockyer Valley following devastating January Queensland floods.

calling on everyone to “stick together.”

In conjunction with this nationalist outpouring, the government seized the opportunity to call in the army, placing Major-General Mick Slater, former head of Australian imperialism’s 2006 neo-colonial occupation of East Timor, in charge of the “flood recovery task force.” The capitalist rulers use such natural calamities to accustom the population to the intervention of the military into civil society, while their media hacks work overtime to paint the repressive capitalist state as a supposed humanitarian force for good. Nothing could be further from the truth. Leninists understand that the bourgeois state—at its core the military, police, prisons and courts—is a violent repressive apparatus that exists to defend the property and profits of the filthy rich capitalists against the struggles of the working class and oppressed.

Following the floods the mendacious capitalist rulers and their media sensationalised the harrowing ordeals of some, while in general disappearing the desperate reality that most working people and the oppressed particularly confront in the wake of such disasters. Following the flooding of coal mines in Queensland, the bourgeoisie bellowed about the potential negative impact on the national economy and future coal contracts (read

their profits) but there has been nary a word about the impact of the floods on mine workers. Meanwhile the Labor government backed those bosses who refused to pay workers stood down [laid off] as a result of the floods.

Highlighting the bourgeoisie’s contempt and indifference toward the plight of Aboriginal people, there has been barely any mention of the conditions in impoverished Aboriginal communities, which have doubtless been left to fend for themselves amidst fetid mud-encrusted wreckage. Reflecting conscious capitalist neglect, the Palm Island Aboriginal community,

the largest and one of the most poverty-stricken indigenous communities in Australia, was pointedly not evacuated prior to the devastating Cyclone Yasi that struck shortly after the floods. The chronic homelessness, mortality rates and unemployment experienced by Aboriginal people in this racist capitalist society will only be exacerbated as a result of these natural disasters.

The misery inflicted by the floods or other natural disasters is magnified tenfold by the decrepit, irrational, capitalist system which, in the search for the greatest profit margins, treats human life with criminal disregard. It is the proletariat, poor and oppressed who always suffer the most as a result of capitalist neglect and greed. It will take a socialist revolution and the establishment of a planned collectivised economy under workers rule for the natural resources and the technological and productive forces of society to be marshalled on behalf of human needs not profit.

Counterposed to this perspective is the puerile reformism of the fake-left opponents of revolutionary Marxism. In their 11 January statement calling for “Money for flood relief, not for war,” Socialist Alliance (SA) demand the Gillard government “call *our* troops back from the war in Afghanistan to assist with tackling

the flood crisis and its aftermath” (our emphasis). For their part, the misnamed Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), proving yet again that their split with SA’s antecedent (the Democratic Socialist Perspective) had no programmatic basis, write, “A simple first step could be to redeploy the troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan to flood affected areas to do socially useful work.” What will these toadies of the bourgeoisie come up with next? Help “the people” by building a bigger military!? As for Socialist Alternative (SAIt) they provide a slightly different but no less reformist schema, baldly headlining that the “Gov’t Should Rethink Priorities to Deal with Flood Region.” Typical of reformists the world over SAIt meekly advise the capitalist rulers to change their policies: “The Afghanistan war cost \$1.2 billion last financial year—scrap it. Gross operating profits of business totalled \$248 billion over the last year—tax it” (*Socialist Alternative*, 14 January).

In sharp contrast to the reformists’ self-appointed role as advisers to the bourgeoisie, we revolutionary Marxists look to the working class as the agency for social change. The Queensland Council of Unions reported that there was an outpouring of “thousands of hours of volunteer labour and significant financial assistance” from unions in the immediate aftermath of the floods. This was a good thing. But while the union bureaucrats are happy to sing the praises of workers volunteering their labour and money they do nothing to organise a class-struggle fight for a massive rebuilding program of public works and infrastructure to create full employment, with union jobs at union wage scales and conditions.

That the union misleaders refuse to engage in such a struggle is rooted in their support to the capitalist profit system, expressed politically in their Laborite nationalism and reliance on the capitalist state, which they repeatedly campaign to be administered by a Labor government. To unleash the social power of the multiracial working class means a fight to break with the politics of Laborism. Concretely this will require a political struggle to replace the hidebound union bureaucrats with a leadership committed to mobilising proletarian power, independent of the capitalist state and in the interests of all the exploited and oppressed. Ultimately it will take the construction of a revolutionary workers party, on the model of Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks who led the great 1917 Russian Revolution, to lead the working class in the overthrow of this anarchic, irrational, profit-driven system, which endangers the safety and welfare of the population. ■

Black Mother...

(continued from page 3)

of public education has hit the working class and especially minorities particularly hard in cities like Akron, which have suffered a huge economic downturn with deindustrialization. In 1993, the Ohio legislature passed an “open enrollment” act allowing students in participating schools to transfer between adjacent districts. In short order, roughly 1,100 students, nearly all white, transferred from Akron to schools in neighboring suburbs.

Efforts by the school district to stem these out-transfers were overturned in 1996 by a federal district court in a case brought by an outfit called the Equal

Open Enrollment Association. This set the stage for further rulings across the country severely restricting the ability for school districts to take measures against segregation—part of a long, deliberate process of overturning *Brown*. Even as white flight continues from Akron schools, suburban districts near poor and minority areas, such as Copley-Fairlawn, have been able to “choose” to opt out of open enrollment, keeping the children of poor minority parents like Kelley Williams-Bolar trapped in the holding pens that are ghetto schools. With “choice” like this, who needs compulsion? When someone such as Kelley Williams-Bolar crosses the line, the repressive force of the capitalist state stands ready to remind her and her children of their “place.”

The case of Williams-Bolar speaks to the vast inequalities structurally embedded in the system of American capitalism. To achieve actual quality, integrated education for all requires a socialist revolution in which the multiracial working class replaces the rotting structure of capitalist property relations with a planned economy, where there are jobs and decent living conditions for all. Only a society organized on the basis of production for human need and not for the profit of an elite few can ensure that all are able to learn and develop to their full potential. The fight for such an egalitarian socialist society requires building a revolutionary workers party that champions the cause of all the exploited and oppressed. ■

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U.S. Reactionaries Stir Up Anti-Gay Terror

Uganda: Gay Rights Activist Brutally Murdered

David Kato, a courageous fighter for gay rights, was bludgeoned to death with a hammer in his home in Kampala, Uganda, on January 26. He was 46 years old. A co-founder of the gay rights organization Sexual Minorities Uganda, Kato was repeatedly beaten, harassed and jailed by police. In October 2010, his picture appeared on the front page of a reactionary local newspaper, *Rolling Stone*, together with an article showing photos, listing names and revealing the whereabouts of hundreds of “known” homosexuals and gay rights activists under the banner “Hang Them!” In a landmark case, Kato sued the paper and won the equivalent of US\$640 in damages. Just weeks later, he was murdered.

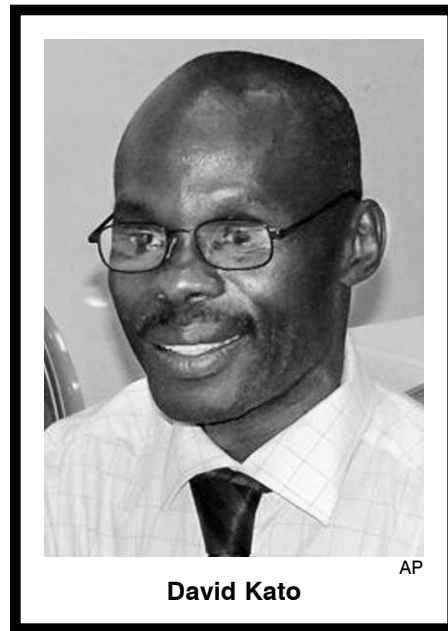
In Uganda homosexuality—defined as “carnal knowledge of any person against the order of nature”—is a crime punishable by up to 14 years in prison. President Yoweri Museveni, in power for 25 years, has called for gays to be tracked down and jailed. He continues to fuel homophobic violence by publicly claiming that gays are recruiting Ugandan schoolchildren. Now, a proposed “Anti-Homosexuality Bill,” written by parliament member David Bahati, would give the state sanction to kill gays by imposing a death sentence for those convicted

teachers and national politicians, listened raptly to the Americans, who were presented as experts on homosexuality. The visitors discussed how to make gay people straight, how gay men often sodomized teenage boys and how ‘the gay movement is an evil institution’ whose goal is ‘to defeat the marriage-based society and replace it with a culture of sexual promiscuity.’”

Obama’s Crocodile Tears for Kato

Shortly after Kato’s murder, President Barack Obama, who personally opposes gay marriage, released a statement laden with hypocrisy. Saying he was “deeply saddened to learn of the murder of David Kato,” Obama continued: “My Administration will continue to strongly support human rights and assistance work on behalf of LGBT persons abroad. We do this because we recognize the threat faced by leaders like David Kato, and we share their commitment to advancing freedom, fairness, and equality for all.”

One need look no further than the carnage in occupied Afghanistan and Iraq, or the cruise missiles raining down on Libya, for a measure of such “commitment to advancing freedom” by Obama, the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism. In the service of Washington’s global “war on terror,” Uganda’s police



mutilation, traditional polygamy and the bride price—as well as gays.

There is much being written about the links between evangelical Christians in the U.S. and the “kill gays” law in Uganda. In fact, Christian missionaries served in the second half of the 19th century as the advance guard for British imperialism’s conquest of the territory. The rampant homophobia in Uganda today is in good measure a remnant of British colonialism, whose laws punished locals for participating in “unnatural sex”—the same proscription under which Oscar Wilde was sent to prison in Britain. To this day, “sodomy” laws are still on the books in more than 35 former British colonies around the world.

Moreover, the industrially advanced Christian West is not exactly a safe haven for gays and lesbians. The U.S., one of the most politically backward “advanced” capitalist countries on earth, is saddled with a huge burden of puritanism and religious fundamentalism. Bible-thumping bigots, “family values” crusaders and other reactionaries serve to ensure that homosexuals continue to endure violence, persecution and abrogation of their rights. This can literally be a death sentence: In 1998, Wyoming university student Matthew Shepard was beaten and left hanging on a barbed-wire fence to die; in 2002, Gwen Araujo, a transgender California youth was savagely beaten and then strangled to death by a rope.

The oppression of gays is directly related to the subordination of women and youth in the social unit of the family. The main institution for the oppression of

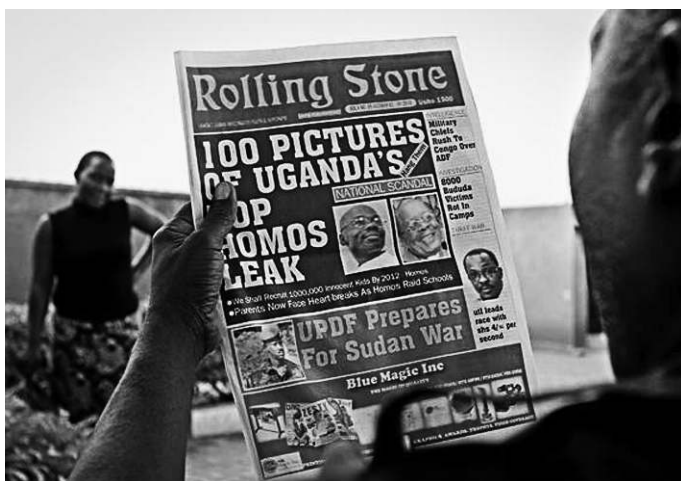
women in class society, the family instills obedience to authority and bourgeois morality, resulting in widespread bigotry that is further propped up by the considerable power of organized religion. In capitalist society, anything or anyone who deviates from male/female gender roles in the family is seen as a threat to the social order. The International Communist League fights for full democratic rights for gays. This is part of our commitment to the revolutionary struggle to eradicate all oppression based on sex, race, ethnicity and class through the overthrow of capitalist rule and the establishment of an egalitarian socialist society.

Anti-Gay Bigotry in Neo-Apartheid South Africa

In an interview, David Kato, who taught in South Africa for several years, spoke to the inspiration he drew from the fight to bring down the hated white-supremacist apartheid regime, under which homosexuality was banned: “In South Africa I fought for their liberation in Johannesburg, so when I came home... I had the same momentum—I tried to liberate my own community.” On paper, the constitution in post-apartheid South Africa, one of only ten countries in the world that legally recognize gay marriage, opposes discrimination based on sexual orientation. But a look at the reality on the ground shows a far different picture, with violence against homosexuals both frequent and widespread. Lesbians are often targeted for what is called “corrective rape.” One high-profile case involved the brutal April 2008 killing of Eudy Simelane, a star of the South African women’s soccer team. An open lesbian, Simelane died after being gang-raped and stabbed 25 times.

South African president Jacob Zuma, leader of the bourgeois-nationalist African National Congress, has himself promoted anti-gay violence. In a 2006 speech, he proclaimed that “when I was growing up an *ungqingili* (a gay person) would not have stood in front of me. I would knock him out.” Zuma has also decried same-sex marriage as “a disgrace to the nation and to God.” Most recently, he appointed a well-known homophobe who calls for the criminalization of gay marriage as South Africa’s ambassador to Uganda! This is rightly seen as a statement of open support for Uganda’s anti-homosexual law.

We should honor David Kato’s bravery in fighting the deadly repression faced by himself and other gays in Uganda. But the only road forward in addressing the brutal conditions of life throughout Africa and liberating these countries from the grip of imperialism is the overthrow of capitalist rule. The revolutionary mobilization of the powerful, mainly black proletariat of South Africa is crucial to this perspective. Only world proletarian socialist revolution can rid the planet of the imperialist order and its neocolonial front men. This will lay the material foundations for a new world in which the oppressive institution of the family will be replaced by socialization of child-care and household work. Only then can all social relations be truly based on the free choice of individuals. The International Communist League is committed to championing these liberating goals of communism and the necessarily global struggle for a classless, egalitarian socialist society. ■



Ugandan *Rolling Stone* in October 2010 called for all gays to be hanged and showed David Kato’s picture on the cover.

of “aggravated homosexuality,” including those who engage in homosexual sex with disabled persons or with persons under the age of 18 and also including those labeled “serial offenders.” The law would also bring a three-year jail sentence for anyone who fails to report homosexuals to the police within 24 hours.

Bahati boasts of his ties with powerful American evangelicals and has been to the U.S. to study the “Christian leadership principles” of an outfit known as “the Family.” A clandestine group of prominent politicians, CEOs and others, “the Family” has long exerted considerable political influence both in Washington, D.C., and abroad. It organizes the annual National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, which has been attended by every U.S. president since Eisenhower.

In a meeting with Jeff Sharlet, author of *The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power*, Bahati openly stated that his aim is to “kill every last gay person.” His Anti-Homosexuality Bill was written one month after a March 2009 conference in Kampala featuring a group of well-known American Christian fundamentalists. As described in a *New York Times* (4 January 2010) article, “Americans’ Role Seen in Uganda Anti-Gay Push”:

“For three days, according to participants and audio recordings, thousands of Ugandans, including police officers,

Rapid Response Unit engages in “torture, illegal detention and extrajudicial killings of its citizens,” according to a Human Rights Watch study reported in the *New York Times* (23 March). As for Obama’s sermonizing about human rights, it is the imperialists’ subjugation of neocolonial countries that perpetrates economic deprivation and other misery. Such conditions feed the religious reaction and social backwardness that brutally oppress women—seen in the prevalence in Uganda of female genital



Barack Obama addressing February 2009 National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C., sponsored by reactionary group “the Family.” Ugandan legislator linked to “the Family” is sponsoring “kill gays” law.

Libya...

(continued from page 1)

neocolonial lackeys. While those protesting the oppressive U.S.-backed regimes in Bahrain and Yemen are gunned down and dispossessed Palestinians face a renewed wave of Zionist state terror, Obama would have us believe that tears welled up in his eyes as he contemplated the fate of the Libyan rebels. The White House hypocritically castigates Qaddafi for deploying the military against civilians challenging his rule. Here at home, the mission of the Pentagon's Northern Command includes coordinating operations on U.S. territory against "threats on the homeland," meaning everything from terrorist attacks to popular insurrection.

Richard Falk, a UN spokesman, pointed out that the Libyan uprising was "more in the nature of a traditional insurrection against the established order than a popular revolution inspired by democratic values" (*Al Jazeera*, 23 March). He added that threats of intervention only arose when "the domestic tide turned in favour of Tripoli, which means that intervention was called upon to overcome the apparent growing likelihood that Gaddafi would reestablish order in his favour."

As Marxists, we have always politically opposed Qaddafi's capitalist regime, a dictatorship that has brutally suppressed anyone suspected of opposing his rule. At the same time, we have consistently defended Libya against imperialist attacks, as in the 1986 U.S. bombing under Ronald Reagan. At that time, Qaddafi's daughter was killed in an attack on the family compound that was clearly meant to assassinate him. For the U.S. Cold Warriors, chief among Qaddafi's "crimes" at the time was that he was a military client of the Soviet Union. With their current attack on Libya, the imperialists are jettisoning the rapprochement they reached with Qaddafi over the last decade, when his regime closely collaborated with Washington in the "global war on terror" and helped police the Mediterranean to keep African migrants out of Europe.

For its part, the Libyan opposition is angling to gain control of the country's substantial oil and natural gas wealth. Rebel forces have been rounding up, torturing and killing anyone suspected of being a Qaddafi supporter, especially black Africans alleged to be his mercenaries. Peter Bouckaert of Human Rights Watch reports that fleeing Africans have been pushed off ships sent by European governments to evacuate their nationals ("The Battle for Libya," *New York Review of Books*, 7 April). In this, the opposition takes its cue, and then some, from the oppression of African migrants under Qaddafi. As for the "humanitarian" imperialists, European governments are ramping up efforts to prevent refugees from making it to their countries.

Even before the bombing began, we noted in "Imperialists Hands Off Libya!" (WV No. 976, 18 March) that the proletariat in Libya had been devastated as a

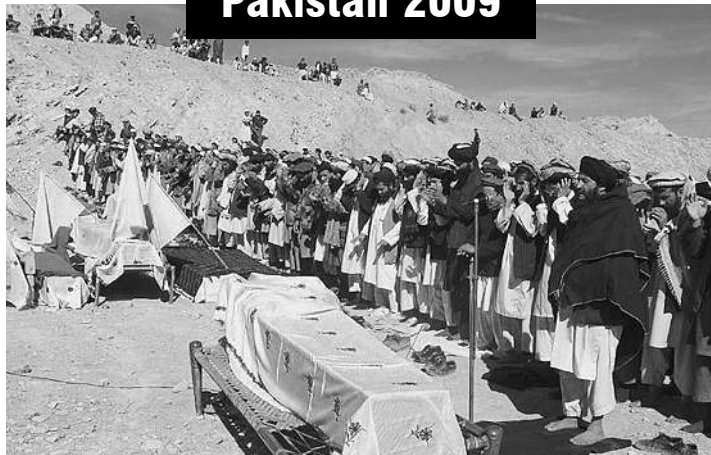
U.S. Imperialism "Protecting Civilians"

Afghanistan 2010



Der Spiegel

Pakistan 2009



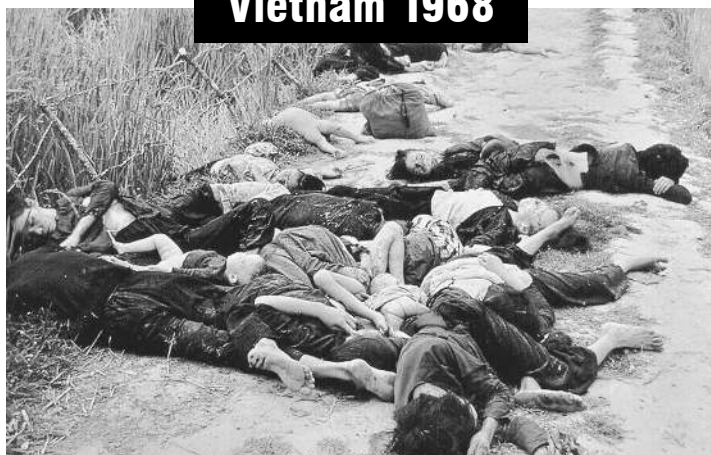
AFP

Iraq 1990-2003



Alan Pogue

Vietnam 1968



Ronald Haebertle

Top row, left to right: U.S. soldier posing with body of Afghan civilian murdered by U.S. "kill team"; funeral for Pakistani victims of U.S. missile attack in North Waziristan region near Afghan border. Bottom row, left to right: UN-imposed sanctions killed some 1.5 million Iraqis due to starvation, lack of medicine; massacre of hundreds of civilians in My Lai, indelible symbol of U.S. war against Vietnamese Revolution.

result of the civil war, with migrant workers fleeing the violence and racist attacks. The article continued:

"The future of the Libyan masses will be decided by working-class struggle that extends beyond the national terrain to include the proletariats of Algeria, Tunisia and, especially, Egypt. That requires the forging of revolutionary working-class parties as part of a genuine Trotskyist Fourth International, which would link the fight for socialist federations of North Africa and of the Near East to the struggle for proletarian revolution in the imperialist centers."

Washington's "Human Rights" Canard

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has likened what Qaddafi is facing to what befell former Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic, who died in 2006 while on trial in the international war crimes court. Hillary Clinton harks back to the 1995 NATO bombing of Serbs in Bosnia in the name of preventing a "genocidal" slaughter of Bosnian Muslims. In 1999, the U.S.-led bombing of Serbia, carried out under the pretense of protecting Albanian Kosovars, terrorized and slaughtered Serbians, destroying a hospital, power grids and other infrastructure. These wars, carried out under Bill Clinton's presidency, exem-

plified the imperialists' ruse of covering their mass terror with a veneer of "human rights."

According to press reports, National Security Council aide Samantha Power and UN ambassador Susan Rice were instrumental in convincing Obama to launch air attacks on Libya. Power's 2002 book *A Problem from Hell* chastises U.S. policy makers who chose not to intervene in Rwanda in the 1990s and elsewhere. Rice is a protégé of Madeleine Albright, who was UN ambassador and then secretary of state under Bill Clinton, whose administration enforced UN starvation sanctions against Iraq that were first imposed in 1990 under George Bush Sr. When asked in 1996 about the half million Iraqi children killed by that time as a result of the sanctions, which were accompanied by repeated bomb attacks, Albright responded, "We think the price is worth it." By 2003, the sanctions had cost the lives of one and a half million people and gravely undermined Iraq's ability to defend itself against the 2003 U.S. war and occupation.

With U.S. forces already stretched thin by their murderous occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, Republicans in Washington and other bourgeois critics of the Obama administration are voicing concern over getting involved in another endless quagmire. Poking holes into the fabric of "multilateralism" that covers the war against Libya, right-wing columnist David Brooks opined in the *New York Times* (21 March): "It is hard to get leaders from different

nations with different values to agree on a common course of action." He went on: "In the Libyan campaign, Qaddafi's defenders will be fighting for land, home, God and country. The multinational force will be organized by an acronym and motivated by a calibrated calculus to achieve a humanitarian end." The simple fact is that what Obama and his cohorts are up to is *mass terror* under the UN banner. Those like Brooks prefer that U.S. imperialism carry out its brigandage without restraints imposed by "coalition partners."

The value that the imperialists place on Libya has mainly to do with its enormous reserves of high-grade oil and natural gas. For example, Italy, Libya's former colonial slave master, depends on Libyan oil for a quarter of its petroleum needs. Calculating its own interests, German imperialism under Christian Democratic chancellor Angela Merkel abstained on the UN Security Council's war resolution, prompting Joschka Fischer, leader of the bourgeois Green Party, to declare: "Germany has lost its credibility in the United Nations and the Middle East." Nevertheless, Germany, along with other European Union members, has called for an embargo on all oil from Libya. For Libya, a country that imports 75 percent of its food and pays for it with oil revenues, this could mean mass starvation. Meanwhile, the U.S. has made very clear that there will be no such sanctions against the opposition, which, soon after taking oil

Just Out!

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Obama: CEO of Racist American Capitalist System



President Obama defends mass firing of Rhode Island teachers, March 2010, part of bourgeoisie's war on public education. Unemployed workers at job fair in Louisville, Kentucky, September 2009. Periodic capitalist economic crises mean immiseration for working people.

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Imperialism’s Social-Democratic Drummer Boys

Defense of Libya against imperialist bombardment should be elementary, not only for proletarian opponents of capitalist rule but for anyone repulsed by capitalist powers imposing their diktat on Third World countries through overwhelming military might. Yet the bulk of the “socialist” left internationally has worked to line up workers and youth behind the imperialist murderers by championing the opposition that is acting as their ground troops. They have done this in the name of the so-called “Libyan revolution.” But what kind of “revolutionary” appeals to the imperialists to impose a “no-fly zone,” launch air strikes or otherwise intervene militarily in their country, as opposition leaders did?

The French New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA) early on pledged its “total support to the insurgents.” Over Libya, this social-democratic group—established two years ago by the French section of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec)—achieved convergence with French president Sarkozy, who welcomed key anti-Qaddafi leaders in the Elysée Palace on March 10 and declared the opposition National Council to be Libya’s legitimate government. The day after the UN Security Council voted to authorize the “use of force in Libya,” the NPA chimed in with a March 18 statement declaring that “the Libyan people... should be given the means to defend themselves and the weapons they need to throw out the dictator.” The NPA endorsed the call for a rally held the next day in support of the imperialists’ stooges in Libya, which took place as the bombing started.

While the NPA statement muttered that “military intervention is not the solution,” Gilbert Achcar, a London-based leftist who associates himself with the USec and the British Socialist Workers Party (SWP), had no such reservations. Echoing the imperialists’ lying pretext of “protecting civilians” from the vengeance of Qaddafi’s forces, Achcar declared in a 19 March *ZNet* article that “no one can reasonably oppose” the UN resolution authorizing the air attacks.

In Britain, Conservative prime minister David Cameron, an early proponent of attacking Libya, was backed by Labour Party leader Ed Miliband. And behind Labour stand Britain’s house-trained reformists, the SWP, who counseled: “Instead of bombing Libya, Western governments could hand all the assets they have seized



Reuters

French president Sarkozy meeting with Libyan opposition emissaries at Elysée Palace in Paris on March 10, more than a week before French planes began imperialist bombardment of Libya. Right: French flag at March 19 Toronto demonstration built by International Socialists.

from Gaddafi’s regime to the revolutionary forces” (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 22 March). In other words, the imperialist gangsters who have ripped off the assets of a sovereign country should hand them over to their flunkys.

The SWP’s estranged American cousins in the International Socialist Organization (ISO), which initially embraced the CIA-funded National Salvation Front with open arms, now claims to have discovered that some pretty reactionary forces are in the leadership of the anti-Qaddafi opposition. The ISO spares a few words, on paper, to express opposition to the bombing. But that does not prevent it from continuing to embrace the opposition forces, no matter what atrocities the imperialists carry out on their behalf. At a March 20 forum in New York City, ISO honcho Ahmed Shawki declared: “Today, the West is bombing Libya as its way of getting a foothold back into the Middle East. But we should have no truck whatsoever to do with the Libyan regime or a defense of it, and join all of those involved in the Middle East people getting rid of its dictators.”

In Canada, where Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper has contributed a half dozen fighter-bombers to the imperialist assault force, the International Socialists (I.S.), affiliated to the British SWP, also hailed Qaddafi’s imperialist-backed opponents while claiming to oppose the bombing. The utter hypocrisy of this stance was exposed at a March 19 demonstration in Toronto called by the I.S.’s creation, the Toronto Arab Solidarity Campaign, where the I.S. stood shoulder to shoulder with people carrying huge French and Canadian flags and chanting “Kill Qaddafi!” A Trotskyist League of Canada comrade reported: “Once we saw



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the vile character of the demo, we increased the size of our team: not to be part of it, but to make our opposition to this pro-imperialist carnival clearer and give it more impact. We stood to the side, with placards and chants, declaring ‘Imperialists Hands Off Libya’.”

The destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92 emboldened the imperialists, centrally the U.S., to carry out a series of bombings, wars and occupations against weaker countries. Capitalist counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union removed what had been the main impediment to imperialist depredations, today exemplified by the slaughter of Afghans and Iraqis by U.S.-led occupation forces.

The social-democratic “left” helped pave the way for these atrocities by hailing the counterrevolutionary forces, from Polish Solidarność to Boris Yeltsin’s Russian “democrats.” Having discarded even the pretense of advocating proletarian socialism, the reformists increasingly and all the more openly march under the banner of bourgeois “democracy.” The USec, among others, promoted imperialist military intervention against the Serbs in 1995 under the guise of providing humanitarian aid for workers in Bosnia. Four years later, the same characters were calling for a European imperialist expeditionary force in Kosovo.

It is noteworthy that a March 22 “Joint Statement” by various Communist Parties around the world—including the Greek KKE, the Portuguese CP and the Indian CPI and CPI(M)—condemns the imperialist intervention against Libya and does not support the pro-imperialist opposition (which it simply avoids mentioning). However, the statement fails to call for military defense of neocolonial Libya,

pushing instead a pacifistic appeal for “the peoples” to demand an end to the imperialist intervention.

The U.S. Workers World Party (WWP) and Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) voice similar opposition to the attack on Libya, mainly driven by their longstanding political support for bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces in Third World countries that make a pretense of being “anti-imperialist.” The ANSWER coalition, founded by the WWP and now controlled by the PSL, recently staged a series of demonstrations calling to “stop the bombing of Libya” and raising the reformist-pacifist demand that the imperialist rulers spend money on jobs and education, not war. This is the timeworn formula the WWP, PSL and others have used to build class-collaborationist “anti-war movements” that unite “the people” behind a supposedly more benign wing of the blood-soaked, profit-bloated capitalist ruling class.

Imperialist wars, occupations and terror-bombing campaigns are inherent to the system of capitalism in its decay. The quest for cheap labor, raw materials and exclusive markets that compels the imperialist rulers to wage military adventures abroad is accompanied by incessant attacks on the wages and conditions of workers on the home front. The current worldwide capitalist economic crisis has brought massive unemployment accompanied by wage-slashing, elimination of social services and a full-bore assault on trade unions. The only way out is through a fight for proletarian revolutions against the decaying capitalist order. This requires building revolutionary workers parties like Lenin’s Bolsheviks—in the U.S., Europe, North Africa and around the world. ■

ICL Statement...

(continued from page 1)

against imperialist attack! U.S. Fifth Fleet and all imperialist military bases and troops out of North Africa and the Near East!

Recall that the slaughter of well over a million people in Iraq began with the imposition of a UN-sponsored starvation embargo and a “no fly zone” in the 1990s. The latest action by the Security Council, including the neo-apartheid South African regime led by the African National Congress, underscores yet again the character of the United Nations as a den of imperialist thieves and their lackeys and semicolonial victims. The abstention by the representative of China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state, gave tacit approval to imperialist depredation, emboldening the very forces which seek to overturn the 1949 Chinese Revolution.

The crocodile tears shed by the imperialist rulers and their media mouthpieces over the Libyans killed by the Qaddafi regime during the recent wave of protests stands in sharp contrast to their muted response to the continuing massacre of protesters in Yemen—whose dictatorship is a key component of Washington’s “war on terror”—and their ongoing support to the Bahraini kingdom, which hosts the headquarters of the U.S. Fifth Fleet. To

aid in crushing mass protests, Bahrain last week invited in troops from the medievalist and theocratic Saudi monarchy, a key bulwark of U.S. imperialist interests in the region. In the eyes of the imperialist rulers, Bahrain’s Shi’ite majority and the Yemeni masses are less than human, with no rights they are bound to respect.

Numerous social-democratic leftists, typified by the United Secretariat (USec) and the British Cliffite Socialist Workers Party, have done their part to prepare the ground for imperialist massacres in Libya by cheering on the so-called “Libyan Revolution.” Having urged support for the cabal of pro-imperialist “democrats,” CIA stooges, monarchists and Islamists that comprise the Benghazi-based opposition, these reformists now feign to balk at imperialist military intervention in support of the opposition. The New Anti-Capitalist Party, constituted in 2009 by the USec’s French section, signed a call for a demonstration yesterday demanding that the Benghazi outfit be recognized as “the only legitimate representative of the Libyan people”—which French ruler Sarkozy had already done! At the same time, those left groups that have promoted illusions in Qaddafi’s “anti-imperialist” pretensions—such as the Workers World Party in the U.S.—seek everywhere and at all times to chain the working class to a mythical “progressive” wing of the bourgeoisie.

We pledge today, as we did at the time

of the U.S. Reagan administration’s bombing of Libya in 1986, to “undertake every effort to propagandize the need for the world working class to take the side of Libya” against its imperialist enemies (“Under Reagan’s Guns in Libya,” *WV* No. 401, 11 April 1986). In the pursuit of profit and domination, the same capitalist ruling classes that brutally exploit the working class “at home,” only to throw workers on the scrap heap during periods of economic crisis, as today, carry out murderous imperialist attacks abroad. The struggle against imperialist war can-

not be conducted separately and apart from the class struggle. Only socialist revolution can overthrow the system of capitalist imperialism which breeds war. Our path is that of the October Revolution of 1917, led by the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, which was a beacon of revolutionary internationalism for the proletariat everywhere. We struggle to reforge the Fourth International as an instrument that can lead the working masses, from the Near East to the imperialist centers, forward to new October Revolutions and a world socialist society. ■

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For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Women and the East German Deformed Workers State

We print below the conclusion of this article, which was translated from *Spartakist* No. 185 (October 2010), published by our comrades of the *Spartakist Workers Party of Germany*. Part One appeared in *WV* No. 976 (18 March).

PART TWO

The Soviet Military Administration in Germany existed until November 1949, a month after the DDR [East German deformed workers state] was founded. Already in August 1946, the goal of drawing women into production—the so-called “Order 253”—had been promulgated, banning wage discrimination based on sex or age. A comparison: in West Germany such a law only came into existence ten years later. And of course under capitalism such a law—no wage discrimi-

backward elements in the working class.

Taking a look at the Democratic Women's Federation of Germany (DFD) is instructive here. It was founded in the DDR in 1947, having originally emerged out of the anti-fascist women's committees, i.e., out of committees that clearly in their own view—and by their very name—embraced a broader horizon. But the East German Stalinist party, the Socialist Unity Party (SED), increasingly

overthrown and the National Front had only the appearance of a popular front.

Popular-frontist politics are a deception of the working class, politically disarming the workers by creating the illusion that they have no independent class interests and talking only about an undifferentiated “people.” Internationally this meant that the Stalinist bureaucracies cozied up to bourgeois forces. For workers following Stalinist leadership, all too

Nonetheless, the following is interesting as a fact: In the DDR, the DFD was a mass organization. These anti-fascist committees and DFD groups had originally existed in all of Germany. In the West, an association arose out of individual state associations in 1952; it was unceremoniously banned by the German bourgeoisie in 1957.

A couple more facts comparing the situation of women in these two countries, East and West Germany. In 1965, a compendium of family law appeared in the DDR stating: “Both spouses must do their part in the education and care of their children and running the household. The relations of the spouses to each other should take such a form that the woman can reconcile her professional activity and her activity in society with motherhood.” While this meant exalting the “holy family,” it still emphasized the equal status of women. In a 1966 report, the government of West Germany set forth that: “A care-giver and comforter is what women should be; an image of modest harmony, a factor for order in the uniquely dependable private sphere; women should enter into gainful employment and social engagement only when the demands placed on them by the family permit them to do so.” In accord with this is the fact that *up till 1977* a West German law stated that a wife could not get a job without her husband's consent.

It was, of course, the socialized relations of production in the DDR that were responsible for these differences. Furthermore, an important aspect was that inheritance played no role in the DDR, since private ownership of the means of production no longer existed. After all, Engels had explained that what had originally been central to the entire institution and ideology of the family was that the husband wanted to know unambiguously: Are these my children or has my wife been playing the field? I want to bequeath solely to my children. That is the root of it.

All this simply played no role anymore in the DDR: There was nothing to bequeath, and thereby this function of the family under capitalism essentially dissolved. But the Stalinist leadership, these backward types, nonetheless kept trying to maintain the ideology of the family, attempting again and again to glue its ideological fragments together. One further aspect of the family is the regimentation of children, and this eroded as well in the DDR due to the socialized relations of production. In the DDR, since 1950 the age of majority had been set at 18; in West Germany this has been the case only since 1975!

Women's Day was always celebrated with flowers, accompanied with calls for the husband to make his wife a super-duper breakfast on this day and generally to be very supportive, etc. Such calls only made more obvious what was generally the rule: that women had to work a second shift to keep the household going and look after the children. The DDR leadership was truly seeking to drain International Women's Day of any trace of its being a day of struggle for the entire working class.



Yevgeny Khaldei

Soviet soldiers trample Nazi flag on outskirts of Vienna in 1945.

tasked the DFD with dealing with “women's matters.”

The DFD was affiliated with the so-called “National Front,” an attempt by the DDR bureaucracy to mimic West Germany's “democratic” multiplicity of parties. This DDR formation contained all possible parties, from the Peasant Party to the Christian Democrats, but with the Stalinist bureaucracy setting the tone via the SED. In contrast to the situation under capitalism, this simply parodied a capitalist popular front, which always consists of a class alliance of bourgeois parties and workers parties. In the DDR, however, the bourgeoisie as a class had been

often this meant deadly defeats—as in the Chinese Revolution in 1927 and the Spanish Revolution in the 1930s, to cite only a couple of examples. For Marxists, the DDR was a dictatorship of the proletariat—albeit bureaucratically deformed—that rested on socialized relations of production, since the bourgeoisie had been expropriated. Within this framework, the National Front was *one* part of the programmatic propaganda of the DDR bureaucracy, which did not want its working class to come up with the idea that it had its own class interests, namely running the workers state itself via workers councils.

SPARTAKIST

nation—exists only on paper. Wage differentials are part and parcel of capitalism, a means of dividing the working class, particularly male and female workers. This is a fundamental component of the economic system.

Just a few days ago, there was a report in *Der Spiegel* with 2008 statistics showing wage differentials of over 23 percent between men and women. And simultaneously there has been a great increase in part-time work for women, who of course cannot survive on their wages but can't work full-time, since they can't get their children taken care of, etc. This law “against wage discrimination” has been in force in West Germany since 1956, but that signifies absolutely nothing.

Certainly, wage differences between men and women did exist in the DDR as well, but first of all they were not as shameful, since the wage range was not as wide and even the lowest wage groups had a secure living standard. It stemmed from bureaucratic misrule and was not inherent to the system. A government of workers soviets would have immediately annulled any wage differences, even if this would have meant opposing more

Below: DDR leader Hans Modrow (left) with West German chancellor Helmut Kohl in Dresden, December 1989. Right: Workers at East Berlin shoe factory in May 1990 protest against threat of unemployment brought by capitalist reunification.

DPA



Stern

When protests from proletarian women over their overly heavy burden of work and the “second shift” got too loud, there were divergent reactions. On the one hand, the bureaucracy sought to make more consumer goods available to lighten the burden of housework, particularly from the early 1970s on. For example, production of family washing machines was promoted. Perhaps it would have been more rational to massively increase the number of public laundromats and equip them better. There were also widespread campaigns for the husband to do more around the house. In fact, for the husband to help in the household was far more widespread in the DDR than in the West. Since 1952, a “Household Day” had existed in the DDR—one free day per month for household chores, but typically granted only to women. Only from 1977 on was it partially accorded to men as well.

“Socialism in (Half of) One Country”

Housing was a scarce commodity in the DDR. The essential reason was that the resources to build adequate housing simply didn’t exist in this half a country, under siege by vengeance-seeking German imperialism, which was continually brooding over how to regain this territory in which it no longer had the say. It is also important to recall that after 1945 West Germany had been beefed up by U.S. imperialism. Moreover, heavy industry plus the entire Ruhr region—i.e., the center of industry—were in the West. That is an important factor.

But the Stalinist bureaucracy in the DDR was unwilling to utter this home truth, instead making a virtue of necessity. “Socialism in one country” meant that the bureaucracy wanted to produce as “autarkically” as possible. Thus 70 percent of the products available on the world market were produced in the DDR, often of poor quality and at inflated cost, while the imperialists could base themselves on a division of labor in the world market, which they dominated. Married couples had first dibs on apartments, again putting pressure on people to get married. The bureaucracy did not proceed linearly here and kept changing its procedures; officially, single mothers and unmarried couples could also lay claim to an apartment. But the feeling among young people was generally that they had greater chances if they got married, strengthening the functions of the family within society.

An important and particularly unattractive aspect of the Stalinist bureaucracies’ program of “socialism in one country”—in their own individual countries and apart from all others—is that it meant nationalism. While the DDR bureaucracy campaigned strongly for marriage and having children, this generally did not apply to contract workers from Mozambique, Cuba or Vietnam: these had no citizenship rights and were often segregated in specific residential areas. If a Vietnamese woman became pregnant, she usually had to get an abortion or return home, leave the country. This was a genuine, major, true piece of piggishness on the part of the bureaucracy. For us communists, it goes without saying, the central slogan is always “full citizenship rights for all immigrants,” as was true for the early Soviet Union: anyone who lived and worked there had citizenship rights.

Down With Paragraph 218!

The notorious [anti-abortion] Paragraph 218 constitutes an extremely important aspect of the woman and family question. This paragraph has existed since the time of Bismarck, since 1871. In the Weimar Republic, the Communist Party [KPD] was well known for its fight against Paragraph 218. There are some expressive posters, for example by Käthe Kollwitz, who for a couple of years was a member of the International Workers’ Aid, the defense organization linked to the KPD. In the Weimar Republic, the KPD repeatedly introduced motions in the Reichstag

[parliament] demanding: Down with this paragraph! All were quashed.

The first alteration after 1871 occurred in 1926, through a Social Democratic Party (SPD) motion that did pass. Abortion continued to be punishable under law, both for the woman and for the person performing it, but now it was “only” punished by a jail term and not by sending the perpetrators to a high-security prison. The fact that under the Nazis the death penalty was imposed for abortion—unless it served to prevent the “reproduction of inferior racial groups”—demonstrates the power exercised by the bourgeoisie via Paragraph 218 and just how deeply it cut into people’s lives.

In 1945, the Nazi regime was smashed by the Red Army, through incredible sacrifice by the Soviet soldiers and people. After 1945, in both the East and the West,

been on the market, doctors were still denouncing this “state-promoted lack of restraint.” In the DDR, Professor Mehlan was one of the pioneers of birth control. In 1965, the West German magazine *Stern* asked him the provocative question: Now tell us honestly—is it true that where you come from, abortion really is not murder? This is the way West Germany was in the 1960s, and even today this is far from being the unfortunate distant past. The Catholic church and other bigots continue to call abortion “murder.” In the U.S., doctors who carry out abortions have been murdered. This rests on the notion purveyed by all churches that the will of God has already endowed the fertilized egg with the “soul” of the future human being.

In general, the Stalinist leadership in the DDR wobbled on the question of

Stalinists always thought and hoped that the SPD—the SPD in West Germany of all things!—might perhaps be an expression of such “progressive forces.” The Stalinists tended to fix their gaze on the SPD in the West the way a rabbit looks at a snake.

When first-trimester abortion was finally introduced in the DDR in 1972, it was also an attempt to trump the imperialist West and the SPD in the minds of women. For in the West in the summer of 1971, a well-known campaign had commenced with major involvement of SPD supporters: “We’ve had an abortion.” Women accused themselves of this “criminal act.” In all probability hastened by this, termination of a pregnancy in the first three months was finally allowed in the DDR. Incidentally, first-trimester abortions were introduced in West Germany in June 1974, only to be nullified the very same month by the Federal Constitutional Court on the grounds that abortion was in principle violating the constitution. Since May 1976, an “indication system” with all its contempt for humanity and with compulsory consultation, often carried out by church officials, has been the rule in West Germany. *We communists fight for the unlimited right of women to free abortion on demand, with the best possible medical care!*

As recently as 1988-89, a witchhunting trial took place in Memmingen, West Germany, where Dr. Theissen was hauled into court for having performed abortions—safe abortions, fine medical work. He felt that women had the right to decide for themselves. He was hauled into court and put in prison, and we intervened in his defense.

We also intervened for our position for the unconditional right to abortion in major demonstrations that took place in the former DDR following counterrevolution. These demonstrations were protesting introduction of West Germany’s “indication model,” where some guy poses inhumane questions and can judge you. These protests were for maintaining the DDR’s first-trimester laws. And they were so strong that even two years after the counterrevolution two different laws continued to exist in East and West. The bourgeoisie feared this question could spark stronger protests against the *Anschluss* [annexation] of the DDR. Two whole years, and then the indication system was pushed through in the former DDR as well.

DDR Bureaucracy Capitulates to SPD, Church

Twenty years after counterrevolution in the DDR, both state churches [Catholic and Protestant], whose church taxes are automatically collected by the bourgeois state, were complaining that too few people were attending church in the former DDR.

In the first years of the DDR, there was still quite a lot of support for the church, above all among women in the countryside. One of the first campaigns the church waged was for preservation of the old system of midwives, who attended

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On eve of 17 June 1953 uprising, East Berlin construction workers demonstrate against government demand for more work at same pay.

the Nazi law—i.e., the death penalty—was rescinded, but otherwise the old paragraph in the penal code was left standing. In the East, that is, in what became the DDR, this occurred with a direct reference to the legal code in the Soviet Union, where abortion had been forbidden by the 1936 Soviet constitution. In the areas under the Soviet Military Administration, the 1926 version of the paragraph was in force. Additionally, in some East German states, there was an “indication system,” requiring that certain social or medical conditions be met, e.g., citing rape. There were a couple of minor different possibilities for how a woman might get an abortion, but they still fell under criminal law.

At this time, West Germany often had even stricter penalties for abortion. But before the erection of the Berlin Wall in August 1961, women from the DDR went to West Berlin for abortions! The West Berlin Senate, usually in the hands of the SPD, obviously kept its eyes closed in the hope of damaging the DDR. This is such an utterly damning judgment on the Stalinists, for women to have to go to the capitalist part of Berlin for an abortion! And later women from the DDR went to Poland and Hungary for abortions: In Poland, a first-trimester law existed, while today, following capitalist counterrevolution, Poland has one of the most restrictive abortion laws in Europe, with ongoing attempts to ban abortion entirely. This is a result of counterrevolution. But before first-trimester abortions were permitted in the DDR, women really did go to Poland and Hungary, where abortions were more readily available, as well as better and safer.

The question of the pill is also important and interesting. In the West, Schering introduced the pill to the German market in June 1961. In the DDR, there was a lengthy research period, with the pill appearing only in 1965. But it was then distributed free of charge, which made a huge difference. In West Germany in 1965, years after the pill had already

abortion and the pill. On the one hand, it cited the KPD in the Weimar Republic, which had fought Paragraph 218. On the other, it pushed the institution of the family; it needed population growth and additional labor and had to attract women into production, which in turn generated problems if women had no access to rational family planning. With their conservative program, the Stalinists were reacting on the one hand to pressure from the proletariat, including proletarian women, on the other to imperialism—they were, so to speak, attempting a wall-balancing act before the Berlin Wall even existed. Here again it is important to state that we Trotskyists defended the Wall, a bureaucratic measure (after all, that’s how the bureaucracy works!) but also, however, a defensive measure to stop the DDR from being bled white of acutely needed skilled workers. Thus we defended the Wall against imperialism.

The DDR bureaucracy’s program of “peaceful coexistence” entails the rejection of workers revolution and the illusory search for “progressive” bourgeois forces in the imperialist countries. The

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(continued from page 9)

families at home, and against the new state health centers. Women naturally realized the real advantages of obtaining better, more comprehensive medical treatment in a health center than a midwife could provide at home, and bit by bit the midwives were integrated into the health system. Between 1952 and 1959, in-hospital births rose from 50 to 86 percent. So the churches really lost out with this probing action. And then the churches intervened again massively over the DDR's family legislation, namely against women in production—women had to remain with the family. This naturally did nothing for the church's popularity, since women increasingly grasped how their participation in the production process led to more independence.

It really is a case of “being determines consciousness.” Any need for the church simply disappeared over time for women in the DDR. And then the church sought to rise up with a campaign against the first-trimester abortion law of 1971. For the first time, a considerable number of no votes and abstentions were cast in the Volkskammer [People’s Chamber, the DDR parliament] from the Christian Democratic Union, which had seats as a member of the National Front. But the forces of the church could not set the world on fire over this. Under capitalism, private ownership of the means of production, linked, as noted before, to inheritance laws and the bourgeois family, needs ideological sanctification by the church. Capitalism needs the church.

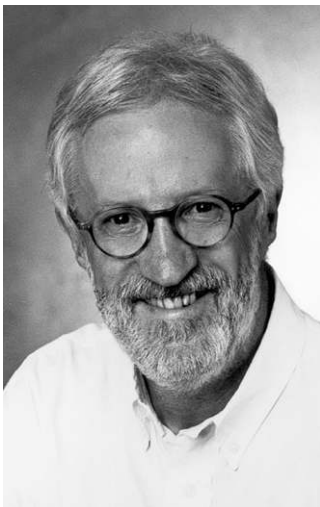
And in all class societies, this goes together with a more or less vigorous persecution of homosexuality. If private ownership of the means of production no longer exists, the church gradually loses its basis. Nobody has any use for it any longer, even though it may take years for its influence to diminish. In the DDR, this was such a long, drawn-out affair because the bureaucrats were hailing the family, thereby implicitly providing ammunition to the church! This glorification of the family in the DDR also brought with it ongoing, greater and lesser harassment of homosexuals, but there was a clear difference with the West and also with the East European states after counterrevolution: In the DDR there were no right-wing or Nazi bands roaming the streets terrorizing, for example, gay bars. There was some harassment, but it was really different from capitalism.

Then, in truly grotesque fashion, from the mid to late 1980s the DDR bureaucracy proceeded to provide ammunition to the church, which had basically been on its last legs with meager support—64 percent of the population did not belong to any denomination—through stupefying

bureaucratic repression of all the dissatisfaction that was bubbling to the surface of society. In particular, the Protestant church, which was supported by the West German SPD right down to its last hymnal, made its “free zones” available for discussion and so was able to gain ground. While the Stalinist bureaucrats were rather hard on opponents from the left, they were oh-so-accommodating when it came to the rights and the “free zones” of the church. That’s just grotesque: they assisted the church in becoming a factor in people’s consciousness.

Drawing the Lessons: We Communists Are the Memory of the Working Class

From the outset, there were countless men and women of every age in the DDR who consciously devoted themselves to “constructing socialism,” to the extent that they understood it, even if their consciousness was often distorted. Literature, particularly from the first years of the DDR, shows people who were euphoric over the real possibilities for women and men that had suddenly become available to them, possibilities that their parents, especially their mothers, never had! In the 1960s, for example, many artists and writers sought to bring “art to the working class” and the working class to art—the “Bitterfeld Way”—



Dr. Horst Theissen, imprisoned in West Germany in late 1980s for performing abortions.

with slogans like “Reach for the Pen, Mate!” or, conversely, “Writers into Production!” Even if these were in part official slogans of the DDR bureaucracy, they were often seized upon enthusiastically. There were loads of women—Brigitte Reimann, Christa Wolf, Maxi Wander, many others—who wrote very interesting stuff about the situation of women, both in the early years, in the midst of this setting off for new horizons, and afterward. It’s fascinating to read about this.

The proportion of women in the lower- and middle-functionary level in the SED and the state was quite high, among the people who actually kept things going



Spartakist Workers Party at 1992 East Berlin march against reactionary abortion law extended from West Germany to the East as result of capitalist reunification.

and organized things. But the higher you went in the DDR hierarchy, in the Central Committee or the like, the fewer women there were. The essential reason was that most women in the DDR had a family and children and hence a “second shift” that rested on them like a heavy yoke, so that they simply lacked the energy to fight their way upward. The ossified DDR bureaucrats at the top also emphasized, consciously, the important role of the “mommy.” In the program of the Stalinists, the special oppression of women, which would have had to be fought through socializing housework, simply did not exist.

But the answer did not lie in making feminism palatable to the DDR bureaucracy, as suggested by West and East German feminists alike. The answer lay in counterposing a revolutionary Trotskyist program to the politically reactionary program of “socialism in one country.” This is what Trotsky did and what we did in 1989-90. In January 1990, there was a giant pro-socialist, pro-Soviet demonstration in Berlin against a Nazi desecration of the Treptow memorial to the Red Army. At this giant demonstration of 250,000, which we had initiated, our comrades stood on the speakers platform, and for the first time in all those decades it was possible for Trotskyists to deliver a speech before a mass public in a deformed workers state. We called for the defense of the DDR and Soviet Union, for a new, revolutionary party, for political revolution and for the extension of the revolution to the West.

On the other hand, look at the programmatic spirit that permeated the Stalinist bureaucracy. It was not during the counterrevolution that this manifested itself for the first time in the DDR, though at that point it became crystal-clear. The SED renamed itself the SED-PDS [Party of Democratic Socialism], later just the PDS. And once Mikhail Gorbachev had given the green light to capitalist reunification in the name of the Soviet bureaucracy, Hans Modrow, speaking for the SED-PDS, promulgated the slogan “Germany, united fatherland.” These Stalinist bureaucrats, who called themselves the leadership of the working class and who were seen by many DDR workers as such, suddenly told the workers that the sole possibility was capitalist *Anschluss* to West Germany.

This was not a sudden, panicked transformation; there was a whole history of this. For example, already in 1987 a joint declaration of the SPD and SED was published under the charming title “The Contest of Ideologies and Joint Security,” in which the Stalinists simply crawled on their bellies before the SPD, pledging not to doubt imperialism’s will for peace and foreswearing the “process of world revolution.” Of course, they had already done this decades before, but now they put it down in writing again, emphatically. All of this was a prelude to Gorbachev’s withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan in the spring of 1989, leaving women in particular defenseless before the *mujahedin*, who had been financed

by the CIA and imperialism. When the Soviet Army marched in, we said: "Hail the Red Army in Afghanistan—Extend the gains of October to the Afghan peoples!" The woman question was an especially important aspect of our position. Gorbachev's withdrawal was a criminal betrayal.

Today, the remnants of the PDS are in the Left Party, which constitutes the second reformist mass party in this country—in Lenin’s words, a bourgeois workers party. They are laboring alongside the SPD to chain the German working class to its imperialist exploiters by telling them that there is no alternative to capitalism.

Counterrevolution in the DDR, in the Soviet Union, in the East European deformed workers states hit women especially hard. This is something we have always emphasized. In the DDR, it particularly hit women with jobs in industry, which has been destroyed by an imperialist campaign of vengeance. The number of people who cannot find work and are today forced to survive on inhumanly low Hartz IV unemployment payments is particularly high in the former DDR, and it is single mothers who are especially hard-hit.

Now as before, we Trotskyists call for unconditional military defense of the states where capitalism no longer exists: today China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba. These deformed workers states represent a conquest for the entire working class worldwide. Our program is for the working class—men and women—to sweep out the bureaucrats through political revolution and return to the road and program of the October Revolution. In capitalist countries, the bourgeoisie must be expropriated by socialist revolution. It is with this aim in mind that we are building our international party. We are the memory of the working class. We must carry this forward. We want to draw the lessons and learn from them, to prepare ourselves for victories. ***Women's liberation through socialist revolution!***■

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Der folgende Artikel wurde veröffentlicht auf der Website von *Workers World in PA* (22. Februar 2011) unter dem Namen der *Spartacist Group/C.A., Section of the U.S.A.*

Für eine Arbeiter- und Bauernregierung!

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Puerto Rico...

(continued from page 12)

March 7, students confronted Río Piedras chancellor Ana Guadalupe. Amid chants of “Resign!” the reviled administrator was shouted down at a meeting and literally run off campus, soaking wet from water doused on her by student protesters. With the security guards escorting her, the director of campus security received a cut under his eye and two windows of the campus security truck carrying Guadalupe were shattered.

With Fortuño pledging to throw the book at protesters, public condemnation of the activists was swift, including from their supposed supporters in the bourgeois Popular Democratic (PPD) and Puerto Rican Independence parties (PIP), as well as from Democratic U.S. Congressman Luis Gutierrez. In short order, the state slammed six students with charges that include “aggravated assault,” “damage to public property” and “interrupting a lawful meeting,” with bail totaling \$60,000. Ibrahim García, a supporter of the Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores (MST), faces three years’ imprisonment for allegedly assaulting the campus security chief. **Drop all charges against Ibrahim García and all UPR protesters!**

García and fellow March 7 protesters Robin Torres, Karla Torres and Rafael Ojeda were suspended from the university and threatened with expulsion. Giovanni Roberto, a spokesman for the Organización Socialista Internacional (OSI), which is associated with the International Social-

**December 8:
Organización
Socialista
Internacional leader
Giovanni Roberto
(left) appeals
to campus
administration’s
strikebreaking
thugs, declaring,
“We are not
enemies, we are
brothers.”**

Rivera Pichardo/El Nuevo Día



ist Organization (ISO) in the U.S., is battling suspension and a ban from campus. Other suspended student leaders include Waldemiro Vélez, Adriana Mulero of the MST and Javier Andrés Córdova Sánchez, youth club member of the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS). Despite our political differences with the reformist MST, OSI and MAS, we call on trade unionists, campus activists and others to defend them and all other protesters against the repression and reprisals. **Drop the suspensions! No expulsions!**

As the crackdown on the Río Piedras campus has shown, the capitalist state—the cops, courts and prisons—is a machinery of organized violence committed to enforcing the interests of the ruling class. On March 10, during the discussion at a “UPR No Se Vende” (UPR Is Not for Sale) forum at New York University, a Spartacist League comrade said, “It is important to

understand that the police and the campus cops and the security guards are deadly enemies of the working class and student strikers. They cannot be won over to your cause. Their job description is to smash the strike.” She asked OSI leader Giovanni Roberto why, one day after Capitol Security guards beat up a striker in December, he fraternized with those guards and told them, “We are not enemies, we are brothers,” as we reported in “Support the Puerto Rico Student Strike!” (WV No. 972, 21 January).

He replied, “I hug other working-class persons [!] because I not only believe in socialism, I not only believe that the working class should be united; we need to do that in practice.” Roberto proceeded to portray these hired guns as misguided black youth from the poor town of Loiza. After spitting on the basic Marxist understanding of the capitalist state and its aux-

iliaries, he concluded by scoffing that socialism is about what you do in practice, “not having the best theoretical perspective of how the revolution needs to be done.”

What the ISO/OSI do in practice is tell workers, minorities and youth to embrace the very forces of the capitalist state whose job is to repress their struggles. The simple truth is that regardless of background, when a person becomes a cop or security guard he becomes a servant of capital. Anyone who has been dealt a blow by these attack dogs of the bourgeoisie knows firsthand that they are squarely on the other side of the struggle.

Our speaker at the March 10 forum observed that the problems Puerto Rican workers and their children face today can ultimately be resolved only by socialist revolution, not only on the island but crucially in the U.S. In mobilizing against their capitalist exploiters, the proletariat in the U.S. must fight for the right of independence for Puerto Rico and demand all U.S. troops and federal agents out of the island now. For Puerto Rican workers, fighting the imperialists and their lackeys requires a struggle against bourgeois nationalism, which promotes the false unity of workers on the island with the local bourgeoisie. Marxists fight for the political independence of the proletariat from all parties of the capitalist class enemy, especially those that falsely portray themselves as “friends” of the workers like the PPD, PIP and the Democrats. What is needed is the forging of revolutionary workers parties in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. ■

South Africa...

(continued from page 12)

struck in the early 1990s bringing to power the Tripartite Alliance of the African National Congress (ANC), South African Communist Party (SACP) and COSATU changed *nothing* in the super-exploitation of mainly black labour for the profits of a filthy rich, overwhelmingly white, capitalist class. The Tripartite Alliance is a bourgeois government responsible for maintaining neo-apartheid capitalism. This means brutal oppression of the black majority and defence of the rule and profits of the same old Randlords who ruled under apartheid, now supplemented by a thin layer of black capitalists and others who’ve enriched themselves by joining in the exploitation of “their own” people.

The reformist COSATU and SACP tops do all they can to cover up this basic fact in order to justify their grotesque class collaboration of participating in the capitalist government. COSATU and SACP leaders were among the most enthusiastic backers of President Jacob Zuma as a supposed “friend” of workers. Since coming to power in 2009, Zuma has delivered on the promise of strengthening the repressive state apparatus to supposedly “get tough on crime,” appointing Bheki “shoot to kill” Cele as police commissioner and unleashing the cops against public sector workers during last year’s strike.

With the same nationalist class-collaborationist logic, the reformists embrace the strikebreaking thugs of the capitalist state as “comrades.” For example, COSATU includes the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU), while SAMWU and other COSATU affiliates organise security guards and cops and the SACP recruits cops into its own organisation. Whether black or white, the cops have the same job in the “new” South Africa as the police had under apartheid: to defend capitalist rule and profits by violently repressing workers and the poor. We oppose the inclusion of police or security guards in the unions and workers movement and fight for the complete independence of the workers movement from the bourgeois state. **Cops, prison guards and security guards out of the unions!**

Protesters struggling against the brutal conditions in the mainly black townships have been particularly hard hit by police terror. Last September, cops in Free State province shot and killed Nontsikelelo Nokela, a 17-year-old pupil taking part in protests against being forced to take matric exams without adequate preparation. In February this year, Solomon Madonsela was killed and many others injured as police fired rubber bullets and live ammunition at protesters in Wesseltown township in Ermelo, Mpumalanga, who were demanding jobs and service delivery. There were widespread reports of beatings and brutal torture by cops trying to extract confessions from protesters in police custody.

The situation cries out for the trade unions to mobilise to defend these protesters against the very same capitalist state which is shooting down trade unionists on the picket lines. Such a struggle, including championing demands addressing the burning needs of the township poor—decent, affordable housing for all; massive improvements in the township schools and infrastructure; skills training; and spreading out the available work amongst available labour with no loss in pay—would be a powerful action to build solidarity between the unemployed and the unions and undercut the attempts by the bosses and their government to pit them against each other. The participation of disciplined, class-conscious union marshals would also help to spike the outbreaks of anti-foreigner attacks which have become an increasing occurrence during the service delivery protests.

This requires a fight for a class-struggle leadership in the unions. The COSATU and other trade-union bureaucracies abandon the township poor to their fate out of class-collaborationist loyalty to the capitalist state which, in COSATU’s case, they are a component part of administering through the Tripartite Alliance. Outrageously, the COSATU-affiliated National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa in Mpumalanga issued a February 16 statement *condemning* the victims of cop terror in Wesseltown for their “violent protests”!

Immigrants from other African countries and Asia also feel the brunt of police repression, from raids on bars and nightclubs in heavily immigrant districts to daily harassment of hawkers, prostitutes and others trying to eke out a desperate

existence. To cite just one example, in November 2009 an Angolan street vendor in Pretoria was shot and killed by two (allegedly drunk) off-duty cops when he tried to keep them from stealing his wares. As proletarian internationalists, we fight for the workers movement to take up the defence of these immigrants and to organise immigrant workers into the unions with full rights and benefits. This is both a defence of democratic rights and an act of class solidarity for the unions’ own defence. **Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations!** This call is particularly important right now, as the government threatens to begin deporting hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans and is proposing draconian amendments to the immigration laws.

In the weeks following the killing of Msiza and other attacks on the union (all of which took place in ANC-run municipalities), the leadership of SAMWU caused unease in the Tripartite Alliance by warning that they “find it impossible to convince our members and the community” to vote for the ANC in the upcoming local elections and demanding that the ANC leadership “intervene urgently to address our concerns.” While COSATU spokesman Patrick Craven assured the ANC that this was “not a Cosatu position,” ANC general secretary Gwede Mantashe, who is also a top SACP leader, arrogantly dismissed “grandstanding by the Samwu leadership who want to eat their bread and still have it.”

Despite the hostile reaction by the

Alliance tops, the SAMWU leadership’s protests in fact have nothing to do with working-class independence from the bourgeois-nationalist ANC and everything to do with *containing* the anger of the union’s working-class base within the framework of the Tripartite Alliance, a nationalist popular front through which the interests of the working-class base of the SACP and COSATU are subordinated to those of the capitalist exploiters. Thus the SAMWU leadership’s resolution promotes the illusion that the ANC—a party of the bosses—can be made to be “worker friendly” if enough pressure is exerted.

This is a deadly illusion which will only continue to disarm the workers in the face of increased capitalist attacks and state repression. The working class can never wage a consistent struggle for its interests and those of all the oppressed if it is chained to the exploiters, their political parties and state through bourgeois nationalism. As long as capitalism exists, the gains which the masses have wrested through struggle will always be threatened. We fight to split the Tripartite Alliance along class lines as part of the struggle for a revolutionary Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party. This is the necessary instrument to lead the working class to a victorious socialist revolution that will shatter the capitalist state and erect in its place a workers state—the dictatorship of the proletariat. Break with the bourgeois Tripartite Alliance! For a black-centred workers government as part of a socialist federation of Southern Africa! ■

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True Face of Neo-Apartheid Capitalism Cops Kill Shop Steward on the Picket Line

The following article was written by our comrades of Spartacist South Africa.

On March 3, during an attack on a protest by striking bus and refuse workers in Tshwane (Pretoria), cops of the South African Police Service (SAPS) shot and killed Petros Msiza, a 43-year-old shop steward in the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU). Spartacist South Africa, section of the International Communist League, stands in solidarity with Msiza's union brothers and sisters and shares our grief with his family.

As a March 7 SAMWU statement denouncing the police killing rightly noted: "This is not the first of our members that have been shot, every few months the SAPS violently shoots at innocent protesting workers.... This attack and killing is an attack on the working class, not just SAMWU." In the same week as the killing, the Tshwane local government responded to SAMWU's "illegal" strike by firing some 1,000 municipal workers. A week later, some 22 SAMWU workers were arrested in Kempton Park on the East Rand outside Johannesburg during protests demanding the reinstatement of their shop stewards and the same pay as workers in other municipalities.



South Africa

SAMWU strikers attacked by police outside Pretoria bus depot, March 3.

Losi/Pretoria News

We demand that charges be dropped and the workers be released.

The attacks on SAMWU, affiliate of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), come in the context of a sharp increase in murderous police violence and a general police clampdown on all aspects of life of poor and working

people, leading the *Sowetan* (14 March) to warn of a "police state." A recent report by a member of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation reveals that the number of deaths from police shootings has more than doubled in the last five years to 568 deaths in 2009-2010—the highest level recorded since

the Independent Complaints Directorate began gathering statistics on police abuse in 1997. The *Sunday Independent* (20 March) reported: "Police researchers and lawyers who specialise in litigating against the police have warned that anecdotal reports of giving electric shocks, suffocation and other apartheid-style torture methods have become more prevalent."

With mounting social unrest come increased attacks on democratic rights and threats of police bonapartism. Recently SAPS cops carried out a raid on the office of the so-called Public Protector, who is supposed to investigate government abuses of power, just one week after she announced an investigation into corruption charges against police commissioner Bheki Cele.

As Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin wrote in *The State and Revolution* (1917), "The state is an organ of class *domination*, an organ of *oppression* of one class by another." The police killing of Petros Msiza is only the latest, most naked, illustration of this Marxist understanding of the capitalist state in neo-apartheid South Africa. While the rigid system of white rule through legally enforced racial segregation and subjugation was ended, the deal

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Cops Off Campus!

Puerto Rico: Protest Repression Against Student Strike Militants

Leading student activists at the flagship Río Piedras campus of the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) now face possible expulsion and new criminal charges as the university administration and colonial government try to stamp out protests against a steep tuition hike. These reprisals come on the heels of the hundreds of arrests and brutal repression meted out by Puerto Rican police forces during a two-month-long student strike this winter. The strike was provoked by the administration's plans to impose an \$800 "special fee" on students, after the systemwide UPR student strike of April-June 2010 successfully beat back tuition hikes for the fall semester (see "Student Strike Shakes Puerto Rico," WV No. 963, 27 August 2010).

The fee, which increases tuition costs by about 50 percent, has forced thousands to drop out since it was implemented in January. As we stressed in our articles in support of the strikes, there should be free, quality education for all up through the university level and a fight to abolish the university administration, to be

replaced by student, teacher and worker control.

To break the strike that erupted in December, the government dispatched SWAT units, snipers and hundreds of riot police, who invaded the Río Piedras campus for the first time in three decades. Meanwhile, the Puerto Rican Supreme Court declared the strike illegal. Since then, police have repeatedly and savagely beaten striking students. Testimony and video footage have surfaced documenting police torture techniques used against the students and sexual assault of young women who were arrested.

On February 9, baton-wielding riot cops ran amok, arresting at least 20 and wantonly assaulting students. In protest, members of the APPU professors union and the HEEND campus workers union walked off the job that afternoon in what became a 48-hour strike demanding an end to the police occupation. UPR president José Ramón de la Torre, who had invited the cops onto campus, officially requested their removal—and then tendered his resignation for "personal reasons." On February 14, Gov-



Ricardo Alcaraz

February 9: Cops assault protester at UPR's Río Piedras campus.

ernor Luis Fortuño did order the withdrawal of most of the police, leaving behind a smaller cop presence on campus. We demand: *All police, campus security and private security guards off campus!*

A student assembly voted the next week to temporarily lift the strike, although protests have continued. On

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