

**Defend the Palestinians! Israel Out of the Occupied Territories!**

# Zionist Terror Machine Strikes Gaza Ghetto

NOVEMBER 19—Over the past six days, Israel's rulers have launched more than 1,000 airstrikes against the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip, slaughtering more than 100 men, women and children. The Zionists began with a missile strike that assassinated Ahmed al-Jabari, head of the military wing of Hamas, Gaza's ruling Islamist party. As Israeli military and political spokesmen trumpet their "surgical" strikes against Hamas, homes throughout Gaza have been reduced to rubble and hospitals are filled to overflowing. This is standard operating procedure for the capitalist rulers of Israel, a Zionist garrison state founded on the mass expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland.

The terror bombing campaign recalls the lead-up to the devastating three-week invasion of Gaza by Israeli forces in 2008-09 that left 1,400 Palestinians dead and reduced most of the 25-mile-long territory to ash and rubble. Israel has called up tens of thousands of reservists, while massing troops, tanks and armored vehicles along the border with Gaza. In the words of the Israeli interior minister, the goal of today's "Operation Pillar of Defense" is "to send Gaza back to the Middle Ages." *The international proletariat must stand in defense of the besieged Palestinians against the Zionist terror machine!*

Israel's rulers years ago turned Gaza



AFP

**November 16: Homes in Rafah in southern Gaza Strip destroyed by Israeli air strikes.**

into what is essentially a concentration camp, hemmed in by the Mediterranean on one side and an electrified fence on the other. In 2007, following the takeover of Gaza by Hamas, Tel Aviv imposed a suf-

focating blockade that, according to U.S. diplomatic cables released by WikiLeaks, was designed to push the enclave's economy "to the brink of collapse." A recently revealed Israeli military document shows

that the Zionists ruthlessly calculated the minimum number of calories required for the bare subsistence of Gaza's population of more than 1.5 million and allowed only

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## Economic Crisis and the Politics of Fear Obama's Re-Election: The Shell Game of Lesser-Evilism

On all sides the 2012 U.S. presidential election can be captured in one word: fear. Amid a persistent economic crisis, which has left working people in ruin across the globe, the Republicans thought they could ride back into the White House on the votes of the Tea Party yahoos, Christian fundamentalists and other such reactionaries who believe that Obama and the "takers" are driving America down the road to a socialist Sodom and Gomorrah. Against the backdrop of millions of unemployed and a growing army of homeless, hungry and destitute, Mitt Romney reviled the "47 percent" of this

society who "believe they are entitled to health care, to food, to housing, to you-name-it." As Romney called on the nearly 12 million "illegal" immigrants in the U.S. to "self deport," other Republican candidates raved about "legitimate rape" and reveled in biblical scripture against gays and other "deviants."

When measured against their Republican opponents, it wasn't difficult for the Democrats to come off as the "lesser evil." They didn't even have to promise much of anything to the working class and the oppressed. A couple of sops were thrown as Obama allowed that his per-

sonal views had "evolved" toward tepidly endorsing gay marriage and granted some undocumented immigrant youth a temporary reprieve from deportation. Labor got nothing, not even a repeat of the empty promises from last time around to push through the Employee Free Choice Act card checkoff for union organizing—an effort that the union officialdom has simply dropped. This year nothing was necessary to piece off the union misleaders, who once again rallied the troops and spent massive amounts of union funds to get out the vote for the Democrats. As for the increasingly

indigent black masses, the most they've gotten from the Obama White House is a lecture to pull themselves up by their nonexistent bootstraps.

While the hope and enthusiasm aroused by the election of America's first black president may have waned, there remains a deep sense of racial pride and solidarity with Obama among the black population. This was reinforced by the backlash from Republican Party "birthers," who question Obama's U.S. citizenship. In these types, black people correctly perceive the forces of

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**For a Workers Party  
That Fights for a Workers Government!**





TROTSKY

increasing congruence with the revisionist mutation of Trotskyism known as Pabloism was exemplified by its uncritical enthusing for the Castro-led Cuban Revolution, which overturned capitalist rule in spite of the fact that the working class played no role in that overturn nor in the government that resulted from it.

British Socialist Labour League leader Gerry Healy and his U.S. flunkie, Tim Wohlforth, engineered an unprincipled split in the RT in November 1962, denying that the SWP had undergone degeneration as a revolutionary party. A few years later, we definitively parted company with Healy and Wohlforth when they politically supported such non-proletarian forces as Mao’s Red Guards in China and the “Arab Revolution.”

The Pabloist current that dominated the Trotskyist movement in Europe following World War II posited that the revolutionary role of the proletariat and its vanguard had been replaced by a variety of petty-bourgeois forces. While initially mainly looking to Stalinist formations that would supposedly spawn “centuries” of deformed workers states, the Pabloites went on to tout anticolonial guerrilla struggle as the epicenter of world revolution. By 1963, the SWP majority extended this methodology to the

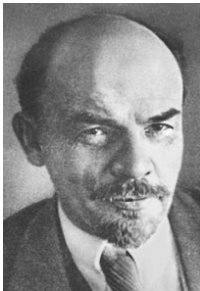
# Fifty Years of Struggle for Trotskyist Leadership

black struggle in the U.S., abandoning attempts to win communist leadership while cheerleading for whatever black leaders were popular.

The document from which the paragraphs below are taken was submitted to the 1963 SWP convention by the RT, whose members were later bureaucratically expelled from the party. Many things have since changed in the world, notably the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. But throughout the half century, our tendency has remained programmatically steadfast and achieved a modest but real extension of forces outside of the U.S. The positions outlined in these documents, which are contained in our *Marxist Bulletin* series, remain central to the perspectives of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

\* \* \*

The essence of the debate within the Trotskyist movement is the question of the perspective of the proletariat and its revolutionary vanguard elements toward the existing petit-bourgeois leaderships of the labor movement, the deformed workers states, and the colonial revolution. The heart of the revolutionary perspective of Marxism is *in the struggle for the independence of the workers as a class* from all non-proletarian forces; the guiding political issue and theoretical criterion is *workers’ democracy*, of which the supreme expression is workers’ power. This applies to all countries where the proletariat has become capable of carry-



LENIN

ing on independent politics—only the forms in which the issue is posed vary from country to country. These forms, of course, determine the practical intervention of the Marxists....

The task of the international revolutionary-Marxist movement today is to re-establish its own real existence. To speak of the “conquest of the masses” as a general guideline internationally is a qualitative overstatement. The tasks before most Trotskyist sections and groups today flow from the need for political clarification in the struggle against revisionism, in the context of a level of work of a generally propagandistic and preparatory nature. An indispensable part of our preparation is the development and strengthening of roots within the broader working-class movement without which the Trotskyists would be condemned to sterile isolation or to political degeneration in the periods of rising class struggle and in either case unable to go forward in our historic task of leading the working class to power. Above all what can and must be done is the building of a world party firmly based on strong national sections, the assembling of a cadre of working-class militants won and tested in the process of the class struggle and on the firm basis of the revolutionary perspective of the Fourth International, the program to realize workers’ democracy—culminating in workers’ power.

—“Toward Rebirth of the Fourth International,” June 1963; reprinted in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 9, “Basic Documents of the Spartacist League”

## Gaza...

(continued from page 1)

that much food to get through the blockade.

Now, with elections to the Israeli Knesset scheduled for January, Netanyahu figures that raining death and destruction on the Gaza ghetto will help him secure another term. Meanwhile, Barack Obama has been unreserved in his declarations of support to the Zionist butchers as they once again slaughter an effectively defenseless people. For decades, Washington’s largesse has been crucial in building up the Israeli military, which is armed with U.S. warplanes, helicopters and missiles. While Hamas has been able to acquire some improved weaponry, its rockets are very small change compared to the Zionist military machine. In opposing its “own” capitalist rulers and their military alliances, the U.S. working class must oppose all U.S. aid to Israel.

### Imperialism and the Near East Cauldron

U.S. imperialism, which in the last decade alone has been responsible for the slaughter of hundreds of thousands in the occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, is the deadliest enemy of workers and the oppressed throughout the world. Whatever its policy differences with Netanyahu, the Obama White House continues to squeeze Iran for its purported move to develop nuclear weapons. As we have repeatedly stressed, it would be entirely rational for Iran to develop such weapons as a means of deterrence against the U.S. and Israel, which are massively armed with nukes.

The Obama administration also appears ready to step up its support to the reactionary opposition forces in Syria battling the bloodsoaked bourgeois regime of Bashar al-Assad. As revolutionary Marxists, we oppose both sides in the Syrian civil war, in which a victory of one combatant or the other would do nothing to further the cause of the working class and the oppressed. At the same time, we stress that the workers of the world must oppose any imperialist intervention there or in Iran as well as the starvation economic sanctions that have been imposed against those societies. In the event of imperialist attack against Syria or Iran, we would stand for their defense while maintaining proletarian political opposition to their bourgeois regimes.

The current Israeli attack takes place against a political backdrop in the Near East that has shifted since the 2009 bloodbath in Gaza. Last year’s “Arab spring” uprisings culminated in bringing to power Islamist governments, notably in Egypt and Tunisia, that are outwardly more sympathetic than their predecessors to the plight of the Palestinians. But these regimes are no less beholden to imperialist aid and IMF loans than the ones they replaced. While sending his prime minister to Gaza in a symbolic gesture of solidarity, Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood has closely coordinated his every move with Washington. Prior to “Operation Pillar of Defense,” Morsi refused Palestinian requests to open the Rafah border crossing to trade, and his security forces destroyed tunnels under the wall separating Egypt from Gaza, a key route for bringing in vital food and building materials.

When Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak was toppled last year, the bourgeois media and almost the entire left internationally hailed this as the Egyptian “revolution.” The Revolutionary Socialists group in Egypt, part of the international family of supporters of the late Tony Cliff, went on to distinguish itself by openly supporting Morsi’s Muslim Brotherhood in this year’s elections. Some in the U.S. International Socialist Organization and other Cliffites elsewhere expressed consternation over this abject capitulation to the reactionary Islamists. But they were quite united in hailing the Libyan opposition that acted as front men for the imperialists’ war against the Qaddafi regime. More recently, they have thrown their support to elements of the Syrian opposition, which serves as a tool of the imperialists.

### A Proletarian Perspective

During the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, we underlined that the working class must emerge as a factor in its own right, acting as the leader of all the oppressed masses. This urgent need requires absolute political independence from and opposition to the Islamists, nationalists and all bourgeois forces. Thus, while defending Hamas against the Zionists’ terror campaigns in Gaza, we do not give the least political support to that Islamic fundamentalist outfit.

In 2005, the Israeli rulers evacuated the more than 8,000 Zionist settlers in the Gaza Strip, having determined that this best served their national interests. We pointed out that with Gaza remaining firmly enclosed and the West Bank surrounded by a ghetto wall and crisscrossed by military checkpoints and Jewish-only highways, “it is totally fatuous to believe that the current ‘disengagement’ from Gaza will lead to a Palestinian state including the West Bank and East Jerusalem” (WV No. 853, 2 September 2005). Yet the evacuation was glorified by perennial cheerleaders for Third World nationalism, such as the Workers World Party (WWP), which applauded signs in Gaza reading, “Today Gaza, Tomorrow Jerusalem and the West Bank” (*Workers World*, 18 August 2005). Having earlier promoted more left-wing, secular variants of bourgeois Arab nationalism, the WWP redirected their affections toward the anti-woman, anti-Semitic Hamas.

While many nationalists and leftists look for some sort of Arab “unity” against Israel, the fact is that the Arab bourgeois rulers have time and again revealed themselves to be enemies of the Palestinian people. Marxists fight to bring the *class*

question to the fore, seeking to mobilize the proletariat in the predominantly Muslim countries of the Near East in struggle against their bourgeoisies, and in Israel to shatter the Zionist state from within.

We have always insisted that national emancipation for the Palestinians requires the proletarian overthrow of the Israeli capitalist rulers and also those of Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, which are home to at least three million Palestinians. The Israeli Jewish and Palestinian Arab populations are interpenetrated peoples, laying claim to the same territory. Under capitalism, the exercise of the national rights of one necessarily comes at the expense of the right of self-determination of the other. Only through the creation of a planned economy in a socialist federation of the Near East can conflicting claims over land and resources be equitably resolved, and all discrimination on the basis of language, religion and nationality be done away with.

Israel is a class-divided society, with workers exploited by the capitalist ruling class. We have no illusions that it will be easy to break through the chauvinism that poisons the consciousness of Jewish working people. But this task is not made easier by the criminal, indiscriminate bombings carried out by Hamas and other Palestinian forces against Israeli civilians, which drive the Jewish population further into the arms of the Zionist rulers. What is necessary is the forging of revolutionary Marxist parties in Israel/Palestine as throughout the Near East, built in opposition to all forms of nationalism and religious fundamentalism and committed to the struggle for socialist revolution on a world scale, the only road to human equality and liberation. ■

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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### CORRECTIONS

Part Two of “Elections 2012: Wall Street Democrat vs. Wall Street Republican” (WV No. 1012, 9 November) reported that Teamsters working at Waste Management Inc. in Oakland, California, had been locked out since July. There was no such lockout at that time. Part One of the same article, in WV No. 1011 (26 October), stated that the wealth of the 400 richest Americans grew by an average of \$50 million each over the past year. The figure should have been \$500 million. In “Gore Vidal: An Appreciation” (WV No. 1010, 12 October), we misspelled the name of Gore Vidal’s first love. He was Jimmie Trimble, not Tribble.



# Democrats Target Public Schools, City Unions

## Chicago Teachers: Solid Strike, But Key Issues Unresolved

The Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) hit the picket lines on September 10, shutting down Chicago Public Schools (CPS) for nine days. Democratic mayor Rahm Emanuel set the stage for the strike, the first in 25 years. Shortly after assuming office a year and a half ago, he canceled a scheduled, union-negotiated 4 percent pay hike and followed up by laying off 930 teachers, disproportionately black, kicking off an incessant campaign for union givebacks packaged as education “reform.” The mayor demanded a longer workday and school year and set out to replace seniority rights with merit raises and evaluations, giving the school board and principals total power in hiring and firing teachers. To this barrage Emanuel added constant calls on the Democratic-controlled state legislature to fix the teachers’ pension system (in the same manner one fixes one’s pet).

Enraged by this assault, union members were more than eager to strike by the start of the school year in August. The union tops managed to delay the strike’s onset so as not to embarrass the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte. But when that was over, tens of thousands of teachers donned red union shirts and poured into the streets, setting up picket lines throughout Chicago. The strike drew widespread support, notably from parents of the overwhelmingly black and Hispanic student population, many of whom joined the pickets. From Boston to Los Angeles, Hawaii and abroad, financial donations and letters of support flowed into CTU headquarters, particularly from other teachers unions.

Unionized teachers throughout the country saw the strike as crucial. The contract approved by the teachers on September 18 was, however, anything but bountiful. It contained a piddling 7 percent raise over its three-year life. The union beat back Emanuel’s demand for merit pay raises and blunted the attacks on seniority by winning limited recall rights for laid-off teachers, although benefits for those laid off were



September 10: Teachers and supporters march through downtown Chicago on first day of strike.

slashed. The demand to restore the stolen 4 percent raise was not included as a strike demand and the union leadership agreed to abandon any attempt to reclaim it, a concession never raised with the CTU ranks. Teachers are now faced with a longer school day and school year.

Backed by their Caucus of Rank and File Educators (CORE), CTU president Karen Lewis and vice president Jesse Sharkey publicly proclaimed one week into the strike that they were happy with the “framework” of a deal that had been worked out at the bargaining table—before any discussion with the membership had been had. But sentiments against the contract ran high at the September 16 delegates’ meeting called to endorse the settlement. When Lewis proclaimed that “this is the deal we got,” delegates responded by shouting “Get it right!” and “Hell no, we won’t go!” The delegates voted to continue the strike, sending union bureaucrats scurrying to mobilize

support for the deal. In the end, 21 percent of the teachers voted against the contract.

What animated the CTU members and teachers throughout the country were not the terms of a contract that could, at best, be characterized as a holding action against the mayor’s attack. It was the fact that Chicago teachers had, in determined strike action, taken on the latest of a series of attacks on public employees and, at least, held the line. This stands in stark contrast to the top labor officialdom’s refusal to mobilize strike action against anti-labor campaigns across the country, conspicuously so in the conflict with Republican Wisconsin governor and Tea Party favorite Scott Walker as he carried out an assault on public workers last year.

The Obama administration’s “school reform,” championed in Chicago by the president’s old right-hand man, Rahm Emanuel, is simply a Democratic Party version of these aggressions. It is nothing less than a ransacking of public education carried out with brass knuckles, specifically directed against teachers unions. Nationwide, state governments use federal funding rules to shutter supposedly failing public classrooms in ghettos and barrios while giving a green light to the proliferation of privately run charter schools. Funding to the states for compliance with these rules is weighted toward those that eliminate seniority and tenure. This paves the way for massive layoffs/firings of teachers in schools where students score lower in standardized testing, particularly threatening those in the poorest school districts.

No less than the Republican Party, the other capitalist party, the Democratic Party, is committed to making working and poor people pay for the devastation caused by the ongoing economic crisis. The Republicans, as currently composed, would prefer to smash the unions and public education outright. The Democrats want to further bind the unions to the state, while visiting such savageries as they deem necessary on the already tattered fabric of what passes for public education in this country.

The tops of the trade-union bureaucracy are, for the most part, an integral part of that party. Their loyalty to the class enemy was showcased by the appearance of American Federation of Teachers president Randi Weingarten at the Democratic National Convention to endorse Barack Obama’s re-election on the eve

of her union members’ strike against his reforms in Chicago. Just before the CTU strike, she announced, “Now I know the struggle can be settled and I know we can move forward, but we need to find common ground and as Democrats we have to deal with each other.”

Given the pent-up rage of Chicago teachers, CTU leaders could do little else but echo their members’ call for strike action. But from the beginning, Lewis, Sharkey and CORE had accepted Emanuel’s insistence that the critical issues of school closings, layoffs and charter schools were non-negotiable and off limits. Not a word was said about the threats to pensions. Lewis had already hamstrung the union in 2011 by signing off on Illinois Senate Bill 7, which dictated the longer school day and year—without additional compensation—pushed by Emanuel. That legislation also required a 75 percent “yes” vote by the membership to authorize a strike, with ballots not cast counted as “no” votes, a measure designed to cripple the union.

After some initial criticism of Lewis for endorsing the bill, the CTU executive board backed her, and CORE signed off on the measure. Despite this betrayal by the CORE leadership, Chicago teachers blew the 75 percent mandate out of the water, with more than 90 percent voting in favor of striking. Hoping to avoid a contract fight over increased work time, CTU bureaucrats two months before the strike made a separate deal with Emanuel agreeing to lengthen the school day, supposedly by hiring laid-off teachers to work the extra hours. One hundred or more schools are likely to be closed next year, and many of those will probably be opened as non-union charter schools. Teacher layoffs are already beginning.

Since the strike, there has been a push to unionize the charter schools. A drive to organize all Chicago teachers while the strike was on certainly would have fueled enthusiasm for unionization. Lewis and Sharkey have generally taken a hands-off approach to the question of organizing charter school teachers, interpreting current law as enjoining the CTU from undertaking such organizing.

CTU leaders made no attempt to mobilize genuine union solidarity during the strike. There was no effort to seek joint action with the city’s firefighters and transit workers, who are still locked in contract negotiations. Nor was any effort made to bargain jointly with other unions within CPS, like the SEIU, which organizes the janitors who manned schools that functioned as day-care centers during the strike. Quite the contrary, CORE alibied in advance the crossing of picket lines by these unionists.

At the end of the strike, Emanuel launched a TV ad campaign extolling the “virtues” of the contract—no wonder, as it takes the ax to some key union gains. Simultaneously, he demanded that the state legislature provide him with the power he needs to suspend cost-of-living increases for retired teachers while phasing in higher pension contributions and raising the retirement age for CTU members. An Illinois Constitutional Amendment (HJRC 49) that in effect aims to freeze pension increases for teachers and other public workers was introduced by House Speaker Mike Madigan, who along with his fellow Democrats has for years had total control over all bills issuing from the state legislature. The

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### 27th Annual PDC Holiday Appeal

**Free the Class-War Prisoners!**  
**Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!**  
**Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!**

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**Sunday, December 9**  
**3 to 7 p.m.**

U.E. Hall  
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Information: (312) 563-0442

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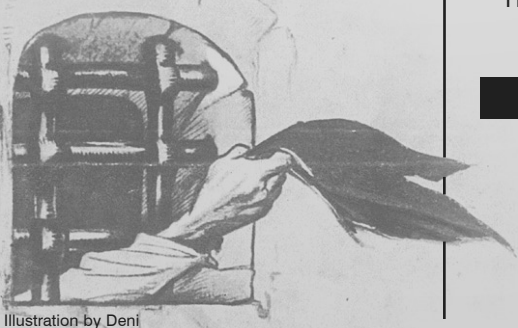
**Friday, December 7**  
**6 to 9 p.m.**

CWA Local 1180 Hall  
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# Thirty Years After Falklands/Malvinas War

## Britain and Argentina: Between Some Rocks and Losing Face

The following article is reprinted from *Workers Hammer* No. 220 (Autumn 2012), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League.

### WORKERS HAMMER

This spring marked the thirtieth anniversary of the bizarre, dirty little war between British imperialism and the Argentine junta over some desolate rocks in the South Atlantic. Both Margaret Thatcher's vicious Tory government and General Leopoldo Galtieri's bloody military dictatorship used the conflict over the Falklands—known in Argentina as the Malvinas—as a diversion to arouse patriotism, quell social struggle and boost their fortunes. It was in the interest of the working class in each country for

Prince William to the Falklands. For its part, the Argentine government aptly condemned Britain's behaviour as “colonial” and declared British oil exploration in the area to be “illegal” and “clandestine.” The trading bloc Mercosur, which includes Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, closed those countries' ports to ships flying the Falklands flag and Argentina turned away several British cruise ships.

After accusing the Argentine government of behaving in a colonial manner, Cameron cynically lectured president Cristina Fernández on the islanders' national rights: “We should believe in self determination and act as democrats here.” Cameron flaunts his commitment to self-determination *against Argentina* but it is not much in evidence when it comes to Scotland, which his government insists should remain part of the “United Kingdom.” And who in their right mind

democrats”! *U.S./British imperialists out of Diego Garcia! For a right of return and compensation!*

The Tory-led government, which is deeply unpopular among the working class at home for imposing punishing austerity measures, is shamelessly trying to whip up a version of the “Falklands factor” to boost its ratings. Before the 1982 conflict, British governments had been trying to unload the Falklands for years, including handing over various administrative powers to Argentina. “But once the Argentines had invaded, an enfeebled Britain saw a chance to reassert the obscene traditions of the Empire, and Thatcher was not about to let it pass,” as we wrote in *Spartacist Britain* (No. 42, May 1982). The sinking of the Argentine *General Belgrano* battleship, upon Thatcher's orders, was a genuine war crime. Hundreds of conscripts were

military machines. Marxists are revolutionary defeatist on both sides in the present conflict. The potential for a massive class upsurge in Argentina is obvious and Thatcher, too, is hated by Britain's workers” (*Spartacist Britain* No. 42, May 1982). At the time, Britain and Argentina were two of the staunchest allies in Washington's Cold War II anti-Soviet crusade which, as defenders of the Soviet Union, we Trotskyists opposed. As our comrades in the U.S. wrote at the time, “revolutionary socialists can only look forward to the spectacle of these two hated right-wing regimes sinking each other's fleets on the high seas” (*Workers Vanguard* No. 304, 30 April 1982).

For General Galtieri, “recovery” of the Falklands/Malvinas began as a textbook case of a despotic regime trying to take the heat off at home by launching a foreign invasion. The world's highest inflation rate, industry operating at 50 per cent capacity, and skyrocketing unemployment stoked popular anger, already boiling over from the military's “dirty war” of terror in which more than 10,000 leftists and other opponents had been killed and 30,000 disappeared. On 30 March 1982, 15,000 workers were met with brutal repression when they attempted to protest in front of the presidential palace. Three days later Argentine commandos seized the Falklands. Galtieri was banking on Washington's support as a well-earned reward for backing the U.S.'s war against the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and leftist insurgents in El Salvador. After all, Galtieri had declared that the third world war had already begun in the Americas, a war between the “free world,” led by the United States, and Soviet Communism. But after failing to prevent Britain and Argentina from falling out, an exasperated U.S. imperialism backed Britain, deciding that its robust anti-Soviet ally in Europe was strategically more important.

As the war got underway, the Thatcher government reached an unprecedented peak in the opinion polls on a wave of jingoism, with the gutter press screaming for “our boys” to get the “Argies” as Royal Navy recruitment posters were pinned on factory noticeboards. The Labour Party leaders and trade-union bureaucracy embraced this patriotic fervour, supporting the formation of the



Press Association

British prime minister Margaret Thatcher (left) ordered May 1982 sinking of Argentine ship *General Belgrano* (right), killing hundreds of conscripts.



“their” bourgeois rulers to be humiliated in defeat: Thatcher's victory spelled bad news for the British working class, while the Argentine defeat resulted in the fall of Galtieri's regime. This year, with austerity and repression on the agenda of both governments, you could be forgiven for thinking that they had orchestrated some kind of parody of the conflict as an anniversary commemoration.

Prime Minister David Cameron has made clear his government's intention to hang on to this archipelago in the South Atlantic, nearly 8,000 miles from Britain's coast. Britain dispatched its prized destroyer, HMS *Dauntless*, and a submarine; to add some pomp the RAF sent

could imagine the British prime minister invoking democratic rights for the people of Diego Garcia? The British imperialist overlords expelled the island's inhabitants in the 1960s to make way for a U.S. military base. In 2004, Tony Blair's Labour government used the royal prerogative to overturn a high court judgement which would have allowed the islanders to return. As Richard Gifford, a lawyer representing the 4,500 islanders and their descendants, remarked: “Not since the days of King John has anyone tried to expel British citizens from the realm by executive order.” Now there's a lesson in how the British imperialists “believe in self determination and act as

slaughtered while the ship was *outside* Britain's own declared war zone. British naval officers made no effort to rescue the survivors huddled together in lifeboats trying to avoid freezing to death.

The Argentine bourgeoisie's claims to the Falklands are based on the heritage of the Spanish crown. The British invaded in 1833, some two decades after Argentine independence. The islands, 300 miles from the Argentine coast, have since been inhabited by English-speaking settlers. According to the *Guardian* (13 September) a recent census shows that of 2,563 residents, fewer than a third consider themselves British while 59 per cent regard themselves as Falkland Islanders. In a rational world, there is no reason for Britain, Argentina or any other country to have sovereignty over the Falkland/Malvinas islands. The inhabitants should be left alone to fish, graze sheep, host tourists and the occasional scientific expedition. To defend its bogus claim to sovereignty over the Falklands, Britain maintains a military base at Mount Pleasant Airfield, in addition to various stations in the South Atlantic. *All British military bases out of the South Atlantic!*

### The Main Enemy Is at Home!

During the Falklands war we put forward the perspective of *revolutionary defeatism* on both sides, expressed in slogans such as: “Sink Thatcher! Sink the Junta!” We wrote: “we think that as long as these two viciously anti-working-class regimes go at one another, it's a good thing if they grind up their respective

## WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

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### WORKERS HAMMER

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British Task Force. The victory of Her Majesty’s forces was a defeat for British workers. The message couldn’t have been clearer, first to striking railway workers, when returning troops unfurled a banner saying: “Call off the rail strike, or we’ll call an air strike!”

The “Falklands factor” enabled Thatcher to triumph in a general election in 1983. In her second term she pushed ahead with plans to smash the power of the trade unions. The militant National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), whose struggles had brought down the previous Tory government, was a particular target. The coal miners fought heroically throughout the 1984-85 strike, against an army of cops and the full might of the state. But thanks to the treachery of the trade-union bureaucracy and Labour Party politicians, the miners remained isolated against Thatcher. Above all what was necessary to ensure a victory for the miners was for workers in other industries to strike alongside the NUM. But the trade-union and Labour “lefts” mouthed words of solidarity, while the right-wing leaders openly and viciously condemned the striking miners, just as they contributed to the chauvinist patriotism around the Falklands war.

**Labourite Left: From Union Jack “Socialists”...**

The Labour “left,” led at the time by Tony Benn, opposed the war on patriotic grounds. Benn warned that the Falklands were not worth risking the British fleet over and that such a costly war could “end in tragedy for this country.” The Spartacist League/Britain responded: “It would be a tragedy for the British *bosses! The only war worth fighting by the British workers is the class war against their own bourgeoisie.* THE MAIN ENEMY IS AT HOME!” (*Spartacist Britain* No. 42, May 1982). Some ostensible “Marxists” at the time managed to stand to the right of Tony Benn. An article in the Socialist Party’s magazine on the 25th anniversary of the war claimed: “We opposed both British imperialism and the Argentinean



Workers Hammer

**London, 1982: Spartacist League/Britain called for revolutionary defeatism on both sides in reactionary Falklands/Malvinas War.**

military dictatorship” (*Socialism Today*, April 2007). But in 1982 their forebears in the Militant tendency, which subsequently split into what is today the Socialist Party and Socialist Appeal, attacked the Bennite call to withdraw the fleet as a “pacifist blind alley.” And they went foam-flecked against organisations who were for the defeat of British imperialism, denouncing the “monstrous absurdity of the sectarians’ position,” of “calling for the defeat of the Task Force.” The ultimate solution for these utter reformists, who are wedded to the idea that socialism can be implemented beginning with an “Enabling Act” in parliament, was “to force a general election to open the way for the return of a Labour government to implement socialist policies at home and abroad.” For the Militant: “Using socialist methods, a Labour government could rapidly defeat the [Argentine] dictatorship” (*Militant International Review*, June 1982).

**...To Cheering the Junta**

Workers Power also has a sordid history of coming down on the side of the imperialists, from championing the counter-revolutionary Polish Solidarność in the 1980s to hailing the imperialist-backed Libyan rebels last spring. However during the Falklands war Workers Power rallied

to the “anti-imperialist” cause...of the Argentine junta. In a 1982 leaflet, Workers Power placed demands on the reactionary military dictatorship, supposedly in order to “expose it”:

“The junta have tried to dress themselves up as real fighters of imperialism. This is a hollow lie. But many believe it to be genuine. The task of Argentinian socialists is to force the junta to take real anti-imperialist measures. They should be forced to nationalise the many multinationals in Argentina; the workers must seize control of those factories and must be armed to mount a real defence against a possible attack.”  
—“Victory to the Argentine”

Leftists in Argentina who held a similar position include the pseudo-Trotskyist Nahuel Moreno’s Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST). For the nationalist cause of the Malvinas, the PST declared that they “form part of the military camp of the dictatorship in the fight against the British imperialists.” As the Spartacist League/U.S. wrote at the time: “It is particularly grotesque for the PST to support this ploy by butchers who have murdered more than a *hundred* of their comrades.” Our article insisted:

“This ultra-reactionary junta will not undertake any anti-imperialist action, however partial. What do they want the islands for? As we have pointed out, they

could well turn them into concentration camps for ‘dissidents,’ the luckiest of the *desaparecidos*—an Argentine Dawson Island. And whom have they named as military governor of the Malvinas? Mario Benjamín Menéndez, who was a principal architect of the junta’s war of extermination against the Argentine left, as well as a notoriously brutal concentration camp commandant.”  
—*Workers Vanguard* No. 307, 11 June 1982

A victory for the Argentine junta in this war would have been *contrary* to the interests of the Argentine working masses, heightening the chauvinist sentiments Galtieri had excited and manipulated in order to defuse a burgeoning class struggle. Our perspective of revolutionary defeatism was vindicated by the events in Argentina following the outcome of the war. Within hours of the fall of Port Stanley to the British imperialists, the chant “*¡Se va a acabar, la dictadura militar!*” (“The military dictatorship is coming to an end!”) was heard through the streets of Buenos Aires. The humiliating defeat of the Argentine bourgeoisie in the war led directly to the overthrow of the military dictatorship, creating an opening for the construction of a genuinely revolutionary party. But the removal of the junta, in the absence of such a party, has been followed by a series of capitalist crises. Populist nationalism is the major barrier to forging a genuinely revolutionary party in Argentina.

The Spartacist League/Britain fights to build a party committed to burying for good the heritage of British imperialism, its military and the Union Jack. We are proud to have stated at the time:

“The Argentine proletariat must not be taken in by the nationalist diversion over the Falklands, but must continue the struggle to smash Galtieri’s bloody junta. It is the duty of British workers to fight against the Thatcher government’s military adventure to regain a colony, and to fight for their own class power, eradicating the last vestiges of Britain’s sordid and brutal imperialist history. The main enemy is at home!”  
—*Spartacist Britain* No. 42, May 1982 ■

# Morenoite Farce over Malvinas, Again

The article translated below originally appeared in *Espartaco* No. 35 (June 2012), the newspaper of our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México.



Marx wrote once that history repeats itself: what happens first as tragedy later takes place as farce. But, in regards to the Malvinas/Falklands, the Argentine pseudo-left has staged the same farce twice. The first mise-en-scène occurred in 1982 when, with the cry of “on the military side of the Argentine dictatorship” and the like, the whole pseudo-Trotskyist swamp saluted the Galtieri military junta for its ridiculous war over the rocky, inhospitable islands then inhabited by some 1,800 shepherds (today there are a little over 3,000). As the brutal military dictatorship teetered in the midst of the worst economic recession in Argentine history up to that time and massive workers’ protests, Galtieri launched an invasion of the desolate islands in order to divert discontent into a wave of patriotic jingoism. Similarly, for the crumbling British empire with Margaret Thatcher at the helm, this was a nice little war that allowed her to placate the militancy of her own working class.

We explained at the time that the genuine Leninist-Trotskyist position on the conflict was *revolutionary defeatism* on both sides: “The bloody Argentine junta, wracked only a few weeks ago by massive labor protests, and the despised Thatcher government, which has driven the British people into the poorhouse, *can be brought*

down as a result of defeat and humiliation in war” (“Falklands: Nowhere War,” *WV* No. 304, 30 April 1982).

Thirty years later, the self-proclaimed “Trotskyists” have once more become enraptured with the “Argentine Malvinas” rhetoric, this time from the mouth of [Argentine president] Cristina Fernández. As she pushed forward a series of

to raise the war cry that the Malvinas/Falklands “are Argentinian, an integral part of our territory,” while boasting of the military “achievements” of the Galtieri junta by referring, in the first person plural, to the destruction of the HMS *Sheffield*, “which we sank from the pirates” (*La Verdad Obrera* No. 469, 5 April). For its part, Izquierda Social-

**November 1985: Ex-president Leopoldo Galtieri (center) with other former leaders of military junta on trial in Buenos Aires. Military regime fell following defeat in war with Britain.**



Reuters

measures against the working masses, such as the elimination of subsidies for utilities and for the Buenos Aires subway, Fernández seized on the war’s anniversary to launch a renewed campaign for possession of the islands, with the extra incentive of the oil discovered in that area a couple of years ago—of which decrepit British imperialism does not want to share a single drop.

A snap of Fernández’s fingers was enough for the neo-Morenoite Partido de los Trabajadores Socialistas (PTS)

ista—what remains of the followers of the late political chameleon Nahuel Moreno outside the PTS itself—flew its white-and-blue colors, chanting that “40 million Argentinians demand sovereignty over our islands” (*El Socialista* No. 214, 15 February). Never one to be outdone, the *caudillo* of the Partido Obrero, Jorge Altamira, pathetically lamented the dictatorship’s 1982 failure: “How happy it would have made us if the papers had carried the news that a lunatic, a murderer and a torturer [Galtieri] had sunk

the British fleet in the South Atlantic, and not that a sane, a democratic [sic!] and a civilized [sic!] Thatcher destroyed the Argentine army” (2 April video on [www.tvpts.tv](http://www.tvpts.tv)).

The pseudo-Trotskyists present the bourgeois chauvinist ambitions and adventures over the Malvinas/Falklands as an “anti-imperialist cause.” But, as we wrote 30 years ago:

“What’s anti-imperialist about the ‘recovery’ of this tiny archipelago hundreds of miles from the Argentine coasts? Does it affect the right of self-determination of the Argentine people? Not at all. In what way are the Falklands/Malvinas used as a means of economic pressure by Britain? By buying supplies in Argentina? Granted, the Falklands are a relic of the British empire, and communists demand that this decaying, second-rate imperialist power get out of all its colonial holdovers, from Hong Kong to the Falklands. But the Argentine working masses would gain nothing from Galtieri’s adventure (even if it had been successful).”  
—“Thatcher Orders Bloody Slaughter,” *WV* No. 307, 11 June 1982

In fact, the PTS has given a new twist to embellishing the Argentine bourgeoisie’s military adventures by raising the grotesquely reformist and social-chauvinist demand that in 1982 “the workers, through their organizations” had to impose “general enlistment of the people so that every man and woman could receive adequate military instruction” to go and kill British people (or get killed by them) over a bunch of wind-swept rocks (*La Verdad Obrera* No. 462, 16 February). With its left flank loyally covered by these fervent patriots, the Argentine bourgeoisie must feel quite at ease. ■



# Young Spartacus

## For Free Quality Integrated Education for All! Supreme Court to Rule on Remnants of Affirmative Action

Having all but abolished special admissions programs and other minimal reforms initiated in the mid 1960s to increase minority students' access to higher education, the Supreme Court will soon rule on whether any consideration of race in University of Texas admissions is constitutional. The *Fisher v. University of Texas* case is taking place in the context of a decades-long racist purge of universities through both legal attacks on affirmative action and astronomical tuition hikes that keep quality higher education out of reach for the mass of black and Latino kids. During the Supreme Court's October 10 *Fisher* hearing, about 250 protesters gathered outside the court in support of affirmative action. There has been a lamentable dearth of protest around this Supreme Court case, even as compared to the 2003 *Grutter v. Bollinger* case.

Workers and youth must oppose this attack on the remains of affirmative action. The *Fisher* case is part of a racist ideological drive to entrench the principle that oppressed minorities deserve nothing, ever. In university admissions, affirmative action has meant gains, however minimal, for a small number of black and Latino students against the inherent race and class bias of higher education under capitalism. But these gains are at best limited and easily reversible, as evidenced by the last 35 years of Supreme Court rulings, as well as the ballot initiatives and laws that currently ban affirmative action in seven states. What is needed is not simply a defense of the existing scraps of affirmative action but a fight for free, quality, racially integrated education as a *right for everyone*. The working class has the potential social power and objective interest to fight for this.

Minimal gains like affirmative action never have and never will fundamentally alter the systematic oppression of black people. The majority of black youth are not simply locked out of the elite universities. Those who are not locked away in America's prisons work in menial jobs—if they have access to a job at all—and languish in the segregated ghettos where the only ticket out is signing up for the impe-



Getty

Rally in support of affirmative action outside U.S. Supreme Court, October 10.

rialist military or the police. Many Latinos, especially Dominicans and Puerto Ricans who are branded by the color of their skin once they hit U.S. shores, do not fare much better. Black oppression is woven into the fabric of American capitalism, starting from the enslavement of millions of black people. Chattel slavery no longer exists in this country, but the forcible segregation of the vast majority of black people cannot be ended by anything short of workers revolution to sweep away the capitalist system.

High school students of today have never seen a time when segregation (white kids going to mostly white schools, black kids going to mostly black schools) was *not* accepted in society as the “normal” order of things. The hypersegregation of U.S. schools, which also affects many Latinos, is the disastrous consequence of the 1970s defeat of busing. Busing was a minimal court-mandated reform that required the racial integration of public schools in Boston and other cities. The Spartacist League defended busing and urged the working class to fight to extend busing to the wealthier white suburbs. (See “As Racist Mobs Rampaged, Liberals and Reformists Knifed Busing,” WV No. 921, 26 September 2008.) As time went on, the courts increasingly accepted

the verdict handed down by racist mob rule in the 1970s.

### Reactionaries' Drive to End Affirmative Action

This Supreme Court case centers on Abigail Fisher, a white student from Texas who cried foul because the University of Texas denied her application in 2008. Fisher's lawyer claims she was “injured” by going through an admissions process that considers race as one of many factors in determining the admission of some incoming freshmen. He further argues that, since the University of Texas automatically admits white, black and Latino students who graduate in the top 10 percent of their high school classes, it is not necessary to ever consider race in admissions in order to achieve racial “diversity.” Fisher's followers are raising the timeworn racist battle cry of “reverse discrimination.”

The driving force behind the *Fisher* case is the Project on Fair Representation, a right-wing legal organization set up by former investment broker Edward Blum. This reactionary outfit is also providing all of the resources for the *Shelby County v. Holder* case that is currently before the Supreme Court—a case aimed at overturning key sections of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. From affirmative action and racial integration of public schools to voting rights for blacks and Latinos, its mission seems to be the elimination of every remaining gain of the civil rights movement.

And where does the money come from? The Project on Fair Representation is funded by Donors Trust, a conduit through which right-wingers like the infamous Koch brothers and Chicago industrialist Barre Seid have funneled over \$300 million to projects ranging from the drive to gut Social Security to the undermining of research into climate change. Donors Trust recipients also include right-wing think tanks like the CATO Institute and American Enterprise Institute, whose “scholars” have included Dinesh D'Souza, Newt Gingrich, Charles Murray, who coauthored the racist *Bell Curve*, and John Yoo, the architect of the Bush administration's torture memos.

For its part, the Obama administration submitted an *amicus curiae* (friend

of the court) brief in defense of the University of Texas and in support of the last scraps of affirmative action. After motivating at length the importance of black and Latino military officers, the brief argues, “A pipeline of highly qualified, diverse graduates is critical to the Nation's law-enforcement and national-security needs.”

The Obama White House could not care less about making education accessible to black and Latino youth. Rather, the administration is simply expressing the interests of a more far-sighted wing of the bourgeoisie that wants to have enough black police chiefs to “educate” the ghettos through cop terror and repression; enough Latino Border Patrol officials to oversee the roundups of Mexicans on the border; and enough black and Latino military officers to command the loyalty of their black and Latino subordinates so that U.S. imperialism can maintain its murderous domination over black- and brown-skinned peoples of the world. The liberals and reformists who think they can successfully pressure the federal government to champion rights for oppressed minorities are living in a fool's paradise.

Also arguing in support of affirmative action, Wal-Mart, Halliburton and Starbucks added their names to an *amicus* brief of nearly five dozen Fortune 100 and other top corporations. Again, these capitalists have not the slightest interest in education for the ghettos and barrios. They want a small layer of black and Latino professionals as supervisors, administrators and marketing agents who can deal in a “global society,” and they want their (mostly white) future executives to have experience in a “diverse” university environment. The *amicus* brief explicitly states their motive: “All of this is not just a matter of abstract ideas, but of dollars and cents.”

### Defend Affirmative Action and More!

In the wake of the civil rights movement and then the ghetto upheavals, the bourgeois rulers set up affirmative action programs beginning in the mid 1960s as a sop to defuse social struggles and to create and co-opt a layer of black middle-class professionals. The liberal affirmative action schemes were from the outset designed in such a way as to set whites against blacks and men against women in competition for a diminishing share of jobs, classroom seats and professional openings. After all, within the framework of the capitalist status quo, advancement for one sector of the population can only come at the expense of another. Black people are therefore turned into scapegoats for the white workers' poor conditions, which have increasingly worsened during this latest economic crisis that the capitalists created.

Young activists who believe that the Democratic Party is the instrument for defending the interests of workers and the oppressed should not fool themselves. As we wrote in “Defeat Racist Assault on Affirmative Action!” (WV No. 620, 7 April 1995):

“And today the liberals cannot defend these measures which they instituted in



Ebony

1960s protest during mass upheaval of civil rights movement.



# Mexico: Cops Attack Students, Teachers in Michoacán

## Drop All Charges!

MEXICO CITY, November 17—Protests have continued in response to the October 15 police raids in Michoacán, which were overseen by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) state government and the outgoing right-wing clerical National Action Party (PAN) federal government. Section 18 of the SNTE teachers union, which is controlled by the CNTE dissident wing of the union, has demonstrated in defense of the students. Section 18 will also be participating in the November 20 national strike in opposition to the anti-labor Labor Reform approved by the federal government (see “Mexico: PRI Back at Helm of Capitalist State,” WV No. 1012, 9 November).

All 176 arrested protesters have since been released, but 49 of them still face charges including sedition and rioting. The students called off their strike on October 29, but on November 6 they set up a round-the-clock protest outside the state government offices in Morelia, the capital of Michoacán. This lasted ten days, at which point they held a demonstration blocking a highway heading out of the city. They are demanding that all charges be dropped and that the authorities comply with what they agreed to in the negotiations—more teaching positions, modifications of the curriculum and full credit for the current semester.

As we wrote last year in the wake of the murderous cop attack in Guerrero, which was spearheaded by the nationalist-populist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD)



October 15: Federal and state police brutally attack and arrest students in Michoacán.

state government, “The demands of rural teachers college students [such as better facilities and more resources] have changed very little in the last 50 years, and in all this time the response of the ruling capitalists/landowners—especially but not only in Guerrero—has varied from class disdain to more abject police/military brutality.”

The following is a translation of the October 22 leaflet issued by the Grupo Espartaquista de México, section of the International Communist League.

\* \* \*

Students, faculty members and workers at the teachers colleges in the cities of Cherán, Arteaga and Tiripetío went on strike September 10, demanding teach-

ing posts and some control over the curriculum. Beginning on October 4, the strikers seized buses and trucks and held them inside the campus facilities. Before dawn on October 15, PRI governor Fausto Vallejo, together with the PAN federal government, unleashed cop terror against the strikers. Armed police stormed in and threw tear gas at the demonstrators, who defended themselves with rocks and by setting some of the buses on fire. Finally, the police overwhelmed and brutally beat them. A total of 176 strikers were arrested and many were injured, including some with gunshot wounds. Cops attacked Cherán villagers who tried to help the strikers. While most of those arrested have been freed, eight are still imprisoned in Morelia under charges of sedition and rioting. Section 18 of the SNTE is now on strike, demanding freedom for the jailed strikers. What’s needed is mass, active solidarity with the Michoacán students, especially mobilizing the support of the working class with its social power. *An injury to one is an injury to all! Freedom now for those still in jail! Drop all the charges!*

The raid against these students, who have strong ties to the teachers union that they will eventually join and who attend school in a region with a large indigenous population, sparked a mass demonstration in Morelia. State repression was directed even against those who mobilized for the release of the jailed strikers: Seven people who blocked the Morelia-Pátzcuaro highway in Michoacán on October 15 were arrested, while dozens of students who closed down Insurgentes Avenue in Mexico City on October 19 were brutally attacked. The raid on the Michoacán campuses is also a threat against the students and rejected applicants who have

occupied schools in Morelia, Chiapas and Mexico City. As long as the capitalist system exists, the rulers will use state forces against those who demand education, jobs, housing, health care and basic rights.

Many throughout the country are worried about what the PRI’s return to the presidency will mean. Nevertheless, widespread illusions in the PRD and/or López Obrador and his Morena [Movement for National Regeneration] are an obstacle that prevents the working class and oppressed from fighting for the society they deserve, one governed according to the needs of the people instead of the interests and profits of the owners of industry and capital. “Leftist” bourgeois parties and politicians only differ with the PRI and PAN over how to administer capitalism. Although the PRD did not directly participate in this cruel repression and they now throw up their hands in horror and condemnation, this party was responsible for the state repression against students of the teachers college in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero, last year that left two students dead on the highway. Similarly, PRD governor Lázaro Cárdenas Batel sent cops against the miners and metal workers on strike in the port of Lázaro Cárdenas in 2006, leaving two miners dead [see “Miners, Steel Workers Strikes Shake Mexico,” WV No. 872, 9 June 2006]. The bourgeois state—which has the cops, the army, the prisons and the courts at its core—can’t be reformed. Its class nature will not change by replacing one ruling capitalist politician with another. What happened in Cherán, Arteaga and Tiripetío last week is not an aberration, but the normal functioning of the bourgeois state.

The bourgeoisie couldn’t care less about the general education of the exploited and oppressed masses—especially poor peasants and indigenous people. As we wrote last year after the attack in Ayotzinapa:

“The bourgeoisie allocates resources for education in proportion to what its own priorities require for the training of capitalist society’s future administrative, technical and ideological personnel.... We communists fight for free, quality education for *all*—in the city and in the countryside—with open admissions and student stipends. Placing education at the service of the workers and peasants requires putting an end to the system of capitalist exploitation, which is dedicated to producing profits for the numerically small bourgeoisie, through a socialist revolution that expropriates the bourgeoisie and establishes a collectivized, planned economy to satisfy the needs of the population.”

—“Mexico: Cops Shoot Down Students in Guerrero,” reprint- ed in WV No. 995, 3 February

To end state violence once and for all, the working class, standing at the head of the rural and urban oppressed masses, must destroy the capitalist state and replace it with its own class dictatorship, in the form of a workers and peasants government. To achieve this it is necessary for the proletariat to break with all illusions in the bosses’ parties and forge a revolutionary workers party that will lead the fight to end capitalism. That is the task to which we dedicate all our efforts. ■



Pauli Estrella

October 17: Mass demonstration by teachers union in Morelia, Michoacán, demands immediate release of arrested students.

the first place, because they have nothing to offer the working class, white or black, and besides, they can’t square them with their ideology of meritocracy and abstract ‘democracy.’ The stark fact is that there is no way to overcome entrenched racial and sexual oppression within the framework of capitalism.”

We defend affirmative action in higher education as a minimal democratic measure. At the same time, we have always opposed affirmative action in employment, because it gives employers and capitalist state agencies the chance to interfere in the trade unions for the purpose of undermining hard-won gains. During the Nixon administration, the 1969 “Philadelphia Plan” mandated hiring quotas on federal construction projects and were used to undermine union hiring halls and seniority rights. This was part of a conscious effort to use minority workers as

a club against their white class brothers and sisters. Against government-enforced affirmative action schemes in the unions, we fight *for preferential training and hiring of minorities by the unions* as part of the struggle to organize the unorganized and to establish and defend union hiring halls.

Quality education should not be a privilege bestowed on the “worthy” sons and daughters of the bourgeoisie and those who can afford it. It should be a right for everyone. The select few who manage to get into a good college can barely withstand the cost of four years. For example, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (31 August) reports that only 32 percent of black students and 39 percent of Latinos at Texas’ public four-year institutions actually graduate. The 57 percent graduation rate for white students is also abys-

mal. Against the debt peonage that awaits so many college students of all races, we say: Abolish the student debt!

All colleges should have open admissions, no tuition, a state-paid living stipend for each student and free childcare in order to make education genuinely accessible to everyone. Private universities like Harvard, with its \$30 billion endowment, should be nationalized under worker, student and teacher control. Massive remedial programs should be set up to academically prepare students coming from the resource-starved inner-city schools. Racial integration and equal access to a quality education will not come through Supreme Court rulings or the election of Democratic politicians. The fight for free, quality education for all cannot be separated from the necessary struggle to abolish the capitalist

system itself. Only workers revolution can put an end to racial and other social inequalities that are firmly rooted in the capitalist system. ■

### New York Spartacus Youth Club Event

Tuesday, November 27, 7 p.m.

**Miners Strikes Shake Neo-Apartheid South Africa Eyewitness Account**

CCNY, 138th St. and Amsterdam Ave.  
NAC Hoffman Lounge  
(212) 267-1025 • nysl@tiac.net

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[www.icl-fi.org](http://www.icl-fi.org)



Re-Election...

(continued from page 1)

racist reaction that want to roll back the remaining gains of the civil rights movement, seen not least in various unsuccessful schemes to suppress black voter turnout. The reactionaries also want to take a hatchet to the Fourteenth Amendment, which granted citizenship to former black slaves after the Civil War and extended this right to anyone else born in the U.S., namely the children of immigrants. What black people feared was seen at the campus of “Ole Miss” on election night, when white students rioted after learning the results, screaming racial epithets and burning an Obama-Biden election sign.

By the count of the Electoral College, Obama won handily, and he beat Romney in the popular vote by roughly three percentage points. Romney captured the lion’s share of the white vote, particularly men and particularly in the vast majority of the states of the former Confederacy as well as the rural areas of the “heartland.” Obama was backed by well over 90 percent of the black electorate and more than 70 percent of Latinos and Asian Americans, also getting the support of single women, young people, gays and families with annual incomes under \$50,000.

Although Obama’s 2008 election was celebrated as the beginning of the “end of racism,” black people overall are far worse off today than they were four years ago. Black unemployment has spiked, wages have flatlined and median wealth has crashed. The wave of foreclosures has black families staying in homeless shelters at seven times the rate of whites. This is not to mention the White House-led assault on public education that has written off ghetto schools. The stark reality is that black oppression, which is structurally embedded in American capitalism, is not going to be overcome short of socialist revolution, whereby the working class rips the economy out of the hands of the racist capitalist rulers and reorganizes it on an egalitarian socialist basis.

The Devil Didn’t Make Him Do It

On the heels of the president’s re-election, liberals, the trade-union bureaucracy and black Democratic Party politicians are peddling the myth that “now Obama will fight for us.” By their lights, Obama was prevented from doing so in his first term by the economic and other “messes,” such as the imperialist occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, left behind by his Republican predecessor, George W. Bush.

As we wrote at the time of Obama’s 2008 election:

“From the standpoint of the international working class and oppressed there is *nothing to celebrate* in Obama’s victory and much to fear. Enthusiasm among large sections of the bourgeoisie, on the other hand, is justified. After nearly eight years of one of the most incompetent and widely despised regimes in recent U.S. history, they now have in Obama a more

rational face for their brutal, irrational system. Obama has also inspired illusions in the trappings of bourgeois democracy, the means by which the capitalists disguise their rule with the appearance of a popular mandate. Abroad, Obama provides an invaluable facelift for U.S. imperialism, the main enemy of the world’s working people.”

—“Obama: Commander-in-Chief of Racist U.S. Imperialism,” WV No. 925, 21 November 2008

Since then, Obama has cut the losses for U.S. imperialism by drawing down the number of troops in Iraq, leaving behind a residual military force to help police the region, and is preparing an eventual pull-out from Afghanistan. At the same time, his administration has ratcheted up the global “war on terror,” with the numbers of those killed by U.S. drones soon to top 3,000 under a president who keeps his own “terrorist” kill list. While liberals hail White House plans to trim some Pentagon spending—a bit of economic correction by the ruling class—this will not in the least cut into the military predominance of U.S. imperialism, which spends more on its war machine than the next 14 largest spenders combined. On the home front, with its electronic and other monitoring of the purported “enemy within,” the Obama administration has outstripped the Bush-Cheney government in assaulting the constitutional rights of the population.

As for the notion that it was Bush administration plans that forced Obama’s hand in bailing out the Wall Street bank-



CalMehala/Shay

University of Mississippi: Obama/Biden sign being burned at racist student rally following news of Obama’s re-election on November 6.

ers whose financial swindles had triggered a global economic meltdown, let’s hear it from the man himself. Not long after Obama came into office, he had his first meeting with these high-rolling perps. In his book *Confidence Men* (2011), Ron Suskind cites a top banking executive: “The president had us at a moment of real vulnerability. At that point, he could have ordered us to do just about anything, and we would have rolled over.” Instead, Obama assured the assembled titans of U.S. finance capital: “My administration is the only thing between you and the pitchforks.... I’m not out there to go after you. I’m protecting you.”

Here is a pure expression of the role of the Democratic Party as one of the dual parties of capital. Its occasional posture



AP

August 2011: Unemployed line up at Atlanta job fair.

as the “friend” of labor, minorities and the poor is aimed at heading off class and social struggle against the capitalist rulers. The lunacy of the Republican Party is simply an extreme expression of a decaying system whose masters see in the present economic crisis an opportunity to further starve the poor, bust the unions, drive down wages and slash such social programs as remain. The Democrats do the same thing because they serve the same interests; they just try to put a “kinder, gentler” face on it. In his 27 September column on the presidential contest, titled “From Hope to Fear,” America’s foremost class-war prisoner, Mumia Abu-Jamal, summed it up: “Truth is, both are essentially advocates

standing that the working class needs its own party—not a parliamentary vehicle vying to be the administrators of the capitalist state but a party championing the cause of all the exploited and oppressed in the fight for *workers rule*. A central obstacle to this fight is the labor bureaucracy, which has long subordinated the struggles and interests of the proletariat to the class enemy, particularly through the agency of the Democratic Party.

The Labor Lieutenants of U.S. Imperialism

The AFL-CIO tops are patting themselves on the back for their role in Obama’s re-election, particularly in such battleground states as Ohio and Wisconsin. These two have also been battleground states for labor, with Ohio auto workers and Wisconsin public workers getting pummeled thanks to their misleaders’ prostration before the Democrats. In 2009, the United Auto Workers tops worked hand in glove with Obama on the GM and Chrysler bailouts, which wrested massive concessions from a union that was once the powerhouse of the labor movement. In 2011, the anger of tens of thousands of workers and their allies who rallied against Wisconsin Republican governor Scott Walker’s union-busting assault on public workers was channeled into a campaign to recall Walker and replace him with an anti-union Democrat. Even that crime didn’t pay, as the recall went down to defeat.

Such has not curbed the enthusiasm of self-proclaimed socialists like the Workers World Party, whose editorial “Obama Wins, Struggle Begins” proclaims: “While unions have been declared dead many times by bourgeois pundits, they showed their muscle, going door to door in places like Wisconsin” (*Workers World*, 7 November). What a shameful statement of the bankruptcy of the reformist left, whose politics mirror those of the labor bureaucracy whom they serve as water boys.

Far from “showing muscle,” the labor officialdom is so averse to employing the strike weapon to defend what exists of organized labor—much less to replenish its ranks through organizing the millions of unorganized workers—that in

of austerity. One wants to slap people with it; the other slaps you as well. He just says he hated to do it.”

That the presidential election was among the most polarized on racial, social and, in many ways, class lines in recent U.S. history speaks to the anger and discontent at the base of this society. But such discontent is massively distorted by the electoral circus, a keystone of the whole fraud of bourgeois democracy. In *The State and Revolution* (1917), Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin succinctly described bourgeois elections as providing voters with the chance to “decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people.”

As revolutionary Marxists, it is our purpose to fight to translate discontent among the toiling masses into a conscious under-

Chicago...

(continued from page 3)

amendment polled a 56 percent “yes” vote in the recent general election but failed for lack of a three-fifths majority.

This measure makes clear the acceleration of efforts to contain the unions in a web of legal and contract restrictions designed to prevent strike action. Equally clear is that the recent strike is just one battle in Obama/Emanuel’s continuing “reform” war on teachers and their unions. A victory in this war requires a return to the class-struggle methods that built the unions, which won legal recognition of the right to strike, among other gains, by striking. Such militancy is predicated on the knowledge that the interests of the working class and the ruling class are diametrically opposed. It necessitates a program of class independence, breaking all illusions in the capitalist rulers and their agents. The answer is that working people need their own party, a multiracial revolutionary workers party to

fight for *their* class interests. Union vice president Sharkey is a supporter of the International Socialist Organization (ISO). Throughout the period leading up to the strike he uttered not a word of criticism of the course taken by Lewis and defended her action in signing off on Senate Bill 7. Similarly, *Socialist Worker*, newspaper of the ISO, alibied this cave-in and is now extolling the strike outcome as an out-and-out victory. While acknowledging a concession or two to Emanuel, the ISO presents contract terms as “not only big wins for the CTU, but for teachers everywhere who are opposed to their unions’ retreats on critical questions” (*Socialist Worker*, 26 September). The ISO’s assessment is completely congruent with that offered by the Democratic Party-loyal union tops. These labor misleaders stand in the way of the struggles that need to be waged. Chicago teachers, who *today* are working longer hours, who *today* see their pensions imperiled and who *today* face the prospect of layoffs, know that the war remains to be fought. ■

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# PSL's Electoral Cretinism

We print below, edited for publication, the remarks of a Los Angeles comrade during the discussion period at the Spartacist League forum “Elections 2012: Wall Street Democrat vs. Wall Street Republican” (printed in two parts in *WV* Nos. 1011 and 1012, 26 October and 9 November). The Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) claimed to run a socialist campaign for U.S. president, based in no small part on the call to amend the Constitution to supposedly ensure jobs and decent housing for all—i.e., the reformist notion that the capitalist system, based on vicious exploitation of working people, can be fundamentally altered through legislative fiddling.

When the PSL split from the Workers World Party (WWP) in 2004, it in no way broke with that outfit's reformist program. The WWP has repeatedly crossed the class line by supporting capitalist politicians, in particular such black Democrats as Chicago's Harold Washington in the 1980s up to Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton. This year, the WWP once again supported Brooklyn's Charles Barron in his efforts to become a Democratic candidate for Congress. As for the PSL, in 2008 it ran candidates on the tickets of the Green Party—a small-time capitalist party—and California's petty-bourgeois Peace and Freedom Party (PFP).

The third parties with whom the PSL cavorts have proved time and again to be

vehicles through which “progressives” try to push the Democratic Party of imperialism and war a bit to the left. In that pursuit, a 10 June 2008 PSL online article declared that the excitement aroused by Barack Obama's candidacy among black people was “perfectly justifiable” given the racist history of the U.S. and concluded: “Our campaign has absolutely no quarrel with those who have devoted their time to righting this historic wrong.” In other words: vote Democrat. For the 2012 elections, the PSL borrowed Obama's slogan of yesteryear, “Yes We Can,” adding some leftist trim, declaring: “Yes We Can—Fight for Socialism!”

\* \* \*

Here in L.A. we don't see much of the International Socialist Organization or WWP, but their place is taken by the equally reformist Party for Socialism and Liberation, who through their ANSWER coalition hosts liberal, pacifist antiwar demos based on appeals to the bourgeoisie to change their priorities and fund things like jobs instead of things like war. These demos are never centered on advancing the need for independent working-class politics but are to pressure the Democrats to do the right thing.

Right now the PSL is putting most of their efforts into a presidential election campaign, but their claim to be an

independent alternative is a lie. Here in California they first sought to run on the petty-bourgeois Peace and Freedom Party ticket. The PFP does not stand for a break with the capitalist parties or a fight for a workers government; it is a place for leftists who have made their peace with capitalism. The PSL actually wound up withdrawing their bid for the PFP nomination and gave support to Roseanne Barr for that ticket. A funny actress she may be, but she's certainly no socialist. Now the PSL is forced to peddle their reformist wares in their own name.

One of the main things that they are calling for in their campaign is seizing the banks within the confines of capitalism. The PSL states that “by creating a national People's Bank, with open books and under the democratic control and administration of the 99%...we can begin the process of reorganizing the economy to meet human needs.” Capitalism can never be reorganized to meet human needs. It is a system which exists to insure the profits of a few capitalists at the expense of the majority of the population. Moreover, the capitalist state exists to defend bankers and their banks from the seizures that the PSL calls for. It is ridiculous of the PSL to think that the capitalist state will allow the banks to be seized when it didn't even allow a few Occupy people to seize a public park! The working class can seize these banks and

make them work for its interests and those of the oppressed *only* after they have overthrown the capitalist state and created a workers state.

In their ten-point program, the PSL calls for making jobs, free health care, and affordable housing constitutional rights. What base reformism! The priorities of the capitalist class cannot be changed simply by changing the laws. The laws actually exist to prop up the capitalist system. If the PSL truly believes that something will be guaranteed just because it's in the Constitution, maybe they can explain how it's possible that people are currently being tortured at Guantánamo and in countless police departments across the U.S. even though the Constitution prohibits cruel and unusual punishment.

We in the Spartacist League believe that the only way to do away with the evils of capitalism is for the working class, led by a Leninist vanguard party, to overthrow the capitalist state and create a workers state, which will lay the foundation for a socialist society. Building a revolutionary party requires making clear that the Democrats are a capitalist party and the *enemy* of working people. But the PSL's reformist program only serves to sow illusions among radical workers and youth. Thus, they actually help prop up this decaying racist capitalist system and act as an obstacle in the fight for a revolutionary workers party. We in the SL seek to break would-be leftists from the reformism of the PSL and other groups and win them to a revolutionary Marxist program. Come talk to us if this interests you. ■

Michigan they put up a referendum to enshrine collective bargaining rights in the state constitution. To make absolutely clear where they stand, the bureaucrats explicitly allowed that lawmakers could ban public employee strikes! Even with such reassurances, this measure sparked an all-out propaganda counteroffensive and was handily defeated. No wonder: the union misleaders were appealing to a voting public that includes the big bosses, small businessmen, preachers and others for whom the unions are a scourge.

The rights of workers to organize, strike, picket and shut down production have never been codified in the Constitution. The reason is simple: they collide with the only actual guaranteed rights in this society, the property rights of the capitalist owners that are the foundation for the profits they extract through the exploitation of labor. Everything of value that workers have won has been gained through hard-fought, often bloody, class battles *against* the employers and their state.

With Obama now turning his attention to the government's supposed fiscal crisis, the name of the game for the labor tops is mobilizing the ranks to back him. Two days after the elections, the union bureaucracy organized rallies in more than 100 cities to demand higher taxes on the rich and no cuts to programs like Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare. Service Employees International Union president Mary Kay Henry explained: “We expect to have the president's back on the agenda that the voters just declared support for,” adding that “the president has always said he needs a movement behind his mandate” (*New York Times*, 13 November).

The very idea that the U.S. economy is about to take a nose dive off a “fiscal cliff” is an invention. As even the *New York Times* (15 November) admitted, manufactured budget crises have been a convenient means, going back to the Reagan administration, of enforcing “unpopular tax and spending actions.” Playing the race card by decrying mythical black “welfare queens” living off the tax dollars of “hard-working” Americans, the Republican Reagan manufactured a debt crisis to shred the “war on poverty” programs that were enacted to buy social peace following the mass ghetto upheavals of the 1960s. But it took Democratic president Bill Clinton to finally eliminate “welfare as we know it.” As he did during the 2011 “debt ceiling” crisis, Obama has now made it perfectly clear that he is will-



Corbis

**Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, September 5. UAW bureaucrats supported Obama's bailout of auto bosses, which gutted union gains.**

ing to strike a “grand bargain” with the Republicans that would cut billions from programs like Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid as long as they throw him a bone on the Bush tax cuts.

In a 7 November editorial, *Socialist Worker* online, publication of the International Socialist Organization (ISO), declares: “We Don't Want ‘Four More-of-the-Same Years’.” The key for them, as always, is to make the Democrats fight. In the words of Chicago Teachers Union vice president and ISO supporter Jesse Sharkey: “Democrats respond when they are pushed.... If the wind's blowing hard enough they'll move” (London *Guardian*, 9 November). No doubt in the offing is the ritual huffing and puffing by the reformist left to demand that Obama “tax the rich” to provide money for jobs, education, welfare and other programs.

The banks and corporations are sitting on mountains of cash, the ill-gotten gains of a system based on the exploitation of the many for the profits of the few. The problem is that you're not going to get your hands on it by appealing to the capitalist rulers to reorder their priorities to serve human needs. Contrary to the bourgeois-democratic myth of government by and for the people, the policies of U.S. imperialism are determined not by the electorate or by “pressure from below” but by the interests of the capitalist ruling class, as overseen by Democrats and Republicans alike. To win what's necessary, the working class

has to smash the rule of the bourgeoisie! What's needed is a workers government that expropriates the capitalists' productive wealth and establishes a rationally planned socialist economy.

## It Is Desperately Necessary to Fight!

On election night, dejected FOX-TV commentator Bill O'Reilly blamed demographics for the results, lamenting: “It's not a traditional America anymore. And there are 50 percent of the voting public who want stuff.... The white establishment is now the minority.” It is worth noting that white Christian fundamentalists, first introduced into the political mainstream not by the Republicans but under Democratic Party president Jimmy Carter, have lost political sway. But it is not as if they ever represented the views of the majority of the population. Rather, they were a convenient ideological battering ram wielded by the capitalist rulers to roll back the gains of the civil rights movement, regiment and “morally rearm” the population to ward off social upheaval and advance the Cold War against “godless Communism” abroad.

With millions unemployed or scrambling to get by through miserably paid part-time work, with many thrown out of their homes, with pension and health care benefits looted and lengthening lines for whatever public assistance is available, people do indeed “want stuff,” like a decent job, a

place to live, food, education for their children, health care. The Republicans overplayed their “kill 'em all, god will know his own” glorification of robber baron capitalism. At the same time, the decades of betrayals by the fakers sitting atop the unions have encouraged the U.S. rulers in the arrogant belief that they can get away with further impoverishing the working class, starving the ghetto and barrio poor and killing the sick and aged. But it is not possible to eliminate the class struggle, which is born of the irreconcilable conflict between labor and its exploiters.

Much pressure has been building at the base of this society, and at some point it can and will explode. Harnessing and directing this anger toward the eradication of a system based on exploitation and rooted in racial oppression is, at bottom, a question of leadership. The key to unlocking the social power that lies in the hands of the multiracial working class is to break the political chains forged by the trade-union misleaders that have shackled labor to its exploiters. To end the ravages produced by the anarchic system of production for profit requires forging a revolutionary workers party. Defending the interests of workers, blacks, immigrants and others against the exploiters, such a party would provide the necessary leadership for sweeping away the entire system of capitalist wage slavery through proletarian socialist revolution. ■

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Greece...

(continued from page 12)

The Troika [the EU, European Central Bank and IMF] demands that the national labor agreement apply only to unionized workers so that the bourgeoisie can starve the most vulnerable workers and further divide and weaken the labor movement.

In addition to the desperate conditions facing the working class, a section of Greece’s large petty bourgeoisie faces ruin, especially small store owners and family businesses. One in four stores around the country have closed in the last year and in Athens 42 percent have gone out of business. The all-round social crisis is also reflected in a public health-care system nearing collapse, with regular shortages of medicine and basic supplies. Hundreds of thousands of unemployed people have been left with no health care whatsoever. As an Athens cancer doctor quoted in the *New York Times* (24 October) put it: “In Greece right now, to be unemployed means death.”

In response to the ever worsening conditions of life for workers and their families, there have been many protest strikes in different sectors so far this autumn, along with several one and two-day general strikes called by the GSEE and ADEDY union federations. Large protests during German chancellor Angela Merkel’s visit to Athens last month made a mockery of the government’s attempt to ban demonstrations. Despite these displays of working-class anger and militancy, the imperialists and their domestic lackeys in the Greek bourgeoisie are determined to use the financial crisis to turn back the clock and destroy the few remaining gains workers have won from their struggles against unbridled exploitation.

Nazi Worshippers Feed on Capitalist Reaction

In opposition to a restive working class, the capitalists are willing to enlist not only the repressive forces of the capitalist state—the cops and the courts—but also the shock troops of national chauvinist reaction, such as Golden Dawn. With anger at the governing parties growing every day, the latest polls show increased support for both the [leftist] Syriza coalition and the fascist Golden Dawn, who are ominously coming third. The disintegration of Greek society is fueling a deep political polarization. The atmosphere of heightened state repression against immigrants, leftists and workers combined with the lack of a revolutionary leadership to lead the working class out of this impasse is the context for the growth of fascist reaction.

The rapid rise of the Nazi-loving Golden Dawn is not an aberration—the capitalists hold the fascists in reserve because they are a useful weapon against the workers in times of instability. Indeed, the Greek bourgeoisie has a long history of great savagery against the working class, resorting to right-wing terror, bonapartist dictatorships and military rule to smash

the workers movement. Golden Dawn is the latest incarnation of this Greek tradition. In a country where hundreds of thousands perished under Nazi occupation during World War II, Golden Dawn occasionally denies its Nazi inspiration and makes a show of handing out food parcels to impoverished Greeks and “protecting” elderly residents from crimes supposedly committed by immigrants. But their Hitler salutes and Nazi-inspired insignia and slogans are unmistakable. Their electoral success in June and growing popularity since have emboldened these racist terrorists, who regularly carry out bloody



May 17: Fascist Golden Dawn deputies and others during swearing-in ceremony at Greek parliament.

rampages against immigrants and their defenders.

Contrary to the hypocritical pronouncements by the government against Golden Dawn, these fascist marauders are taking their cue directly from the Greek capitalist state, which has rounded up over 16,000 immigrants just since August. The government is completing a fence along the Turkish border to keep out immigrants, many of them desperate refugees from the hells created by the imperialists in places like Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Libya. Golden Dawn goes one further by proposing to plant land mines along the border. The capitalists and their Golden Dawn minions try to deflect the blame onto immigrants for the crisis that the capitalists themselves have brought upon the masses. In opposition to this, the workers movement must fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations!

It is no surprise that an estimated 50 to 60 percent of police sympathize politically with Golden Dawn given that repressing leftists and terrorizing immigrants are an essential part of police work. A vivid example of this was the police torture of 40 anti-fascist activists arrested on September 30 and October 1, as publicized by the London *Guardian*. The first 15 of these activists were arrested after courageously defending immigrants against Golden Dawn scum in the streets of Athens, while the other 25 were arrested for protesting in their comrades’ defense. One of the activists interviewed by the *Guardian* explained: “They spat on me and said we would die like our grandfathers in the civil war.” We, the Trotskyist Group of Greece, demand that all charges against the anti-fascist activists be dropped immediately! The Minister of Public Order threatened to sue the *Guardian*, and two television reporters, Kostas Arvanitis and Marilena Katsimi, were summarily suspended because they had the courage to hint that the minister could not pursue his threat because the reports of police torture were credible.

Among the defenders of immigrant rights in the sights of Golden Dawn is lawyer Yianna Kourtovik, whom Golden Dawn attacked with eggs and beat up on September 25 outside the Agios Pantelimon police station as the police, not surprisingly, looked on. Well known for her defense of leftists and immigrants, Kourtovik has been taunted on the street by policemen chanting “Blood! Honor! Golden Dawn!” It is hardly a secret that

the cops and the courts collude with the fascists—the press reports that residents complaining to the police about immigrants in their neighborhood are directed to Golden Dawn to take care of matters.

KKE: Touching Faith in the Capitalist State

The TGG stands against the deadly illusion, spread by the Greek Communist Party (KKE) and other groups on the left, in the capitalist state and its police forces. In a September 7 article in *Rizospastis*, the KKE reports as positive its participation in a demonstration

by the Pan-Hellenic Federation of Police Employees, quoting the statement of KKE leading cadre Spiros Halvatzis to the cops:

“We believe that the working people of the security forces should not allow themselves to be used as the long arm of the bourgeois state to smash the working-class, trade-union movement. What is needed is unity, rallying, common action with the rest of the workers.”

This grotesque appeal for unity with the police is the polar opposite of a Marxist understanding of the state. As Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin explained in his key work, *The State and Revolution*, the capitalist state is “the ‘special coercive force’ for the suppression of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie.” Lenin explained that this state power “consists of special bodies of armed men having prisons, etc., at their command.” In other words, the security forces of the state exist for the very purpose of smashing the working class and the unions when they pose a threat to the capitalist class. Appealing to the cops to stop being the guard dogs of capital is nothing more nor less than pleading for the peaceful and democratic reform of the dictatorship of capital. In doing so, the KKE tops foster the lie that the capitalist state can be made to serve the interests of the working class.

At the same demonstration, a KKE trade unionist, Ilias Stamelos, said: “PAME [KKE trade-union formation], with its presence, wishes to express its solidarity with the just demands of those in uniform, the majority of whom live on poverty wages.” Far from shedding any tears over the “poverty” of those whose job it is to attack workers and the oppressed, the TGG calls for: *All cops, prison and security guards out of the unions!* As Leon Trotsky wrote: “The worker who becomes a policeman in the service of the capitalist state, is a bourgeois cop, not a worker” (*What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat*, 27 January 1932). While the KKE leadership has no problem standing in solidarity with the fascist-infested Greek police in their demands for better pay, it outrageously smears anarchist protesters as allies of the fascists: “Let’s not forget that these kinds of fascist forces acted jointly with para-state, hooded anarcho-autonomes” (*Rizospastis*, 16 October).

Deadly Threat to Immigrants, Gays, Workers

Golden Dawn has lately joined forces with reactionaries of the Greek Orthodox

church, a central pillar of the capitalist order in Greece which fuels all-sided social reaction and national chauvinism, in particular against Turkey and Muslims, in order to tie the exploited to the Greek bourgeoisie. In Athens on October 11, Golden Dawn members and a religious rabble wielding icons and crucifixes terrorized patrons and performers of a play depicting Jesus and the apostles as gay men. A journalist was brutally assaulted by Golden Dawn members shouting anti-gay and racist epithets in full view of the police. Lately, there have been a number of attacks on gay men. It is in the interests of the working class to defend gay people against this poisonous reaction, as we wrote in “The Founding of the Trotskyist Group of Greece” (November 2004):

“A Trotskyist group must be a Leninist ‘tribune of the people.’ And for Greece, where the ultra-reactionary Orthodox church has enormous influence, the oppression of women is extreme. The Greek ‘holy trinity’ of ‘homeland-religion-family’ which the capitalist state promotes is strongly connected with the national and the woman questions. A central issue for Trotskyists must be the fight for the liberation of women through socialist revolution and opposition to women’s oppression. We fight for full democratic rights for homosexuals, in opposition to the male-chauvinist, homophobic Greek society and the Greek left. We are for the separation of church and state.”

Our call for the separation of church and state is underscored by the recent arrest of a man from the island of Evia on charges of blasphemy. Due to a protest in parliament by a Golden Dawn MP, this man faces charges that can result in up to two years in prison for the “crime” of satirizing a famous monk as Elder Pastsios [a pun on a popular pasta dish] on Facebook!

For Workers United-Front Mobilizations Against the Fascists!

While Golden Dawn currently aim their attacks primarily against immigrants, gays and leftists, their ultimate purpose is to crush the organizations of the working class in order to save the capitalists, as Mussolini’s forces did in Italy in the 1920s and Hitler’s in Germany in the 1930s. Having led the October Revolution alongside Lenin in 1917, Leon Trotsky sought to bring the lessons of that struggle to the German proletariat in the early 1930s as they faced the rise of the Nazis. In *What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat*, Trotsky explained the social roots of fascism:

“Through the fascist agency, capitalism sets in motion the masses of the crazed petty bourgeoisie, and bands of the declassed and demoralized lumpenproletariat; all the countless human beings whom finance capital itself has brought to desperation and frenzy.... “The gist of fascism and its task consist in a complete suppression of all workers’ organizations and the prevention of their revival. In a developed capitalist society this goal cannot be achieved by police methods alone. There is only one method for it, and that is directly opposing the pressure of the proletariat—the moment it weakens—by the pressure of the desperate masses of the petty bourgeoisie.”

Trotsky consistently warned that the reformist misleaders of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and of the Stalinist Communist Party (KPD) downplayed the danger represented by the fascist menace and urged the KPD to initiate mass united-front actions jointly with SPD workers to defend the workers and the oppressed against the Nazi stormtroopers and to destroy them while they were still small.

Central to the fight against fascism then and today is an understanding of the centrality of the working class. As Trotsky pointed out in 1931:

“The main army of fascism still consists of the petty bourgeoisie and the new middle class.... On the scales of election statistics, a thousand fascist votes weigh as much as a thousand Communist votes. But on the scales of the revolutionary struggle, a thousand workers in one big factory represent a force a hundred times greater than a thousand petty officials, clerks, their wives, and their mothers-in-law.” —“Germany, the Key to the International Situation”

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10

WORKERS VANGUARD



# Ireland...

(continued from page 12)

condemned Ireland’s abortion laws, saying: “In an attempt to save a 4-month-old foetus they killed my 30-year-old daughter” (*The Hindu*, 15 November).

The question starkly posed today is how come, in the 21st century, a woman who was suffering a miscarriage was denied an abortion that could have prevented her death? Ireland is “a Catholic country,” the dying woman was told. Make no mistake: any effective fight for abortion rights necessarily means a hard-fought struggle against the full force of clerical reaction and against the capitalist state.

The mass protests in 1992 forced the Supreme Court to rule that the young woman known as “X” could go abroad for an abortion. At the time, the liberals and leftists who led the campaign lulled the mass movement into thinking that legislation for abortion rights would follow automatically. Such illusions in the Irish capitalist state were used to demobilise the struggle. We warned that:

“The women of Ireland and all those who favour abortion rights still face a bitter struggle for what is *needed*: free abortion and contraception on demand. It can rarely have been clearer that it will take working-class revolution to break the power of the church in society, and that the reformist parties of the Irish working class are utterly tied to the capitalist system of austerity, oppression and bigotry.”

—*Workers Hammer* No. 129,  
May/June 1992

The struggle for abortion rights, for the separation of church and state, as well as for decent healthcare and education provision, means a fight against the whole reactionary edifice of capitalism. It is in the direct interest of the working class—men and women—to take up the fight for free abortion on demand, as part of the struggle to free itself from capitalist austerity, exploitation and oppression. Irish society is no longer in thrall to the clergy, as it was for many decades. But the church maintains much control of education and healthcare—many hospitals abide by Catholic ethical codes. The right to an abortion should not be subject

to the moral views of doctors or hospital management. ***For free abortion on demand! For free public healthcare for all! For separation of church and state!***

Under capitalism, democratic rights are the product of social struggle and must constantly be defended against attack. In the 20 years since the “X case,” anti-abortion forces have relentlessly tried to reverse any opening for abortion rights that has been won, such as the right to information on abortion services and to travel abroad for an abortion. It is delusional to think that the capitalist parties Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, or for that matter Labour, a bourgeois workers party, will mount a fundamental challenge to reactionary Catholic forces over abortion rights. Yet these are the parties that reformists are capitulating to, restricting their demands to calling for legislation conforming to the Supreme Court ruling in the “X case.” This boils down to calling for abortion to be legalised *only* in cases where the woman’s life is in danger. The call for “free abortion,” which the Socialist Workers Party [Irish followers of the late Tony Cliff] tacked on to the end of a leaflet issued on 14 November, is merely a fig leaf covering their prostration before the Irish state.

Labour Tánaiste [Deputy Prime Minister] Eamon Gilmore has promised that the government will introduce guidelines stating when abortion is permitted. Of course Marxists defend any legal right to abortion, however limited, that might be achieved. *Any* legalisation of abortion would cause a rift within the government, with several Fine Gael TDs [members of parliament] insisting that no legislation be produced. A dividing line also runs through Sinn Féin, as [its president] Gerry Adams admitted, saying: “I realise there are strongly held opposing views, including within Sinn Féin and throughout society, on the issue of medical termination.” Adams concludes with the standard call for the government to provide legislation, no doubt assuming that such legislation will pander to the anti-abortion bigots, including those within his own party.

Clare Daly (formerly of the Socialist Party) and other TDs elected on the United Left Alliance ticket, put a motion in the

Dáil [Irish parliament] earlier this year, solely designed “to provide for termination of pregnancy where a real and substantial risk to the life of the mother exists” (*Irish Times*, 22 February). In the Dáil debate following the death of Savita Halappanavar, seven “left” TDs—Patrick Nulty, Mick Wallace, Clare Daly, Joan Collins, Richard Boyd Barrett, Joe Higgins and Catherine Murphy—all pleaded with the Fine Gael-Labour coalition government to legislate “for abortion under the terms permitted by the Supreme Court ruling in the X case” (thejournal.ie, 15 November).

Labour Party senator Ivana Bacik likewise demands legislation, to “save the lives of pregnant women” (*Irish Times*, 16 November). Bacik cites the European Court of Human Rights, which ruled in 2010 that Ireland must clarify the legal position on abortion. The government set up an “expert group” to produce recommendations on how to comply with the European Court ruling, but would prefer to postpone a decision as long as possible. Many today still look to the European Union to liberalise Ireland’s laws on abortion, and to permit gay marriage, etc. Such hopes are likely to be in vain. We oppose the European Union, an imperialist club that is dictating savage attacks on working people in Ireland, as well as in Greece, Spain and Portugal.

Limiting the demands for abortion rights to cases where the woman’s life is in danger is a betrayal of the basic needs of Irish women, thousands of whom are forced to travel to Britain every year for an abortion. To get an idea of what government legislation might look like, women in the South need only look across the border to Northern Ireland, where abortion is only available in cases where there is “a risk to the life of the woman or a risk of real and serious adverse effect to her physical and mental health on either a long-term or permanent basis.” Abortion in the North is regulated by criminal law, and is “punishable by a maximum sentence of life imprisonment” (*Irish Times*, 12 October).

The newly opened Marie Stopes private clinic in Belfast, offering non-surgical abortions up to nine weeks, met with howls

of protest from both Catholic and Protestant reactionaries. An article in the *Irish Times* (22 October) noted: “Last year only some 43 legal abortions were performed in the North while the Family Planning Association referred 40 women a week from there to British clinics for a private abortion. Like their Southern counterparts, the boat to Britain has been the only real option.” For the overwhelming majority of working-class and poor women, the “right” to have an abortion without the means to pay still leaves them without much “choice.” Women in Ireland, North and South, depend on the availability of abortion services in Britain, where abortion was legalised in 1967. However today the right to abortion in Britain has faced repeated threats, including an attempt to reduce the time limit of 24 weeks. Birth control and abortion remain restricted throughout the capitalist world by the state, by the institution of the family, and by organised religion, which all serve to enforce women’s oppression.

The fight for abortion rights must be linked to the struggle for women’s liberation through socialist revolution. As we noted in 1992, in opposition to liberals and reformists who trimmed their demands to what they thought was least likely to provoke reactionary forces: “This Gordian knot of bourgeois ‘constitutional’ legal wrangling can only be cut in a progressive sense by a tough, principled, iron-hard fight: not for this reform or that wording but for what is *needed* by women and the working class” (“For a Working Class-Centred Fight for Free Abortion on Demand!” *Workers Hammer* No. 129, May/June 1992). Socialist revolution will tear down the clericalist capitalist system in the South and that of the Loyalist masters in the North. The construction of a planned economy alone can provide quality healthcare and make abortion and contraception free and safe, on demand. Such a society would provide jobs for everyone, laying the *material basis* for the genuine liberation of women. We seek to build proletarian internationalist parties dedicated to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism on both sides of the Irish border and both sides of the Irish Sea. ■

protesters by the Athens police underscores that the strategy of small groups of leftists mobilizing to defend immigrants against fascists, while courageous, is not an effective means of destroying the Golden Dawn menace.

The violent racist attacks on immigrants and others by mobs of Golden Dawn fascists pose the urgent need to mobilize contingents of workers, based on the trade unions, to defend immigrants and sweep the fascist vermin off the streets. What is necessary is to fight to remove the political obstacles to mobilizing the power of the trade unions against Golden Dawn. The KKE has the social weight in the trade unions to take the lead in doing this, but its promotion of illusions in bourgeois democracy and its nationalist populism are barriers. The reformist organizations that compose groups such as Antarsya also reinforce the political obstacles, in particular by tailing the pro-EU Syriza coalition, which promises to provide immigrants more “humane” conditions of imprisonment and to put more cops on the streets to fight “crime.” While groups in Antarsya may claim to be against the EU (or for Greece to get out of the EU), their preference for a “left” capitalist government headed by Syriza and aspirations to pressure such a government show how hollow their anti-EU posture is. In an interview with *International Viewpoint* (June 2012), Dimitris Hilaris of the OKDE-Spartakos (part of the Antarsya coalition) stated: “Syriza has been able to provide a credible solution to the situation, through the slogan of a left government” (“Toward a Government that Will Break with the Troika?”). Given that the EU is responsible for driving down the conditions of life in Greece and fueling the growth of the fascists, you can’t lead a struggle against fascism without trenchant opposition to the capitalist EU.



**Greek cops in central Athens round up undocumented immigrants for eviction, August 5.**

The leadership of the KKE has lately argued that a front against fascism is not needed and that Golden Dawn merely needs to be “exposed.” In a speech to the European Communist Meeting in Brussels on October 1-2, KKE general secretary Aleka Pappariga acknowledged that Golden Dawn is developing along the lines of the “hit squads of the Hitler period” and that cells of the security forces of the capitalist state work with them. However:

“It cannot be dealt with on the basis of an anti-fascist front or a front against violence in general whatever its source, because such a stance will lead to an attack on the movement itself. Golden Dawn must be dealt with by the organized movement itself, in the workplaces, the sectors, in the popular organizations, by exposing its role as a supporter of the system, and dealing with the criminal offences they commit with their murderous attacks which they name as taking the law into their own hands.”

What the KKE means by “dealing

with the criminal offences they commit with their murderous attacks” is to rely on the capitalist state to prosecute them. An example was the demand by PAME leaders on the Minister of Public Order, Nikos Dendias: “We call on you to take measures for stricter control for the safety and protection of all citizens, Greek and immigrant” (*Rizospastis*, 18 July). In fact, the biggest danger of “an attack on the movement itself” comes from believing in the democratic pretensions of the capitalist state, which is exactly what the KKE misleaders do when they beg the minister to send forces of repression to “defend” immigrants. Mass proletarian united-front mobilizations against the fascists are the only way to ensure that the fascists cannot continue to grow and attack the organized workers movement.

Because it is capitalism that gives birth to the scourge of fascism, the struggle against forces like Golden Dawn must be

linked to the fight for the overthrow of capitalist rule in Greece and internationally. Indeed, the working class can only win the ruined petty bourgeoisie to its side and away from the fascists by fighting for a socialist solution to the capitalist crisis. It must fight to combat mass unemployment by demanding the sharing of available work, with no loss of pay, and a massive program of public works. To stop the decline in living conditions, workers must demand that wages be indexed to inflation. To unmask the exploitation, robbery and fraud of the industrialists and bankers, workers should demand that the capitalists open their (real) books. The proletariat must fight for the expropriation of the productive property of the capitalist class as a whole and the establishment of a planned economy under workers rule, where production would be based on social need, not profit. This struggle must extend from the countries most severely ravaged by the crisis in Europe so far like Greece, Portugal, Ireland and Spain and from the superexploited proletarian masses of neo-colonial countries like South Africa and India, to the imperialist powers like the U.S., Germany and Japan, where workers are also under the gun.

The capitalist European Union serves to pit workers of different countries against each other. In opposition to the national chauvinism whipped up by this capitalist crisis, we understand that the fight for international socialist revolution and a Socialist United States of Europe is key to leading the Greek working class out of its desperate situation. As Trotsky noted in 1930, “the slogan of the proletarian unification of Europe is...a very important weapon in the struggle against the abomination of fascist chauvinism” (*The Turn in the Communist International and the Situation in Germany*, 26 September 1930). ■



# WORKERS VANGUARD

## Outrage Over Death of Woman Denied Abortion For Free Abortion on Demand!

### Ireland

Across Ireland, thousands of people, representing a broad cross section of society, came out on November 17 to protest the cruel death of Savita Halappanavar. Seventeen weeks pregnant, she was admitted to University Hospital in Galway on October 21 with severe back pains and was told she was having a miscarriage. Despite her repeated requests for a medical termination, doctors refused to do the procedure on the grounds that the fetal heartbeat was still detectable. After days of agony, she died of septicemia, a victim of the anti-woman, clericalist policies of the Irish capitalist state.

The demonstrations are the largest rallies challenging Ireland's draconian ban on abortion since the "X case" in 1992, when a court ruling barred a 14-year-old rape victim from leaving the country to obtain an abortion. The mass protests at that time forced the Supreme Court to lift the injunction in this one case, and the



Workers Hammer

**Dublin, November 17: Some 20,000 rallied in outrage over death of Savita Halappanavar.**

teenager was allowed to travel to England for an abortion. The court said that a woman could obtain an abortion if there was a "real and substantial risk" to her

life, but in general women could still be legally barred from leaving the country to get the procedure. Abortion remains criminalized under the 1861 Offences

Against the Person Act, buttressed by the anti-abortion Eighth Amendment to the constitution, and runs directly counter to the entrenched Catholic "ethos" of the hospitals, many of which are still controlled by the church.

We reprint below a November 16 Spartacist League/Britain leaflet distributed by International Communist League comrades at protests in Dublin and outside the Irish Embassy in London.

\* \* \*

The agonising death of Savita Halappanavar on 28 October, after being repeatedly denied an abortion, is the latest atrocity against women by the Irish clericalist state. It shows that, 20 years after Ireland was swept by mass protests over the "X case," nothing fundamental has changed: a woman can not get an abortion to save her life. The barbaric treatment of the young Indian woman in hospital has caused widespread outrage and there is massive support for an end to Ireland's virtual ban on abortion. Halappanavar's mother bitterly  
*continued on page 11*

## Golden Dawn Fascists Feed on Economic Crisis Capitalists Bleed Greek Working Class

The following article is from a leaflet by our comrades in the Trotskyist Group of Greece. It was written as an introduction to "Greek Elections: Workers Face More Austerity" (see WV No. 1005, 6 July). The leaflet was distributed at events marking the anniversary of the 17 November 1973 suppression of the Polytechnic student uprising by the military dictatorship, which fell the following year.

Coming off last June's election, the government alliance of New Democracy, PASOK [the bourgeois Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement] and the Democratic Left have worked to deliver a further €13.5 billion [\$17.25 billion] in barbarous austerity cuts to the Greek capitalists and the imperialist overlords of the European Union (EU) and International Monetary Fund (IMF). The latter demand the most savage deprivation of the workers and oppressed as the price for so-called "financial aid," that is, money to keep the bloodsucking international bankers afloat and rescue the Greek bourgeoisie from a default. Not content with slashing even more billions from health care, education, pensions and salaries, the imperialist rulers demand that Greece carry out "labor reform." This reform is so vicious that

**November 6:  
Anti-austerity  
demonstration  
in Thessaloniki  
during  
nationwide  
general strike.  
Inset: German  
chancellor  
Angela Merkel  
meets with  
Greek prime  
minister  
Antonis  
Samaras  
in Athens,  
October 9, to  
work out further  
attacks on  
working people.**



AP, Getty (inset)

even a toady to the capitalists like Democratic Left leader Fotis Kouvelis said it would "demolish what is left of workers' rights."

Official unemployment has soared to

25 percent for the population as a whole, and to over 50 percent for young people. Almost 60 percent of the unemployed are women. Another 25,000 jobs are slated to be slashed from the public sector within

the next year. Meanwhile, the Greek bourgeoisie has driven down labor costs in Greece nearly 12 percent in the last year alone while inflation continues to rise.

*continued on page 10*

## Down With the European Union! For a Workers Europe!