

Statehood Charade at UN

U.S./Israel Tighten Screws on Palestinians

On September 23, Palestinian Authority (PA) president Mahmoud Abbas formally asked the United Nations Security Council to sponsor the establishment of a state in the West Bank and Gaza by granting the Palestinians full UN membership. The Obama administration declared in advance that it would veto the proposal if it gained broad support in the Security Council. Thousands watching Abbas' speech on outdoor screens across the West Bank cheered thunderously at what they viewed as a step toward relieving the dreadful oppression they suffer under the Zionist jackboot. This is a cruel illusion. As one young man watching the speech declared to the London *Guardian* (23 September), Palestine will remain "basically a big refugee camp. Nothing on the ground will change."

The hopes of Palestinian officials that their appeal to the UN would pressure Israel into granting concessions quickly went up in smoke. Fascistic Zionist settlers in the West Bank, encouraged by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing government and the Israeli military, retaliated against the UN bid by burning and defacing mosques, assaulting Palestinians and torching their olive groves. Just hours before Abbas took the podium at the UN, a Palestinian father of seven was killed near Nablus when Israeli soldiers fired on villagers who were gathering to defend their farmland against a mob of settlers.

Several days later, Netanyahu announced the construction of 1,100 new housing units



Israeli security forces brutalize Palestinian demonstrator at Qalandiya checkpoint in the occupied West Bank, September 21. AFP

in Gilo, one of a ring of settlements built by the Zionists around East Jerusalem in order to cut it off from the Palestinians in the West Bank. That population has been increasingly confined by Israel's rulers in bantustan-like enclaves demarcated by a heavily guarded wall and separated off by Zionist settlements, "Jewish-only" roads and military checkpoints. Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, squeezed by a blockade imposed with U.S. support after Hamas

militarily took control of Gaza in 2007, are trapped in an impoverished, devastated ghetto, surrounded by the sea, an electrified fence and a wall along its border with Egypt. The Islamic fundamentalist Hamas appeared torn by the PA's bid at the UN, although some of its spokesmen distanced themselves from Abbas' appeal.

The Obama administration had warned the PA of dire consequences if it brought the issue to the UN, and Congressional Dem-

ocrats and Republicans voted almost unanimously to cut off aid to the Palestinians if the PA defied Washington's admonition. When Congress then blocked \$200 million in aid—threatening food programs, health services and infrastructure projects—the PA aptly termed it "collective punishment." A PA spokesman remarked that "it is ironic to be punished for going to the United Nations."

Not so ironic, really. From the three million killed in the 1950-53 Korean War to the terror bombing of Muammar el-Qaddafi's Libya this year, the UN has acted as a tool of imperialist depredation around the world. The treatment of the Palestinians themselves starkly illuminates the nature of the UN as a den of imperialist thieves and their accomplices and victims. The UN sponsored the foundation of the state of Israel, touching off the 1948 War and the mass expulsion of Palestinians from their lands. It was the UN that disarmed Palestinian fighters during Lebanon's bloody civil war, setting up the 1982 massacre in the Sabra and

Shatila refugee camps. At this year's UN session, the new Libyan state that came into being through NATO bombing easily won recognition while U.S. officials worked furiously to head off any possibility that a Palestinian state might be recognized.

Workers internationally must stand in defense of the Palestinian people against Zionist terror. The Israeli state is backed *continued on page 8*

White House Trumpets Killing of U.S. Citizen

Al-Awlaki Assassination: U.S. State Terror

On September 30 in remote northern Yemen, four men, two of whom were U.S. citizens, were killed by a missile fired from a U.S. pilotless drone. This was no "friendly fire" attack but an assassination carefully planned and organized at the highest levels of the U.S. military and the CIA on orders from the White House. The Obama administration immediately congratulated itself

for the murder of Islamic cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, who was dubiously labeled "the leader of external operations for Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula." The other U.S. citizen killed, Samir Khan, was involved in producing Al Qaeda's online magazine *Inspire*. From the point of view of the blood-lusting imperialists, this activity qualified him as an enemy "belligerent" whose killing could be dismissed as a casualty of the "global war on terror."

The murder of al-Awlaki sets a significant, ominous precedent. As a U.S. citizen, he was supposed to have some rights to confront and answer the allegations

against him. But for the rulers of U.S. imperialism, such rights are forfeited by those deemed "terrorists" or even "terror suspects." The assassination mission was planned for over a year, and every potential legal obstacle was reviewed—and dismissed—by lawyers from the Pentagon, State Department, National Security Council and intelligence agencies, culminating in a secret memorandum by the Justice Department authorizing the killing. It has been reported that the government's "kill list" includes three other U.S. citizens, who have not been publicly identified.

Washington's targeted killing of the

New Mexico-born al-Alwaki on foreign soil marks an escalation of the imperialists' "war on terror," which was launched after the September 11 attacks with wholehearted bipartisan support. Defined as a war without end against no readily definable enemy, the "war on terror" has served as the pretext for the murderous occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, the imprisonment of "terror suspects" at Guantánamo Bay and other torture centers and the increased shredding of civil liberties of the U.S. population. People have been targeted for "terrorism" investigations for their political views, and the government has enormously expanded domestic wiretapping and other surveillance operations.

Barack Obama, who came into office with avid support from the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy and among the reformist left, pledged to carry out the "global war on terror" with greater effectiveness than the widely reviled Republican Bush administration. While drawing down U.S. forces in Iraq, Obama has escalated the occupation of Afghanistan *continued on page 7*



Geronimo Pratt Refused to Bow

June 12, 2011

I appreciated the timely statement in *Workers Vanguard* No. 982 following the death of Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), a courageous former Black Panther Party leader who, throughout his 27-year imprisonment, remained unbowed and unbroken. We can be proud of being in the vanguard of those championing his fight for freedom, while for many years the liberals and reformists virtually abandoned him and other class war prisoners. But I write for a different reason.

As an activist in the Southern California based Riverside Political Prisoners Defense Committee (formed in the early 1970's to free three black men framed for murdering two cops), I along with a few others attended the farcical trial of Geronimo Pratt. The zeal with which the prosecutors and judge pursued his conviction was truly nauseating. I was in the courtroom the day they convicted him. The cops and the prosecutors could barely hide their smiles. They were thirsting for his blood.

It was noticeable how the fake left and liberals were absent throughout most of the trial. It was mainly a few friends of Pratt, his family, and some of us from the Riverside Political Prisoners Defense Committee who were present.

While shackled but with a determined look on his face throughout the trial, Geronimo made a deep impression on



WV Photo
Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt) at San Quentin prison in 1985.

me. In the eyes of the capitalist state, this fighter was a dangerous runaway slave, a captured commander with military knowledge who could lead.

Those were very difficult days. It was scary, and with so many former revolutionary minded black youth whom I knew dropping out of politics, jailed, or hooked on drugs, I wondered where I would end up.

Without exaggeration I can say that, more than any single individual then, it was seeing how Pratt refused to bow

down in that court that made me want to stay in the struggle. He knew the purpose of his conviction and that it was bigger than him.

As the article in *Workers Vanguard* notes, the Black Panther Party's nationalist program "doomed them to isolation in the ghetto."

But I'm afraid it was more than that. It led some of the best subjectively revolutionary elements to make their peace with the racist capitalist system and embrace the very capitalist Democratic Party of imperialist war, racism, and repression that they once opposed.

Don A.

On NYC Smoking Ban

June 17, 2011

Dear WV

I read with alarm your article "NYC: Anti-Smoking Totalitarianism" [WV No. 982, 10 June] as you outright deny the huge body of scientific evidence which shows a link between secondhand smoking (SHS) and increased risk of cancer and other diseases. In support of this position you quote a 20 year EPA report and a short, badly written, suspiciously non-specific Washington Post article written by Gio Batta Gori, a scientist who is fairly open about being a consultant for the tobacco industry and who makes clearly bogus claims such as study results not being consistently reproducible.

You go on to state that even for the studies which show a 19% increase in risk this is not statistically significant (!?). It's been a few years since I studied statistics where as I recall 5% was a general rule but this would vary depending on the data. I believe in epidemiology because very large numbers of people involved even a 2 or 3% risk can mean the unnecessary deaths of thousands of people but they have big problems in detecting such small variance.

In the same issue of WV you quite rightly decry the cutting of safety precautions for construction workers. If accidents were to increase by 19% due to falling safety standards would you not regard these as "statistically significant"?

In addition you state "As for the 19 percent figure, a number this low in such a study could be explained by anything from pure chance to previous family history" which completely ignores the issue of biological plausibility—we already know smoking causes cancer and we already know there is a dose-response curve, the more you smoke the bigger the risk. So it seems likely that exposure to SHS would increase cancer risk, just at a much lower dose.

Does this mean the ICL should change its position on Bloomberg's outdoor smoking ban? Absolutely not, the article makes some very good political points in that regard. Does it mean the ICL should change its position on the ban on indoor smoking in public buildings such as bars and restaurants? That's more difficult to say.

As a former (pre-smoking ban) bar worker myself I spent up to 12 hours a day, 6 days a week in often extremely

smokey environments so on the one hand I'm sympathetic to a ban which significantly reduces disease risk along with improving the working environment. On the other hand there is a real issue of individual liberty, the fact the bourgeois state will use any law it can to victimise workers and the oppressed, including smoking bans and the fact that millions of people who are addicted to smoking are now effectively ostracised from these environments which can hit older people particularly hard. Certainly I think smoking areas should be provided for people and good ventilation. And of course what we do in our own homes should be no business of the state.

In any case a political decision has to be based on the facts. And WV have got the facts spectacularly wrong in this case. I suggest you do more research, the 2006 Surgeon General's report on involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke (<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke/index.html>) would be a good place to start and there are literally hundreds of studies to examine on Pubmed.gov.

After all that I now feel like a cigarette... [author's ellipses]

Kind Regards,
Michael C.

WV replies:

Although conflicted on the issue of indoor smoking bans, Michael C. quite rightly expresses a healthy distrust of the anti-smoking zealots in government and beyond. At the same time, he admonishes us for denying "the huge body of scientific evidence" supposedly showing a link between secondhand smoke and increased risk of life-threatening diseases in our article. In fact, we reviewed such evidence, discussing the 1992 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) report by name and "subsequent major studies that tried to find a health risk from secondhand smoke," all of which showed "no statistically meaningful correlation."

Unless such proof someday becomes available, we stand by our longstanding position, which we quoted in the article: "Medical evidence on the effects of 'secondary smoke' is inconclusive, and the obvious solution is to provide adequate ventilation for everyone." However, we did also incorrectly write in regard to the effects of smoking that "for those who don't, but are merely 'exposed' to those who do, *nothing* has been scientifically proved to show that they suffer from secondhand smoke." Cigarette smoke is an irritant, as is all smoke; at issue is at what dose it may become toxic.

On this score, the EPA report, like that from the Surgeon General in 2006, mostly draws on studies of disease frequency in spouses of cigarette smokers. Where elevated risks of lung cancer were observed, the elevations were quite small. While an increased risk of 19 percent might sound like a person has a one in five chance of developing cancer, this is not the case. It refers to a risk that is initially extremely low increasing to one only marginally higher. To put it another way, buying a second lotto ticket will double your chances of winning, but the probability of hitting the big jackpot is still one in several billion.

Such a slight uptick in risk, even assuming it is the 30 percent from the 2006 report, cannot be attributed with any certainty to

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The Necessity of Revolutionary Leadership

The ongoing world economic depression emphatically underscores the need to forge revolutionary workers parties to lead the proletariat to power and sweep away the capitalist system once and for all. This point was stressed in a document adopted at the 1961 Annual Conference of the Socialist Labour League in Britain that addressed capitalism's recurrent crises and imperialist rivalries and the upsurge of liberation movements in the colonial world. The document was endorsed by the Spartacist



TROTSKY



LENIN

League's forebears in the Revolutionary Tendency of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party.

Reformists and opportunists of all varieties echo the spokesmen of the bourgeoisie in supposing, and hoping, that the separate manifestations of the fundamental world crisis can be taken one by one and separately remedied. Marxists claim that this is impossible. All such problems are related because of the inextricable connections between them established by imperialism itself. They do not assume, however, that imperialism will somehow collapse because the contradictions which it secretes will eventually bring the system to a halt. Such an idea of automatic downfall is no part of Marxism. The history of the last 40 years has driven home the lesson so often repeated by Lenin and Trotsky, that there are no impossible situations for the bourgeoisie. It survived the challenge of revolution and economic depression between the wars by resort to fascism. It survived the Second World War with the complicity of the Stalinist and Social Democratic leaderships—which ensured that the working class would not make a bid for power—and used the breathing space to elaborate new methods of rule and strengthen the economy. Even the most desperate situations can be overcome if only the active intervention of the workers as a class for themselves, with a party and leadership with a perspective of overthrowing capitalism, is not prepared in time.

—"The World Prospect for Socialism," *Labour Review* (Winter 1961)

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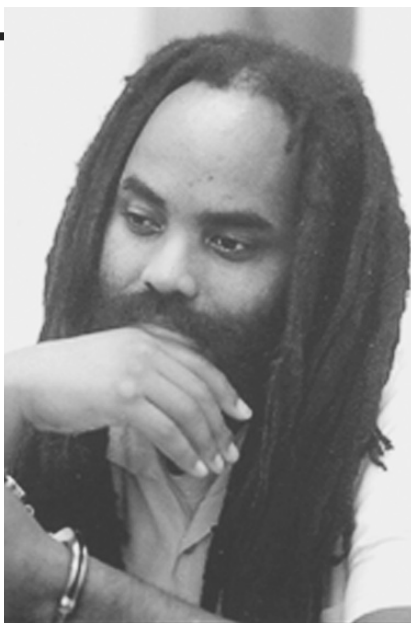
14 October 2011



Mumia Abu-Jamal: Supreme Court Rejects D.A. Appeal to Reinstate Death Sentence

OCTOBER 11—The U.S. Supreme Court today rejected a petition by the Philadelphia D.A.’s office to restore the death sentence for political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. The D.A. had sought to reverse an April 26 ruling by the Third Circuit Court of Appeals that upheld for

the second time a 2001 decision by District Court judge William Yohn overturning the death sentence on the grounds of faulty jury instructions (see “Federal Appeals Court Orders New Sentencing Hearing,” WV No. 980, 13 May). The D.A. now has 180 days to convene a new



AFP

sentencing hearing, the sole purpose of which would be to determine whether Mumia is to again be sentenced to death or will rot in prison for life.

The Supreme Court’s ruling dealt a blow, for now, to the prosecution’s drive to kill Mumia. But in no way should it justify faith in the capitalist injustice system. Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man who has already spent just under 30

years in prison for a murder he did not commit. Mumia was convicted for the December 1981 killing of Police Officer Daniel Faulkner based on lying testimony extorted by the cops, phony ballistics “evidence” and a “confession” manufactured by the police and prosecutors. A former Black Panther Party spokesman, a supporter of the MOVE organization and well-known journalist, Mumia was sentenced to death explicitly for his political views (see the July 2006 Partisan Defense Committee pamphlet, *The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal—Mumia Is Innocent!*).

The courts have steadfastly refused to hear the overwhelming evidence of Mumia’s innocence, including Arnold Beverly’s confession that he was the one who shot and killed Faulkner. As the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee have always insisted, fighters for Mumia’s freedom must look to link his cause to the class struggles of the multiracial proletariat. Trade unionists, opponents of the racist death penalty and fighters for black rights must not rest until Mumia is released from prison hell. **Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty! ■**

California

Sadistic Jailers Crack Down on Prison Hunger Strikers

On September 26, California prisoners renewed their hunger strike against the barbarism of solitary confinement in the state’s notorious “supermax” and other prisons. For three weeks in July, thousands of prisoners starved themselves to demand access to sunlight, decent food, weekly phone calls and that human contact be allowed for those locked up in the concrete isolation chambers of the Security Housing Unit (SHU). The strike ended when the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) agreed to allow the prisoners to have wall calendars and woolen caps to wear. The state’s jailers claimed these token measures as evidence of the “good faith” of their promises to consider other demands, particularly a review of the “debriefing” procedures. These procedures mandate that in order to get out of solitary, prisoners have to snitch out other inmates as “gang members”—a tag which is a one-way ticket to the SHU.

In a September statement, prisoners at the Pelican Bay SHU wrote that despite the July hunger strike, they “continue to be subjected to CDCR’s torturous human rights violations...barbarous policies and practices.” As the statement details, even to be allowed to buy art pens and paper or to

have their picture taken annually to send to family or friends, SHU prisoners must have a record free of any discipline for a year. While a prison memo promising these “privileges” was being handed out, a jail guard sergeant was ordering his staff to immediately write inmates up for disciplinary violations.

Far from reviewing the “debriefing” procedure, at an August 23 hearing before the California State Assembly’s Public Safety Committee, CDCR undersecretary Scott Kernan said that the department planned to *widen* its criteria for sending prisoners to solitary! The label of “security threat” that has been placed on supposed gang members will now be applied to inmates considered to be part of any “disruptive group.” The general population yards at the Pelican Bay and Tehachapi prisons are already being converted into SHU units.

Under order by the U.S. Supreme Court,

the state of California is being forced to reduce its overcrowded prisons, and the state’s jailers are worried there will be less money for them. Noting that solitary confinement costs nearly twice as much as regular prison, the Pelican Bay prisoners’ statement pointed out that the CDCR’s plans to expand these torture chambers are designed to “maintain their staff and funding status quo.” Hellish conditions in the jails are the bread and butter of California’s prison guards’ “union,” one of the most powerful political forces in the state.

Now, prison officials have branded the hunger strike as a “mass disturbance.” In a truly Orwellian twist, they have threatened to remove food from the cells of those participating in the strike! A CDCR spokesperson said that 15 hunger strikers in the general population at Pelican Bay have been sent to solitary “because they were identified as coercing other inmates”...into starving themselves! The

air conditioning in the SHU is maintained at full blast to keep temperatures freezing. As one strike leader told a lawyer for the prisoners: “It’s like arctic air coming through, blowing at top speed. It’s torture. They’re trying to break us.”

Two Bay Area lawyers who served as mediators for the hunger strikers in July have been banned from state prisons as a “security threat.” One reported that prisoners are being denied both family and legal visits and that their mail is being stopped.

The brutal and sadistic crackdown on prisoners who are simply asking for some vestige of humanity from their jailers throws into stark relief the organized violence of the capitalist state—its cops, courts, military and prison guards. As we wrote in “Hunger Strike in California Prison Hell” (WV No. 984, 5 August):

“The prisons are the concentrated expression of the depravity of this society, a key instrument in coercing, torturing and brutalizing those who have been cast off as the useless residue of a system rooted in exploitation and racial oppression. Elementary humanity demands that the SHU and all other solitary confinement chambers be abolished. But it will take nothing short of proletarian socialist revolution to destroy the capitalists’ prison system and sweep away all the barbaric institutions of the bourgeois state.” ■

Final Unraveling of S.F. 8 Frame-Up

Charges Against Francisco Torres Dismissed

SAN FRANCISCO—On August 18, Superior Court judge Philip Moscone dismissed charges against Francisco Torres, bringing to an end a decades-long frame-up of the San Francisco 8 (SF8). Former members of the Black Panther Party and Black Liberation Army, the SF8—now ranging in age from their 50s to their 70s—were falsely charged for the 1971 killing of a San Francisco police officer. After previous attempts to prosecute them had fallen through, the eight were charged and dragged through the courts beginning in 2007. In resurrecting its vendetta against former black radicals, the capitalist state had a dual purpose: to settle the score against those who fought for black freedom over 40 years ago and to warn that such political activity would be treated as “domestic terrorism.”

The victory for Torres is a genuine setback for the rulers and their state. Charges against five of the defendants had already

been dropped when prosecutors admitted that they had no evidence against them. Two others, Jalil Muntaqim and Herman Bell, made decisions to accept plea bargains with reduced charges of conspiracy and manslaughter. The two have languished in prison for decades in a separate frame-up conviction as part of the “New York 3” case (see “COINTELPRO Charges Dropped Against Four SF8 Defendants,” WV No. 941, 29 August 2009). **Freedom for Herman Bell and Jalil Muntaqim!**

The persecution of the SF8 was a continuation of the FBI’s COINTELPRO operation of the 1960s and ’70s, part of the government’s drive to destroy the Panthers through infiltration, repression and outright murder. The SF8 case was constructed on concealment and destruction of evidence, false testimony and outright police torture, such as a 1973 “interrogation” of three Panthers who were blindfolded and beaten for days and were

shocked with electric cattle prods on their genitals and anuses. In 1975, a San Francisco judge threw out their “confessions” because they had been coerced through torture.

The eight were finally charged in January 2007 as one of Democrat Jerry Brown’s first acts as California state attorney general. This served Brown well when he later ran for governor and sought the support of the police and prison guards. Held on \$3 million bail each, the SF8 were dragged into court in shackles and handcuffs during several months of pretrial hearings, painting a false portrait of the men as dangerous criminals. At a bail hearing in June 2007, the prosecutor argued to deny bail explicitly on the basis that these men had been members of the Panthers and/or the Black Liberation Army, claiming that their purpose was to “kill cops as a method of social change.” This lie has long been wielded by cops,

courts and prosecutors to railroad Panthers to prison and even death row, as in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was falsely convicted for the 1981 killing of a Philadelphia police officer.

Speaking at the Partisan Defense Committee’s 2009 Holiday Appeal fundraiser in New York for class-war prisoners, Francisco Torres stressed that “for those of you who still think these dirty tactics and COINTELPRO programs don’t exist...they still prevail and persist.” In defense of the SF8, supporters of the PDC and members of the Labor Black League for Social Defense attended hearings and rallies outside the courthouse sponsored by the Committee for Defense of Human Rights. In publicizing and protesting such frame-ups, we seek to instill the understanding that the labor movement and all fighters for black rights must take up the struggle against capitalist repression. ■

Kenya's Independence Struggle in the 1950s

The Mau Mau Uprising Against British Imperialism

The following article originally appeared in Workers Hammer No. 215 (Summer 2011), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League.

In April four elderly black Kenyans appeared in the High Court in London seeking recognition of atrocities committed against them during British imperialism's brutal colonial rule. The Kenyan claimants, Ndiku Mutua, Paulo Nzili, Wambugu Wa Nyingi and Jane Muthoni Mara, are survivors of the barbaric torture that was meted out to countless thou-

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sands of black Africans in detention camps between 1952 and 1961. Of the four claimants (a fifth died before the High Court hearing) Jane Mara was subjected to sexual abuse, one man was castrated and another was beaten unconscious during an atrocity in which eleven men were clubbed to death. British imperialism pillaged and exploited Kenya and used savage repression to crush the anti-colonial revolt known as the Mau Mau uprising.

The survivors are demanding that the British state take responsibility for their treatment in the camps and that the government pay around £2 million [\$3.3 million], a trifling sum, into a welfare fund. With swinish racist arrogance, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) insists that Britain cannot be held responsible, and that any atrocities that may have been committed under colonial rule became the responsibility of the Kenyan government that took over at the time of independence in 1963. Furthermore, says the FCO, too much time has elapsed for the claims to be valid.

The High Court has yet to decide whether or not the case will proceed to trial. But if the British state had got its way, the evidence in this case would never have seen the light of day. Since independence, the former colonial overlords have kept a tight lid on the documentary record of repression in Kenya. Nonetheless, much effort by researchers and advocates for the survivors has resulted in a significant victory. In May the FCO was forced to hand over 300 boxes of files, some 17,000 pages, including material relating to the suppression of the Mau Mau revolt. The departing colonialists destroyed many of the files at independence and removed others, having "made a calculated decision not to hand over any of its colonial era files to the Kenyan government" (guardian.co.uk, 5 April). A letter dated 7 November 1967, issued under Harold Wilson's Labour government, explains that the general practice at independence was not to hand over files that "might embarrass HMG [Her Majesty's Government] or other governments" or members of the police or military forces (guardian.co.uk, 5 April).

The mass torture and imprisonment of Kenyans during the uprising has long been documented by historians. To this day, any attempt to expose the truth of what happened has been sharply contested by apologists for imperialism. Caroline Elkins, author of the book *Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (2005), who is an expert witness for the survivors in the current court case, noted that: "My book was resoundingly criticised at the time of its publication. Historian Andrew Roberts wrote that I had committed 'blood libels against Britain'" (*Guardian*, 14 April).



Popperfoto

Langata concentration camp near Nairobi, 1954. British imperialists imprisoned and tortured thousands of Kikuyu during Mau Mau revolt.

Elkins estimates that between 160,000 and 320,000 people were detained in camps and at least 100,000 killed. David Anderson, author of another major work, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain's Dirty War in Kenya and the End of the Empire* (2005), documents 1,090 hangings of alleged Mau Mau. Mark Curtis in *Web of Deceit* (2003) estimates that 150,000 black Kenyans died as a result of British policy in this period.

The British capitalist rulers have carried out mass murder and torture on an immense scale, from the brutal occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq to the bombing of Libya today. Much of the wealth that laid the foundations of British capitalism was acquired from trade in African slaves. Brutal subjugation of the colonial world was part and parcel of imperialism's drive to secure world markets, cheap labour and raw materials. From Kenya to Aden, Cyprus, Malaya, Nigeria and the Indian subcontinent, the globe is strewn with colonial victims of the British Empire's pursuit of profits.

In Kenya the colonial rulers imprisoned in concentration camps a large proportion of the million and a half Kikuyu people, the country's largest ethnic group. The Mau Mau rebellion was essentially

a peasant-based revolt of the landless Kikuyu people against colonial rule that had dispossessed them of their lands, the basis of their existence. Although it was ultimately defeated, the uprising forced an end to colonial rule. In its terminal years, British rule consisted of naked state repression, culminating in an official "State of Emergency" lasting from 1952 to 1960. Arrayed against the Mau Mau was the armed might of the British colonialists combined with that of their Kenyan stooges, including the Home Guard and other forces. The colonial regime co-opted a layer of rich peasants composed of land-owning, educated Christians. These "loyalist" Kenyans included Kikuyu landowners who were deeply hostile to the landless Kikuyu masses and supported the British in suppressing them. This deep social polarisation within Kenyan society is key to understanding the independence struggle in Kenya and its outcome.

With independence in 1963 British imperialism was forced to relinquish direct rule over Kenya, just as it had been driven out of many of its other colonial holdings in Africa and Asia following World War II. Reverting to indirect domination, the imperialists now relied on the national bourgeoisie which in turn became more direct-

ly the oppressor of the masses. Nationalist leader Jomo Kenyatta, who had been locked up for supposed Mau Mau sympathies, was released from prison in 1961. He was correctly regarded by the imperialists as safe hands for maintaining their interests in the region. Kenyatta had denounced the Mau Mau and was regarded by the more militant leaders of the movement as a traitor to their goals of land and freedom, which indeed he was.

The national bourgeoisie that came to power in Kenya was incapable of resolving any of the fundamental problems forced on the Kenyan masses by imperialist subjugation—dire poverty, lack of education and all the attendant social and economic backwardness. The land-hungry peasants did not regain their lost lands; the plantations and large white-owned farms were not expropriated. The outcome of the Kenyan independence struggle confirms in the negative the programme of permanent revolution codified by Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky, who with Lenin led the 1917 October Revolution in Russia. The Bolshevik Revolution established the dictatorship of the proletariat, expropriated the landlords and capitalists and granted land to the peasants. The programme of permanent revolution means that in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the proletariat must draw behind it the millions of peasant poor to oust the colonial powers in a struggle for a socialist revolution against the local bourgeoisie. This requires a Leninist-Trotskyist party dedicated to international proletarian revolution both in the neo-colonial countries and in the imperialist centres.

Imperialist Subjugation of Kenya

Britain first laid claim to Kenya and other East African territory when Africa was carved up by the imperialist powers in the 1880s. The rapid expansion of the system of world trade fuelled competition between dominant capitalist powers to establish spheres of influence and to control land, raw materials, markets and sources of cheap labour. In contrast to Congo and South Africa, where the imperialists extracted enormous mineral wealth, British interest in Kenya was mainly strategic. To control access to the source of the Nile, the British built a railroad from Mombasa on the Indian Ocean coast to Lake Victoria in inland Kenya. Completed in 1901, the railway was financed by loans from the British government. The colonial overlords decided the loans would be repaid, and the cost of administering the colony would be met, through profitably farming the millions of acres of land through which the railway ran. To make this land productive, they brought in white settlers, mainly from Britain but also from South Africa, to produce cash crops.

The first British settlers arrived in 1902, lured by the British government's promise of cheap land and unlimited cheap labour. Writer Colin Leys describes the rationale behind it thus: "The settlers would invest capital and produce crops; the railway would earn revenue by carrying them to the coast, and by carrying the imports inland they would earn abroad," while "the government would finance its activities by levying tariffs on these imports." The British capitalist rulers were determined to force the toiling black masses to bear the cost of imperialist domination over them. As Leys describes it:

"The highlands were 'alienated' to Europeans; that is, Europeans bought the



Getty

London: Kenyans tortured under British colonial rule gather outside High Court, April 7.

land at nominal prices from the colonial administration. But at first they had neither the knowledge nor the capital to farm it very differently from the Africans on their land. They had not, moreover, come to Kenya to work as peasants. Their ‘farms’ were extremely large—an average of over 2,400 acres per ‘occupier’ in 1932. There was therefore only one solution, to make the Africans work for them. This the Africans had no reason to do, unless the Europeans had been willing to pay in wages more than Africans could earn from farming on their own account. But such wages would have meant little or no profit for the Europeans. Therefore Africans had to be compelled to work, partly by force, partly by taxation, and partly by preventing them from having access to enough land or profitable crops to enable them to pay taxes without working for wages.”
—*Underdevelopment in Kenya* (1975)

Roots of Nationalist Revolt

In order to claim the farmlands of the Central Highlands, part of the Great Rift Valley, the British slaughtered Kikuyus by the thousands. Many indigenous Kenyans driven off their lands were pushed onto “native reserves” set up by the colonial regime in 1915. These reserves were separated by ethnic grouping as part of reinforcing divisions among the Kenyans. As the population in the Kikuyu reserves grew and more British settlers seized the arable land, subsistence became even more difficult. The landless and impoverished black population was subjected to a system of racist laws regulating land, as well as a poll tax and a hut tax. There were also pass laws (*kipande*) like those in South Africa, prohibiting free movement including in the search for employment. Access to education for the poorest was nil; a small privileged layer was able to attend schools run by Christian churches.

The early British settlers were heavily drawn from the notoriously racist aristocracy. According to Robert Edgerton (*Mau Mau, An African Crucible*, 1990) “the Norfolk hotel, where they congregated when they visited Nairobi, quickly became known as the ‘House of Lords’” and “their goal was to recreate the Virginia plantocracy in which white gentlemen of breeding and leisure oversaw vast plantations worked by black men.” Sir Charles Eliot, the High Commissioner appointed to rule the East Africa Protectorate, as it was then known, proclaimed Kenya a “white man’s country.”

Outside the reserves other displaced Kikuyu became squatters on the white settlers’ farms in conditions akin to serfdom, raising their own livestock and crops for local sale in return for working the settler’s plantation. Beginning in 1925, with a surplus of available workers, the colonial government and settlers turned the screw on squatters. Rights of tenancy and to own livestock were cut back to the point where squatters laboured for the white farmers for below-subsistence wages. During the depression and World War II, forced labour was instituted to keep the settlers’ plantations functioning. By the mid-1940s there were over 200,000 registered squatters in the so-called White Highlands. With market prices for their produce set far below what the settlers earned for the same crop, the squatters were reduced to starvation conditions. Floggings by landlords were commonplace and squatters were evicted if they refused to sign new labour contracts on worse terms.

In the years leading up to the revolt the squatters were transformed from independent tenant-producers to rural, desperately impoverished wage labourers. Resistance among squatters took the form of illegal cultivation and sale of produce, mass refusal to sign new contracts and in some areas organised strikes. As described in a study by Frank Furedi, by the late 1940s, this resistance became “transformed into a militant wing of Kenyan nationalism.” The Mau Mau revolt was “the last stand of the Kikuyu squatter before his final destruction as an independent peasant producer” (*The Mau Mau War in Perspective*, 1989).

Although there were other ethnic groups among the squatter population,

the Kikuyus were the most numerous and were subjected to special repressive measures. Pastoral groups such as the Nandi people, who included many police, were regarded by the colonialists as potential allies and largely exempted from the anti-squatter measures. By the late 1940s the movement of resistance among the squatters had linked up with resistance in the reserves and Kikuyu radicals in Nairobi.

Kenya’s agricultural resources—principally coffee, tea and sisal—were profitable cash crops grown for the export market. World War II led to increased British investment in mechanisation, resulting in vastly increased profits for the settlers while forcing more black labourers off the farms and onto the reserves, which were already unable to support their population. This fed the disparity between the landed elite and the desperate and landless masses among the black population. By 1948 the population of the colony comprised some 30,000 European settlers, 5.2 million indigenous black Africans, and 98,000 Asians who were brought in as cheap labour but were banned from owning arable land and composed a mercantile layer. The White Highlands—the best



Kenya National Archives

April 1954: British colonial forces rounded up all Kikuyu in Nairobi in “Operation Anvil.”

farmland in the colony—was in the hands of the white settlers, some 0.7 per cent of the population.

During WWII more than 75,000 black Kenyans joined the British Army and fought in the King’s African Rifles and other regiments in Africa, Asia and the Near East. But in contrast to white settlers who served in the British Army and were rewarded with land and low-interest loans, blacks returned to worse conditions than when they left. Many returning black soldiers were inspired by independence movements like those sweeping the Indian subcontinent. With no land, some gravitated to Nairobi where the scarcity of jobs and housing forced many into an urban lumpenproletariat. Amid mounting bitterness towards the colonial power for which they had risked their lives, landless war veterans formed an organisation called the Forty Group which would go on to play a key role in the Mau Mau.

Divisions Within African Nationalism

The Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) had been founded in 1924 in opposition to the theft of Kikuyu land and lack of education. Jomo Kenyatta, an educated Kikuyu who had spent some 16 years in Europe, was a leading member of the KCA at this time. On behalf of the KCA he went to London in 1929 to pressure the colonial government for better terms for the Kikuyu. But contrary to a perspective for independence, his programme was for “meaningful cooperation between the colonial state and his people” (*Mau Mau and Kenya*, Wunyabari Maloba, 1993). Kenyatta returned to Kenya in 1946 where he was widely revered as the Kikuyus’ leader, the “Burning Spear” who symbolised the growing anti-colonial sentiment among the black population. After the KCA was outlawed in 1941 the Kenya African Union (KAU) was formed in

1944. In 1947 Kenyatta became the leader of the KAU, nominally a nationalist party of all African ethnic groups but dominated by the Kikuyu. The KAU included some trade union militants; its leaders were educated and some had lived abroad. Its demands centred on better conditions for the black population under colonial rule. Although the KAU was for independence in principle it did not see this as attainable in the near future.

The organised working class was relatively weak, but was young and combative. The trade union component of the KAU leadership represented urban workers including government clerks, taxi drivers, shop workers and others. The African Workers Federation was formed by Chege Kibachia, who organised a strike of dockers—a potentially strategic workforce—in the port city of Mombasa. He was arrested in 1947 while fighting for a general strike in Nairobi and detained in a remote outpost for ten years. In 1949 the East African Trade Union Congress was formed by Fred Kubai, who was later imprisoned, and an Asian communist, Makhan Singh. This organisation was banned in 1950 and Singh was deported

and held in a remote area near the Ethiopian border for eleven years.

By late 1947 evicted squatters had become frustrated at the lack of any gains through the gradualist methods of the KAU. Members of the KCA led a militant illegal society and began using the Kikuyu oath to cement unity in struggle. The Kikuyu fighters referred to themselves as the Land Freedom Army or “the movement” but came to be called Mau Mau. The colonial rulers seized on the oath to demonise Mau Mau and to legitimise savage repression against the Kikuyu people. The Mau Mau became the vehicle for mass resistance to the eviction of squatters from white farms. The core of the guerrilla fighters, led by WWII veterans, trained and lived in the forests of the Aberdare Mountains and Mount Kenya. Their weaponry was sparse and they were barely fed and clothed—and then only due to the heroic efforts of sympathisers in the reserves.

It is impossible to overstate the extent of racist hysteria among the settlers and colonial government, which reverberated in the pages of the *Daily Mail* in Britain. Whole pseudoscientific theories were concocted about the “illness” particular to black Africans. Typical was the ranting of colonial secretary Oliver Lyttelton who wrote: “The Mau Mau oath is the most bestial, filthy, nauseating incantation which perverted minds can ever have brewed” (quoted in *Mau Mau, An African Crucible*).

The colonial state used widespread repression between 1950-52. However, the audacious daylight killing by Mau Mau of a prominent loyalist chief in October 1952 was seized on by the new colonial governor, Evelyn Baring, as a pretext for declaring a State of Emergency and letting loose a reign of terror by the security forces. Kenyatta and other KAU leaders were imprisoned and later convicted of masterminding Mau Mau in a sensation-

alised and rigged show trial.

The deep division between wealthy loyalist Kikuyu and the landless poor was brought home in the Lari massacre in March 1953. Lari, near the Aberdare forest not far from Nairobi, symbolised the dispossession of land once farmed by peasants and systematically stolen, much of it now in the hands of wealthy loyalists. Mau Mau fighters killed a major loyalist chief and some 97 others at Lari, indiscriminately targeting families, including many women and children. In retaliation, up to 400 Kikuyu were slaughtered by the government forces, including the Home Guard, which was a key military force alongside the British Army and the colonial forces. Eventually 71 people were hanged for the Lari killings. This episode sharply fed the racist frenzy among the settlers and in Britain and increased the polarisation among the Kikuyu people.

Under the State of Emergency the settlers, British Army and Home Guard were permitted to summarily execute anyone who failed to stop when ordered. Thousands of Kikuyu were shot on sight. The Kenya Regiment and Kenya Police Reserve, both made up of settlers, were notoriously brutal. However, many authors also stress the extreme brutality of the Home Guard, loyalists who often had personal scores to settle with their neighbours. And they were not few: there was in fact an aspect of civil war to the Mau Mau uprising, between those who had benefited from co-operation with colonialism and those who were dispossessed and recipients only of brutality and exploitation. There is a similarity to the French colonial war in Algeria that took place at the same time, in which the French imperialists killed a million people—over a tenth of the population. In both cases there was a colonial settler population and a large loyalist militia co-opted from among the indigenous population.

Virtually the entire population of one and a half million Kikuyu were rounded up and “screened” during the Emergency. In Nairobi, where the rebel command was based, the colonial forces carried out a devastating month-long siege in April 1954 known as Operation Anvil, in which all Kikuyu in the city were rounded up and up to 30,000 were taken away for further “interrogation.” Screenings were usually performed by loyalist Kikuyu who wore hoods to conceal their identities from people they had often known their entire lives. With a nod of the head, these stooges sent their neighbours to detention camps. The camps were part of a vast system of prisons, interrogation centres and torture outposts known as the “Pipeline.” This included over a hundred camps and prisons, not counting the camps run by individual loyalist chiefs and white settlers throughout the Rift Valley and central provinces. In the camps, jails and screening centres Kikuyu were starved, beaten and tortured until they “confessed.”

In 1954 the government began the “villagisation” policy of uprooting Kikuyu and resettling them in new villages—actually

continued on page 6

WORKERS HAMMER
No. 276 15p 15th OCTOBER 1951
the official newspaper of the Spartacist League

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Kenya...

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barbed wire-enclosed concentration camps under the control of the Home Guard and military. The villages the Kikuyu left behind were burned down and their livestock confiscated. The aim was to cut off the Mau Mau fighters’ supply lines by virtually imprisoning that part of the Kikuyu population not already in detention camps. Between June 1954 and October 1955, 1,077,500 Kikuyu were relocated to 854 “villages.” One survivor recounted to Caroline Elkins the treatment of the “villagers” by the Home Guard and British:

“Some people who had refused to confess were being put in sacks, one covering the lower part of their bodies while the other covered the upper part. Then petrol or paraffin would be poured over the sacks, and those in charge would order them to be lit. The people inside would die writhing in the flames. Many people were dying every day. And it was the people who refused to confess, even after all the bad things that were being done to them; they were always killed in order to instill fear into others who might think of concealing the truth.”
—*The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya*

By 1954-55, the colonial government undertook a programme of land consolidation called the Swynnerton Plan which anticipated the land settlement that would be agreed at independence. The plan aimed to reinforce class divisions, rewarding loyalists with large parcels of land, declaring: “Former government policy will be reversed and able, energetic or rich Africans will be able to acquire more land and bad or poor farmers less, creating a landed and a landless class. This is a normal step in the evolution of a country” (quoted in *Underdevelopment in Kenya*).

By late 1956 the guerrillas had been militarily defeated but mass detention and torture continued into 1959. That same year, public opinion in Britain turned sharply against colonial rule in Kenya when evidence came to light of a massacre in Hola camp, a particularly brutal detention centre for Mau Mau, in which eleven men were beaten to death in March.

Kenya achieved independence in an international context in which British imperialism had suffered profound decline following WWII and national independence struggles had forced an end to colonial rule in India and were raging throughout Africa. The war on the part of Britain, France, Germany, Japan and the United States was an interimperialist conflict in which the working people and oppressed masses had no side. The working class did however have a side in defence of the Soviet workers state. The Soviet Union was no longer the revolutionary workers state that it was under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, having undergone a political degeneration, beginning in 1923-24, under the bureaucratic caste led by Joseph Stalin. Nevertheless it remained a degenerated workers state until counterrevolution

triumphed in 1991-92. It was the Soviet army’s victory over the imperialist armies of Nazi Germany that ended the carnage of WWII.

Following the war the imperialists ramped up their anti-Soviet Cold War and in the 1950s a central preoccupation of the colonial powers in Africa was to curtail the influence of the Soviet Union, which had provided support to nationalist movements, albeit within the framework of “peaceful co-existence” with imperialism. At the time, “anti-imperialist” rhetoric poured forth from bourgeois-nationalist leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah, leader of newly independent Ghana, and Patrice Lumumba in the former Belgian Congo, who was murdered by the CIA in 1961. In 1960 South African troops massacred



A. Hopf

Left: Nationalist leader Jomo Kenyatta (center) in British detention. Right: Kenyatta taking oath of office as Kenya’s first president, 1963.

69 black activists at Sharpeville who were protesting the hated apartheid pass laws. The CIA worked with South African armed forces and in 1962 tipped them off to Nelson Mandela’s whereabouts, leading to his 27-year imprisonment.

Kenyatta: Henchman of Imperialism

In a 1957 speech then-British prime minister Harold Macmillan said, referring to the peoples of Africa, “if they are exposed to the full force of nationalism, it is up to us to see that they are steered away from Communism” (quoted in *African Affairs*, January 1970). Jomo Kenyatta was certainly an asset to the imperialists in that regard. When released from detention in August 1961 he was still widely revered by the masses and seen as the leader who would take Kenya to *Uhuru* (freedom). As the Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong’o, who was imprisoned for his outspoken criticisms of the Kenyatta government, noted: “Looking at Kenyatta people tended to see what they wanted to see rather than what there was: petty bourgeois vacillations and opportunism” (quoted in Maloba, *Mau Mau and Kenya*).

Kenyatta preached “forgiveness” towards the murderous chiefs and Home Guard who had been the eager jailers and tor-

turers of the Kikuyu masses, saying they were “all brothers and sisters and there should be no revenge.” He assured the European landowners their property rights were safe. He became the leader of the Kenya African National Union party, composed of mainly Kikuyu and Luo people, which saw itself as successor to the KAU and which was voted into government in 1963. Formal independence of Kenya was granted in December of that year.

With regard to the all-important question of land ownership, Kenyatta & Co. accepted a rotten deal which allowed for the rich Kikuyu to buy land from the white settlers, for which they could obtain loans from the British government. The large plantations and ranches owned by foreign capital were untouched. Needless to say



no credit

the mass of peasants remained landless. Kenyatta and his cronies were prepared to give the white settlers everything; the black peasants received only continued poverty and repression. Mau Mau veterans who rejected the deal formed a new Kenya Land and Freedom Army demanding the return of stolen lands. The Kenyatta government cracked down on these fighters, sentencing them to long prison terms. As one of the former leaders of the radical wing of the KAU, B.M. Kaggia, commented bitterly: “We were struggling to regain our own lands which were stolen by the British colonial government. We were not fighting for the right to buy our own land” (*East African Standard*, 22 April 1965). Kenyatta turned to the police and army, just like the British who had detained him. A famous anecdote tells of a meeting two years after independence between president Kenyatta and former colonial governor Baring who was visiting. Baring said: “By the way, I was sitting at that actual desk when I signed your detention order twenty years ago.” Kenyatta replied: “If I had been in your shoes at the time I would have done exactly the same.”

Under capitalist rule, much of the wealth of the former colony continued to flow into the coffers of the erstwhile colonial masters. After independence Britain continued to dominate the economy in Kenya. The rising black bourgeoisie were at one with the propertied settlers in stifling the Asian entrepreneurs and ensuring racist economic policies and legislation discriminating against Asian-owned enterprise. Such policies culminated in the mass expulsion of Asians in 1967-68 in Kenya under so-called “Africanisation.” Soon after in Uganda, this same policy was carried out by Idi Amin to a particularly brutal degree.

The bourgeois nationalists who came to power in Kenya reinforced tribal divisions and upheld backward anti-woman practices. From the 1920s, the Kikuyu-based KCA was a vigorous defender of female genital mutilation (FGM). In response to a 1929 campaign waged by the Christian churches in Kenya in alliance with the educated elite against FGM, the KCA and Kenyatta defended FGM as part of “African culture,” thus condoning this retrograde and barbaric practice which is widespread today in parts of Africa, Asia and the Near East. There is nothing new in the British imperialist rulers hypocritically purporting to defend women’s rights in the colonial world—such as opposing

suttee (immolation of widows) in India and the veil in the Islamic world—as a cynical ploy to dress up imperialist occupation as a “civilising mission.” While we fight every aspect of imperialist oppression, we vehemently oppose practices such as FGM, an especially brutal aspect of the oppression of women which maims them and means a lifetime of excruciating pain. (See “The Crime of Female Genital Mutilation,” *Women and Revolution* No. 41, Summer/Autumn 1992.)

For Permanent Revolution Throughout Africa

To this day Kenyan society is riven by murderous tribal and ethnic violence which is a legacy of colonial rule. At the time of Kenyatta’s death we wrote that

the “Grand Old Man” of Kenya rose to the presidency as a Kikuyu tribalist. We added:

“An Oxford-educated elite may be at home in the capitals of Europe, but as soon as any serious social unrest breaks out, the underlying tribalism and other indices of backwardness are quickly bared. This is not merely a holdover from the past: imperialism actually intensified and formalized ethnic rivalries with its divide-and-rule policies. Today the same patterns are fostered by the requirements of maintaining a political base in an environment of massive poverty.”
—*Workers Vanguard* No. 214, 8 September 1978

A workers and peasants government in Kenya would expropriate the highly mechanised and capital-intensive large white-owned farms and transform them into modern large-scale collective and state farms. Councils of workers and rural toilers would decide on land distribution. A collectivised economy must be extended to neighbouring countries in the context of a socialist federation in sub-Saharan Africa.

The proletariat is the only class with the social power to bring the capitalist system to its knees and replace it with the dictatorship of the proletariat. The powerful South African proletariat is key to a revolutionary perspective in the whole region. Our comrades of Spartacist South Africa (SSA) fight to build a Leninist-Trotskyist party to lead the struggle for socialist revolution—for a black-centred workers government. Adequate housing for the millions in the townships, squatter camps and villages, electricity and water for the entire population, free quality education, the eradication of *lobola* (bride price) and other traditional patriarchal practices oppressive to women: these desperately needed measures require the socialist transformation of the economy and society under the dictatorship of the proletariat, fighting to promote socialist revolution throughout the African continent and worldwide. As a recent article written by the SSA said:

“As part of a socialist federation of Southern Africa, a black-centred workers government would fight to extend revolution to the imperialist centres of the U.S., West Europe and Japan. It will take an international socialist planned economy to lift the urban and rural masses out of poverty and create a classless society of material abundance—the beginning of a communist society. This is the essence of Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution.”
—*Workers Vanguard* No. 964, 10 September 2010 ■

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Al-Awlaki...

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and massively expanded drone attacks, slaughtering villagers from Pakistan to Yemen and Somalia. The assassination of Osama bin Laden by Navy SEAL commandos in Pakistan in May was an act of imperialist arrogance typical of the U.S. “cops of the world.” Now, by assassinating al-Awlaki, the Obama administration has declared in effect that a U.S. citizen designated a terrorist can be summarily executed: no legal charges, no trial.

The decision by the White House to place al-Awlaki on a kill list was made in the aftermath of the failed plot to blow up a jet over Detroit in December 2009. The alleged bomber, whose burning underwear was extinguished by fellow passengers on board the flight, seems to have found al-Awlaki inspirational. The *New York Times* (8 October) noted that the secret Justice Department memo justified the plot against al-Awlaki “despite an executive order banning assassinations, a federal law against murder, protections in



Spillers/NY Times

Anwar al-Awlaki in Virginia mosque, October 2001.

the Bill of Rights and various strictures of the international laws of war.” In fact, the U.S. rulers had already dispensed with such legal formalities in pursuing the “war on terror.”

A case in point is the persecution of Jose Padilla, a U.S. citizen who was arrested at Chicago’s O’Hare airport in



Reuters

Miranshah, Pakistan: Mass funeral for victims of U.S. drone attack, June 16.

May 2002. Declared an “unlawful enemy combatant” accused of planning to set off a “radioactive bomb,” Padilla was eventually disappeared into a Navy brig in South Carolina, where he rotted for over three years without any charges filed against him. Padilla was tortured with sensory deprivation, hooded and forced to stand in stress positions for long periods of time and threatened with imminent execution. He was also forbidden to meet with attorneys or family. In 2005, the government finally filed ludicrous “conspiracy” charges against him. After a show trial, Padilla was sentenced in 2007 to more than 17 years in prison.

In 2002 and 2003, the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee submitted “friends of the court” briefs on behalf of Padilla, warning that his case posed “the evisceration of the rights and privileges of citizenship embodied in the first ten Amendments to the Constitution and secured on the battlefield of the Civil War and in class and social struggle over the past hundred and more years” (printed in *Class-Struggle Defense Notes* No. 31, Summer 2003). Explaining the ramifications of the government’s phony construct of an open-ended “war” on terrorism, the brief stated:

“Taking the Executive’s position to its conclusion, the assertion of its right to apply martial law means not only that the imperial President can detain enemy captives until the war ends, i.e., indefinitely; but also he has the prerogative to shoot enemy combatants engaged in active hostilities. In the ‘war against terrorism’ that translates to the right to assassinate any-

one, anywhere in the world alleged to be a terrorist, not just on foreign soil (as the U.S. has already claimed the right to do), but within the United States.”

The killing of al-Awlaki came shortly after a federal appeals court in Atlanta ruled that the sentencing of Jose Padilla was too lenient. We demand: Free Jose Padilla now!

Partisan Defense Committee

CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

Number 31 50¢ Summer 2003

BRIEF OF AMICI CURIAE SPARTACIST LEAGUE AND PARTISAN DEFENSE COMMITTEE ON BEHALF OF JOSE PADILLA AND GRANTING HIS WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS

In The UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS For The Second Circuit Docket No. 09-2315 (5-24-08)

JOSE PADILLA, Donna R. Newman, as Next Friend of Jose Padilla, Petitioner-Appellee-cross-Appellant, v. DONALD RUMSFELD, Respondent-Appellant-cross-Appellee.

On Appeal from the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York

SEE PAGE 2

Free All MOVE Prisoners! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! 25th Anniversary of Powelton Village Siege 18

'Anti-Terror' Dragnet Threatens 13,000 with Expulsions Stop the Deportations! 22

SL/PDC *amici curiae* brief on behalf of Jose Padilla can be obtained for \$.50. Order from/pay to: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal St. Station, New York, NY 10013-0099.

Al-Awlaki’s father, together with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the Center for Constitutional Rights, had brought a lawsuit raising a constitutional challenge against the Obama administration for designating his son for assassination. The Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) froze al-Awlaki’s assets and made it illegal for any attorney to provide him legal services without first obtaining a license from OFAC itself. The ACLU requested such a license, but OFAC did not even

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respond. This left al-Awlaki with zero rights, zero representation, no access to his own funds—obliterating any chance of legally challenging his impending assassination. Meanwhile, the alleged evidence of his terrorist activities remains secret.

In December 2010, a judge threw out the lawsuit on the grounds that the issue of targeting for assassination was a “political question” to be taken up by the executive branch—i.e., the White House has carte blanche to decide whom it targets for death. Furthermore, the judge stated that “no U.S. citizen may simultaneously avail himself of the U.S. judicial system and evade U.S. law enforcement authorities,” effectively declaring that al-Awlaki had sacrificed his rights by hiding from the government that was intending to kill him! The judge’s deference to Executive Office removed any remaining legal obstacle for the White House to authorize its murder mission.

In the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, we warned that the laws and measures initially targeting immigrants from overwhelmingly Muslim countries would also be used to eviscerate the rights of the population as a whole, especially endangering the oppressed black population and targeting the labor movement as well. We stressed as well that what the government is actually able to get away with will ultimately be determined by the level of social struggle. As Obama has broken new ground in the assault on constitutional rights, it is important to understand that none of the rights and gains that working people hold dear will be secure as long as the capitalists hold power.

As communists, we have no sympathy for retrograde Islamic fundamentalists and the Al Qaeda terrorists. But we recognize that the greatest terror threat comes from the imperialist rulers. It is in the class interests of the proletariat to oppose the imperialist wars and occupations and the assaults on democratic rights carried out by the capitalist rulers. Our aim is to build a revolutionary workers party that will mobilize the social power of the proletariat, at the head of all the exploited and oppressed, to sweep away this capitalist system of repression and war. Our model is the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin, which led the working class of Russia to power in the October Revolution of 1917. As Lenin described in *What Is To Be Done?* (1902), a revolutionary party must act as the tribune of the people, “able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; ...able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation,” and setting forth socialist convictions and democratic demands “in order to clarify for *all* and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.” ■

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Palestine...

(continued from page 1)

to the hilt by the Democratic and Republican parties of U.S. imperialism, the biggest enemy of working people and the oppressed around the globe, and is supported as well by the rulers of Germany and other capitalist powers. To defend its interests in the oil-rich Near East, U.S. imperialism each year pumps some \$3 billion in military aid to Israel and shells out another \$1.3 billion for Egypt's military, relying as well on the Saudi monarchy and the despots ruling the Persian Gulf states. *Down with the blockade of Gaza! All Zionist troops and settlers out of the West Bank and East Jerusalem! Down with U.S. aid to Israel, Egypt!*

For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

At the heart of the Palestinians' oppression is the fact that both the Hebrew-speaking and Palestinian peoples claim the same slice of land in the Near East. Figures on the Zionist right, such as Netanyahu's foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman, have long raised the rallying cry of "transfer"—i.e., the forced expulsion of all Palestinian Arabs from the Occupied Territories, and perhaps from within Israel itself. This perspective goes back to the "founding fathers" of the Zionist state. The head of the Jewish Agency's Colonization Department, Joseph Weitz, wrote in 1940: "Between ourselves it must be clear that there is no room for both peoples together in this country.... And there is no other way but to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighboring countries; to transfer all of them; not one village, not one tribe should be left" (quoted in introduction to Maxime Rodinson, *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?* [1973]).

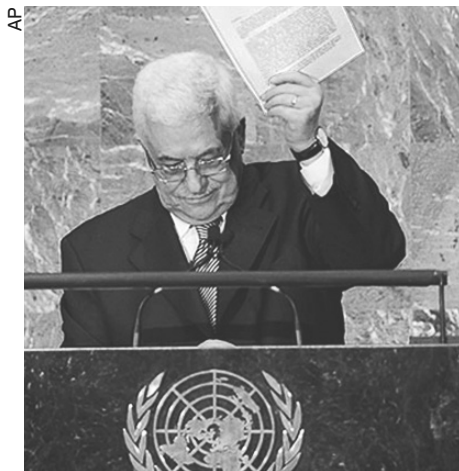
As has been repeatedly demonstrated in Israel/Palestine, the Balkans and Northern Ireland, under capitalism the only possible outcome to the conflict between geographically interpenetrated peoples is one nation on top with the other either expelled, subjugated or some combination thereof. To secure the national rights of the oppressed Palestinians without thereby denying the national existence of the Hebrew-speaking people, the Zionist garrison state must be shattered from within through Arab/Hebrew workers revolution. As long as the national principle prevails, the oppression of the Palestinians, who are the weaker side, can only worsen. Only within the framework of a socialist federation of the Near East can the right of national self-determination of both the Palestinian Arab and Hebrew-speaking peoples and the many other minority peoples of the region be equitably realized.

In 1974, after Yasir Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) first came out for a "two-state" solution to Palestinian national oppression, we declared that at most it represented "a very partial and deformed expression of the Palestinian Arabs' right to self-determination" ("West Bank Mini-State No Solution," WV No. 57, 22 November 1974). Since the U.S.-sponsored 1993 Oslo accord between Israel's then-Labor Party government and



Reuters

Left: Israeli prime minister Netanyahu with Barack Obama at UN, September 21. Right: Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas addressing UN General Assembly, September 23.



AP

the PLO, what has been on offer as an "independent" Palestine is a rump state consisting of the Gaza Strip and four isolated cantons in the West Bank. We warned at the time that far from offering even the most deformed expression of self-determination, Arafat's deal placed the PLO's seal on the national oppression of the Palestinians.

At best, the "two-state solution" being pushed by the imperialists, "left" Zionists and Arab nationalists would mean an impoverished Palestinian statelet under the stranglehold of the Zionist capitalist state and with no viable economy. Among other things, it would permanently consign the millions of Palestinian refugees to the camps in Lebanon, Jordan and

states" is just a social-democratic veneer to the perspective of a Palestinian mini-state ghetto.

In the concrete, the Taafeites crassly capitulate to the Zionist rulers. The SP article fails to raise even the simple, unambiguous demands for defense of the Palestinian people against Zionist terror and for all Israeli troops and settlers out of the Occupied Territories. As for the CWI's section in Israel, Thua't Maavak Sozialisti (Socialist Struggle Movement), an article it produced on this summer's mass protests in Israel over the high cost of living maintained Zionist "unity" by avoiding any call to defend the Palestinians as well as any discussion of how to achieve Palestinian national rights. (The article is



AFP

May 15: Palestinian police stop demonstrators on way to Jewish settlements in the West Bank city of Hebron on anniversary of 1948 founding of Israel.

elsewhere where they now languish or get them dumped into the impoverished mini-state.

A "socialist" rendition of the "two-state solution" is provided by Peter Taafe's fake-Trotskyist Committee for a Workers' International (CWI, represented by Socialist Alternative in the U.S.). The CWI's British mainstay, the Socialist Party (SP), declares that "a capitalist Palestine alongside a capitalist Israel would not end poverty and bring security for either state" and raises a call for "two socialist states in a socialist confederation of the region" (socialistparty.org.uk, 14 September). Yet the article nowhere mentioned the need for joint class struggle by the Arab and Hebrew-speaking workers, much less for Arab/Hebrew workers revolution. Thus the SP/CWI call for "socialist

posted in English on the Web site of their U.S. comrades, SocialistAlternative.org, 9 August.)

Hailing the outpouring over skyrocketing housing prices and other necessities as a "magnet for almost all other social protests," the article remarks that "even the police and prison guards...participated in some of the protests." This is in line with the CWI's long history of perpetrating the lie that the cops, prison guards and other armed thugs of the capitalist state are "workers in uniform."

For Arab/Hebrew Workers Revolution!

The massive protests in Israel this summer were perhaps the largest in the country's history. After years of government austerity and wage-gouging, Israel

has one of the highest poverty rates of any industrialized country in the world. Like all capitalist societies, Israel is divided along class lines and beset by political fissures. The Ashkenazi (European-derived) elite lords it over the Sephardic (Near Eastern) Jewish population, many of whom live in conditions of poverty. The wealth gap between Israeli-born Jews and Israeli Arabs, who constitute some 20 percent of the population, is four to one.

The core of the protests, modeled on the petty-bourgeois "Indignados" ("the indignant") movements in Spain and Greece, was a tent city that sprang up in Tel Aviv on July 14. As the protest movement was getting under way, public sector doctors and railway workers were carrying out strikes. Early this month, six Arab-populated Israeli towns in the Negev were shut down for a day in protest against a government plan to drive 30,000 Bedouins from their homes and confiscate their land.

While the most prominent slogan in this summer's protests was "The people want social justice," the "J14 movement" leadership refused to address the country's most obvious injustice: the oppression of the Palestinians. The petty-bourgeois protest movement was firmly within the bounds of the Zionist ideology that binds Israeli working people to their capitalist exploiters. Indeed, the tent cities in Tel Aviv and elsewhere attracted their fair share of support from fascistic settlers. Danny Dayan, chairman of the Yesha Council, the main group representing settlers, met with a prominent leader of the protest movement to express his solidarity. Baruch Marzel, formerly the head of Kach, the (banned) fascist party founded by American ultra-Zionist Meir Kahane, likewise brought scores of supporters to the Tel Aviv encampment. The settlers have a program to address the high cost of housing: They demand that the government expand the West Bank settlements by forcibly expropriating ever more Palestinian land.

While largely avoiding any hint of solidarity with the Palestinians, many protesters sought to link this movement to what has been dubbed the Arab Spring. Demonstrators chanted, "Tahrir Square is here" and carried posters with the names of Netanyahu, ousted Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak and Syrian despot Bashar al-Assad, linking the three as common protest targets. The struggles of workers in Tunisia and Egypt played a critical role in the toppling of the despised regimes

Letters...

(continued from page 2)

breathing in cigarette smoke. There are too many factors at play, from the presence of environmental pollutants to the difficulty of quantifying how much smoke actually has been inhaled. While it is true that Gio Batta Gori is in the hip pocket of Big Tobacco, his criticisms of the 2006 report that we cited in the article are unobjectionable—nor are they limited to friends of the tobacco industry in the medical community.

In addition, a lot of the studies over the years have failed to meet basic standards of "statistical significance." This term has nothing to do with the common usage of the word "significant" but

rather is a measure of whether a study's results are due to pure chance. When evaluating the studies, it also should be kept in mind that correlation does not per se prove causality.

The wildly exaggerated and unscientific statements in the 2006 report do provide ample evidence of the ideological crusade at hand. For example, among its conclusions: "There is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke." This makes a mockery of the most basic tenet of modern toxicology—"The dose makes the poison." It's as if there is no difference between exposure to radiation from a single X-ray and the fallout from a nuclear bomb. In the twisted minds of the Surgeon General and his army of moralistic fanatics, even ventilation is a curse, supposedly distributing smoke

throughout a building rather than dissipating and removing it.

The materials publicizing the report also repeat another favorite canard of the prohibitionists: "Smoking is the single greatest avoidable cause of disease and death." What pure bourgeois propaganda! The capitalist ruling class denies health care to tens of millions, kills untold numbers in its imperialist wars of depredation, starves the impoverished masses and daily puts the life and limb of industrial workers at risk as it squeezes out its profits.

Commenting on the outdoor smoking ban in NYC, the *New England Journal of Medicine* (23 June) noted, "Since smokers are more likely to be poor and therefore dependent on free public spaces for enjoyment and recreation,

refusing to allow them to smoke in those places poses potential problems of fairness." That's putting it far too mildly. There is a strong class and race bias to this puritanism, as Michael C. notes. While working people can no longer enjoy a smoke on the beach, in a park or while strolling along a pedestrian mall in the Big Apple and office employees huddle outside trying to sneak a puff, those with money light up freely inside "doorman and rope" nightclubs where a bottle of liquor can go for hundreds of dollars. Oozing ruling-class arrogance, Mayor Bloomberg, the Surgeon General and their ilk push a cause that has nothing to do with health and everything to do with the wholesale regimentation of the populace and a drive to increase workplace productivity. ■

The uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt have been dominated by class-collaborationist coalitions ranging from viciously anti-woman Islamic fundamentalists to bourgeois liberals and reformist leftists. In the name of “national unity,” the proletariat has remained politically submerged as a class. In Egypt, the same military that had been the backbone of the Mubarak regime is now openly the governmental power, arresting and torturing hundreds of leftists, worker militants and others. Women and Coptic Christians are increasingly besieged by reactionary fundamentalists and by the military regime itself, as seen in the horrific killing of two dozen Coptic protesters by security forces in Cairo on October 9.

Bankruptcy of Palestinian Nationalism

By the early 1990s, the PLO's reliance on the Arab regimes was supplanted by direct appeals to the imperialists, particularly the United States. After capitalist counterrevolution destroyed the Soviet Union in 1991-92, removing the main military and political counterweight to U.S. imperialism, the PLO was deprived of crucial diplomatic and financial support. This set the stage for the 1993 Oslo accords, under which the Palestinian nationalist leaders became enforcers for the Zionist occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

toward the Palestinians.

The idea that the U.S. capitalist ruling class could be pressured into serving as a force for good in the world is obscene. From its emergence as an imperialist power in the late 19th century, the U.S. has left a grisly trail of carnage around the globe—from its murderous “pacification” of the Philippines after seizing those islands in the 1898 Spanish-American War to the Korean and Vietnam Wars and the current ravaging of Afghanistan. But for reformists like the International Socialist Organization and Party for Socialism and Liberation in the U.S., their backing of the BDS movement is but one facet of an entire program based on the illusory quest to pressure the profit-driven, blood-soaked imperialist rulers and their state to serve the interests of workers and the oppressed.

Most of the left internationally offers nothing more than a “socialist” gloss on the treacherous nationalist program that has led the Palestinian masses into ever-deeper misery. A case in point in Israel is the Internationalist Socialist League (ISL), which is affiliated with the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) in the U.S. An undated statement last spring by ISL leader Yossi Schwartz declared (lrp-cofi.org):

A black and white photograph capturing a large, dense crowd of people at a protest or demonstration. The scene is set on a city street at night, with buildings and streetlights visible in the background. In the center of the crowd, a person holds a large, rectangular sign that reads "WALK LIKE AN EGYPTIAN" in bold, capital letters. To the left of this sign, another person holds a sign with Hebrew text, including "18" and "807". To the right, another sign with Hebrew text is visible, featuring the words "הממשלה" (the government) and "העם" (the people). The crowd is diverse in age and appearance, with many people looking towards the camera or the signs. The overall atmosphere is one of a large-scale public gathering.

“Palestine and not allow the right of self-determination of the Palestinians; or the Palestinians have the right of self-determination, which negates the right of self-determination of the Israeli Jews on Palestinian lands.”

But the Hebrew workers will never be broken from Zionism and won to the need for common class struggle with the Palestinian Arab toilers against the Israeli capitalist rulers if their own right to a national



existence is denied. Unlike the Palestinian nationalists, the anti-Semitic fundamentalists like Hamas and indeed the Zionists themselves, we do not equate the Zionist state with the Hebrew-speaking people. Nor do we accept the line of the ISL, LRP and much of the left that only the oppressed nations are endowed with valid national rights.

What is necessary is to build revolutionary Marxist parties throughout the Near East that fight against all forms of nationalism and religious fundamentalism and put forward the perspective of international proletarian revolution, crucially including the U.S. and other imperialist centers. The greatest historical example of such a perspective is that provided by the 1917 Russian Revolution, which, despite its later bureaucratic degeneration under Stalin, brought unparalleled and all-sided social development and national collaboration to the Caucasus and other oppressed regions of the former tsarist empire. Likewise, in the Balkans, long a seething cauldron of interethnic bloodshed, the social revolution led by Tito in Yugoslavia laid the foundation for almost 50 years of national peace and social development. The restoration of capitalism in both the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia unleashed the old nationalist hatreds and murderous "ethnic cleansing" anew, aided and abetted by the imperialist powers.

In the struggle to forge a revolutionary workers party in Israel/Palestine, Marxists can take inspiration from the Revolutionary Communist League (RCL), the small Palestinian Trotskyist group that upheld the position of communist internationalism in the 1948 War between Israel and the Arab states (see *WV* No. 981, 27 May). While recognizing the right of both the Hebrew-speaking and Palestinian Arab peoples to self-determination, the RCL resolutely opposed the imperialist-imposed partition and took a position of revolutionary defeatism toward both sides in the war, concluding in an editorial in its Hebrew organ *Kol Ham'amad* (*Voice of the Class*):

and the entire region. Only through the overthrow of the Israeli bourgeoisie and also the Jordanian monarchy, the Syrian regime and the other Arab ruling classes can the right of self-determination for both the Palestinian Arab and Hebrew-speaking peoples, as well as the many other peoples of the region, be equitably realized. There can be no revolutionary perspective in the Near East without the inclusion of the proletariat of Israel, the most technologically advanced and militarily powerful country in the region. We have no illusions that this will be an easy task; it will likely take some historic event, like the victory of social revolution in another country in the Near East

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Wall Street...

(continued from page 12)

new tax rate for millionaires (the so-called “Buffett Rule”) in exchange for Democrats’ support to more cuts in Medicare and Medicaid. In reality, this token “tax the rich” scheme is meant to be sugarcoating on another round of anti-working-class austerity.

Obama and the Democrats want to appear as if they care about “the little guy,” but in reality Obama championed the same austerity agenda as the Republicans all summer long, pushing for massive budget cuts. The Democrats, like the Republicans, are a political party of the capitalist class. As one Verizon striker put it, “The Democrats are doing the job of the Republicans, only with a smile.”

Economic crises, booms and busts, are nothing new—they are endemic to the capitalist mode of production. A key contradiction that Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels identified is that under capitalism production is socialized. But the means of production remain the private property of a few, who appropriate the wealth that is produced by workers’ collective labor. Those who own the means of production—the factories, mines, railroads, banks—constitute the capitalist class, also known as the bourgeoisie. Those who subsist only on their labor power—their mental and physical ability to work—constitute the working class, the proletarians. Between these two classes lies a variety of merchants, independent professionals and others known as the petty bourgeoisie. But the main, decisive classes are the capitalist class and the working class.

Consciously or not, labor seeks to resist exploitation. It comes into constant conflict with the uncontrollable drive of capitalist production, which is the drive for the accumulation of more and more capital, and the production of more and more profit. This is the basis for class struggle—the irreconcilable class conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

The Imperialist Epoch

V.I. Lenin, leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, described how capitalism in the late 19th century reached its highest stage—imperialism. He described how the means of production came to be monopolized by fewer and bigger conglomerates with ever-growing needs for investment funds and other financing, leading to the dominance of finance capital, centrally the giant banks. As the capitalists in the advanced industrial countries strove for newer markets to exploit, they carried out wars to redivide the world and secure spheres of exploitation in less-developed countries. In their competition for world domination, the imperialist powers engulfed people around the world in the barbarism of World Wars I and II and waged countless bloody wars in colonial and semicolonial countries.

The way out of the endless cycle of capitalist economic crises and imperialist wars was shown by the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, when workers took power in their own hands, expropriating the bourgeoisie and establishing the Soviet workers state. It is high time that working people, who create the wealth in this society, run this society! We need an all new ruling class—the workers! Fight, don’t starve! Labor must rule!

In a climate conditioned by the imperialists’ proclamations that the destruction of the Soviet Union proved Marxism to be a “failed experiment,” the prospect of proletarian socialist revolution might appear implausible. But the collectivized economy in the Soviet Union worked! Despite its isolation in a world dominated by imperialism, the Soviet Union, arising from deep backwardness and the destruction of world war, civil war and imperialist intervention, became an industrial and military powerhouse, even under Stalinist bureaucratic misrule.

When the capitalist world was in the midst of the Great Depression, the Soviet Union actually increased its industrial out-



Corbis



AP

Left: “Occupy Wall Street” protesters carry American flag, September 19. Right: U.S. occupation forces in Iraq brutalize residents of Falluja, November 2004. American flag is emblem of blood-drenched U.S. imperialism.

put. As Leon Trotsky pointed out in *The Revolution Betrayed* in 1936:

“Even if the Soviet Union, as a result of internal difficulties, external blows and the mistakes of its leadership, were to collapse—which we firmly hope will not happen—there would remain as an earnest of the future this indestructible fact, that thanks solely to a proletarian revolution a backward country has achieved in less than ten years successes unexampled in history.”

Now, two decades after counterrevolution destroyed the Soviet degenerated workers state, many in Russia long for



VV Photo

Foley Square, October 5.

the days when they were guaranteed a job, education, housing, health care and vacations, regretting that they were taken in by the myth of capitalist “democracy.” What undermined the collectivized economy, and ultimately laid the basis for the destruction of the Soviet Union itself, was the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy, which robbed the workers of their political power and vainly sought to appease the imperialists by selling out workers struggles in other countries.

Today, the deep economic crisis in the capitalist countries contrasts sharply with the situation in China, where the industries central to production are collectivized. Beijing has massively channeled investment into developing infrastructure and productive capacity. However, China’s Stalinist regime also undermines the social gains of the 1949 Revolution by conciliating imperialism and promoting “market reforms” that strengthen internal counterrevolutionary forces. In its “partnership” with world capital, the Beijing bureaucracy is subsidizing American imperialism through its huge investment in U.S. treasury bonds, which, among other things, are used to finance the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. As Trotskyists, we stand for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese deformed workers state against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. At the same time, we call for proletarian political revolution to replace the Stalinist

bureaucrats with a revolutionary internationalist leadership and a regime of workers democracy.

From Spain’s Indignados...

I want to talk a bit about Europe and in particular Spain, where I visited this past summer. Along with the wild roller-coaster ride of the stock market, Europe has been in the news just about every day with the imperialist rulers desperately trying to keep the economies afloat. In Europe, the financial crisis has sharply accentuated the contradictions inherent in the European Union (EU), an unstable consortium of rival capitalist states, some richer, some poorer. At the heart of the EU’s contradictions is the fact that the maintenance of a common currency requires a common state power. That is simply not possible under capitalism. As proletarian internationalists, we have always opposed the EU as an imperialist trade bloc. We say that only the conquest of state power by the working class can lay the basis for a *socialist* United States of Europe and a rationally planned economy.

In Spain, youth unemployment is around 45 percent. Factories are closing, hospitals are cutting back, and evictions during just three months of this year numbered over 15,000, more than 150 a day. When I was in Spain I got to discuss with some of the “Indignados” (“the indignant”) at their encampment in Puerta del Sol, the central square in Madrid. The Spanish Indignados are essentially a petty-bourgeois movement that arose in response to the austerity measures being enforced by the social-democratic Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) before its huge defeat in the municipal and regional elections in May. The PSOE in power has carried out a relentless capitalist austerity drive.

Those who started the Indignados movement were inspired by the best-selling book *Indignez-vous!* (Be Indignant!) by Stéphane Hessel, a French anti-communist bourgeois ideologue. They were also inspired by the protests in Egypt and Iceland. They occupied squares in major cities throughout Spain, numbering in the

tens of thousands, mostly youth, calling on people to “stand up against indifference in a peaceful uprising.”

Their main organizers, around a group called Real Democracy Now, put out a manifesto calling for an end to corruption and an end to the dictatorship of the markets, “real democracy.” But what is democracy in a class-divided society? Under capitalism, it is democracy for the ruling class, those wealthy few who own the means of production and carry out laws to defend their private property. There are no laws that will establish equality between the capitalists and the working class. The capitalists have a state apparatus, armed bodies of men (cops, courts, prisons) to keep the bourgeoisie in power and repress *any* challenge to their rule.

So how do the Indignados propose to change society? By endless protests and encampments? You can be indignant all you want, but to really make a change you have to ally with the social power of the working class, the only class that has the power to stop production and has the historic interest to overthrow capitalism. But the leadership of the Indignados movement is anti-union and therefore anti-working-class, because unions are the basic defense organizations of the working class. In Spain early on, the Indignados assemblies would not allow any union or political organization to join with them, “in order to guarantee the political neutrality of this citizens’ movement”! Their so-called “non-political” stance is actually very political—in the direction of anti-communism. This is shown by their exclusion of left groups from speaking at assemblies and attempts to censor left groups from distributing their literature.

Even their anti-leadership emphasis on “consensus” decision-making is undemocratic. Instead of using majority votes to make decisions, people are supposed to debate endlessly until they all agree. Then, of course, a non-elected clique usually makes the decisions in the background.

While the Indignados leadership pushes anti-union politics, it seems that many of the youth don’t necessarily buy into it. One example is that there have been large

A Spartacist Pamphlet

Karl Marx Was Right

Capitalist Anarchy and the Immiseration of the Working Class

For Workers Revolution!
For an International Planned Socialist Economy!

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Programmatic Statement of the Spartacist League/U.S.

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For Socialist Revolution in the Bastion of World Imperialism!

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NYPD...

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chanting, “Police, join us! They want your pensions, too!”

The cops are the hired guns of the capitalist class, “earning” their pay (and sweet retirement) by breaking strikes and terrorizing the ghettos and barrios to protect the interests of Wall Street. As revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky put it, “The worker who becomes a policeman in the service of the capitalist state, is a bourgeois cop, not a worker” (*What Next?*, January 1932). The pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucrats betray the interests of workers by organizing cops and security guards into the unions.

The nature of the police as guard dogs of capital is seen in any outbreak of class struggle. To punish the NYC Transport Workers Union for its 2005 strike, which for three days all but shut down the financial center of U.S. imperialism, the police dragged the union president off to jail. In the current vital struggle against union-busting in Longview, Washington, two International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 21 officials



Xanthos/Daily News

NYPD business as usual: Cops pepper-spray, arrest protesters marching to Wall Street on October 5.

sought to aid a 57-year-old grandmother whose rotator cuff was torn by the cops. The Local 21 leaders were hurled to the ground and cuffed, their eyes directly and repeatedly maced. Now they’re charged with assaulting the police! (See “Defend

Longview ILWU Against Bosses’ Cops and Courts!” WV No. 987, 30 September.)

Police violence is systematically employed in enforcing black oppression, a cornerstone of American capitalism. Just one day after the arrests on the Brooklyn

teachers strikes in Madrid recently, and some Indignados have put out a statement in support.

Many of these youth hate the effects of capitalism but do not see socialism as an alternative. The whole “death of communism” ideology pushed by the bourgeoisie following the fall of the Soviet Union is reflected in such low-level protest movements. This is also a reflection of the betrayals of the Social Democracy and the Communist parties, which have engaged in decades of class-collaboration—the Spanish labor union bureaucrats work hand in hand with the Socialist Party government! We fight to win youth over to the side of the working class, to the program of international socialist revolution, and to the understanding that you need a Bolshevik vanguard party to accomplish this.

...To “Occupy Wall Street”

The new Occupy Wall Street encampment, which has been gaining steam around the country, is in solidarity with the Spanish Indignados, raising similar demands against corporate greed and for a “leaderless resistance movement.” As one columnist put it, it’s like a “festival of frustrations” and people are plenty mad. They also look for inspiration from the “Egyptian Spring.” But look at what has happened in Egypt—the workers continue to get screwed under a renewed military dictatorship. What’s needed is not endless protests and occupations of squares but workers to power!

For many of the youth in the encampment, this is their first protest. Many are pro-union, but they view the working class as just another base of support for their all-inclusive “movement.” We’ve been intervening into the Occupy Wall Street protests, distributing lots of *Workers Vanguard*, looking to win over those who are open to a Marxist perspective of international socialist revolution.

Many of you have seen the video of the Wall Street protesters getting viciously attacked by the NYPD during a march to Union Square, where 80 people got arrested. The videos show several young women being corralled inside a movable police pen and pepper-sprayed by cops. Others were kicked, bruised and thrown over barricades by the police. And then last weekend 700 were arrested when the police trapped them on a march over the Brooklyn Bridge. According to a recent *New York Times* article, the NYPD is geared up to deal with “unrest.”

Many of the protesters are saying that the problem with the cops is that they were “unprofessional.” But these cops are as “professional” as they come! They are precisely carrying out their “profession” as the capitalist state’s armed bodies of men. There are massive illusions that “the cops are workers, too,” with slogans

like “NYPD is a layoff away from joining us” and “The 99 percent includes cops.” No, the cops are not a part of the working class—they have a special role to play as part of the capitalist state apparatus. We say cops, prison guards and security guards out of the unions!

What we are seeing in the Occupy Wall Street protest is lowest-common-denominator politics, which does not at all challenge the rule of the bourgeoisie. An example of this was seen in the attempt to create a General Assembly

unions have called for joining the Occupy Wall Street protests. A recent article noted, “The decision by organized labor to join the demonstrations has given them an extra jolt of numbers and credibility, since unions have historically played an important, but waning, role in mobilizing voters on the left” (*New York Times*, 6 October). The labor bureaucrats’ program is not about class struggle. It’s about pressuring the Democratic Party to go a little easier on their membership during a period of union-busting austerity.



Brock Lile

Longview, Washington: ILWU Local 21 members and supporters face off against cops on September 7 in fight to defeat union-busting.

declaration: Somebody objected to using the phrase “redistribution of wealth” because it sounded “dangerously similar to theft”! So it was decided, via consensus, to remove this phrase altogether. If you look at their final declaration posted on the Web, it does not even oppose capitalism, it just raises the same appeals for classless “democracy.” This is not new. A lot of these same themes were put forward during the anti-globalization protests of the late 1990s, here and in Europe, which did not go anywhere.

Many of the slogans raised, like “We are the 99 percent,” are totally compatible with the Democratic Party’s line. In fact, the Democrats are working to get on top of these protests as a way of invigorating Obama’s campaign for the next election and to counter the Tea Party. Not only has Obama empathized with the protests, but yesterday’s *Wall Street Journal* reported that even Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner and Ben Bernanke have expressed sympathy! You also have celebrities like Michael Moore and Susan Sarandon there—one of the first things she asked was if people were registered to vote. And there are the left-talking Democrats like Charles Barron, all looking to corral youth toward the Democratic Party.

As I mentioned at the start, several

One of the more vocal unions in support of the protests has been the New York City Transport Workers Union (TWU). Like other unions, the TWU is under heavy attack by the bosses. TWU members showed *real* social power when they went on strike in December 2005, defying the state Taylor Law banning public workers strikes. But the workers were stabbed in the back by the leaders of other NYC unions and the TWU International, and in the end were sold out by their own local union misleaders.

TWU bureaucrats and the rest of the AFL-CIO officialdom are pushing impotent “tax the rich” schemes along with reformist left groups like the International Socialist Organization, the Workers World Party and the Party for Socialism and Liberation. These “tax the rich” demands are tailor-made to fit in with the current Obama administration and Democratic Party platform. The corporations and banks are sitting on mountains of cash, but you aren’t going to get your hands on it by appealing to the tax authority of the capitalist state, whose purpose is to guarantee and defend the interests of the bourgeoisie.

This past spring, tens of thousands of unionists and their supporters (including students) came out to occupy the Wiscon-

Bridge, police fired multiple rounds into 57-year-old Yvonne McNeal, killing the black homeless woman in front of the shelter where she lived. A protest statement by Queers for Economic Justice (QEJ) noted: “When police targeted largely white Occupy Wall Street protesters, they used pepper spray. When faced with a vulnerable woman of color, they chose to use lethal force as their first option.” McNeal was affiliated with QEJ, which marched on Wall Street in her honor.

The capitalist class gives the police a license to kill, and they exercise that license with impunity in New York City as elsewhere. Amadou Diallo was shot dead in the Bronx in 1999 by cops who fired 41 bullets into him; Sean Bell died in Queens in a hail of 50 NYPD bullets in 2006. In 2010, Luis Soto was gunned down when cops emptied their semiautomatics into a crowd of hundreds at a Harlem block party.

In a speech that polarized the Occupy Wall Street crowd on October 8, a member of the Spartacus Youth Club fought against deadly illusions in the police, declaring: “Cops defend the capitalist system. Blue shirt, white shirt, a cop is a cop! They are not workers!” ■

sin State Capitol to protest Republican governor Scott Walker’s union-busting law tearing up collective bargaining for public workers unions. But the bureaucratic misleaders of the AFL-CIO worked overtime to squelch any move toward actually using labor’s strike weapon. Instead they channeled the anger of the ranks into support for the Democratic Party with a petition to recall Walker and a number of Republican state legislators, which failed miserably. Wisconsin public employee unions have been dealt a real defeat.

Within the labor movement, the proletariat is saddled with a pro-capitalist union bureaucracy that promotes the lie that the interests of labor and capital are compatible. They tie working people and the oppressed to the capitalist system, especially through support to the Democratic Party. The trade-union misleaders poured a whopping \$450 million into the 2008 elections, backing capitalist politicians like Obama as “friends of labor.”

It is absolutely necessary to forge a new leadership of the unions to mobilize labor in struggle for its class interests, to fight against all forms of discrimination and for full citizenship rights for immigrants. A strategic question for the American workers revolution is the fight against black oppression, which is rooted in the very foundation of capitalism in the U.S. If the unions are to fight for their very existence, they must take up the defense of the ghetto and barrio poor by fighting for jobs, quality housing, education, health care and more.

The decades of betrayals by the labor bureaucracy have encouraged the U.S. rulers in the arrogant belief that they can get away with doing anything to the working class, the poor and most everyone else without provoking any social struggle. But the rulers and their labor lieutenants cannot eliminate the class struggle. The same conditions that grind down the workers can and will propel them into battle against the capitalist class enemy. Right now International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 21 in Longview, Washington, is in a battle for its life, fighting against the union-busting of the EGT multinational conglomerate. They have been facing court injunctions, arrests and police assaults, including pepper spray and cops in full riot gear, in a fight to defend their union.

Renewed labor battles will lay the basis for reviving and extending the unions, with a new, class-struggle leadership coming to the fore. It is crucial that we build a revolutionary vanguard party that will bring the critical element of consciousness to the proletariat, to transform it from a class in itself to a class for itself, fighting to do away with this entire system of wage slavery. Join us in the fight for a socialist future for humanity! ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

“Occupy Wall Street”: Rebels for Liberal Reform



October 5: “Occupy Wall Street” demonstration in downtown Manhattan’s Foley Square.

WV Photo

For Workers Revolution to Expropriate the Capitalist Class!

Below we print excerpts from an October 8 forum by Spartacist League spokesman Irene Gardner in Oakland.

This past Wednesday my comrades and I were at the mass demonstration in downtown Manhattan with the Occupy Wall Street protesters, roughly 700 of whom were arrested by the NYPD at a march over the Brooklyn Bridge a few days earlier. I think the scale and popularity of these protests have surprised the New York City ruling class somewhat. It’s another indication of how much anger is out there.

Each day we open up the paper and discover another set of horrible statistics about the effects of the capitalist crisis on poor and working people. The reality is a lot worse than the numbers. Back in 2008, the con men on Wall Street, whose financial swindles were central to the economic collapse, were bailed out to the tune of trillions of dollars. But the working class, black people, Latinos and the growing mass of the poor have been made to foot the bill, losing jobs, homes, pensions and just about anything else that makes life livable.

Today, one in six people of working age in the U.S. are unemployed, with long-term unemployment the highest since the Great Depression. The Census Bureau now reports that 46.2 million in the U.S. live under the poverty line, and of those, 2.6 million fell into poverty just in the last year alone. Those who still have a job are being squeezed to work harder, faster and longer for lower pay. And there are plenty of people who have given up even looking for a job altogether. A new census report also shows that one in five New Yorkers now live in poverty, the highest level in a decade. Another astounding figure: in

New York City the number of homeless students in public schools has *quadrupled* since 2008, to almost 43,000 as of last October.

Meanwhile, during the past two years, corporate profits have broken all historic

records. The government’s “welfare for the rich” schemes have boosted financial speculation, artificially driving up the price of stocks, while the manufacturing and productive capacity of the U.S. has dropped significantly. And now we’re in

a global financial crisis with Europe ready to implode.

Even billionaire New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg mentioned that riots could

happen if job prospects don’t improve. It is the fear that the masses might revolt that concerns union-hating Bloomberg and other multibillionaires like Warren Buffett. President Obama has now been pushing a

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Drop All the Charges!

Know Your Enemy: NYPD Arrests Hundreds

The hundreds of “Occupy Wall Street” protesters trapped and arrested on the roadway of the Brooklyn Bridge on October 1 received a bitter lesson on the role of the police and the nature of the capitalist state, as did the young women whose pepper-spraying at pointblank range on September 24 drew international attention to the protests. If this was a first-time experience for many of the demonstrators, the arrest of black protester Hero Vincent called to mind the brutal treatment meted out to ghetto youth every day by the NYPD. In an

interview with *Democracy Now*, Vincent recounted how four laughing officers yelled, “Stop resisting arrest” while kicking him in the stomach as he lay helpless on the ground. He now faces a trumped-up felony charge of assaulting a police officer. We demand: **Drop all charges against the anti-Wall Street protesters!**

Many protesters have bought the liberal organizers’ line that the “white shirt” commanders are the problem, while the “blue shirt” cops are themselves victims of Wall Street. Rein-

forcing this myth is the illusion that the cops who are beating and arresting protesters are just a few bad apples. In response to the September 24 police assault, an occupywallst.org statement calling for a march to NYPD headquarters bleated: “Let us also be clear that, when approached as individuals, members of the NYPD have expressed solidarity with our cause. It has been inspiring to receive this support.” On an October 5 march through Lower Manhattan, organizers led demonstrators in

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