

Hands Off Syria, Iran!

Obama in Israel: Stomping on the Palestinians

The overriding purpose of Barack Obama's trip to Israel, the West Bank and Jordan in late March was to further U.S. imperialist designs in the turbulent Near East. Reaffirming Washington's commitment to its Israeli junior partners, Obama promised to extend—through 2027—the billions that the U.S. provides every year to the Zionist state. When Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu called for a “credible threat of military action” to snuff out Iran's purported nuclear weapons program, Obama reiterated that indeed “all options are on the table.” As Obama threw some bones to Netanyahu, he kicked the oppressed Palestinians in the teeth, issuing paeans to Zionism and laying a wreath at the grave of the movement's founder, Theodor Herzl. Long forgotten was the call Obama had raised early in his first term for a “freeze” on new Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories.

Obama won plaudits for a speech in which he told Jewish youth to see their society through Palestinians' eyes. Obama himself got a taste of how Palestinians view him when he visited the West Bank city of Ramallah and was met by protesters, many of them carrying pictures of Obama in an Israeli military uniform under the words “No Hope.” In Ramallah, U.S. imperialism's Commander-in-Chief tried to push Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas into the charade of “negotiations” with Netanyahu even as Zionist settlers, backed by the Israeli government and its military forces, continue to gobble up ever more Palestinian land. In return for unblocking \$500 million in aid to the Palestinian Authority, Obama pressed Abbas to refrain from submitting any grievances against Israeli settlement expansion to the International Criminal Court. While Obama cynically invoked the goal of an “independent Palestinian state,” Zionist land grabs have hardly left enough territory for even the figment of a viable Palestinian state.

Since the Israeli state was founded in 1948, its very existence has been predicated on the displacement and brutal oppression of the Palestinian people. Today, well over half of the West Bank has been confiscated from Palestinians or closed off to them. This includes land occupied by murderous settlers, land cut off by the wall surrounding the West Bank and land used for “bypass roads” and military zones that are off-limits to Palestinians. With more than half a million settlers already occupying the West Bank and East Jerusalem, Tel Aviv announced plans in November for the construction of more than 3,000 additional housing units that would essentially cut off access between East Jerusalem and Ramallah



Top: President Obama and Israeli prime minister Netanyahu view Iron Dome missile defense battery, built with U.S. aid, at Tel Aviv airport, March 20. Above: Palestinians protest Obama's visit to West Bank, March 19.

and the rest of the West Bank. When trying to get to work, school or a hospital, West Bank residents must contend with more than 500 military checkpoints and barriers where they are subjected to humiliation, fear and abuse. Teachers and health care workers recently struck over not being paid by the Palestinian Authority, which depends on Israel to collect and remit its taxes and customs duties.

While forcibly ghettoizing the West Bank Palestinians, the Zionist rulers long ago transformed Gaza into what is essentially a concentration camp for Palestinians, surrounded by an electric fence, a wall and the Mediterranean. Almost 80 percent of the population in Gaza is dependent on humanitarian aid for their survival. Infant mortality in the West Bank and Gaza is roughly seven times that in Israel, and life expectancy of those Palestinians is almost nine years less than that of Israelis.

brutally beaten by his jailers. Demonstrators were also spurred by a long-term hunger strike carried out by four Palestinian political detainees. The men were imprisoned under the system of “administrative detention” by which Israel holds many Palestinians indefinitely, without a trial or even formal charges. Last month, one of the hunger strikers, a West Bank resident, was released to forced exile in Gaza; another, Samer Issawi, has continued his hunger strike and is reportedly in critical condition.

The Israeli state is backed to the hilt by the Democratic and Republican parties of U.S. imperialism and is supported as well by the rulers of Germany and other capitalist powers. To defend its interests in the oil-rich Near East, U.S. imperialism each year pumps some \$3 billion in military aid to Israel and has long provided over \$1 billion annually to Egypt, and is continuing to do so with the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsi at the helm. Workers internationally must demand: All Zionist troops and settlers out of the West Bank and East Jerusalem! Down with U.S. aid to Israel, Egypt!

Imperialist Machinations

The unexpected news during Obama's trip was his orchestrating a phone call from the airport tarmac in which Netanyahu apologized to the prime minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, for the May 2010 Israeli marine attack on the Turkish ship *Mavi Marmara* that killed nine activists. The ship had been attempting to deliver humanitarian supplies to Gaza, which is squeezed by a blockade imposed by Israel (and abetted by Egypt) after Hamas militarily took control there in 2007. With Netanyahu's apology and agreement to compensate the families of the marines' victims, relations are being patched between these strategic allies of U.S. imperialism.

What drove Obama in brokering this deal was the ongoing civil war in Syria, which has now spilled over into neighboring countries. Turkey has been the staging point for transmitting arms and other material to the imperialist-backed Syrian rebels, many of them Islamic fundamentalists, who are fighting to overthrow the murderous bourgeois regime of Bashar al-Assad. Sunni groups from other Muslim countries, who often seem to be as intent on waging communal war against Syria's myriad religious minorities as they are in

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SPARTACIST FORUM



150 YEARS SINCE THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION...6



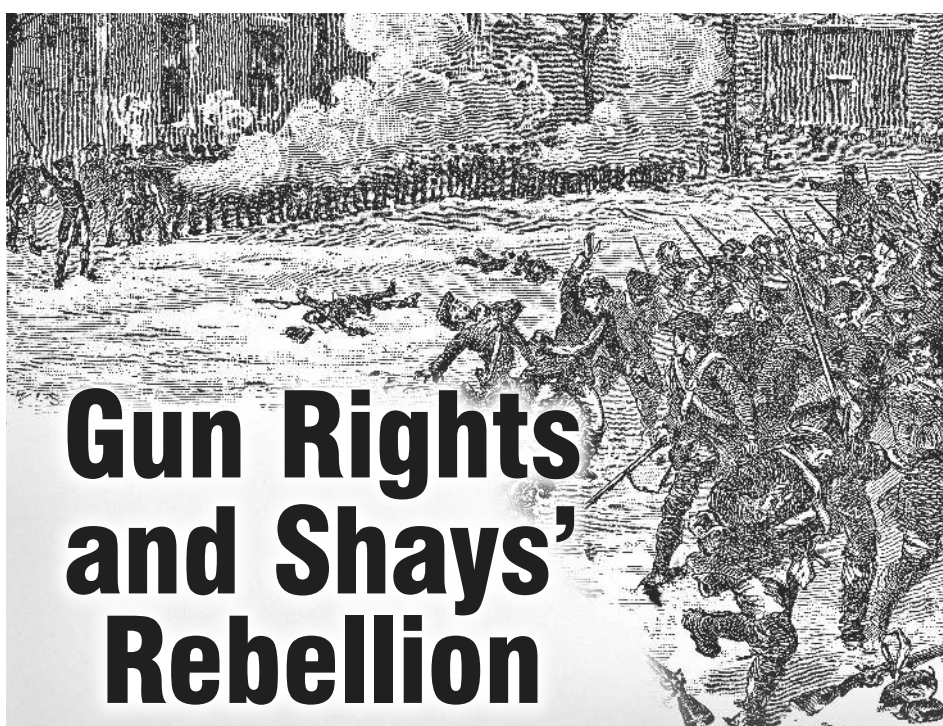
14 February 2013

Dear *Workers Vanguard*:

Issue No. 1015 of WV reprinted the 1989 *Spartacist* article on the Second Amendment concerning the right to form militias (usually mislabeled as the right to bear arms). The article states: “American colonial revolutionaries wanted the whole people armed...in order to be able to *kill British soldiers* and to forestall the threat of any standing army.”

Since the British surrender at Yorktown in 1783 effectively ended the American Revolution, it is not strictly true that the Second Amendment had to do with killing British soldiers. This telescopes historical events and leaves out the single most critical event in prompting the adoption of the Constitution (1787) and the Bill of Rights (1789): what is known as Shays’ Rebellion, in the winter of 1786-87.

Leonard Richards’ excellent 2002 book, *Shays’s Rebellion: the American Revolution’s Final Battle*, is based on a detailed demographic analysis of some 4,000 members of “Shays’ Rebellion.” Burdened by crippling taxes and lawsuits that put many people into debtor’s prison, much of Western Massachusetts rose up in the fall of 1786 and closed down court sessions when-



Culver

Gun Rights and Shays’ Rebellion

1786-87 Shays’ Rebellion in Massachusetts.

ever they were meeting. They referred to themselves as Regulators whose goal was “the Suppressing of tyrannical government in Massachusetts State” (P. 63).

Daniel Shays was a heavily decorated eight-year veteran officer of the American Revolution and had been presented with a gold-handled sword by Lafayette, under whom he served. The core of the Shays’ officer corps was long-time veterans of the Revolution, not a bunch of poor disgruntled debt-ridden farmers. The insurrection was extremely popular. In fact, when the State sent an army of about 1,000 men to suppress Shays, someone suggested they vote on supporting the insurrection. 800 men moved to the side of the road supporting Shays (12).

Prior to Shays’ Rebellion, efforts to adopt a centralized Constitution had failed. However, the specter of Shays’ Rebellion crystallized antidemocratic sentiment. Proponents of the Constitution justified it as necessary to limit the “excess of democracy” (134). Reports of the rebellion so concerned George Washington that he agreed to attend the constitutional convention in Philadelphia because, as Richards puts it, “the country desperately needed a stronger national government, one that could maintain order, one that could protect property holders like him, one that could suppress malcontents like those in Massachusetts.”

At first it was not at all clear that it would pass. In addition to the notorious “compromise” characterizing slaves as being only 3/5 of a person (which effectively gave control of the government to the South for the next 60 years), the Federalist supporters of the Constitution behind Alexander Hamilton succeeded in sticking a “Shaysites” label on all opponents of the Constitution.

One of the main arguments of those opposing the Constitution was that it had no Bill of Rights, a staple of English law, as the *Spartacist* article points out. The agreement to add a bill of rights to the

constitution was probably the key factor in providing the narrow margin by which the Massachusetts convention approved it.

In short, Shays’ Rebellion was a key factor both in frightening the nascent bourgeoisie into adopting the Constitution and providing the impetus for the Bill of Rights. The Second Amendment is not about the right of an individual to go hunting or target shooting, but the right to organize an armed militia to “suppress tyrannical government.”

Fraternally,
John H.

WV replies:

John H. points out that Shays’ Rebellion in Western Massachusetts helped convince leaders of both the Southern slavocracy and the Northern merchant bourgeoisie that a new centralized federal government was necessary. It is also true that in parts of Massachusetts a significant portion of the population both sympathized with Shays and distrusted the Constitution. As to the Second Amendment, the right to bear arms was widely accepted in the English-speaking world well before Shays’ Rebellion, as were the other rights codified in the Bill of Rights. And in fact, the Second Amendment did have to do with combating British military forces, which would continue to pose a threat to the young republic for some years after Yorktown.

The intent of the amendment was to provide for a people’s militia as against a standing army. At the same time, as the *Spartacist* article excerpted in WV No. 1015 (11 January) underlined, “The right to ‘keep and bear arms’ was universally recognized as an *individual* right” by American colonial revolutionaries. This was part of the heritage of the English bourgeois revolution of the mid 17th century. The article noted: “Carrying forward the English tradition, the American revolutionaries expanded on this right, in light of their own experience in struggle against the British king, when they drew up the Constitution.”

The roots of the right to bear arms go back to the Middle Ages. As early as the 13th century, England’s yeoman farmers, who served in wars for “king and country,” were encouraged to arm themselves with longbows, the preeminent weapon of the time. During the Hundred Years War, batteries of yeoman archers were decisive in defeating the French at the battles of Crécy (1346) and Agincourt (1415). Of note is that England had a substantial population of free peasants, i.e., not feudal vassals. As early as the 15th century, the peasants were compelled by royal decree to personally own a longbow and to participate in weekly target practice. This obligation was widely resented, particularly since it meant being available to serve in militias. The customary practice of bearing arms was formalized as a “true, ancient, and indubitable” right in the 1689 Bill of Rights that issued from the English bourgeois revolution.

The right to bear arms is bound up with *social defense*—that is, safeguarding the interests of a class, nation or other social entity. The American Revolution itself began when British soldiers tried to confiscate weapons in Lexington, Massachusetts, in 1775. By 1777, several states had adopted their own declarations of rights guaranteeing the right to bear arms. Massachusetts followed suit in 1780, before Shays’ Rebellion.

But, as the *Spartacist* article noted: “As in any class society, there were some big, categorical exceptions to these ‘universal’ rights.” Like everything else about the American Revolution, the Second Amendment is particularly complicated by the fact that slavery was the bedrock of much of the country’s economy. The assumption was that white English-speaking Protestants were the ones wielding the guns. The Bill of Rights was adopted to placate



TROTSKY

Defending Labor Against Capitalist Assault

In early 1947, the Political Committee of the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party passed the resolution excerpted below on its tasks regarding the trade unions. On the heels of the largest strike wave in U.S. history, the government had embarked on an anti-labor offensive that led to the June 1947 Taft-Hartley Act, which banned militant union tactics and sought to purge reds from organized labor. Today as then, the

fight to defend the unions requires struggling against the class collaborationism of the labor bureaucracy, which subordinates the unions to bourgeois politicians and the capitalist state.

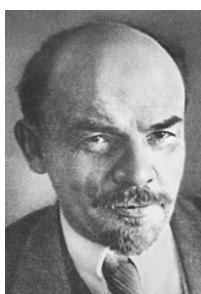
The trade union bureaucracy has always been the most dangerous agency of the capitalist ruling class inside the ranks of labor. In their habits of life, in their social ideas and political outlook these capitalist-minded officials are very little different from the members of the National Association of Manufacturers. Within the unions the bureaucrats willingly undertake the assignment of disciplining the workers for the bosses, curbing their militancy, and restricting the functions of the unions within the narrowest economic limits. This role of the bureaucracy was driven home to many workers during the war when the union officialdom served as policemen for the government inside the trade unions, enforcing their no-strike pledge and shielding the employers against the just grievances of the workers.

Today the bureaucrats are cowering before the monopolist assault upon the rights of labor. In fact, a section of the union bureaucracy secretly welcomes some parts of the legislation before Congress which they themselves could use as weapons against the militancy of the rank and file....

The rest of the trade union leadership proposes to confine its fight against the congressional punitive legislation to the lobbying methods and dependence upon friendly capitalist politicians which have proved so costly to the unions and led them into their present blind alley.

That is why the militants must snap out of their lethargy, prod the unions into action and take the initiative to unite the labor movement for an all-out fight against the anti-labor drive.

—Socialist Workers Party Political Committee, “The Tasks of the Party in the Fight to Defend the Trade Unions” (21 January 1947)



LENIN

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Wal-Mart: Labor Bureaucracy's Non-Organizing Drive

In late January, the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) informed the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) that it was disavowing any intent to unionize Wal-Mart, declaring that the union-sponsored Organization United for Respect at Walmart (OUR Walmart) merely demands that the retail giant “improve labor rights and standards for its employees.” Wal-Mart had filed a complaint against the UFCW with the NLRB charging that OUR Walmart protests last fall violated federal law limiting picketing at companies where a union has not officially sought recognition. The UFCW leadership has now pledged to cease picketing for 60 days, to erase demands for unionization from union Web sites and to e-mail its disavowal to some 4,000 OUR Walmart members nationwide. In return, the NLRB issued a January 30 memorandum saying that it would hold the company’s charge in abeyance for six months, waiting to see if “the Union complies with its commitments.”

With their *non-organizing* drive at Wal-Mart, the UFCW tops hope that they can slip by both the company’s anti-union machinery and the capitalist state’s web of anti-labor laws. But the labor bureaucrats are deluding Wal-Mart workers with this supposedly wily strategy. It is nothing but a surrender to a capitalist exploiter known worldwide for its anti-labor chicanery. As Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon wrote about the 1934 Minneapolis strikes that helped pave the way for the Teamsters to become a powerful nationwide union: “Bluffs don’t work in fundamental things, only in incidental ones. In such things as the conflict of class interests one must be prepared to fight” (*The History of American Trotskyism*, 1944).

The struggle to unionize Wal-Mart is one of those fundamental things. As the country’s largest private employer, Wal-Mart has some 1.4 million workers, employing nearly one of every 100 American workers. It is one of the world’s largest companies, operating more than 10,000 stores and generating \$464 billion in revenue last year, roughly equal to Belgium’s gross domestic product. The wealth produced by Wal-Mart’s cutthroat exploitation of workers in the U.S. and abroad is enormous. The offspring of Wal-Mart founder Sam Walton, who own roughly half of the company’s shares, are worth about \$90 billion. That figure is equal to the combined net worth of the bottom 41.5 percent of the entire U.S. population!

On the other hand, Wal-Mart workers (“associates” in company lingo) on average earn \$8.81 an hour, well below the poverty level for a family of four. Even when they manage to get “full time” work (34 hours per week), it is not uncommon for them to rely on local food pantries. New hires must beg managers to get the 30 hours per week they need to qualify for the company’s costly, substandard health coverage. Wal-Mart’s abuse of its workers is legendary: forced and unpaid overtime, workers locked in at night to keep them from



Reuters

Southern California Black Friday protest, 23 November 2012. Labor tops have officially dropped union organizing efforts at Wal-Mart.

stealing, rampant discrimination against the women who make up 70 percent of its hourly workforce.

The astounding inequality between the obscenely rich Walton family and their impoverished employees makes Wal-Mart emblematic of the capitalist system, whose lifeblood is the exploitation of labor. What Karl Marx wrote in *Capital* (1867) during the rise of industrial capitalism is true with

Mart management cracks the whip fast and furiously at pro-union or “uppity” workers with the other. When workers at a store in Jonquière, Quebec, voted to join the UFCW in 2004, the company simply closed the store down—one of many times it has snuffed out union organizing drives.

Organizing Wal-Mart is critical for the welfare of its army of low-wage workers and for revitalizing a labor movement that



Matthew C. Wright

Massive Wal-Mart distribution center in Temple, Texas, part of corporation's worldwide cargo chain.

a vengeance today, long after the capitalist system began to decay: “Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation at the opposite pole.”

Much of Wal-Mart’s success in accumulating profit comes from keeping unions out of its operations in the U.S. and most everywhere else. As it expanded into the rest of the U.S. from Arkansas, it brought with it the racist, anti-union “open shop” of the Southern bourgeoisie. Dishing out folksy paternalism and phony “profit-sharing” schemes with one hand, Wal-

has taken one body blow after another in the last few decades. Millions of workers want and need real fighting unions. But any serious union organizing drive will mean going up against not only the capitalists whose profit margins depend on remaining union-free but also the courts,

cops, labor boards and other forces of the capitalist state. Waging such battles requires a hard fight against the privileged trade-union bureaucracy and its sacred strategy of reliance on the bosses’ government and the Democratic Party. Above all, what labor needs is a leadership that understands that organizing the unorganized, like all struggles against exploitation, is a matter of *class against class*.

Black Friday and Beyond

Right after the UFCW tops launched OUR Walmart two years ago, the *New York Times* reported, “Unlike a union, the group will not negotiate contracts on behalf of workers. But its members could benefit from federal labor laws that protect workers from retaliation for engaging in collective discussion and action” (“Wal-Mart Workers Try the Nonunion Route,” 14 June 2011). OUR Walmart grew rapidly over the next year, with workers signing up on the Internet and paying the \$5 monthly dues online, reflecting real desire for union organization. While union officials pinned their hopes on paper-thin legal protections, Wal-Mart bosses prepared to go after OUR Walmart as a stalking horse for future unionization. The NLRB’s recent threat to clamp down on the union and OUR Walmart proves that such “protections” are a sham.

Last year’s rallies culminated in the heavily publicized “Black Friday” events held in front of 1,000 Wal-Mart stores the day after Thanksgiving. Some among the 500 Wal-Mart workers who participated braved company reprisals by walking out during their work shifts. The protests were built to shame Wal-Mart for bad corporate behavior, not to shut the stores down, and union organizers explicitly avoided calling for unionization.

A slew of fake-socialist outfits hailed the protests as historic, with the International Socialist Organization going so far as to describe this non-organizing campaign as “class struggle unionism.” The Party for Socialism and Liberation gushed that a work stoppage by a tiny sliver of Wal-Mart’s workforce “set the stage for a dramatic upsurge in the labor movement, and is an important development in the consciousness of workers, both union and non-union” (*Liberation*, 15 October 2012). The centrist Internationalist Group described protests and small strikes held before Black Friday as having “challenged the hidebound labor movement” (*Internationalist*, November 2012). More recently, *Labor Notes* (February 2013), whose editors orbit the reformist Solidarity organization, headlined “In Walmart and Fast

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much of the hostility toward the Constitution’s prescription of a strong national government, which came not only from supporters of Shays but from representatives of the Southern slavocracy. One of the first to suggest a Bill of Rights was Virginia planter Richard Henry Lee. With its protection of so-called states’ rights, the Tenth Amendment further codified the power of the slavocracy.

While the American War of Independence released a democratic spirit that resonated internationally, it fell to the Civil War to abolish slavery and affirm the basic democratic rights of citizenship and

equal protection for the entire population, black and white. Yet in clearing the road for the development of capitalism, this Second American Revolution laid the basis not only for the growth of the working class but also for the consolidation of a central bourgeois state power. With the rise of U.S. imperialism by the end of the century, a standing army was firmly established. Fearful of an armed population and striving to maintain a monopoly of violence for its state, the ruling class has over the years sought to roll back the fundamental democratic right to bear arms. ■

A Spartacist Pamphlet

Karl Marx Was Right

Capitalist Anarchy
and the
Immiseration of the
Working Class

For Workers Revolution!
For an International Planned
Socialist Economy!

AUSTRALIA...NZ BRITAIN...IT/FR CANADA...CONGO IRELAND...EL/DO SOUTH AFRICA...PA USA...USA2

A Spartacist Pamphlet

Imperialism
the “**Global Economy**”
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Wal-Mart...

(continued from page 3)

Food, Unions Scaling Up a Strike-First Strategy.”

These opportunist outfits not only give cover to the UFCW bureaucrats but also actively sow confusion about the most basic precepts of trade unionism. A strike means “one out, all out.” The aim is to shut down an enterprise and its profit-making activities by mass picketing and other means. It was just such class-struggle methods that built the unions in this country and that need to be revived if labor is to get off its knees.

Before Black Friday, Wal-Mart bosses threatened employees to “show up for work or else” while also advising management hotheads to not crudely go after workers for exercising their “general legal right to engage in a walkout.” There would be casualties in any real organizing drive, and unions need to be prepared to defend victimized workers. But the UFCW and OUR Walmart are not fighting for union protections. Instead they wait for labor law violations so they can file complaints with the NLRB. This only breeds illusions in the purported neutrality of the NLRB, whose purpose is to maintain labor “peace” by enforcing anti-union laws and entangling workers in protracted legal proceedings.

Supply Chain Choke Points

The hard truth is that retail workers, atomized in thousands of separate stores, do not have the social power on their own to put a wrench in Wal-Mart’s profit machine. But Wal-Mart is not the invulnerable behemoth it is portrayed to be. Where it is particularly vulnerable is in its dependence on the steady movement of its wares through the “just-in-time” global cargo chain, with its key choke points. A huge proportion of Wal-Mart’s commodities flows from Asian factories through West Coast ports, where they are off-loaded by longshoremen and then moved by port truckers as well as rail workers to Wal-Mart’s warehouse distribution centers. A fight to organize those warehouses and Wal-Mart’s army of 7,400 truck drivers, as well as the workers in its stores, would crucially depend on solidarity in action by longshoremen and other unionized workers along the cargo chain. It would also need to be linked to efforts to organize the port truckers.

Wal-Mart commonly uses subcontractors to hire and manage workers at its huge modern warehouses. Several of these have been hit by walkouts. In September, workers backed by the Change to Win-sponsored Warehouse Workers United (WWU) walked out of a Jurupa Valley, California, warehouse over unsafe work conditions. That same month, 38 non-

union workers at a distribution center in Elwood, Illinois, walked off the job for three weeks to protest the firing of several co-workers as well as wage theft and unsafe work conditions.

The Elwood action was organized by the Warehouse Workers Organizing Committee (WWOC), backed by the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (UE). While the victimized workers were rehired with back pay, in November the same subcontractor fired four more. Those firings have not been answered with walkouts, and the workers are in limbo until an NLRB hearing in May. Like the UFCW at the stores, neither WWOC nor WWU is calling for unionization of the warehouses. Nevertheless, Wal-Mart has made



Striking workers on picket line outside Ralphs supermarket, Los Angeles, October 2003.

some concessions to warehouse workers, indicating the disproportionate leverage they hold at the distribution choke points.

By hiring layers of subcontractors, Wal-Mart seeks to insulate itself from labor strife. Militants must find a way to bring the armies of low-wage “perma-temps” into the unions, including by fighting for union control of hiring as part of organizing drives. It is also necessary for labor to fight discrimination against young, old, women, black and immigrant workers, such as the thousands of Latino port truckers and warehouse workers in California.

In January, L.A. port truckers working for Toll Group won their first-ever contract after they joined the Teamsters. Their new contract raises their pay from \$12.72 to \$19.00 per hour and gives them access to more affordable health care, the Teamsters pension fund, paid sick leaves and holidays. This victory ought to be a springboard for renewed organizing of port truckers. Some 12,000 largely

Latino port truckers are vital for the flow of goods from L.A.-area ports to the massive Inland Empire warehouse complex to the east. Unlike the Toll Group drivers, almost all of the port truckers are “owner operators.” Organizing this workforce has suffered from the legalistic strategy of the Teamsters bureaucracy, which has banked on pressuring the government to reclassify them as “employees.”

It’s Spelled U-N-I-O-N

Having all but abandoned the strike weapon and even use of the “s-word” in the years following the crushing of the PATCO air traffic controllers union in 1981, the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy has helped oversee a steady, pain-

ful decline of the unions from their peak numbers in the 1950s. After throwing hundreds of millions of dollars into Democratic Party coffers, the AFL-CIO and Change to Win bureaucracies pined for Obama to give the go-ahead to organize through “card checks” and the Employee Free Choice Act. But the Obama White House was not about to ease the way to union organizing, and labor has gone on to suffer yet more defeats. When a wave of “right-to-work” laws swept into former bastions of union power like Wisconsin and Michigan, the union tops could not muster a single protest strike, despite the seething anger of rank-and-file unionists. Selling the notion that strike action is futile and that labor’s only real weapon is electoral politics, the defeatist labor bureaucrats have a new slogan: the polling booth is the new picket line.

Nowadays, in place of union organizing, the labor officialdom conjures up workers “associations,” advocacy groups, community outfits and single-issue campaigns in an attempt to get back some numbers and clout. Many of these groups exist only to help Democratic Party and other “friend of labor” capitalist politicians get elected. Some are lash-ups with clergy, small businesses, environmentalists and consumer groups pushing for good “corporate behavior” from Wal-Mart and other bloodsuckers. Instead of fighting to *unionize* Wal-Mart outlets, the leaderships of both the UFCW and SEIU service employees union have often campaigned to keep those stores out of key urban areas. In doing so, they go against the interests of the ghetto and barrio poor who would benefit from the jobs (and low prices) and could be won to union organizing drives.

In her book *Raising Expectations (And Raising Hell): My Decade Fighting for the Labor Movement*, Jane McAlevey, a former top-level SEIU service employees organizer, goes after the union’s new “grassroots movements,” using quotes from union dispatches:

“In a slight change of tactics, SEIU is now...lavishly funding community groups, or simply setting up their own fully controllable ‘community groups’ that give an illusion of independence.... SEIU is spending tens of millions ‘mobilizing underpaid, underemployed and unem-

ployed workers’ and ‘channeling anger about jobs into action for positive change.’ What’s beyond bizarre is that the program is aimed at mobilizing poor people rather than SEIU’s own base. SEIU looks everywhere except to their own membership to gin up popular revolts.”

A class-struggle union leadership would seek to tap into the anger among the unemployed and the poor, not as a substitute for mobilizing workers but as a way to gather behind labor’s cause those cast aside by the racist rulers. Raising such demands as free, quality health care and jobs for all with good pay and benefits, union organizing drives would find a huge reservoir of support at the base of this society.

In 2003, the trade-union tops threw away an opportunity to spearhead the organizing of Wal-Mart when they sabotaged a bitter, five-month-long strike by 60,000 UFCW grocery workers in Southern California. At the time, Wal-Mart was moving into L.A. and unionized grocers like Vons, Ralphs and Albertsons used its arrival to push the UFCW for deep concessions in health and other benefits. The strikers fought like hell to win. But in the end the strike lost because of the bureaucrats’ refusal to shut down the key grocery distribution centers and to extend the strike when other supermarket contracts in California, Arizona and several other states had expired or were being negotiated.

By the mid 2000s, plenty of bureaucrats like SEIU organizer Wade Rathke had thrown in the towel when it came to Wal-Mart. Rathke’s “A Wal-Mart Workers Association? An Organizing Plan” (reprinted in the 2006 book *Wal-Mart: The Face of Twenty-First-Century Capitalism*) reads like a blueprint for OUR Walmart. Concluding that unionizing Wal-Mart is impossible and that the strike weapon is “bankrupt,” Rathke argues that a company union would be a step forward and that new workers “associations” could find sufficient legal protection in New Deal-era labor legislation.

Similar arguments for “non-majority,” “minority” and “open source” organizing are now sprouting up throughout the American labor movement, rejecting key lessons from the 1930s fight to forge industrial unions. What low-wage workers at Wal-Mart and everywhere need are strong, fighting unions and the power and benefits only unions can secure: good wages, seniority rights, work rules, safety protections, health care, pensions, vacations, etc. They need solid contracts and the readiness to strike to defend their gains.

To organize Wal-Mart, whose tentacles reach around the world, would require a high level of coordinated labor action, nationally and internationally. U.S. workers must form bonds of mutual assistance with their class brothers and sisters in Mexico, where Wal-Mart outraged the populace when it bribed officials to enable the company to build a “super-center” next to the ancient pyramids in Teotihuacán. In Bangladesh, after a fire at a Wal-Mart subcontractor killed 112 garment workers in November, labor organizers produced documents showing that the retailer resisted safety improvements at the notoriously fire-prone factories. That kind of industrial murder should ignite internationally backed organizing drives demanding real gains in safety. But any such solidarity is undermined by the chauvinist flag-waving of the U.S. union tops, whose protectionist calls to “save American jobs” come at the expense of workers elsewhere.

Unionizing Wal-Mart would go a long way toward reversing what has been a one-sided class war against the working class. Led by a revolutionary workers party, a revived American proletariat would fight not only to regain what it has lost in recent decades but to expropriate the tiny class of capitalist exploiters, from Sam Walton’s spawn to the owners of the banks and major industries. That will take sweeping away the capitalist state and erecting in its place a workers state as part of the fight for world socialist revolution. ■

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

BAY AREA

Wednesday, April 17, 7:30 p.m.
**The Russian Revolution of 1917:
How the Working Class
Took Power**

San Francisco State University
Cesar Chavez Student Center
Delmy Rodriguez Conference Room
(T-152, Terrace Level)
Information and readings: (510) 839-0851
sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

CHICAGO

Wednesday, April 10, 7 p.m.
**Isolated and Betrayed:
The Degeneration of the
Soviet Union**

University of Chicago, Reynolds Club
5706 South University
Information and readings: (312) 563-0441
chicagosyc@sbcglobal.net

LOS ANGELES

Tuesday, April 9, 6:30 p.m.
**Lessons of the
Russian Revolution—
For New Octobers!**

UCLA, Ackerman Union
Room 3516
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
slycla@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Tuesday, April 9, 7 p.m.
**The Russian Revolution of 1917:
— Part Two —
From the Kornilov Coup to
the October Revolution**

CCNY, NAC Room 1/211
138th St. and Amsterdam Ave.
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net

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

The Idle No More protests have put a harsh spotlight on the desperate conditions of Native people. Beginning late last year as a teach-in organized by four Saskatchewan women in opposition to changes to the Indian Act [adopted in the 19th century] and several federal government bills, the protests spread like wildfire. Thousands of people in cities, towns and reserves across the country mobilized on December 10 to demand recognition of Native rights. The next day, Chief Theresa Spence of the Attawapiskat band in Northern Ontario began a hunger strike. In the weeks that followed, rallies, teach-ins and flash mobs popped up in cities from coast to coast, along with road and rail blockades.



The backdrop to the spate of new federal laws further eroding aboriginal rights is the government's push to accelerate resource extraction in areas where Native people are the predominant population and/or have longstanding land claims. Some \$650 billion worth of resource projects are at stake over the next ten years. This notably includes the Northern Gateway pipeline, which is opposed by most Native groups. Some of the new laws that sparked the protests weaken or eliminate environmental protections. Changes to the Indian Act allow for the surrender of reserve land without proper consent of all those affected. Such measures will directly benefit the resource companies, who long to get their hands on the mineral wealth from which they hope to reap fabulous profits. And it's all being done without any pretense of consultation, much less the consent of the Native population.

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INDIGENOUS RIGHTS ARE NON-NEGOTIABLE

VIOLENCE NO MORE

PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE(S)
WHO ARE PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF THE PLANET

Spartacist Canada

who have been murdered or gone missing since the 1990s, particularly in B.C. [British Columbia]. According to the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), the number dead or missing now approaches 600. The NDP [social-democratic New Democratic Party] has joined NWAC, Amnesty International and other groups in calling for a "national inquiry." The ruling class cares nothing for the lives and deaths of Native women. When they accede to calls for public inquiries, their purpose is to channel anger into whitewashes that ultimately strengthen the capitalist state by refurbishing its tarnished image. It is precisely the state—the prisons, courts and cops—that is the main source of the repression of Native people.

Capitalism and Native Oppression

“I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that this country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone.... Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in

—quoted in E. Brian Titley, *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (1986)

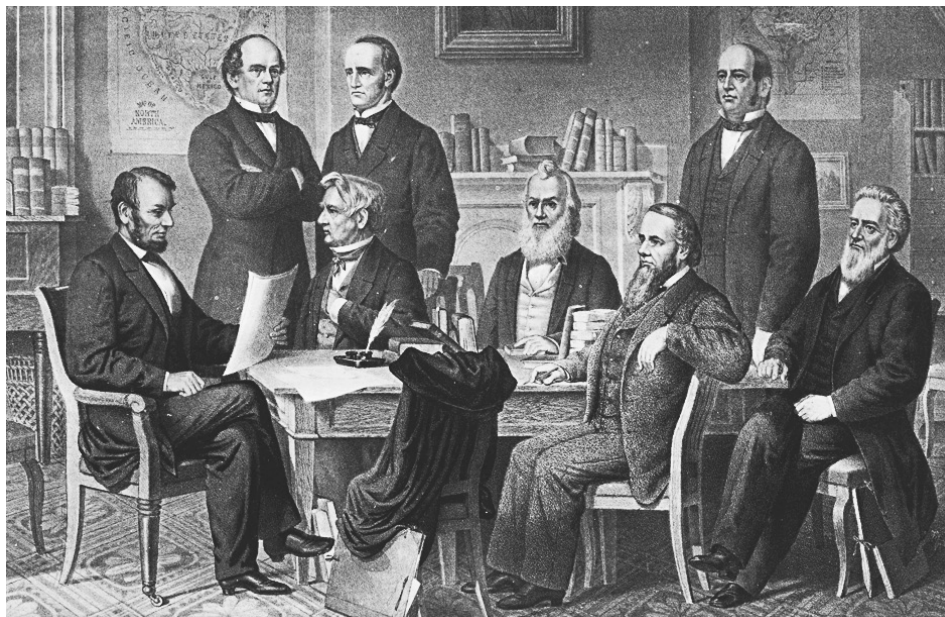
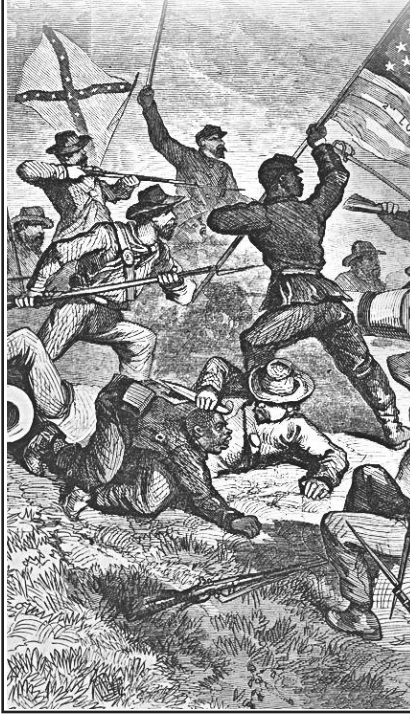
The Harper Tories [Conservative Party of Prime Minister Stephen Harper] have shown the same disdain for the recent protests. One could not read a daily newspaper without seeing Spence vilified and portrayed as a financially corrupt (courtesy of the feds' audit). Obscenely, she was baited as a terrorist by the *National*



R.C. Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith

5

150 YEARS SINCE THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION



Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper

Spartacist Forum

PART ONE

The following is a presentation, edited for publication, by Spartacist League speaker Brian Manning at a March 23 New York City forum.

The Commander-in-Chief of bloody U.S. imperialism was inaugurated again a couple of months ago, and he cynically repeated the words of Abraham Lincoln and the Declaration of Independence—fine words about fighting for justice and equality. But Barack Obama is Commander-in-Chief of a capitalist system long into its imperialist epoch of decay. Today, racist U.S. imperialism continues to carry out what has been more than a century of pillage and war across the globe, brutally exploiting labor at home and abroad while qualitatively arresting wider social and economic development. The American capitalist rulers are the main enemy of the world's working people and oppressed, as the millions of dead bodies from Hiroshima to Korea to Vietnam to Iraq to Afghanistan silently attest.

In 1852 Frederick Douglass said, "There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of the United States at this very hour." Substitute "ruling class" for "people" and it holds true today. But in the interim there was a great revolution in this country—the Second American Revolution. The Civil War was the last great, progressive act of the American bourgeoisie. To further the consolidation of industrial capitalism, at a time when the exploitation of free labor represented an historical advance, the North was compelled to destroy the system of chattel slavery in the South. Slavery has been smashed, but the legacy of slavery, racial oppression, lives on.

The foundations of Obama's current residence and indeed the foundations of capitalist America were built by the labor of black slaves. The election of the first black president in history has done nothing and will do nothing to relieve the continuing nightmare of racial oppression for the mass of the black population. That oppression is structurally embedded in American capitalism and will not be overcome short of socialist revolution.

Obama's liberal apologists, including those on the left who consider themselves

socialists, like the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and Socialist Alternative, make excuses for Obama. They complain that Obama's hands are tied, that he can't do anything because if he does the right wing will say he was doing it for black people. Well, Obama's hands aren't tied! The hands of the working class are tied, chained to the racist capitalist Democratic Party by trade-union misleaders who preach that the Democrats are the lesser evil. Obama likes to appeal for unity—one nation, one people. But this is a class-divided country—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. And the two classes have no common interests. In this capitalist country, the head of the government always represents the ruling class. Obama represents the system that is based on exploitation, oppression and war. The cynical sops he throws out are so much poisonous pabulum to fool the gullible or satisfy the sycophants.

With the release of the *Lincoln* movie, it was inevitable that there would be favorable comparisons of Lincoln and Obama. But we are talking apples and oranges. Abraham Lincoln was president in a different epoch, when capitalism was historically progressive, when for a short time the interests of the nascent bourgeoisie coincided with the interests of black people in their fight against slavery and racist oppression, when the triumph of capitalism despite all the horrors inherent in that system of exploita-

tion meant, as Abraham Lincoln put it, "a new birth of freedom." Obama does not represent the culmination of the fight for black freedom but the effort of a retrograde system to preserve its barbaric rule by placing a black man at the helm.

One hundred and fifty years ago, when Lincoln was president, the capitalist system was different—not prettier, not benign, but compelled by history to eliminate a more backward economic system. The Union armies, black and white, began the task of ending black oppression by burning out the system of slavery. But the task of achieving full equality for black people still remains. The special oppression born of slavery will be destroyed only through a class-struggle fight against that oppression and the system that perpetuates it—capitalism. We fight for the full integration of black people into an egalitarian socialist society—revolutionary integration. It is up to the multiracial working class, led by its most conscious elements forged together in a revolutionary vanguard party, to finish the job. That's why we say: Finish the Civil War!

The Civil War: A Social Revolution

An antiquated social order does not cede its place to a new order without resistance—not today, not ever. A change in social regimes presupposes the sharpest form of class struggle, i.e., revolution. The American Civil War was the most

titanic and bloody of all social struggles during the 19th century. That struggle and the changes it wrought in the social and economic system, particularly in regard to the black population, set the stage for the American socialist revolution today. It was of decisive significance because the first American Revolution, in 1776, didn't accomplish all of the tasks demanded of the bourgeoisie, specifically, national unification under a common political economy. It did not answer the question of who was to have political and economic supremacy: the slavocracy or the bourgeoisie. The first American Revolution was born of a compromise that gave the slavocracy an inordinate amount of power.

Compromise, that's what the American system is all about, that's how change comes about, right? The president of Emory University in Atlanta recently lauded the compromise that left black people enslaved and counted as three-fifths of a human being. But I bet the slave, shackled and whipped in perpetuity, didn't think it was much of a compromise.

Despite pervasive racist attitudes among all social classes in the North, the compelling historic interests of Northern capital, expressed in the founding of the Republican Party as explicitly anti-slavery, led to a war against the southern slavocracy. The Radical program eventually became government policies. The armies of the Confederacy were defeated on the battlefields of the Civil War, and the political and economic power of the slaveowners' oligarchy was shattered. The bourgeois dictatorship set up during the war was consolidated and the republic remodeled into conformity with the class aims and interests of the bourgeoisie. The way was paved for the exploitation of the North American continent and the world by American capital.

The North's victory was possible only through the emancipation of the millions of black chattel slaves and the arming of 200,000 of them in a war that destroyed the slave system. Today, the descendants of those slaves form a key component of the American proletariat, which will be the gravedigger of capitalism. The joint struggle of blacks and whites together has been a key motor force for social progress in this country, from the liberal-led civil rights movement that resulted in the end of *de jure* segregation to the massive class battles—many led by reds—that led to the formation of the integrated CIO unions.

In the 19th century, the Civil War and Reconstruction constituted the most far-

Finish the Civil War!

reaching example of that joint struggle. The turbulent decade following the Civil War was one of interracial bourgeois democracy in the South, carried out by the freedmen and their white allies and protected by federal troops, many of them black. This period, known as Radical Reconstruction, was the most egalitarian experiment in U.S. history. A hundred and fifty years after the fact, the bourgeoisie wants to bury the truth about the Civil War. They would like to blot out any record of the fact that a social revolution occurred, that armies of black former slaves bloodily suppressed white racist armies. The bourgeoisie wants to paint an image of the war as a tragic conflict, a purely military affair, and to extol the virtues of Lincoln the gifted and wily compromiser, the kindly Father Abraham who freed the slaves.

Because of the reality of black oppression today, people generally don't appreciate the significance of the Emancipation Proclamation. Black people today are no longer slaves, but neither are they free. The war and its results were a good thing. It was a social revolution in so far as labor is concerned. Slavery was destroyed. It is just unfortunate that it did not come sooner and that its job was not done more thoroughly.

The Northern bourgeoisie was reluctant to wage revolutionary warfare against the slavocracy, and afterward they made their peace with the Southern propertied classes and their minions at the expense of the emancipated blacks. The period after the destruction of the slave system was a period characterized by great fluidity in social relations, as the old social order had been destroyed. But the defeat of Reconstruction ensured the subordinate position of black people in American society. Black people were eventually consolidated into a race-color caste, integrated into the capitalist economy but forcibly segregated at the bottom of society. This was codified around the turn of the last century in the system known as Jim Crow.

The contours of society that emerged out of the Civil War and the defeat of Reconstruction—the economic system, the social relations, the political structure—are essentially the contours of American society that we know today. That's not to say there haven't been some changes since then, for example, those resulting from the civil rights movement. But the basic lines are still the same.

The young working class did not enter the struggle against the slave power as a class on its own account, or with as much consciousness of its own aims as had been the case in the bourgeois revolutions in Europe in the 19th century. In the North, the white working class was the base of the slaveholders' Democratic Party. You know, it's nice to be able to denounce the Democrats here and not have people argue, "Oh, they're the lesser of two evils." Political parties cannot ignore their heritage. The Democrats were the party of slavery, the party of the White Leagues and the Redeemers, the party of the Dixiecrats. And now they're the party of Obama.

It was only when the Northern bourgeoisie conquered political power and remodeled the state according to its own wants that the inevitable conflict between labor and capital became imminent. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in Europe fought from the very beginning for the victory of the Union, the Northern bourgeoisie, in the Civil War. This was not because they were interested in a better, more just bourgeois society per se but because they wanted the working class to fight for socialist revolution, to seize power in its own name. They knew that it could not do so as long as slavery dominated and disfigured the country, stunting the development and consciousness of the proletariat. As Marx wrote, "Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin, where in the black skin it is branded."

And the War Came

In 1860 the slaveowners said that the slave system was great. It had been in place on this continent for 250 years. But

in 1865, four million black slaves had been freed in the course of a great Civil War. A key milestone was the Emancipation Proclamation, which was the death knell of slavery on the North American continent.

In this talk I want to focus in a little more detail on the summer and fall of 1862, on the various challenges that Abraham Lincoln had to confront when making his decision for emancipation. That's when the character of the war changed. Before the battle of Antietam in Maryland in September 1862 and the announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation in the wake of that Union victory, it was possible that a compromise settlement that left slavery intact could have been hammered out. Afterward, only a hard war was possible—a war of subjugation in which the slavocracy and its ability to wage war against the Union were destroyed.

As Marxists and historical materialists, we see the world in class terms. In 1860, the South had to expand or die. The question was who was going to be master of the North American continent. Marx wrote:

"The present struggle between the South and North is, therefore, nothing but a struggle between two social systems, the system of slavery and the system of free labour. The struggle has broken out because the two systems can no longer live peacefully side by side on the North American continent. It can only be ended by the victory of one system or the other."
—"The Civil War in the United States," November 1861

The slave system was increasingly a brake on material progress. By all indices—industrial production, miles of railroad, agricultural production—the South lagged way behind the North. Just as European capitalism had to liberate itself from the outworn restrictions of feudalism, so a dynamic American capitalism could no longer coexist with the outworn institution of slavery. Abraham Lincoln was elected on a program of no expansion of slavery. He could not have been elected on an abolition program. But even so, his program was not acceptable to the South.

Lincoln wanted to put slavery on a road to eventual extinction, and his favorite schemes were for gradual compensated emancipation and the colonization of black people outside of the country. The slavocracy, that thin layer of wealthy planters that ruled the South and the federal government for most of its existence



Timothy O'Sullivan

Escaped slaves at Union Army lines in Virginia, 1862.

up till then, still would have none of that. Lincoln was also inclined to denounce slavery as denying men and women the hard-earned fruits of their labor. He thought it was immoral for some to eat while others did all of the work. Lincoln and the Republicans extolled the virtues of the free labor system whereby everyone supposedly has a chance to improve their condition.

Now, there hasn't been much acknowledgement of the Emancipation Proclamation sesquicentennial. But the *Wall Street Journal* did notice, and what they focused on was that Lincoln believed in liberty of all kinds, beginning with economic freedom. That's rich coming from the newspaper that speaks for the lords of finance capital, some of the most despicable parasites, who believe it's their right to suck the lifeblood out of the poor and oppressed masses around the world.

The Democrats had dominated the political scene since the time of Andrew Jackson. But in 1860 the party split between a Northern and a Southern wing. Many in the Northern wing opposed secession, and so the Democrats lost to the Republicans. With Lincoln's election, eleven states seceded and rose in armed rebellion, attacking federal forces at Fort Sumter. Lincoln never compromised on the need to save the Union despite pressure to do so. But initially his war aims were limited to restoring the Union and bringing the Confederate states back into

the Union as it had been. Lincoln wanted to draw in to that fight all the elements that wanted to save the Union. Hence, his conciliatory policies toward the border states and the War Democrats. He could not have mobilized for the war without the help of the War Democrats.

The Southern war aims were very explicit: to protect and defend slavery. The Confederate vice president, Alexander Stephens, in a speech right after secession—the famous "cornerstone speech"—said that his new government's "foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not the equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and moral condition." So even if the North was not fighting *against* slavery, the South was fighting *for* slavery.

Butler and the "Contrabands"

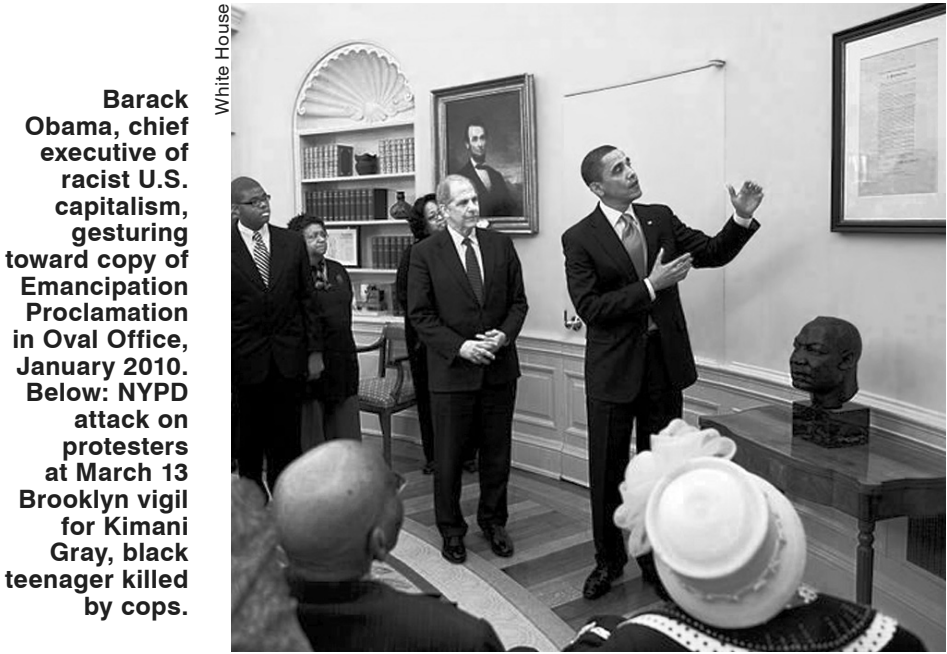
From the beginning, the abolitionists raised the call to turn the war into an abolition war. For years, through tireless and courageous agitation, the abolitionists had sought to bring the slavery question to the fore. There had been the prelude to the Civil War in "Bleeding Kansas," and John Brown and his integrated band had sent a lightning bolt through the nation with the Harpers Ferry raid in 1859. Now the chance to wage war against the slave power was here. The great black abolitionist Frederick Douglass wrote:

"Fire must be met with water, darkness with light, and war for the destruction of liberty must be met with war for the destruction of slavery.... *Let the slaves and free colored people be called into service, and formed into a liberating army, to march into the South and raise the banner of Emancipation among the slaves.*"
—"How to End the War,"
Douglass' Monthly (May 1861),
printed in *Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*, Vol. 3

The slaves knew the stakes. They had their own agenda and immediately started coming into Union lines. Union commanders were wondering: "What do we do with these slaves coming into our lines?" The slaves had been doing work for the Confederates, raising food, of course, and working for the army as teamsters and laborers. The Northern government had no consistent policy as to what to do about slaves and the slavery question, as yet. So, in May 1861, General George McClellan, who was a pro-slavery War Democrat in Virginia, told his armies to send the slaves back to their owners and be prepared to suppress slave insurrections.

On the other hand, Benjamin Butler—a political appointee and a lawyer from Massachusetts—was also a Democrat, but one who actually started changing when confronted with the problems of war. Butler came up with a new policy, the contraband policy. Also in Virginia in May 1861, three slaves who had been building Confederate fortifications came into Union lines. The next day, a Confederate colonel who had been their owner came in under a flag of truce and demanded his property back under the authority of the Fugitive Slave Law. Well, Butler told him no, they're contraband of war and we're keeping them. And he sent the colonel packing. That policy was eventually endorsed by the federal government.

So the slaves came into Union lines
continued on page 8



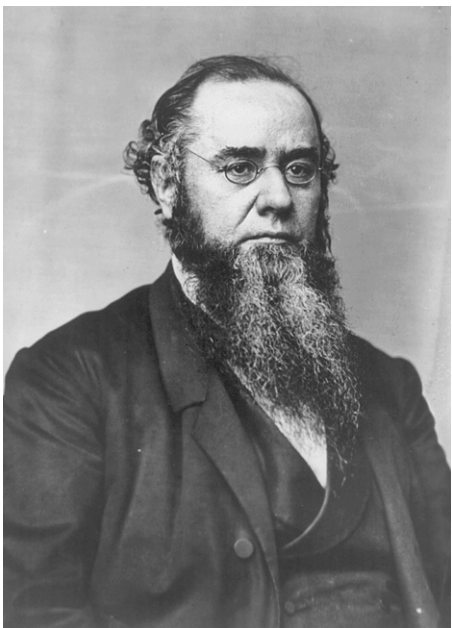
Reuters



(continued from page 7)

“All persons who shall be taken with arms in their hands within these lines shall be tried by court martial, and, if found guilty will be shot. The property, real and personal, of all persons in the State of Missouri, who shall take up arms against the United States...is declared to be confiscated to the public use, and their slaves, if any they have, are hereby declared free men.”

Lincoln forced Frémont to revoke that order, and in December 1861 he fired his Secretary of War, Simon Cameron, who had been advocating emancipation. Granted, Cameron was truly corrupt and



Mathew Brady

ineffective. Nevertheless, he was advocating emancipation. Lincoln ended up replacing Cameron with War Democrat Edwin Stanton, who turned out to be a great choice.

Toward Emancipation

For many soldiers, the experience of war was turning them against slavery. A volunteer from the Third Wisconsin Regiment wrote, "The rebellion is abolishing the whole army." In May 1862, General David Hunter, commanding the Department of the South, comprising South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, declared that slaves in his Department were forever free. Lincoln overturned that order, much to the chagrin of abolitionists, and said that if anyone were to act, it would be the president, not his generals. But Lincoln did not object to emancipation per se.

Hunter was operating from the Sea

“No regiment of ‘fugitive slaves’ has been or is being organized in this department. There is, however, a fine regiment of persons whose late masters are ‘fugitive rebels’.... They are now, working one and all, with remarkable industry to place themselves in a position to go in full and effective pursuit of their fugacious and traitorous proprietors.”

Many of those first organized by Hunter later went on to be incorporated into the Union Army as the First and Second South Carolina Colored Troops.

In mid June, Lincoln apparently first decided to issue an emancipation order, and he discussed this with his vice president, Hannibal Hamlin. Six months earlier, in December 1861, Lincoln said in his message to Congress: "The war continues. In considering the policy to be adopted for suppressing the insurrection I have been anxious and careful that the inevitable conflict for this purpose shall not degenerate into a violent and remorseless revolutionary struggle." But increasingly, the war was becoming exactly that on the slavery question and on the question of the destruction of the South's ability to make war. To bring this to fruition, Lincoln had to dance through a minefield: Pro-slavery generals who didn't want to fight to finish off the rebels, border state opposition to tampering with slavery, public opinion in the North, which was hardly universally abolitionist.

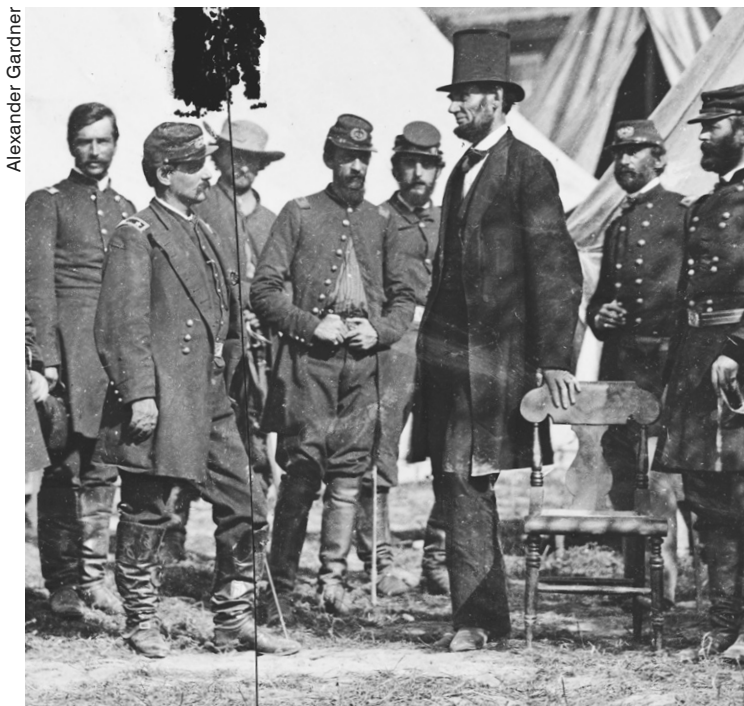
On July 8, Lincoln's most powerful general, McClellan, gave him a letter. Really it was a political manifesto urging a conservative war policy and urging Lincoln to abjure all thoughts of emancipation and put control of all military affairs into McClellan's hands. McClellan was a real piece of work. He had been placed in command the previous fall and had effectively reorganized and trained the army. He was totally full of himself, disdainful of Lincoln and angling for power. He surrounded himself with cronies all with the same view: keep things as they are, don't touch slavery.

But Congress and Lincoln had other ideas. On July 17, Congress passed the Second Confiscation Act, which allowed the seizure of rebel property, including slaves who would be emancipated. Although he signed it, Lincoln had his doubts, still. He actually wrote out a veto message that said, “The severest justice may not always be the best policy.” Lincoln was not a consistent proponent of hard war, yet. At the same time, he wrote a letter to a Treasury official in New Orleans who complained that Union policy seemed headed toward emancipation. Lincoln wrote testily: “What would you do in my position? Would you drop the war where it is? Or would you pros-

On July 22, Lincoln presented a draft of the Emancipation Proclamation to his cabinet. Secretary of State William Seward suggested that Lincoln hold off issuing this preliminary proclamation until there was a Union victory. Otherwise, it might be viewed as an act of desperation on the part of the Union.

The black delegation was not impressed, and told him so. Black slaves had built the South, had supported themselves and their masters and created untold wealth for their masters besides. And the war had raised the hopes of the black population. What little sentiment there had been for emigration before the war totally dissipated after the war began.

“My paramount object in this struggle *is* to save the Union, and is *not* either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing *any* slave, I would do it. And if I could save it by freeing *all* the slaves, I would do it; and if I could



Alexander Gardner

**Lincoln
confronts
General
McClellan
at site of
1862 Battle
of Antietam.**

Lincoln was still worried about the border states. How would whites there react to an emancipation edict? Cassius Clay, a Kentucky radical Unionist after whom Muhammad Ali would later be named, told Lincoln to chill out: Anybody who's in a border state who wanted to fight for the Confederacy is already fighting for the Confederacy. Meanwhile, McClellan is sitting idly with his army. He said he was gratified to receive "letters from the North urging me to march on Washington and assume the government."

On August 30 there was another Union disaster: General Pope was defeated at the Second Battle of Bull Run. McClellan looked on gleefully as Pope's forces around D.C. were routed, holding his own forces back from coming to their relief. He figured if Pope was defeated it could only further his own agenda. Pope had lost the confidence of his officers and the army. So Lincoln appointed McClellan to command all of the armies around D.C., over the strenuous objections of his cabinet. Secretary of War Stanton had passed around a statement calling for McClellan's removal, which almost all of the cabinet signed. Treasury Secretary Salmon Chase said that McClellan should be taken out and shot. But Lincoln didn't see an alternative. He kept McClellan as the top general, but he was a total wreck about it.


The summer of 1862 was the key turning point in the war. The strategies of both the North and the South had to change if *either* was to win a victory. At the end of August, the South launched a simultaneous invasion of two border states, Maryland and Kentucky, to “liberate” the supposedly pro-Confederate population from Yankee oppression. Lincoln and Confederate president Jeff Davis were not acting as

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Black History and the Class Struggle

No. 23

South Africa: Marikana Massacre



The True Face of Neo-Apartheid Capitalism



Caption: (Left) Reuters
Massacre of 34 striking platinum miners by police in Marikana on 16 August 2012 (neatly did not break the workers' fighting spirit). More than 3,000 anti-racist workers marched in protest in Marikana on September 3.

**Break with the Bourgeois Tripartite Alliance!
Forge a Leninist Party!**

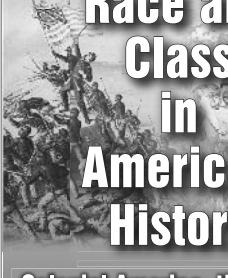
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No. 22

Race and Class in American History



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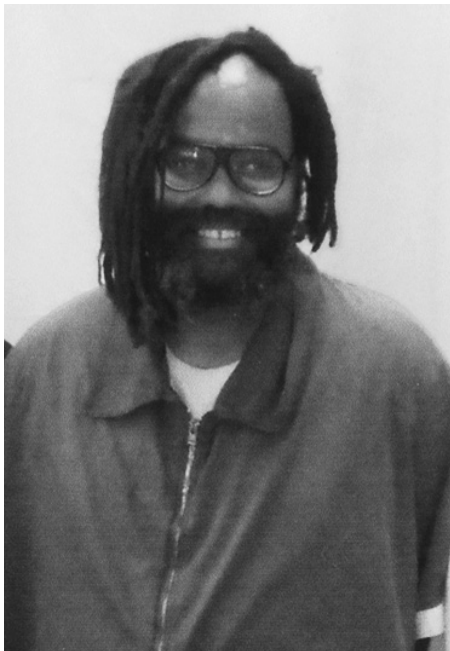
Mumia Abu-Jamal Attorneys Challenge Resentencing Process

On February 25, attorneys for class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal filed an appeal challenging the secretive court order that sentenced him to life without parole last August. The sentence was mandated by Pennsylvania statute following Mumia's removal from death row in December 2011, after the Philadelphia district attorney's office ended its campaign to legally lynch him (see "Drive to Execute Mumia Halted," WV No. 993, 6 January 2012). Mumia's legal papers note that while the outcome of a hearing may have been pre-ordained, the deprivation of his basic due process rights jeopardizes future legal efforts to fight for his freedom.

Seeking a new sentencing hearing, the brief details how the court violated both Pennsylvania law and due process rights by imposing sentence without notice to Mumia or his counsel, preventing Mumia from being present and offering information and argument. The brief further notes, "In fact, there is no record that the sentencing took place in open court at all."

The secret resentencing of Mumia had more in common with the conclave of the College of Cardinals to anoint the new pope than the due process that purports to be the underpinning of American "justice." Barring Mumia recalled his eviction from most of the 1982 trial in which he was sentenced to death by a judge who was overheard promising, "I'm going to help them fry the n---r." Once again the courts have demonstrated that from the day he was falsely charged with the killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner, this lifelong fighter for black freedom has no rights the capitalist rulers are bound to respect.

Mumia was targeted by the racist cops from the age of 15, when he donned the beret of the Black Panther Party. The murderous fury of the police was reinforced when he became a renowned journalist known as the "voice of the voiceless" and, in the late 1970s, a supporter



CSDN

Mumia, July 2012.

of the demonized and brutalized Philadelphia MOVE commune. Mumia's innocence of Faulkner's murder is a fact as demonstrable as the earth is round. But court after court has refused to even consider the mass of evidence proving this.

Mumia's conviction was based on lying testimony extorted by the cops, a "confession" manufactured by the police and prosecutors and phony ballistics "evidence." In 2001, Mumia's attorneys presented in state and federal courts the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he and another man were hired for the job because Faulkner "was a problem for the mob and corrupt policemen because he interfered with the graft and payoffs made to allow illegal activity," such as prostitution, gambling and drugs (see the September 2001 Partisan Defense Committee pamphlet, *Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!*). At the time, the Philadelphia police were under three corruption investigations by the Feds,

A Death Sentence for Defending Her Client? Lynne Stewart

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

The following was transcribed from a February 21 prisonradio.org recording.

Lynne Stewart, a brilliant, gung-ho trial attorney, has a stellar history that many attorneys would kill for: a defense attorney who truly fights for her clients and, far more often than not, brings them home. She has battled some of the biggest cases in New York history, beating quite a few and beating the government as well. After her representation of Egyptian cleric Omar Abdel Rahman, for daring to speak out publicly in his defense, and delivering a message of his thoughts to the public, she was charged with conspiracy, providing material support to terrorists, convicted, sentenced to—after an appeal—ten years in federal prison, and disbarred.

Lynne, 73, is a breast cancer survivor, and recently the cancer has returned.

Her treatment in federal custody is, to say the least, far from optimal. That ten years, increased by order of the Second Circuit Court of Appeals from 28 months, may prove a death sentence for a courageous, principled, and brilliant defense lawyer, who has been a bane to the state since she first walked into a courtroom.

Andrew Napolitano, former judge and conservative Fox TV contributor, has called the Stewart conviction a perverse victory for the Justice Department and a travesty of justice designed to intimidate all lawyers from vigorously advocating for their clients. To find out how you can help win justice for Lynne Stewart, contact: lynnestewart.org.

From imprisoned nation, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

©2013 Mumia Abu-Jamal

Sign the petition to free Lynne Stewart at lynnestewart.org. Send donations to: Lynne Stewart Organization, 1070 Dean Street, Brooklyn, New York 11216. Those wishing to correspond can send letters to: Lynne Stewart, #53504-054, Federal Medical Center, Carswell, P.O. Box 27137, Fort Worth, TX 76127.

encompassing virtually the entire chain of command that oversaw the "investigation" of Faulkner's death.

Mumia may no longer live in the shadow of the executioner, instead condemned to what he describes as the "'slow' Death Row" of life in prison. From the 1887 execution of four anarchist labor organizers known as the Haymarket martyrs, the gallows and dungeons are the capitalist rulers' reward for fighters for the exploited and oppressed. Today such prisoners include American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier, eight MOVE members and Jaan Laaman and Thomas Manning of the Ohio 7. The PDC, a class-struggle legal

and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, urges union militants, black activists and radical youth to take up the cause of freedom for Mumia and all the class-war prisoners.

* * *

Contributions for Mumia's legal defense can be made out to the National Lawyers Guild Foundation, earmarked for "Mumia," and mailed to: Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 132 Nassau Street, Room 922, New York, NY 10038. To correspond with Mumia, write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM 8335 SCI Mahanoy, 301 Morea Road, Frackville, PA 17932. ■

the heads of stable national governments defending well-established constitutional systems but as leaders of embattled political movements whose regimes were vulnerable to the play of social and political forces they struggled to control.

Lincoln knew from the moment McClellan came to Washington in July 1861 to assume command of the Army of the Potomac that "Little Mac," as he was called, had incessantly schemed and conspired and politicked to try to gain control of the administration. In August and September of 1862, Lincoln came to believe that McClellan was deliberately sabotaging the war effort and that the ideas being espoused at army headquarters were increasingly disloyal and treasonous. The capital was rife with rumors of plots and counterplots in the summer and fall. Colonel Thomas Key, who was on McClellan's staff, told a *New York Tribune* reporter that high officers in the Army of the Potomac were planning to "change front on Washington." McClellan's circle of confidants considered him to be the one man capable of saving the Union from both secession and radicalism, and the Army the only institution strong enough and loyal enough to control the administration.

Lee invaded Maryland and McClellan lucked out. He got a copy of Lee's order detailing the disposition of Confederate troops going into Maryland. So at Antietam the Union was able to thwart the Confederate invasion. But McClellan refused to go in for the kill, to destroy Lee's army. To his mind, that was not part of the plan.

Lincoln had not effected the strategic



Madison County Historical Society

Frederick Douglass, seated at center, at anti-slavery meeting in New York State, 1850.

transformation he had envisioned in early July, the shift from a strategy of conciliation to a strategy of subjugation. That required the permanent sidelining of McClellan and the promulgation of the Emancipation Proclamation. But the victory at Antietam enabled Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation, which he did in preliminary form on September 22. But it also aggrandized McClellan, who opposed emancipation and was willing to use his power to thwart Lincoln. Additionally, on September 24, Lincoln authorized the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* anywhere in the country,

which allowed the arrest and detention of those accused of being Confederate agents or sympathizers and the suppression of newspapers for sedition.

It remained to be seen whether the military leadership was prepared to fight a war of subjugation, an emancipation war. Lincoln and his cabinet worried about how McClellan would respond. Lincoln did not publicly acknowledge the existence of the McClellan conspiracy; to do so would be to provoke a direct and dangerous confrontation between civil and military authorities. McClellan was either disloyal or incompetent, or both.

So he had to go. But how to get rid of him, when he had just won the Battle of Antietam and public opinion was still in a tizzy over the issuance of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation and the suspension of *habeas corpus*? And all this was on the eve of midterm elections. This was not the Korean War of the 1950s, when the primacy of civil over military authority was already well-established. When General MacArthur objected to Harry Truman's war policies, Truman had a precedent for firing him. Plus, MacArthur was halfway around the world, not 70 miles from D.C.

Lincoln started weakening McClellan's position by exposing his flaws as a general, and McClellan had to decide what to do. He discussed it with his coterie in the army and prominent Democratic Party supporters who came to his camp up at Antietam, and even his pro-administration generals, all of whom advised him not to usurp civil authority. But McClellan did what he wanted. He issued an order to his army on the subject of the Emancipation Proclamation, carefully avoiding explicit opposition to the president but saying that the remedy for political errors, if any are committed, is to be found only in the action of the people at the polls, a clear challenge to the president. Furthermore, McClellan refused to move his army to attack Lee, again, despite direct orders. Lincoln waited until midterm elections were over (the Republicans got trounced, by the way) and removed McClellan from his generalship. McClellan accepted it passively.

TO BE CONTINUED

Israel...

(continued from page 1)

combating the Assad regime, have gained increasing prominence in the rebellion. This has complicated matters for the U.S. and Israeli rulers, who do not take lightly to the prospect of jihadists getting their hands on Syria’s considerable weapons stockpile.

Many reformist outfits, such as the International Socialist Organization in the U.S., proclaim their solidarity with the “Syrian Revolution,” thus giving support to the imperialists’ attempts to oust Assad. The reformist Workers World Party, meanwhile, opposes the rebels but gives political credence to Assad, falsely portraying his and other Third World bourgeois-nationalist regimes as anti-imperialist. As we stated in “Imperialists’ Hands Off Syria!” (WV No. 1009, 28 September 2012):

“Revolutionary Marxists support neither side in this 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. However, workers internationally *do* have a side in opposing military intervention by the imperialists. In the event of imperialist attack, we would stand for the defense of Syria while maintaining proletarian political opposition to Assad’s blood-soaked rule.”

Since at least early last year, the CIA has been active in Turkey, helping to determine which groups of anti-Assad rebels will receive arms purchased by U.S. allies Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. The Obama administration has been wary of directly intervening militarily



February 28: Secretary of State Kerry meets with pro-imperialist Syrian opposition leaders in Rome.

purported drive to develop nuclear weapons, U.S. imperialism and its European allies have imposed ever more draconian economic sanctions on Iran, strangling its economy and exacting a devastating toll on the population. The imperialists have imposed similar sanctions on Syria in an effort to topple the Assad regime.

As Obama made clear during his trip to Israel, behind economic sanctions stands the threat of war. Whether or not Iran is moving toward developing nuclear weapons, it is surely not lost on Tehran that in today’s world, possession of nukes is crucial to deterring military attack and resisting imperialist diktat. It is the duty of the U.S. proletariat to oppose sanctions and all other means by which “its own” ruling class seeks to further its interests around the world. This includes standing for the defense of Iran against any mili-

Khalidi in an op-ed piece in the *New York Times* (12 March). Khalidi aptly observed that “America for many decades has helped produce a situation where, pious invocations of support for a Palestinian state notwithstanding, there is, and for the foreseeable future will be, only one true sovereign authority between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River: the state of Israel.” Yet his proposed solution is to call on Obama “to chart a new course” based on support for the “Palestinian right to freedom, equality and statehood.” Thus Khalidi counsels looking to U.S. imperialism, the very force that for decades has helped to ensure the Palestinians’ oppression.

A similar dilemma faces Palestinian youth who seek an alternative to the utter prostration of the Palestinian Authority before the Zionists and their U.S. imperialist backers. A number of activists who are politically disenchanted with the Palestinian Authority have initiated a movement of “nonviolent popular resistance” against the Israeli occupation. The Israeli-Palestinian film *Five Broken Cameras*, which was nominated for a best-documentary Oscar, recounts the weekly protests in the West Bank village of Bil’in against the “separation fence” that cut the village off from most of its lands as part of building a settlement.

The transformation of yesterday’s “freedom fighters” of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) into today’s enforcers for Zionist occupation is rooted in the logic of petty-bourgeois nationalism. Despite the “people’s war” rhetoric of Yasir Arafat’s PLO in the late 1960s and early ’70s, the Palestinian people have never had the social weight or the military strength to take on the nuclear-armed Zionist state. Yet the Arab regimes to which the PLO looked for support are no less the enemies of the Palestinian people than the Zionist oppressors. That has been repeatedly demonstrated, from the 1970 Black September massacre perpetrated by the Jordanian monarchy to the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian workers by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia following the U.S.-led “Desert Storm” war on Iraq in 1991.

In September 1993, the PLO signed the U.S.-brokered Oslo “peace accord” with Israel. We denounced that accord as a “gro-

tesque bargain over the subjugated Palestinian people” that “would place the PLO’s seal on the national oppression of the long-suffering Palestinian Arab masses” (WV No. 583, 10 September 1993). Underlying that betrayal was the destruction of the Soviet Union through capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92. Without the diplomatic and financial support previously provided by Moscow, the PLO (like other Third World nationalist movements and regimes) quickly came to terms with U.S. imperialism. Today, if many among the historically cosmopolitan Palestinian people have been driven into the arms of anti-Semitic, anti-women Islamic fundamentalists like Hamas, it is precisely because of the utter bankruptcy of Palestinian nationalism.

There will be no justice for the Palestinian people short of socialist revolution in Israel and throughout the region. Israel/Palestine is a case of two interpenetrated peoples who lay claim to the same piece of land. Assuring the right of national self-determination for both the Palestinian and Jewish peoples requires the proletarian overthrow of the Israeli capitalist rulers and also those of Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, which are home to several million Palestinians. 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.

We have no illusions that it will be easy to break through the chauvinism that poisons the consciousness of the Jewish working people. However, like all capitalist societies, Israel is class-divided, with both Jewish and Arab as well as immigrant workers exploited by the same capitalist ruling class. It is the task of revolutionary Marxists to use every strike, every opportunity to widen the gap between Israel’s workers and rulers, to convince the Israeli proletariat that it is in its interests to defend the Palestinians and to oppose the Zionist ruling class.

Long ago carved up by the imperialists, the Near East is a cauldron of peoples competing at the expense of each other. At the same time, imperialist penetration has created strategic concentrations of the proletariat, from Egypt’s ports and textile factories to the Iranian oil fields. In the “Arab Spring” upheavals of the past two years, the dominant political players have been bourgeois forces—from military officers and liberals to Islamic fundamentalists—all of which are subordinate to imperialism and oppressors of their own population. The proletariat has not yet emerged as an independent force. What is needed is the construction of revolutionary internationalist workers parties, forged through irreconcilable struggle against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism and religious fundamentalism and committed to the program of world socialist revolution. ■



Beirut: Sunnis protest attacks by Shi’ites, March 18, as Syrian civil war begins to spill over into Lebanon.

into the conflict. However, when France and Britain last month sought (unsuccessfully) a green light from the European Union for arms shipments to the rebels, Secretary of State John Kerry declared that Washington “does not stand in the way.” No sooner had Obama left Jerusalem than Kerry showed up in Baghdad, demanding that Iraq’s Shi’ite-dominated, pro-Iranian government block arms shipments from Iran to the Assad regime through Iraqi airspace.

Steadily increasing belligerence toward Iran has been a hallmark of the Obama administration’s policy in the Near East, together with withdrawing almost all troops from Iraq and drawing down U.S. forces in Afghanistan. American forces in Kuwait and the U.S. naval presence in the Persian Gulf have been reinforced. In the name of stopping the Islamic regime’s

tary attack by the imperialists or Israel. As Marxists, our defense of Iran or Syria in the military sense does not imply the least political support to those countries’ reactionary regimes, which enforce all-sided oppression and brutally repress labor struggle. But what must be understood is that it is U.S. imperialism that is the greatest danger to the working people and downtrodden of the planet. Nothing short of the overthrow of the capitalist-imperialist system through workers revolution will rid the world of this menace and open the road to a socialist future.

For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

The dilemma of liberals in the U.S. who recognize and decry the desperate plight of the Palestinian people was well expressed by Columbia University professor Rashid

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10

WORKERS VANGUARD

Oakland...

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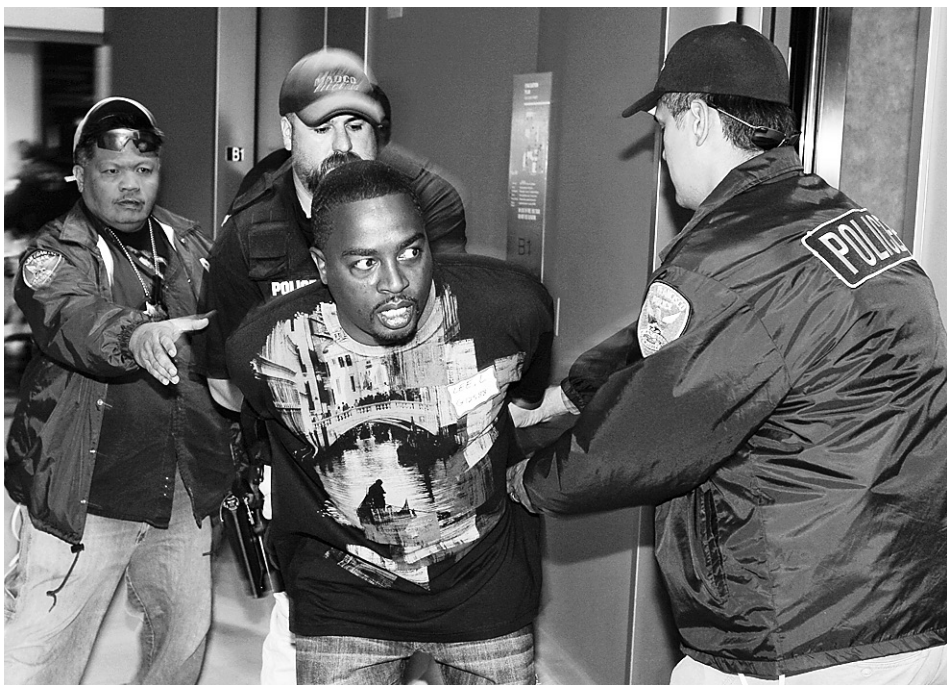
“allies in the community.” His record as LAPD chief is particularly cited as an example. But the myth that Bratton transformed the corrupt, consummately racist Los Angeles cops into a kinder, gentler police force with good relations with black and Latino communities literally went up in the flames that engulfed ex-LAPD officer Christopher Dorner after cops fired pyrotechnic bombs into the cabin where he was hiding.

Dorner, who was fired after reporting a vicious assault on a suspect by his training officer, was driven to a homicidal vengeance, mainly targeting cops and their families, by his treatment at the hands of the LAPD. While obviously unhinged, Dorner’s manifesto nonetheless provided a coherent picture of the unabated racism, corruption and sadism of the L.A. cops. And it struck a chord among blacks and Latinos who continue to be on the receiving end. As one man put it, “I don’t defend what Dorner did, but like many in the community, I believe what he said.” This was driven home after cops fired into the pickup truck of two Latino women delivering newspapers. The cops claimed that they thought the truck—driven by a 71-year-old woman who was shot twice in the back—was Dorner’s. In response, other such potential “suspects” began wearing T-shirts and putting on bumper stickers saying they were not Dorner. And so goes the “reformed” LAPD.

But Bratton’s main claim to fame is his “zero tolerance” policing, which spawned the mass targeting of black and Latino young men under the New York Police Department’s “stop and frisk” roundups. In a statement of mind-blowing hypocrisy, Jean Quan piously proclaimed that “racial profiling will not be tolerated in the Oakland Police Department”! Bratton fired back: “For any city to say they don’t do stop-and-frisk...I’m sorry, they don’t know what the hell they are talking about. Every police department in America does it.” Indeed they do, and singling out blacks and Latinos is the name of the game. For the Oakland cops, killing Alan Blueford was little more than another notch in their “stop and frisk” holsters.

The Dangerous Hoax of Police “Reform”

Outrage over the police lynching of Blueford has given rise to calls to fire the killer cop Masso and charge him with murder, as well as appeals to stop racial



AP

Parolee arrested in sting operation in Oakland, May 2010.

profiling and institute “stricter background checks, training, apprehension and gun use policies within the OPD.” These demands have been taken up in motions by several union bodies, including SEIU service employees Local 1021, which organizes Oakland city workers, the San Francisco Labor Council and Bay Area Local 10 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union.

That these unions have gone on record protesting the racist terror of the OPD is important, particularly given the trade-union bureaucracy’s frequent embrace of the strikebreaking cops as “union brothers.” Moreover, integrated unions like the SEIU city workers and the ILWU are a vital link between the power of organized labor and the defense of the black and Latino poor in the inner cities. But far from offering a prospect of mobilizing the unions in protest against cop terror, appeals for police “reform” serve to deflect outrage over the cops into illusions that their political masters can be pressured to make them serve “the community.” The last six decades of Oakland history stand as a living refutation of such arguments. Endless racist police atrocities have been followed by protests, probes, reports, reforms, police review boards and the occasional firing, and then by more atrocities, repeated ad nauseam.

As Marxists, we understand that the cops are one of the armed bodies of men—along with the military and the prisons—whose job is to protect America’s capitalist rulers against the many whose blood

and sweat make the profits for the few. American capitalism is a system built on a bedrock of racial oppression, from chattel slavery to wage slavery. Masses of black and Latino youth have simply been discarded by this country’s callous rulers, left to live and die on the mean streets of the ghettos and barrios, to get gunned down by the cops or to rot in prison torture chambers. As the Labor Black League for Social Defense, which is fraternally allied with the Spartacist League/U.S., wrote in a statement following the coldblooded killing of Oscar Grant:

“The hard truth is that there will be no end to police brutality short of the destruction of this entire system of capitalist exploitation and racial oppression. But a massive protest based on the organized muscle of the labor movement would give the cops and their capitalist masters some pause. And it would drive home the point that the interests of the working class are inseparably linked to the defense of the ghetto and barrios, the defense of immigrant rights and the fight for black freedom.”

Instead, the trade-union misleaders promote suicidal illusions in reforming this system, particularly through the agency of the Democratic Party. The price has been paid in the devastation of the unions and the increasingly depraved conditions of life for those who have been cast off as useless to the system of production for profit.

Reformist Dementia: The ISO’s “Crime Fighting” Program

Seizing on statistics showing a recent rise in crime in Oakland, the cops and

their political masters have been whipping up a “crime wave” hysteria. Backed by community preachers, Oakland’s deputy mayor demanded that a state of emergency be declared. With the bourgeois press calling Oakland the most violent city in California, Mayor Quan is trying to get funding for more cops from the Obama administration.

Pandering to this crime scare, an article titled “What Will Stop the Violence in Oakland?” on the International Socialist Organization’s (ISO) *Socialist Worker* Web site declares that “the streets of Oakland are reeling from a seemingly unstoppable spike in street crime and murders.” Arguing that hiring more cops “is probably the worst way to deal with the crisis”(!), the ISO asks, “What if the Oakland City Council and Mayor Jean Quan fired all the cops...and exchanged badges for jobs?” From here they go on to calculate the millions that could be redirected to create an “army of community workers” to “develop recreation and art programs in our poorest neighborhoods” and help in “organizing a gang truce.” The idea that the political representatives of the capitalist state would abolish the cops who serve on the front lines in defending the rule of American capitalism is reformist dementia on amphetamines.

Street crime in poverty-ridden neighborhoods like East Oakland is real and violently ugly. It targets primarily the poor and working people who live there amid the social rot and other pathologies generated by the racist workings of the capitalist system. Preachers and many others in the black middle class call to “stop the violence” by bringing in more cops. These sentiments are often shared by many residents of the inner cities who then find themselves on the receiving end of the rampaging OPD thugs.

To wipe out the systematic demonization and degradation of ghetto and barrio youth requires shattering the capitalist system and the state that defends it. Only by creating its own state power can the workers expropriate the capitalist class and its enormous wealth, instituting a planned, socialist economy that provides jobs and quality housing, education and health care—in short, a real future—for all. This requires building a multiracial revolutionary workers party to lead the workers in struggle as champions of all the oppressed. Such a party can only be forged in political struggle against the current pro-capitalist leaders of the labor movement and their small-time reformist hangers-on. ■

Canada...

(continued from page 5)

mine generates over \$400 million a year in revenue. De Beers pays a lousy \$2 million a year in royalties to the Attawapiskat Cree, most of which is buried in stocks and bonds under a trust agreement—chump change for this immensely profitable and wealthy corporation. Attawapiskat protesters have blockaded the mine to press their demands for jobs, housing and environmental protections. De Beers responded with an injunction from the Timmins Superior Court accusing them of “extortion.”

There is a fundamental class divide in society between the capitalists—the tiny group of families that own industry and the banks—and the working class, whose labour is the source of the capitalists’ profits. The working class has the potential power and historic interest to sweep away the capitalist system and rebuild society based on a centralized, planned economy that serves human need, not profit. It is this social power to stop the flow of profits that must be mobilized in defense of Native rights.

A majority of the approximately 1.3 million aboriginal people in Canada live in the cities, where the working class is concentrated. Put simply, the future for Native rights lies with the class struggle. Labour’s struggles and those of the



Warrior Publications

Mohawk fighters at Oka, Quebec, during 77-day standoff with police, 1990.

Native peoples will either go forward together or fall back separately. Trade unions including the Canadian Labour Congress declared their solidarity with Idle No More. But this is light years from what is necessary. The isolation of the Native protests from the social power of the working class is a direct reflection of the fact that the labour movement itself is quiescent and on the defensive. This sharply undercuts the possibility of any amelioration of the

conditions facing aboriginal peoples.

A fighting labour movement would not only use its power to champion Native rights, but would take concrete steps such as aggressive union-run recruitment and training programs. Such programs would be a first step toward breaking the cycle of unemployment and social marginalization. Labour must also be mobilized against acts of racist state terror to make it clear that Native people do not stand alone in their struggles.

The fight against Native oppression provides a litmus test for those aspiring to lead the working class. A party that does not inscribe the defense of the most downtrodden high on its banner will never succeed in leading the proletariat against its class enemy. We seek to build a revolutionary workers party that champions the cause of all the oppressed in the struggle for socialist revolution. To open up a future for the Native peoples will take the establishment of an egalitarian socialist society under workers rule. As we state in our *Programmatic Theses*:

“Only the destruction of capitalism can hold out the possibility of voluntary integration, on the basis of full equality, for those aboriginal peoples who desire it and the fullest possible regional autonomy for those who do not. The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste demands that whatever residual rights Native peoples have been able to maintain, whether through treaty agreements or otherwise, be respected.”

—“Who We Are, and What We Fight For” (1998)

The stark fact is that in this capitalist society—whether run by the Tory reactionaries or their Liberal and NDP rivals—Native people have no chance at a decent future. Only the destruction of the bourgeoisie’s barbaric profit system and the inauguration of the era of socialist development can redress centuries of crimes against the aboriginal peoples of this country. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

There's No "Reforming" the Gang in Blue

Oakland Cops: Racist Killers on the Loose

On March 6, William Bratton, the former chief of the Los Angeles and New York police departments who was recently hired as special "consultant" to the Oakland Police Department (OPD), rode into a press conference in Oakland at the head of a posse of fellow ex-top cops from around the country. *San Francisco Chronicle* (7 March) columnist Chip Johnson enthused: "In another era they could have been wearing cowboy hats, dusters and cradling rifles in their folded arms. However you want to envision it, the message they sent was clear: 'We're here to clean up this town.'" Their "war on crime" roundup was launched with a vengeance in the early morning hours of March 8. Some 200 cops busted into homes in East Oakland and three suburbs, arresting more than 18 supposed gang members.

Backing up the Oakland cops were federal, state and county police agencies including the FBI, the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the California Highway Patrol and Department of Justice as well as the Alameda County Sheriff's office. In short, this deliberate display of racist police terror was orchestrated from the top: Obama's Attorney General, Eric Holder, together with Democratic California governor Jerry Brown and his state attorney general Kamala Harris and Oakland's "progressive" Democratic Party mayor, Jean Quan. The day before, Brown, Harris and former CIA chief and defense secretary Leon Panetta were on the podium before a chilling mobilization of thousands of police at a memorial for two Santa Cruz officers killed by an apparently deranged former military cop on February 26. Police forces in four Bay Area cities had earlier exacted vengeance for their fallen brethren in a shooting spree, killing four "suspects" in one 27-hour period.

The calling card in the Oakland raids was a letter from OPD chief Howard Jordan warning "individuals who are at risk of being involved in gun violence," i.e., the residents of the overwhelmingly black and Latino neighborhood: "This is how we will be working from now on." Serving as a racist occupying army in the inner cities is how the cops have *always* operated, everywhere. The brutal enforcement of capitalist rule is their job, whether in the ghettos and barrios or on the picket lines. The Oakland cops are such infamous frame-up artists, thugs and killers that the police department came within a hair's breadth of becoming the first in the U.S. to be put into federal receivership. Instead, at the urging of Mayor Quan and the Oakland City Council, the federal judge appointed a "compliance director" to oversee "reforms" mandated by a court order almost a decade ago.

That order came out of a lawsuit in 2000 by victims of a gang of Oakland cops known as the Riders, who rampaged through the West Oakland ghetto beating, robbing and planting drugs and guns on young black men. The Riders were so notorious that three were even put on trial,



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only to be acquitted on all charges by a jury that included not a single black person. In response to the subsequent lawsuit, the City of Oakland agreed to a settlement including a court mandate that the cops clean up their act through the implementation of some 50 largely procedural reforms.

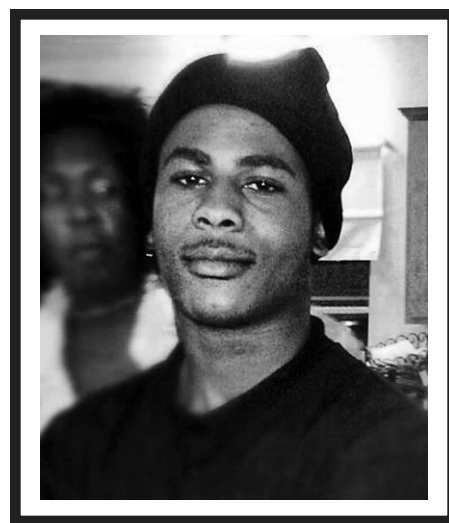
For nine years, the OPD has collectively given the finger to the federal judge—Thelton Henderson, a black man—charged with overseeing compliance with this order. A picture of Henderson was defaced with racist graffiti by cops while a flyer posted at the OPD's firing range threatened: "You shut the f--k up. We'll protect America. Keep out of our f--king way, liberal pussies." Out on the streets, their lethal swagger didn't miss a beat. From 2000 to 2012, nearly 550 police abuse lawsuits were filed, with the city shelling out over \$57 million in defense of their thugs in blue.

In October 2011, the massive police assault against Occupy Oakland protesters made international headlines. Cops cracked heads with clubs while hurling tear gas and flash-bang grenades, nearly killing Iraq War veteran Scott Olsen, who was shot in the head with a pellet-loaded beanbag. A subsequent investigation into

repeated police attacks on Occupy showed the cops covering up their name badges and turning off lapel cameras, violating two of the "reforms" that had purportedly been instituted. But such transgressions are a mere tip of the iceberg. According to an article in the *East Bay Express* (10 October 2012), other evidence of the cops' "compliance" with the court order includes an OPD police academy instructor telling new recruits that the Oakland cops shoot people more now because under the court order they are no longer allowed to beat them up! And the cops' kill rate has steadily mounted.

Killings and Cover-Ups

Among the cops' victims were two unarmed men who were pulled over in separate traffic stops. Andrew Moppin-Buckskin was gunned down in December 2007. In July 2008, Jody Woodfox was killed by the same OPD cop, Hector Jimenez. Jimenez was fired, but two years later he was back on the force. In 2011, in front of Skyline High, school district police officer Barhin Bhatt shot student Raheim Brown five times, twice in the head, killing him. Cleared by the DA, Bhatt is still on the job.



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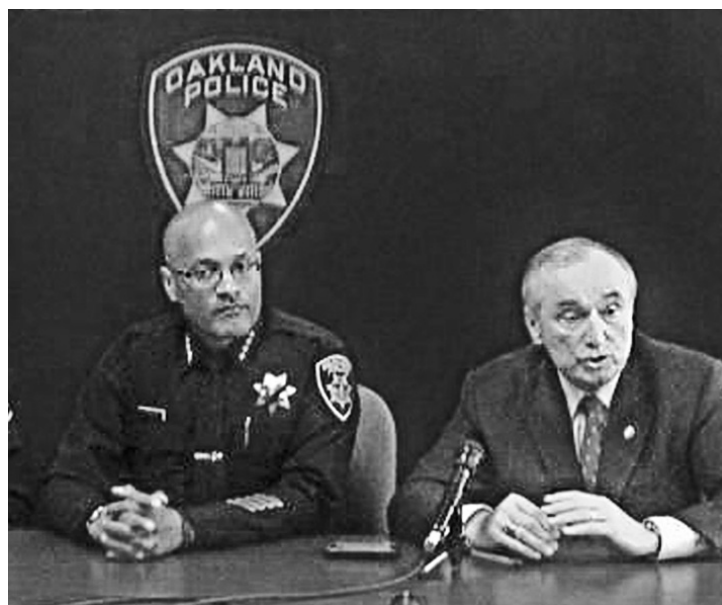
Left: Oakland police brutalize man at July 2010 protest over transit cop's killing of Oscar Grant. Above: Alan Blueford, gunned down by OPD in May 2012.

Last May 6, Oakland cops killed 18-year-old black Skyline student Alan Blueford, weeks before his graduation. Blueford and two friends had been accosted by plainclothes police on an East Oakland street. Understandably afraid, Blueford ran and was chased down and shot to death by Officer Miguel Masso. No attempt was made to contact Blueford's parents even after he was finally taken to Highland Hospital, where he was pronounced dead on arrival. The OPD cover-up machine immediately went into high gear. First the cops claimed that Blueford had died in a "gun battle" with the police in which Masso had been shot. Later it was revealed that Masso had *shot himself* in the foot. Twelve witnesses testified that Blueford had no weapon.

It took a courageous months-long struggle by Blueford's parents and their supporters, including a protest the weekend following the killing, even to extract the coroner's report and, much later, a highly redacted police report on the shooting. The Bluefords continue to fight on behalf of their son and other victims of the marauding OPD, recently joining hundreds of other Oakland residents at a City Council meeting to protest the hiring of Bratton. On the other side, Mayor Quan and city councilors were backed by black preachers in promoting Bratton as the way to "reduce crime" in Oakland's destitute ghettos. Exposing this lethal fraud, Cephus Johnson, uncle of Oscar Grant—the 22-year-old black man killed in cold blood by BART transit cop Johannes Mehserle on New Year's Day 2009—argued: "You will create a war zone like you've never seen before...these intrusive measures are why my nephew is dead, why Oscar Grant is dead, why Alan Blueford is dead."

Days after Bratton was hired, police announced that they would be dividing the city into five separate war zones to more effectively prosecute the racist "war on crime." This is being sold as the implementation of Bratton's policies of making

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Cheyl Hurd

Former LAPD and NYPD police chief William Bratton (right), now "consultant" to Oakland cops, with OPD chief Howard Jordan, March 6.