

Imperialists Fuel Communalist Slaughter

Syria: Trip Wire for Regional Conflagration



AFP



Reuters

Left: In May 25 speech broadcast in Lebanon, Shi'ite Hezbollah leader Sheik Hasan Nasrallah commits to fight to keep Syrian president Assad in power. **Right:** Militiamen near Ramadi, Iraq, center of Sunni insurgency, in May.

MAY 27—The two-year-old civil war in Syria, pitting Sunni rebels against the regime of Bashar al-Assad, an Alawite, is threatening to escalate into a Near East-wide communal war extending from Lebanon, through Syria and across Iraq. Israeli airstrikes against Syrian military installations in early May were a further indication of the regionalization of the conflict. In turn, the Israeli raids galvanized the Shi'ite fundamentalist Hezbollah, which is essentially the state power in parts of Lebanon. Already heavily involved in the Syrian conflict, Hezbollah militiamen have recently joined Syrian government troops in a major offensive to retake Qusayr. The fierce fighting for that strategic Syrian town on the Lebanese border has triggered renewed sectarian bloodshed between Sunnis and Alawites in Tripoli in northern Lebanon. Meanwhile, large quantities of arms supplied to anti-Assad rebels by Saudi Arabia and Qatar with the approval of the imperialists are flowing to Sunni fundamentalist forces in Iraq. Iran, whose main Arab ally is Syria, looms large in the calculations of the imperialists, the Zionist rulers and the Gulf states.

In the past several months, Iraq has also again been engulfed in sectarian warfare pitting forces in and around the Shi'ite-dominated government of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki against an array of Sunni militias. Casualties have mounted steeply since the beginning of the year in a resurgence of the interethnic bloodletting in Iraq unleashed by the 2003 U.S. imperialist invasion and subsequent occupation.

Ironically, the U.S. occupation installed

U.S. Hands Off!



Reuters

Secretary of State John Kerry meets with then-Syrian National Coalition president Mouaz al-Khatib in Rome, February 28, together with officials from Turkey and Qatar.

a Shi'ite-dominated regime in Iraq that is now tied to Iran. The Israelis see Iran as attempting to challenge their monopoly of nuclear arms in the region, as do their U.S. imperialist allies who have subjected the country to increasingly punishing sanctions. Although the Iranian government denies that it is developing nuclear weapons, Iran clearly needs nukes to defend itself against the imperialists. We demand: Down with the sanctions against Iran and Syria!

As Seumas Milne observed in a London *Guardian* article (7 May) following the recent Israeli airstrikes, which were the largest Israeli offensive against Syria since the 1973 Arab-Israeli war:

"It is Syria's role as the pivot of Iranian influence across the Middle East that has turned the Syrian war into a potential regional conflagration.

"Having hedged its bets, Israel has now started to make clear it regards the prospect of Islamist and jihadist groups taking over from the Assad regime as less threatening than the existing 'Syria-Iran-Hezbollah axis', as the Israeli defence ministry official Amos Gilad put it recently."

The imperialist powers, whose global "war against terror" has taken the lives of countless victims, are throwing their lot in with the reactionary Sunni fundamentalists who dominate the Syrian opposition forces. For over a year, the U.S. imperialists have provided financial support and

"non-lethal" aid to the Sunni insurgents in Syria. Today, under pressure from France and Britain, both of which last year mooted the possibility of imposing a "no-fly" zone over Syria, the European Union (EU) ended its weapons embargo on Syria so that EU powers can help arm the rebels. The U.S. and European imperialists have imposed a broad range of economic sanctions on Syria, whose main casualties have been working people, especially the poor, the sick and the aged.

The Obama administration recently began talking about providing direct military aid to the rebels when anti-Assad forces—without a shred of evidence—accused the regime of using sarin gas on the population. Previously, Obama had declared that the use of chemical weapons would be viewed as a "red line" by his administration. Yet while upping its support to the rebel forces, the White House has been far from eager to intervene directly into the Syrian quagmire. More broadly, there is little popular support in the U.S. for military intervention in Syria.

The rulers of the imperialist countries are directly responsible for the conflagration that is erupting in the Near East. Syria, Lebanon and Iraq are not nations but rather patchworks of different peoples and ethnicities that, following the First World War, were carved out of the collapsing Ottoman Empire by the British and French imperialists. In the secret Sykes-Picot treaty of 1916, France took Syria (including present-day Lebanon) for itself while Britain acquired Jordan and Palestine—all against the wishes of their inhabitants (see "Syrian Civil War: Legacy of Imperialist Divide-and-Rule," WV No. 1009, 28 September 2012). The publication of the treaty by the Soviet workers state in late 1917 exposed the imperialist intrigues and had an electrifying effect, helping to spark a series of

continued on page 10



Zionism Betrayed Holocaust Victims, Jewish Refugees

The following contribution was submitted to Workers Vanguard by Spartacist League Central Committee member Reuben Samuels.

Commentary

I appreciated Art Preis’ moving 1944 article “Warsaw Ghetto Anti-Nazi Uprising of Labor,” reprinted in WV No. 1024, 17 May. Originally published in the *Militant*, newspaper of the then-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the article rightly slammed Britain as well as the U.S. and other imperialist “democracies” for shutting their borders to Jewish refugees fleeing Hitler’s “Final Solution.” Britain also prevented desperate Jews with nowhere else to go from reaching Palestine after promising them a “homeland” there in the 1917 Balfour Declaration as part of its divide-and-rule strategy for conquering the Arab Near East. Captured

refugees who had made it to Palestine were shipped off to internment camps in the far reaches of the British Empire, such as Mauritius and Cyprus. Indeed, the Soviet Union was the only country to open its doors to Jewish refugees en masse, providing sanctuary for the overwhelming majority of the 2.5 million Jews who succeeded in fleeing the Nazis.

In his article, Preis wrote: “Since the Warsaw battle, the British government has closed the last door of refuge for the Jews, in Palestine, while the American State Department and Roosevelt shed crocodile tears in public but deny haven to the Jews in any United States territory. Roosevelt could only mumble evasive statements about ‘military necessity’ and ‘post-war’ plans when asked to intercede with the British government to open Palestine once more for Jewish refugees.” This statement might leave the false impression that the SWP supported the Zionist project of mass Jewish emigration to Palestine. On the contrary, the SWP stood with Lenin’s



Getty

British detention camp for Jewish refugees, Cyprus, 1946.

Bolsheviks in implacable opposition to Zionism and its scheme to carve a “Jewish homeland” out of the indigenous Palestinian Arab nation. In a 1920 resolution titled “The slogan of the Jewish proletariat must be ‘Hands off Palestine!’,” the Central Bureau of Jewish Sections of the Communist Party of Russia declared:

“Jews are being provocatively identified as initiators and culprits in the parceling out of Arab lands among the victorious powers [of World War I], including the handing over of Palestine to Britain. This identification serves British imperialism in Palestine and throughout the East as a means to ignite national passions among the working people of the East and to sow hatred between Arabs and Jews.... Such a policy is a direct violation of the rights of the Arab working masses in their struggle for independence and for complete possession of the land and of all the products of their labor.”

—reprinted in *To See The Dawn: Baku, 1920—First Congress of the Peoples of the East*, 1993

Under capitalism, peoples that have fled Europe to escape persecution and colonize less-developed regions of the world—for example, the Huguenots in South Africa (French Protestants absorbed into the Afrikaner population) or European Jewry in Israel—often turn the very weapons of the persecution inflicted upon them against the native populations they encounter. Entirely in keeping with the Nazi exterminators of the Jewish people, Israel was established on the *blut und boden* (blood and soil) principle of being a solely Jewish state lusting for Arab-free *lebensraum* (living space).

In a series of articles that denounced the refusal of American Jewish leaders to support the call for the U.S. to open its doors to refugees from Nazi persecution in 1938, SWP leader Felix Morrow wrote, prophetically, “Under what conditions, then, can one envisage a Jewish Palestine? Obviously only two: (1) By agreement with the Arabs, who inhabit not only Palestine but the Near East; or (2) by driving the Arabs out of Palestine with fire and sword” (“Blind Alleys for the Jewish People,” *Socialist Appeal*, 17 December 1938). Morrow added: “Without British bayonets, the Jews today would be driven out of Palestine by the Arabs. Jewish colonization in Palestine continues only thanks to British imperialism.”

One month before his assassination in August 1940, Leon Trotsky was even more blunt: “The attempt to solve the Jewish question through the migration of Jews to Palestine can now be seen for what it is, a tragic mockery of the Jewish people.... The future development of military events may well transform Palestine into a bloody trap for several hundred thousand Jews.”

In the immediate aftermath of the November 1938 *Kristallnacht* pogroms in Germany, the SWP spearheaded a nationwide labor-centered campaign demanding *unrestricted immigration* for the hundreds

of thousands of refugees from Nazi terror then besieging American embassies in Europe as well as those who would surely follow. The 17 December 1938 issue of *Socialist Appeal* reported on a meeting earlier that month of 100 delegates representing 35 CIO industrial unions that unanimously adopted a resolution calling on President Roosevelt and the State Department “to immediately offer asylum in the United States by lifting all restrictions and quota limitations to the refugee victims of Fascism.” Even that quota, according to a recent *Los Angeles Times* op-ed (7 April), “was less than 25% filled during most of the Hitler era, because the Roosevelt administration piled on so many extra requirements for would-be immigrants.”

In their campaign to rescue the surviving victims of the Nazi genocide, the SWP and its anti-fascist allies had to fight not only the Roosevelt administration but also the American and world Zionist movement! American Jewish leaders were bitterly denounced in a January 1943 appeal from Polish Jews: “The survivors of the Jews in Poland live with the awareness that in the worst days of our history you have given us no aid.” In *Zionism in the*

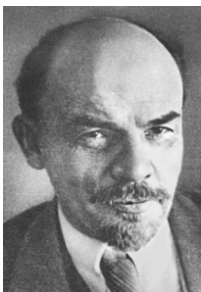


TROTSKY

The Promise of a Socialist Society

In the selection below, Friedrich Engels makes plain how proletarian revolution opens the road to an emancipated future in which the productive powers of humanity are unleashed for the benefit of all mankind.

Their political and intellectual bankruptcy is scarcely any longer a secret to the bourgeoisie themselves. Their economic bankruptcy recurs regularly every ten years. In every crisis, society is suffocated beneath the weight of its own productive forces and



LENIN

products, which it cannot use, and stands helpless face to face with the absurd contradiction that the producers have nothing to consume, because consumers are wanting. The expansive force of the means of production bursts the bonds that the capitalist mode of production had imposed upon them. Their deliverance from these bonds is the one precondition for an unbroken, constantly accelerated development of the productive forces, and therewith for a practically unlimited increase of production itself....

With the seizing of the means of production by society, production of commodities is done away with, and, simultaneously, the mastery of the product over the producer. Anarchy in social production is replaced by systematic, definite organisation. The struggle for individual existence disappears.... Man’s own social organisation, hitherto confronting him as a necessity imposed by nature and history, now becomes the result of his own free action. The extraneous objective forces that have hitherto governed history pass under the control of man himself. Only from that time will man himself, with full consciousness, make his own history—only from that time will the social causes set in movement by him have, in the main and in a constantly growing measure, the results intended by him. It is humanity’s leap from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom.

To accomplish this act of universal emancipation is the historical mission of the modern proletariat. To thoroughly comprehend the historical conditions and thus the very nature of this act, to impart to the now oppressed class a full knowledge of the conditions and of the meaning of the momentous act it is called upon to accomplish, this is the task of the theoretical expression of the proletarian movement, scientific socialism.

—Friedrich Engels, *Anti-Dühring* (1878)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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

DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Liz Gordon

EDITOR: Ray Bishop

ASSISTANT EDITOR: Michael Davisson

EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Tricia Seneca

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

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

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

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

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

The closing date for news in this issue is May 28.

No. 1025

31 May 2013



Editions La Brèche

Abram Leon



Age of the Dictators (1983), Lenni Brenner exposed how such organizations as Chaim Weizmann’s World Zionist Organization and Rabbi Stephen Wise’s American Jewish Congress (AJC) *opposed the rescue of European Jewry*. These groups wanted to save only “the chosen few”—those young, healthy and ambitious enough to forge a racist Jewish statelet in the Arab

continued on page 8

CORRECTIONS

In our article “U.S. Imperialism’s Machinery of Torture” (WV No. 1024, 17 May), we misspelled the name of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) of El Salvador. In the same article, we referred to the overthrow of the “blood-drenched dynasty of Luis Somoza in 1979.” While Luis Somoza Debayle was part of the Somoza dynasty in Nicaragua, holding power in the 1950s and ’60s, it was his brother Anastasio Somoza Debayle who was overthrown in 1979.

Remember the MOVE Massacre

May 1985 Bombing: Racist State Terror

On 13 May 1985, the Philadelphia police, with the cooperation of Pennsylvania State Police and the FBI, consciously carried out racist state murder. Acting on the orders of black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode and the Reagan White House, the cops dropped a satchel with C-4 explosives onto the MOVE organization's Osage Avenue home. The explosion and ensuing firestorm killed eleven black people, including five children, and destroyed an entire city block, leaving hundreds homeless. The bombing capped a 12-hour cop siege during which over 10,000 rounds of ammunition were fired into the house. Firefighters were prevented by police from tackling the blaze for more than an hour, and the cops shot at anyone trying to escape the inferno. There were only two survivors: 13-year-old Birdie Africa and Ramona Africa, who was sent to prison for seven years for the "crime" of still being alive.

This massacre was the culmination of years of police harassment, beatings and hundreds of arrests of members of this mostly black back-to-nature commune known for denouncing "the system" and defending its right to armed self-defense. In August 1978, 600 Philly cops had surrounded and attacked MOVE's Powelton Village compound, unleashing a barrage of gunfire. Nine MOVE members were framed up and sentenced to between 30 and 100 years in prison after a cop was killed in the ferocious police crossfire.

May 1985 police firebombing of Philadelphia MOVE commune killed eleven people and burned down entire black neighborhood.

AP, Barger/WCAU-TV (inset)



Merle Africa died in prison in 1998; the others are still locked away in Pennsylvania's prison hellholes.

While covering the trial of the MOVE 9, Mumia Abu-Jamal became a MOVE supporter. A former Black Panther and Philadelphia journalist known as the "Voice of the Voiceless," Mumia was framed for the

December 1981 killing of police officer Daniel Faulkner and sentenced to death for his political views. Mumia was confined to death row for 30 years before his sentence was overturned two years ago, but his conviction still stands. For him it is now the "slow death row" of life in prison. **Free all the MOVE prisoners! Free Mumia Abu-**

Jamal! Abolish the racist death penalty!

A new documentary about the MOVE bombing, *Let the Fire Burn*, premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York in April, winning a Special Jury mention for a first documentary. The filmmaker, Jason Osder, watched the bombing live on television as a child and was spurred to make the documentary because he was horrified that people of his generation didn't remember the events of 13 May 1985. Although Osder's film is a welcome exposé, it makes an unwelcome attempt at being evenhanded. There are no two sides to an atrocity. In a Q&A with the filmmaker at the screening, a supporter of the Partisan Defense Committee stressed that the bombing was "**not** a confrontation between extremists and authority but between the oppressed and the oppressors."

The MOVE bombing belongs to the long history of murderous capitalist state repression against workers, the oppressed and groups deemed "deviant." We will not forget the 1921 aerial bombing of the black neighborhood in Tulsa, Oklahoma, or the 1993 massacre of the integrated Branch Davidian movement in Waco, Texas. These and other atrocities evoke the terror meted out by U.S. imperialism in its wars far from home.

The state branded MOVE "terrorist" to justify its mass murder, the signature of the Reagan years. With the "war on terror," this pretext has become a fixture in the arsenal targeting those who stand up against the depredations of the capitalist rulers, not least black people. In this society, the entire state apparatus is racist to the core, as witnessed by "stop and frisk" and the massive numbers of black men in prison. Anti-black oppression has been the very bedrock of American capitalism since its foundation on the backs of chattel slaves seized from Africa.

On the 28th anniversary of the MOVE bombing, we again seek to etch this atrocity into the collective memory of the working class and oppressed. Workers revolution will avenge the MOVE martyrs. **For black liberation through socialist revolution! ■**

Letters

On the Korean War

14 April 2013

Dear *Workers Vanguard*,

The article "Chinese Stalinists: Running Dogs for Imperialist Drive Against North Korea" (WV No. 1020, 22 March) is a good article. However, the article states, "That war [in Korea] was launched by an imperialist invasion led by the U.S. in an attempt to smash social revolution." This is only partially accurate. U.S. imperialism's invasion was preceded by a civil war (dubbed a "national liberation war" by Kim Il Sung) that erupted in June 1950 when the North Korean army crossed the 38th parallel. That line had been drawn by the U.S. in 1945 out of fear that the Soviet Union would advance into the southern part of the peninsula following Japanese imperialism's defeat at the end of World War II. At the time, Moscow immediately agreed to the division of the peninsula.

The North Korean army reached Seoul within a week, pushing aside South Korean forces that had been trained by the Japanese imperialists. In 1994, the Spartacist

Group Japan wrote the article "Defend North Korea Against Imperialist Provocations!" in which we noted: "When North Korean troops advanced south in 1950 they were welcomed as liberators; popular support for the Northern side was often expressed in strike action" (reprinted in WV No. 602, 10 June 1994). The South Korean masses hated the reactionary Syngman Rhee government. Supported by American imperialism as well as the UN, this puppet regime sought to smash the North Korean deformed workers state.

Democratic Party president Harry Truman's government was upset and caught off guard by the sudden onslaught of the North Korean army. Truman authorized war against the North on June 27 and on September 15 U.S. forces carried out an invasion in the name of the UN, landing at Inchon. By then, the North Korean army had already advanced near Busan (formerly Pusan), a city on the southern coast of the peninsula. The U.S. invasion inflicted a big defeat on the North Korean army, cutting off its military supplies and forcing it to retreat north.

The North Korean army was very brave and heroic. In 1949, it had been reinforced with tens of thousands of Korean troops who had fought together with the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA). These troops were combat-hardened and efficient. Mao Zedong had agreed to their transfer back to Korea more for economic reasons than out of concern for the defense of North Korea and the extension of its revolution. By that time, he considered the PLA's war against the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang basically won and thought the Korean troops would become an

unnecessary economic burden on the Chinese workers state. The battle experience acquired by these troops while fighting in China—shown also in military skirmishes between the North and South, particularly in August 1949, when the North came out on top—made it possible for the North Korean army to reach Seoul as quickly as it did.

The North's advance represented an opportunity to carry out a social revolution in the capitalist South. There was a space of almost three months between the North's initiative at the end of June and the U.S. invasion on September 15. In the meantime, Moscow and Beijing hoped the U.S. military would not intervene.

In Japan, the leadership of the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) refused to defend North Korea. But about 4,000 Korean members of the JCP demanded that North Korea be defended to the death. After the war, the JCP lost all its Korean members, who went on to form Chosen Soren. Today, JCP leader Tetsuzo Fuwa and other reformists like the Kakehashi group denounce North Korea for having crossed the 38th parallel. We defend the North Korean advance as progressive because it posed the possibility of driving American imperialism, as well as the UN forces, out of the peninsula and overthrowing the South Korean capitalist class.

Comradely,
Tsukioka

On the Lockdown of Boston

[Received 13 May 2013]

Dear comrades,

I am writing to you in regards to the *Workers Vanguard* article: "In Wake of Boston Bombing—Ominous Display of Police-State Powers." [See WV No. 1023, 3 May 2013.]

I live in the Brighton area of Boston and wish to comment on the events involved in the incidents in the wake of the bombings.

People here have commented on that when the police searched door to door. Those who refused were handcuffed and held down while the police ransacked their homes. People complained that this was a violation of their Fourth Amendment rights not realizing that the capitalist police and courts don't give a damn about civil rights.

Most of the day the city was on lock

down. I went out for about ten minutes and a few people in my neighborhood also ignored the order. People basically went out to find a food store open, fortunately some were open. This was mostly people who were poor, living in the warehouses known as the projects.

An open secret was that the state and city governments recently received from the federal government high capacity automatic weapons with hundreds of hollow tip armor piercing bullets. They were just looking forward to testing them out.

The local authorities and the bourgeois press have been milking the bombings ever since, especially the politicians running to fill John Kerry's senate seat.

Your article was quite accurate and right on the money.

Comradely,
Alan N.

Now Available in Korean

**원칙들에 대한 선언과 강령의
몇 가지 요소들**

**국제공산주의동맹
(제4 인터내셔널주의자)**

**Declaration of Principles and
Some Elements of Program
International Communist League
(Fourth Internationalist)**

www.icl-fi.org/korean

For the last few months, teachers throughout Mexico have been mobilizing against the newly enacted education “reform” law that attacks union control over hiring and imposes continual evaluations of teachers, thereby threatening to do away with permanent positions. This legislation was a centerpiece of the “Pact for Mexico,” an agreement between President Enrique Peña Nieto of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the right-wing clericalist National Action Party (PAN) and the populist-nationalist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). Late last month, protesters in Chilpancingo, the capital of the state of Guerrero, stormed the offices of the PRI, PAN and PRD, outraged by the state congress’s adoption of a bill that reproduces the terms of the federal anti-union education “reform.” Four protest leaders have since been arrested on an array of charges, including “terrorism.” The entire labor movement must demand: Drop all charges against the Guerrero protesters!

Gordillo's arrest is a direct attack on the teachers union and the entire Mexican labor movement, part of the bourgeoisie's agenda to dismantle the unions and ram through privatizations to make Mexican capitalism more "competitive." This is what is behind both the destruction of the SME electrical workers union in 2009 and the on-and-off push to dismantle the oil workers union at state-owned PEMEX. Calls to jail the oil workers' leader have been issued by a leader of the Movement for National Regeneration (Morena), which is led by former PRD presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

A black and white photograph showing a woman in profile, looking out through the vertical bars of a prison cell. She is wearing glasses and a light-colored turtleneck sweater. The bars are dark and create a grid pattern across the frame. In the background, behind the bars, other people can be faintly seen, suggesting a prison environment.

El Universal

The elementary need to defend the SNTE against capitalist attack is anathema to the bulk of the Mexican left, which typically derides unions affiliated to the PRI in favor of those in the camp of its “progressive” bourgeois rival, the PRD. Forming one of the puddles in this swamp is the Internationalist Group (IG), an outfit led by defectors from the International Communist League. In “Labor Cop Gordillo Busted to Crush Teachers’ Resistance” (*Internationalist*, March 2013), the IG makes the obvious point that “Gordillo was the perfect target in order to promote Peña Nieto’s privatization agenda.” But while the IG demands “Hands off the teachers,” it *refuses to defend their union*, writing off the SNTE as purely “a state institution, a labor police agency whose purpose is to prop up the regime and regiment the workers.” You can’t have it both ways: either you defend the union under attack, despite its brutal, pro-capitalist leadership, or you add grist to the union-busters’ mill.

The IG's rationale for refusing to defend the SNTE is that such corporatist unions are simply organs of the state and not part of the labor movement, a notion that obliterates any distinction between the bureaucrats at the top of the unions and the workers at the base. Corporatism has long been a hallmark of the capitalist system in Mexico, as in many other semi-colonial countries. For decades, the major unions, primarily grouped within the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM), have been integrated as component parts of the long-ruling PRI and its predecessor, the Party of the Mexican Revolution, along with associations of peasants and other "sectors." The government decided which unions were legal, installing and removing union bureaucrats at will. In return, these *charros* (cowboys) policed the unions for the state, purging and often killing dissident workers while benefiting generously from corruption.

A black and white photograph capturing a moment of intense conflict during a protest. In the foreground, a dense crowd of people is pushing against a line of riot police. The police, wearing helmets and carrying shields, form a solid barrier. Some individuals in the crowd are wearing hats and backpacks, and one person in the lower right has a backpack with a visible logo. The background shows more people and the continuation of the protest line. The overall atmosphere is one of chaos and confrontation.

EPA

The IG refused to defend the SNT-MMSRM leadership or the union itself against the state, undoubtedly given the union's *charro* leadership and history of affiliation with the PRI. Prefiguring its line that Gordillo's arrest was a "settling of scores among the rulers," the IG claimed that Gómez Urrutia's ouster was a "settling of accounts within the regime" (even though the PRI was not then in power). While vaguely calling to "reject this frontal assault by the government," the IG's *El Internacionalista/Edición México* No. 2 omitted any call for victory to the strikes or for dropping the charges against

The IG's demand "Peña Nieto, hands off the teachers!" is just subterfuge, counterposing defense of people who teach to defense of their *union*. Another mystery unfolds, as the IG claims that the National Coordination of Education Workers (CNTE), the pro-PRD opposition within the SNTE, "effectively acts as an independent union" even though it "has not broken with the SNTE." Indeed, the CNTE fights explicitly to democratize the SNTE from within. One of the more militant formations in the Mexican labor movement, the CNTE is leading the current protests against the education "reform." But how can it do so as a component of what the IG dismisses as a "labor police agency"?

ESPARTACO

**“Pacto por México” de PRI, PAN y PRD:
Represión, privatizaciones, ataques antisindicales**

La “Pax Porfiriana” a la Peña Nieto

Los incidentes ocurridos en la ciudad de Toluca, durante la campaña electoral, se atribuyen a la presencia de grupos de jóvenes que se dedicaban a atacar a los candidatos y a los simpatizantes de los partidos políticos. Los incidentes ocurridos en la ciudad de Toluca, durante la campaña electoral, se atribuyen a la presencia de grupos de jóvenes que se dedicaban a atacar a los candidatos y a los simpatizantes de los partidos políticos.

[illegible]

**Publication of the Group
Espartaquista de México**

No. 37, February 2013, \$50 (32 pages)
Subscription: \$2 for 4 issues
 (includes Spanish-language *Spartacist*)

Order from/make checks payable to:
Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116



AP



WV Photo

Left: Union copper miners protest after cop assault on striking mine workers in Cananea, Mexico, January 2008. Right: At IG-initiated demonstration the same month outside Mexican consulate, NYC, Spartacists protest attack on union.

who typically rule with an iron fist, the pro-PRD union tops are more democratic. But the non-*charro* union leaders serve the same role as lieutenants of capital within the working class, despite whatever flimsy claims they might offer to be independent of the bourgeois parties. As our comrades in the GEM wrote in an article that dealt in depth with the fight against corporatism in the Mexican labor movement:

“The ‘independent’ union tops tie the workers to the Mexican bourgeoisie through other means, through nationalist ideology and illusions in ‘democratic’ reform of the capitalist state. Revolutionaries seek to intervene in the unions to replace the bureaucratic and nationalist leaderships with a leadership opposed to *all* bourgeois parties.”

—“Mexico: NAFTA’s Man Targets Labor,” WV No. 748, 15 December 2000

Elevating democracy above the class line has long been the formula used by opportunist “socialists,” and not just in Mexico, to justify inviting the capitalist courts and governmental agencies to intervene to “clean up” the unions. In the early 1970s, while virtually every other left organization was cheering on the U.S. Labor Department’s candidate, Arnold Miller, to take over the United Mine Workers (UMW) from Tony Boyle, a murderous thug, we were unique in opposing both sides. Miller went on to be reviled by UMW members for his subservience to the coal companies during a bitter 1977-78 strike. One can also look at the case of Jimmy Hoffa, historic leader of the Teamsters. While Hoffa was no slouch at using violence against internal critics, Marxists opposed the Justice Department’s years-long vendetta against him, which was meant to cripple a union that had the power to shut down the nation’s commerce.

The key principles guiding Marxists in the fight to forge a class-struggle leadership in the unions, an essential part of the effort to build a revolutionary workers party, were spelled out by Marxist leader Leon Trotsky in his 1940 essay, “Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay.” Trotsky wrote, “The primary slogan for this struggle is: *complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state*.... The second slogan is: *trade union democracy*. This second slogan flows directly from the first and presupposes for its realization the complete freedom of the trade unions from the imperialist or colonial state.”

This is another test the IG has miserably failed. With enormous chutzpah, its article on Gordillo pontificates about the need for a union leadership that insists “on total political independence from the bourgeois state.” This from an outfit whose supporters in the Brazilian city of Volta Redonda dragged the municipal workers union through the bourgeois courts in 1996-97 as they tried to hold on to the leadership of that cop-infested union. Having run an ex-cop for president, the IG’s supporters turned over the union’s bank statements, account books, statutes and minutes to the courts (see “IG’s Bra-

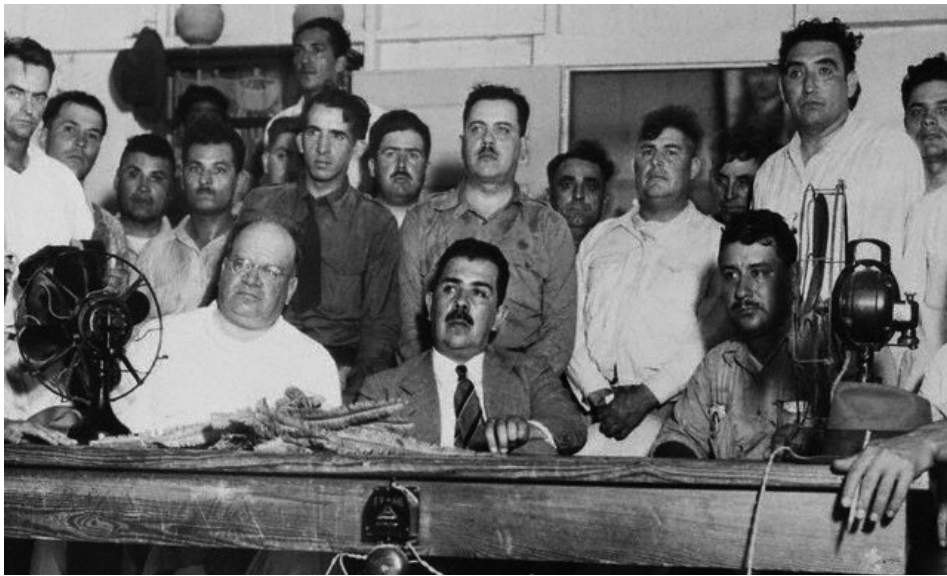
zil Cover-Up: Dirty Hands, Cynical Lies,” WV No. 671, 11 July 1997).

Norden in His Labyrinth

The notion that corporatist unions are purely and simply appendages of the bourgeois state has nothing to do with revolutionary Marxism. In his 1940 essay, which was uncompleted due to his assassination by a Stalinist agent, Trotsky answered such moralistic nonsense with particular reference to Mexico, where the CTM was part of the ruling party under left bourgeois-nationalist Lázaro Cárdenas. At the same time, he warned that unions’ ties to the

thoroughly integrated into the capitalist state. By the 1950s, quantity had turned into quality.” For the IG the class character of a labor organization is determined by the political face of its leadership.

This flies in the face of Trotsky’s analysis. Pointing to the increasing ties of the unions to the bourgeois state in both the imperialist and the colonial and semicolonial countries, Trotsky wrote: “From the foregoing it seems, at first sight, easy to draw the conclusion that the trade unions cease to be trade unions in the imperialist epoch.... Such a position, however, would be false to the core. We cannot



Bettmann

Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas (center) with union leaders, 1938. His bourgeois-nationalist regime used corporatism to tie labor organizations to the state.

Cárdenas bourgeois government were dangerous for the proletariat, despite the “progressive” image the regime had acquired for such acts as nationalizing oil, providing “socialist” education and distributing land. Trotsky wrote:

“In Mexico the trade unions have been transformed by law into semistate institutions and have, in the nature of things, assumed a semitotalitarian character. The statization of the trade unions was, according to the conception of the legislators, introduced in the interests of the workers, in order to assure them an influence upon governmental and economic life. But insofar as foreign imperialist capitalism dominates the national state and insofar as it is able, with the assistance of internal reactionary forces, to overthrow the unstable democracy and replace it with outright fascist dictatorship, to that extent the legislation relating to the trade unions can easily become a weapon in the hands of imperialist dictatorship.”

Even within the parameters of semi-bonapartist bourgeois rule, the unions’ ties to the state increasingly became a means by which the bureaucracy policed the workers on behalf of the capitalist rulers. According to an October 2006 IG screed (“GEM: Caboose of the Mexican Popular Front”), this process culminated in the transformation of the CTM from a bona fide union into a state agency: “Evolving from semi-state institutions under Cárdenas, during the course of World War II and through the post-war ‘red purges’...the CTM unions became

ment party. And if the world war and subsequent Cold War were definitive in changing the class character of the CTM in Mexico, what does that make of the unions in the U.S., where the labor bureaucracy imposed a no-strike pledge during the war and went on to drive reds out of the labor movement and collaborate with the CIA in smashing left-led unions in Europe and Latin America? Not a few leftists and petty-bourgeois radicals have written off the unions due to the treachery of their misleaders. The conclusion that Marxists draw is the necessity to fight for a new leadership to transform the unions into weapons of class struggle.

All this was something that IG leader Jan Norden used to know, when he was editor of *Workers Vanguard*. When Joaquín Hernández Galicia (“La Quina”), the notoriously brutal and corrupt head of the SRTPRM oil workers union at PEMEX, was arrested in 1989, WV attacked the “classless methodology” of radical-liberal intellectuals who “ask how one can possibly defend this labor kingpin.” Referring to the Soviet Union, which had not yet succumbed to capitalist counterrevolution, we wrote in “Mexico Rulers Declare War on Labor” (WV No. 470, 3 February 1989):

“The Trotskyists, who understand the class character of the USSR as a workers state despite its bureaucratic degeneration under Stalinist rule, and thus defend it against imperialism, likewise defend the unions against the bosses despite the sellout bureaucracy which sits atop these repositories of workers power.... Those who don’t defend the Soviet Union also can’t defend the oil workers union in Mexico.”

Similarly, we did not write off the SNTE as a bosses’ organization when the CNTE led a massive teachers strike three months later, but called to sweep away the bureaucratic misleaders through a “class-struggle fight for the independence of labor from the bourgeois state” (“Labor Showdown in Mexico,” WV No. 476, 28 April 1989). The IG is left to explain what has changed since then.

In another case of twisted logic, the IG has insisted that the Venezuelan unions in the CTV corporatist union federation—tied from its inception to the Democratic Action party that ruled that country for decades—were “*workers* organizations” in spite of “their sellout leaderships.” It is noteworthy that the CTV played a central role as an agent of Yankee imperialism in the U.S.-orchestrated coup attempt against the Hugo Chávez regime in 2002.

To save our readers from more of their tortured reasoning, we will cut to the chase. In 1996, Norden & Co. departed the Trotskyist ICL, allowing them full rein to indulge their opportunist appetites. In Mexico today, the IG accommodates the rulers’ attacks on PRI-affiliated unions in order to appeal to nationalist-populist forces in and around the PRD. For revolutionary Marxists, swimming against the nationalist stream is part of the task of building a Leninist workers party, independent of and opposed to all the bourgeois parties—PRI, PAN, PRD and Morena. As Trotsky wrote in concluding his 1940 essay: “The independence of the trade unions in the class sense, in their relations to the bourgeois state, can, in the present conditions, be assured only by a completely revolutionary leadership, that is, the leadership of the Fourth International.” ■

Special ICL Bulletins

No. 38 (1996)

Norden’s “Group”: Shamefaced Defectors From Trotskyism

English edition: **\$6** (152 pages)

Spanish edition: **\$6** (92 pages)

No. 41 (1997)

The Fight for a Trotskyist Party in Brazil

Correspondence between the International Communist League and Luta Metalúrgica/Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil

In English, Portuguese and Spanish: **\$7** (184 pages)

Order from/make checks payable to

Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

France

Fake Trotskyists Support

Firing of Veiled Women

The following article is translated from Le Bolchéviek No. 204 (June 2013), newspaper of our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France.

LE BOLCHEVIK

MAY 3—In March, the Final Court of Appeals reversed a decision that had allowed the Baby Loup day-care center to fire an employee for wearing an Islamic headscarf. Seizing on this ruling, [Socialist Party] president François Hollande announced that he wanted a new law that would extend to the private sector the restrictions on wearing the headscarf now in force in the public schools. He proclaimed, “Whenever there is contact with children, in what we call public care for toddlers, there should be parity with what exists in the [public] schools.”

The government and local administrations are already closing maternity hospitals, cutting back the family allowance, preventing children whose parents are unemployed from eating in school cafeterias, etc. But babies and toddlers can sleep peacefully because Hollande and his education minister Vincent Peillon will protect them from nannies in headscarves. Hollande & Co. hope their new crusade, waged in the name of the sacrosanct principle of “secularism” and the “values of the Republic,” will bring them a little relief by deflecting people’s attention away from soaring unemployment and the new austerity programs coming on top of the existing ones.

Supporting Hollande over the Baby Loup affair are many of the same people who yesterday were howling in support of [former president Nicolas] Sarkozy’s anti-Muslim provocations: Alain Finkielkraut, Philippe Val, Jeannette Bougrab, Elisabeth Badinter, etc. But behind them stand the Left Party and Lutte Ouvrière (LO), serving as a grotesque left cover for this latest racist attack by the French state. And they join the fray in the name of combating women’s oppression. Thus, LO headlined its article on the Baby Loup court decision “The Final Appeals Court and the Baby Loup Childcare Center: An Attack on Women’s Rights” (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 29 March).

It is obvious that a new law prohibiting the headscarf in the private sector will only reinforce the isolation of Muslim women in their homes as well as their economic woes. Their families will pay the price. This campaign is in the service of the racist lie that the real problem in society is not the capitalist system but supposedly women in headscarves, and Muslims and minorities in general. The ayatollahs of secularism intend to broaden their offensive. In the name of “religious neutrality,” they are now trying to ban the headscarf for childcare providers working out of their own homes. A similar law was adopted by the Senate a year ago. It was dropped from the Assembly’s legislative agenda but has now resurfaced, promoted by Roger-Gérard Schwartzberg, honorary president of the [bourgeois] Left Radicals and part of the government majority.

These home-based childcare providers, often Muslims, provide a service that allows many thousands of other women to leave home to work given the short-

age of day-care centers in France. The Baby Loup center offers 24-hour childcare seven days a week—which is very rare—in one of the working-class suburbs around Paris. But the great defenders of secularism and women’s rights are not only ready to see it closed rather than employ a woman in a headscarf, they are equally ready to sentence countless other women to unemployment if their home-based childcare law is passed. *We say: No to racist exclusions and laws against the veil! Down with the government’s anti-Muslim offensive!*

“Secularism”: Cover for Anti-Muslim Prejudice

This so-called secularism, which is a cover for anti-Muslim prejudices, has nothing to do with the principle of secularism established by the French Revolution of 1789. As we explained in our article “Women and Immigration in France” [*Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 57, Winter 2002-2003]:

“The French state *deformed* the goals and values of the French Revolution with this attack on these Muslim girls. Under the *ancien régime* of the French king, France was known as ‘the eldest daughter of the Church.’ The principle of secularism in the French Revolution came from the need to protect the freedom to express ideas and to free society from the hands of the Catholic church. That this principle is used today by a Catholic majority to oppress a Muslim minority in French society is a cruel irony of history. It underscores the degree to which the French bourgeoisie in the epoch of capitalist decay has degenerated from the class that led the 1789 Revolution, a historic watershed in the struggle for human emancipation.”

The Ligue Trotskyiste de France has always opposed the headscarf and the veil, which represent a reactionary social program of keeping women within the con-



Fatima Afif, 2010.

flocks have taken the streets to spew their reactionary venom, praying and marching in opposition to new democratic rights for gays and in support of their model of “one man on one woman for life.”

Islam in France will never be anything but a religion of the ghetto, i.e., a religion of the oppressed who often have lost hope of fighting the racist segregation and poverty they endure under French capitalism. They turn to religion not only as a refuge but also as an act of defiance of the French state that excludes them. This is why Marx called religion “the heart of a heartless world.” The mosques are overflowing in Chanteloup-les-Vignes where the Baby Loup day-care center is located and in many *banlieues* [minority and working-class neighborhoods on the outskirts of big cities] across the country



May 6: Strike at Charles de Gaulle Airport by workers providing services to the disabled.

fines of the family, in the home and in a position of servitude. Likewise, we oppose the trappings of all religions, all of which promote the family, which is the bedrock of women’s oppression. In France, a 1905 law went some way toward the separation of church and state, but Catholicism remains powerful and is used by the ruling class to reinforce social conservatism and sanctify capitalist class rule. This has been repeatedly demonstrated in the past six months as priests and their well-heeled

where unemployment is at least twice the national average (and even higher for youth).

Evidently, Fatima Afif, the worker at the center of the Baby Loup affair, wanted to wear the headscarf after returning to the facility in December 2008 from a five-year family leave. Prior to this leave, which began in May 2003, she had no problem wearing her headscarf at work. But during her absence, in the summer of 2003, new regulations were instituted at

her workplace to impose “philosophical, political and religious neutrality.” During her five-year leave, racist exclusions served to push women like Afif deeper into religious obscurantism.

For a Multiethnic Revolutionary Workers Party!

The use of secularism as a cover for anti-Islamic prejudice escalated in the early 1990s and reached a high point in 2004 with then-president Chirac’s law banning the headscarf in schools. The backdrop to this rise in reaction was capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and across East Europe in 1990-92—a huge defeat for the world’s working class and oppressed, which was hailed by virtually the entire “left.” The capitalist class, which appropriates the wealth produced by the workers, has needed a scapegoat to derail the class struggles that continue to break out.

The Communist Party and the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR—which finally dropped the “communism” in its name to become the “New Anti-Capitalist Party”) believed the bourgeoisie’s lies about the so-called “death of communism” and the end of the *grand soir* [revolutionary aspirations]. But the bourgeoisie knew they had to continue to devise schemes to divide and weaken the working class—hence the “Green [Islamic] Peril.” In 1991, at the onset of the first Gulf War, [“Socialist” president François] Mitterrand deployed “Vigipirate” [a campaign of cop terror in minority communities] for the first time. It was reminiscent of the anti-Muslim offensive in Paris during the Algerian War and laid the groundwork for the “war on terror” against Islam. It also provided the basis for a significant strengthening of the state’s repressive arsenal against any perceived opponent of capitalist rule and ultimately the working class. *Down with Vigipirate! For workers mobilizations against racist state terror!*

The isolation and hopelessness of the oppressed in this society today are the bitter fruit of the left’s betrayals. Socialist rulers Mitterrand, Lionel Jospin and now Hollande have all portrayed Muslims as the new “enemy within” and have increased deportations and attacks on undocumented immigrants. They have also driven down the living standards of the poorest layers in society. The economic crisis has only made things worse, as factories that used to employ the fathers and grandfathers of today’s minority youth have closed down. The planned closure of the PSA auto plant in Aulnay, the axing of 800 temporary jobs at Sochaux and the decision to eliminate 1,200 jobs at Phone House are just the tip of the iceberg of constantly rising youth unemployment.

The parents and grandparents of today’s minority youth contributed to creating France’s wealth in the period following World War II. But their descendants are largely treated as a surplus population, useful at best for an occasional short-term job but more often destined for the local unemployment office or prison.

At the same time, until capitalism is overthrown, the bourgeoisie will need a proletariat to exploit and extract surplus value from in order to generate profits

and capital. While the capitalists seek to transfer more and more manufacturing overseas, where even more profit can be squeezed out of foreign workers, an industrial infrastructure remains and will remain in this country. From Charles de Gaulle Airport, to auto plants, public transport, construction, etc., not to mention janitors and staff in nursing homes, it is clear that minority workers make up a disproportionate percentage of the workforce. Their central role in production gives them the social power that is essential to fight against capitalist exploitation. This is also why the bourgeoisie sees them as a special threat.

The struggles to save individual plants or defend local working conditions, which are now often isolated and end in defeat, must be taken to a higher level. For this, the working class needs a revolutionary leadership, a tribune of the people. Such a leadership would fight for jobs for all, especially for youth of immigrant background. It would combat the daily racist terror in the minority neighborhoods and wage a fight for women's rights. It would expose how the poison of racism, a form of "false consciousness," is used to divide the working class. It would seek to win the working class to defend ghetto youth and veiled women against repression. If workers combat the rulers' divisive



Marnette/Le Parisien

Sirine, expelled from school in Val-de-Marne in early April.

maneuvers, they will wield their social power with greater unity and become stronger against the bosses.

A revolutionary party would also combat the lies peddled by the left that capitalism can be made to be more humane, gentle and inclusive. Only workers overthrowing their exploiters through socialist revolution can open the way for a new society based on a centralized planned economy. The fight will have to be extended internationally, but it will immediately be possible to start tackling the scourges of capitalism—unemployment, scarcity and social oppression—along with the preju-



Le Bolchévik

Paris, 2004: LTF banner at protest against ban on headscarf reads, “No to the Racist Law Against Youth Wearing the Headscarf! Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants! Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!”

dice and reaction they breed. We are dedicated to building such a leadership, and our model is the experience of the Bolshevik Party and the Russian Revolution of October 1917.

Expelling Veiled Girls from School

In 2003, giant public-sector strikes exploded against the Fillon reform, which was an attack on pensions. One of the clearest examples of how the bourgeoisie wields “secularism” to divide the workers and weaken their struggles occurred in this context. Teachers formed one of the most militant sectors of these strikes. Although the protests ended in June with a sellout by the union bureaucrats, many teachers threatened to resume their strike action at the start of the fall term. It was at the onset of the strike movement to defend pensions that the Socialist Jack Lang, a former education minister, introduced a bill in parliament seeking to outlaw the headscarf in schools. Fellow Socialist Laurent Fabius then picked up the baton. At the height of the strike movement in late May, he publicly demanded such a law, joining the leaders of the [governing conservative] UMP, which was increasingly calling for such legislation.

When schools reopened, Lutte Ouvrière and leading LCR members such as Pierre-François Grond (now with the Anti-Capitalist Left inside the Left Front) acted as foot soldiers for secularism, opening up a new front rather than resuming the fight over pensions. This time they marched in step with [labor minister François] Fillon and Chirac, to exclude from their schools young women wearing the headscarf. Some LO members and Grond played a key role in the expulsion of Alma and Lila Levy from their high school in Aubervilliers. LO and Grond served to spearhead the 2004 headscarf law, which brought a rare moment of national unity for then-president Chirac. Building on it, he launched new attacks on workers, notably the privatization of EDF-GDF [electric and gas companies] in June 2004.

Before the new school year in August 2003, LO was lamenting that Chirac

would not go all the way and ban the headscarf at schools. They wrote: “When they want to bury a problem they create a commission. And what Chirac is proposing to set up certainly seems to come out of that tradition” (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 8 August 2003). But LO would not be disappointed by the commission presided over by Bernard Stasi. In December 2003, it recommended a ban on the headscarf in schools. Barely a few weeks later, the law was adopted with 93 percent of the legislators across all parties in favor. In a recent article on the Baby Loup affair, *Le Monde Diplomatique*’s Alain Gresh noted regarding the Stasi commission (blog.mondediplo.net):

“Going back to the 2003-04 debate is important, because the commission, to justify its choices, based itself on ‘examples’ and ‘cases’ supposedly proving that the school system faced an imminent threat. Now the same pretext is being used *with the Baby Loup affair*, to jus-



Reuters

**Paris, May 2011:
Tunisian migrants
arrested by
French police
for squatting.**

tify a new law the only result of which will be, again, to stigmatize Muslims as suspect a priori."

Only on the last day of hearings did the commission agree to even hear from women wearing the headscarf. It previously had no qualms, however, about interviewing the [fascist] National Front or about hearing from carefully selected teachers and school principals who all recounted more or less the same horror story that the so-called jewel of the Republic—its secular public school system—was under siege by Islamic fanatics. The Ligue Trotskyste de France participated in the 14 February 2004 demonstration called to protest this law with a banner reading: “No to the Racist Law Against Youth Wearing the Headscarf! Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants! Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!”

LO, however, welcomed Chirac's law: "If in the end there is a law, so much the better. Because for all these girls who are fighting to be able to dress, work and live as they want, which means not to wear the veil, this can be a point of support" (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 6 February 2004). Since the law was passed in 2004, racial divisions and tensions have only increased. At least a dozen Muslim private schools now exist, including in Aubervilliers, where Lutte Ouvrière had Alma and Lila Levy expelled. And while it is difficult to establish just how many expulsions have

taken place over this nine-year period, it is undeniable that young girls continue to be driven out of public school and into private religious schools.

The most recent example is 15-year-old Sirine, who was expelled from her school in Val-de-Marne in early April after being barred from attending classes for four months because her headband was too wide and her skirt too long for her inquisitors. The local court in Melun ruled in mid March that her school had to reinstate her, but the school district administration appealed and she was expelled for good shortly thereafter. Sirine will now attend a private school, no doubt one that is religious and probably Muslim. How her expulsion combats women's oppression is for LO and their fellow devotees of secularism to explain. [Sirine is now attending another public school.]

Banning Layoffs... Except for Veiled Women!

In 2003-04, Lutte Ouvrière manned the front lines in the effort to get a law passed expelling veiled young women from school. Today in the wake of the Baby Loup affair, they once again present themselves as the guarantors of a new law to be recommended by Hollande's *Observatoire de la laïcité* [government body ensuring enforcement of secularism in the public sector]. An article in *Lutte Ouvrière* (29 March) said about the court decision in favor of Fatima Afif: "This decision rightly provoked a wave of protests, because it gives ammunition to obscurantists of all stripes, and many people are calling for a revision of the existing laws, calling for a broadening of the prohibition of obvious displays of religious practice, in the name of secularism." Given its protest of the decision, one can only suppose that LO counts itself

[illegible]

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| SPARTACIST | | 4 |
| NUMERO 40 | EDITION FRANCAISE | AUTUMNE 2011 |

Sixième Conférence internationale de la LCI

La lutte pour l'intégrité programmatique en période de réaction

PAGE 2

Preface à la Déclaration de principes de la LCI.....11

Edmund Samarakkody et l'héritage du LSSP ceylanais

La lutte pour le trotskysme dans le sous-continent indien

PAGE 14

M.N. Roy, menchévik nationaliste.....37

En défense du matérialisme dialectique

Lénine philosophe de Peter Fryer.....42

Femmes et Révolution 

Thèses de l'Internationale communiste sur le travail parmi les femmes

PAGE 72

ALGERIE.....12 DA CANADA.....126 \$CAN EUROPE.....126 € USA.....\$25.00

Spartacist (French Edition)

No. 40, Autumn 2011 (72 pages)

\$1.50 (includes postage)

Down With “Age of Consent” Laws! Drop the Charges Against Gay Florida Teen!

Kaitlyn Hunt, a high school senior in Sebastian, Florida, faces up to 15 years in jail and lifetime branding as a “sex offender,” for the “crime” of being in a same-sex relationship with a freshman schoolmate. The two were dating when Hunt was 18 and her girlfriend was 14. Her girlfriend’s parents, reportedly outraged that their daughter was “made” a lesbian, conspired with the police to record a conversation between the two youth. The next day, on February 16, Hunt was arrested for “lewd and lascivious battery of a child 12 to 16 years of age.” Before the state intervened, Hunt had already been kicked off the school basketball team for her relationship. She has since been expelled from school. On May 24, Hunt rejected a plea deal that included a charge of child abuse, two years of house arrest and one year of probation.

Officials predictably deny the obvious: Hunt was targeted because she is in a gay relationship. State Attorney Bruce Colton declared: “You’re talking the difference between a senior in high school and a freshman in high school. That’s what the law is designed to protect.” Actually, the only protection provided is to the moral and religious puritanism pervading American society. As anyone who’s seen a movie, watched a television show or gone

to high school knows, teens do have sex.

The sex police, though, want to stop consenting youth from acting on sexual desires, romantic feelings and the impulse to experiment. Even teenagers who have no physical contact but simply engage in “online sex” are subject to prosecution, and meddling parents can use anti-sex laws to break up relationships. The regimentation of youth—including by dictat-

ing who they can screw and how they should live—is a central purpose of the institution of the family, a mainstay of the capitalist order and source of women’s oppression.

We in the Spartacus Youth Clubs oppose all laws governing “crimes without victims,” e.g., consensual sex, gambling, drug use. Sexual relations should be guided by effective consent and nothing else. As

long as those taking part mutually agree, nobody—least of all the state—has the right to tell them they can’t do it. We also oppose “sex offender” registries, a form of life sentence in themselves. Those on them face systematic discrimination and are set up for state repression and vigilante violence.

In this racist society, reactionary “age of consent” laws provide yet another means to criminalize black youth. In 2005, Genarlow Wilson was sentenced to ten years in prison in Georgia for engaging in consensual oral sex with a younger schoolmate. Following massive public outcry, he was finally released after serving two years. Professional football player Marcus Dixon was thrown into prison in 2003, when he was 18 years old, for having consensual sex with a white girl just shy of 16. The Georgia Supreme Court ordered his release a year later.

Hunt has won a lot of supporters since her arrest. But the Vero Beach chapter of the Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays is not among them. Its president released a statement that grotesquely opined: “The problem is that there is a law, and it appears the law was broken.” The rulers of this bigoted country have always had it in for sexual “deviants.” It was not so long ago that anti-sodomy laws were on the books. In Alabama, sex education teachers are still required by law to instruct students that homosexuality is a crime and “not a lifestyle acceptable to the general public.”

Hunt did nothing wrong! We demand: Drop the charges now! The Hunt family’s online petition at change.org has garnered nearly 300,000 signatures. Letters of protest can be written directly to State Attorney Bruce Colton and Assistant State Attorney Brian Workman, State Attorney’s Office 19th Judicial Circuit, 411 South 2nd Street, Fort Pierce, Florida 34950. The Hunt family is raising money to defray legal costs at: gofundme.com/2yz5ts. ■



Kaitlyn Hunt and her father, Steve.

Birth Control...

(continued from page 12)

calculated maneuver by the White House to head off protest against its appeal of the court order issued just weeks earlier. The new FDA guidelines only remove the prescription requirement for 15- and 16-year-olds who want to buy Plan B One-Step. But this allowance does not apply to other emergency contraception on the market, thus preserving preferential market position for the Teva product. The morning-after pill can still only be bought from a registered pharmacy, and ID is required for everyone who wants to buy it. But very few teenagers have government-issued ID, not to mention the cool \$50 the price-gouging drug company charges for the little 1.5 mg tablet.

The U.S. teen pregnancy rate is one of the highest in the developed world, more than twice as high as the rates in Canada and Sweden. Young black and Latina women suffer the highest rates, reflecting their limited access to health care in this deeply racist, class-divided society. Together with undocumented immigrants, they are the least likely to have photo ID. The effectiveness of the morning-after pill declines

swiftly—it needs to be taken as soon as possible after sex. Fast, no-hassle access is key. All the delays caused by overcoming the prescription and ID requirements, not to mention finding the money to pay for it and an open pharmacy willing to sell it, combine to massively reduce the effectiveness of the drug.

The attacks on women’s rights and on the limited abortion services still available have escalated during the years of the Obama presidency. Already in 2008, 87 percent of all counties in the U.S. had no abortion providers. In recent years Republicans in state legislatures have spearheaded the attacks, but the Democrats have their share of responsibility. Obama has consistently renewed the Hyde Amendment, signed into law by fellow Democrat Jimmy Carter, which eliminated federal funding of abortions. Obama’s signature first-term act on health care, the Affordable Care Act, was renegotiated to appease reactionary bishops at the expense of women workers in Catholic institutions who have to go elsewhere for insurance coverage for contraception. The act specifies that funds will not be used for abortion services, and it allocates \$250 million for ludicrous “abstinence only” miseducation.

Obama concluded his April 26 speech to Planned Parenthood by saying, “As long as we’ve got to fight to protect a woman’s right to make her own choices about her own health, I want you to know that you’ve also got a President who’s going to be right there with you fighting every step of the way.” Well, Obama’s fighting record is crystal clear—against progress, reason, science and women’s rights. The fact that Planned Parenthood rolls out the red carpet for Obama—who upholds the same policies as Bush on teen birth control—shows how the

Democrats are more effective than the Republicans at greasing the skids for attacks. Witness the lack of social protests against Obama’s war crimes abroad, the layoffs and speedups demanded by the capitalists at home, and the ongoing reality of racist oppression.

In our article, “White House Obstructs Morning-After Pill for Teens” (WV No. 993, 6 January 2012), we said:

“The Obama administration’s ruling on the morning-after pill shows that the religion-drenched, cruel priorities of bourgeois electoral politics trump the needs of some of the most vulnerable members of society. Sexual repression is all about social control. The capitalist class seeks to buttress the family—

the main social institution oppressing women—which along with organized religion and the state forms a triad that props up the exploitation of labor.”

As representatives of the capitalist class, the Democratic politicians are just as much enemies of the workers and oppressed as the Republicans are. Our perspective is to forge a revolutionary workers party as a tribune of the people. Only the working class, by taking power in its own name, can build a society in which women and youth are not second-class citizens but play a full, productive role. A future socialist society will apply the highest scientific technique in the service of people’s health and well-being. ■

Moving?

To receive *Workers Vanguard* without interruption please let us know at least three weeks before you move. Send your new **and** old address to:

Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO
New York, NY 10116

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

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

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

Chicago Box 6441, Main PO, Chicago, IL 60680, (312) 563-0441
chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: 1st Sat. of every month, 2-5 p.m., and by appointment, 222 S. Morgan (Buzzer 23)

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

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

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

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA

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

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

Syria...

(continued from page 1)

national revolts and popular uprisings across the region.

In Iraq, the British imperialists forcibly cobbled together a single state consisting of different peoples, including Sunni and Shi'ite Arabs as well as Kurds and Turk-mens. In furthering their policy of divide and rule, the imperialists promoted ethnic or religious minorities like the Syrian Alawites to lord it over the predominantly Sunni Syria.

U.S. imperialism's invasions of Iraq in 1991 and 2003, aimed at perpetuating and extending its world domination, manipulated and reinforced those divisions by playing Shi'ite, Sunni and Kurdish forces off against each other. Similarly, Washington's drive to effect "regime change" in Syria, a pivotal country in the oil-rich Near East, is inflaming communal tensions. Meanwhile, Russia has been a major backer of Syria, providing the Assad regime with sophisticated missile defense technology and presenting an obstacle to Washington's ambitions.

For its part, Turkey—NATO's bulwark in the Near East and a key sponsor of the Sunni anti-Assad opposition—spotted the Syrian conflict as an opening to extend its own influence in the lands of the former Ottoman Empire. A newspaper expressing the views of the "moderate" Turkish fundamentalist regime of Recep Tayyip Erdogan proclaimed at the end of last year



WV Map

crushed the left and workers movement and persecuted national and ethnic minorities.

As we underlined in "Near East, 1950s: Permanent Revolution vs. Bourgeois Nationalism" (WV Nos. 740 and 741, 25 August and 8 September 2000), Communist parties in that period attracted the most class-conscious workers and radical intellectuals throughout the Near East. They were virtually the only political organizations with a base that cut across the myriad national, ethnic and religious lines in the region: Jews played a major role in the Egyptian Communist movement, as did Kurds in the Iraqi.

The Communist militants were inspired by the example of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. The Soviet Union, albeit degenerated under Stalinist rule, remained a workers state embodying historic gains

a regional cultural center, lies in ruins. Two U.S.-led wars and over a decade of UN sanctions, which killed over one and a half million people, devastated Iraq's economy and infrastructure. This devastation and the widespread desperation felt by the population have helped nourish the growth of Islamic fundamentalism in that country.

The legacy of Stalinist betrayals in the Near East, combined with the bankruptcy of bourgeois nationalism and the desperate misery of the masses, helped create the vacuum that would eventually open the floodgates to the ascendancy of political Islam as a predominant force in the region. Political Islam, in turn, has inflamed the already pervasive communalism that has long plagued the region. Two key events in the rise of political Islam were the 1979 "Islamic Revolution" in Iran and the war in Afghanistan waged by reactionary, U.S.-backed Islamic fundamentalists against Soviet military forces that moved into that country in December 1979.

In Iran, where mass protests erupted against the dictatorial regime of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi in 1978-79, the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party had a mass base among the working class, notably the powerful and strategic oil workers, while the more left-wing guerrillaist Fedayeen attracted tens of thousands of youth to its banners. Yet these groups chained the combative working class to the reactionary Shi'ite mullahs led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Uniquely on the left internationally, we championed the proletariat's class interests against the forces of Islamic reaction. Our battle cry was: "Down With the Shah! Don't Bow to Khomeini! For Workers Revolution in Iran!"

Upon coming to power, the Khomeini regime embarked upon the mass slaughter of leftists, trade unionists and unveiled women as well as Kurds and other national minorities. As we noted in our "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program" (adopted in 1998): "The 1979 'Iranian Revolution' opened up a period of ascendant political Islam in the historically Muslim world, a development which contributed to and was powerfully reinforced by the counterrevolutionary

destruction of the Soviet Union."

In Afghanistan, reactionary Sunni *mujahedin* (holy warriors)—among them, Osama bin Laden—were armed, funded and trained by the U.S., Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to kill Soviet soldiers. The Red Army had entered the country at the request of the modernizing nationalist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) regime, in order to defend the USSR's southern flank and to prop up the besieged government. The PDPA's introduction of minimal social reforms—especially those benefiting women, such as the lowering of the bride price—had provoked a *jihād* led by the landlords, tribal chiefs and mullahs. As the CIA undertook its biggest covert operation ever in support of the *mujahedin*, Afghanistan became the front line of the imperialist crusade to destroy the Soviet Union.

We underlined that for this extremely backward country with its minuscule proletariat, progress would have to be brought in from the outside. While the bulk of the left internationally lined up with the imperialists by denouncing the Soviet "invasion," we said: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" and called to extend the gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples.

The *mujahedin* forces, who threw acid in the faces of unveiled women and murdered those who dared teach schoolgirls to read, included those who went on to found the Taliban and Al Qaeda—Washington's Frankenstein's monster. Yet Washington's alliance with murderous religious fundamentalists hardly began in Afghanistan. In 1950, Cold Warrior John Foster Dulles pointed to a "common bond" with "the religions of the East" in fighting Communism. Today in Syria, the imperialists are once again allied with Islamic reactionaries in pursuit of their great-power interests.

For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92 had a profoundly negative—albeit uneven—impact on working-class consciousness throughout the world. It also removed the central challenge to U.S. ambitions, allowing the American ruling class to project military power—not least in the Near East—and ride roughshod over anyone they perceive as standing in their way.

As Saddam Hussein and Muammar el-Qaddafi discovered to their misfortune and Assad is now learning, the imperialists have no compunction about turning on those local satraps who previously served their interests. The U.S. imperialists gave their approval when Syria under Hafez al-Assad, father of current president Bashar, intervened in the Lebanese civil war in 1976 to combat Palestinian forces. And in 1991, Syrian troops fought alongside U.S. forces in the first Gulf War against Iraq. Following the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, according to a February report by the Open Society Justice Initiative, Syria was one of the "most common destinations" in the "extraordinary rendition" program by which "terrorism" suspects were sent by the U.S. to other countries to be tortured.

Following a well-trodden path, the U.S.,



Marines in Falluja, November 2004. U.S. imperialists devastated city during occupation of Iraq.

that "the World War I borders" are melting away, and Erdogan's foreign minister has asserted that the end of the Sykes-Picot period is near.

Both sides in the communally-based Syrian civil war are deeply reactionary enemies of the working class. But in the event that the U.S. and/or European imperialists go beyond their present support to the anti-Assad forces and launch a military attack on Syria, working people in this country and internationally must stand with Syria against the imperialist forces. As Marxists, we would maintain proletarian political opposition to Assad's bloodsoaked rule. Our aim is to win workers to the understanding that predatory imperialism is the main force for reaction in the world and that the imperialists and their regional lackeys must be overthrown through international socialist revolution.

Imperialist Depredations and the Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism

There was nothing inevitable about the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and intercommunal conflict in the Near East, although these have tended to dominate political life in that region for at least a generation. At bottom, the turn to Islamism is a product of despair, conditioned by the political bankruptcy of the large Stalinist Communist parties that existed in many Arab countries in the 1940s and '50s. Despite the revolutionary aspirations of their ranks and supporters, the Communist parties of the Near East helped install bourgeois-nationalist regimes, which then

of the October Revolution of 1917, centrally the planned economy and collectivized property. As a result of the Bolshevik Revolution, the Muslim regions of the former tsarist empire—Central Asia and Azerbaijan in the Transcaucasus—had advanced from conditions even more socially and economically backward than the Near East today to modern societies in which women were no longer enslaved by the veil and education and medical care were available to all.

However, revolutionary upheavals in the Near East, exemplified by the Iraqi revolution of 1958-59, did not result in new October Revolutions. Instead, these opportunities were sacrificed on the altar of the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy's futile and treacherous pursuit of "peaceful co-existence" with imperialism. The Iraqi CP in 1958 had the overwhelming support of the multinational Iraqi working class and clearly could have taken power. Yet the Moscow Stalinists sold out the revolution in the interests of placating the U.S. And the Iraqi CP went along, putting the brakes on the movement. The CP threw its support behind the government headed by the bourgeois-nationalist officer Brigadier Qassim, who then turned on the Communists. In 1963, the reactionary, nationalist Ba'ath party, which included Saddam Hussein in its ranks, came to power and carried out a bloodbath of thousands of leftist workers using lists supplied by the CIA.

Today, Iraq, once one of the more advanced countries in the Near East and

Tehran, May 6: Iranian and Syrian students demonstrate in front of UN offices against Israeli airstrikes on Syria.



Anti-Gay Killing...

(continued from page 12)

anger by talking up measures to prevent hate crimes in the city. In light of the approaching gay pride demonstrations in June, Quinn called for more police presence in parts of Manhattan.

Gay rights activists should understand that cops—the notoriously racist and brutal NYPD, no less—are not interested in “protecting” gay, lesbian and transgender people. The historic Stonewall riots, ignited following a police raid of the Stonewall Inn, were an act of defiance against commonplace police repression. LGBT people—especially blacks, immigrants, youth and the homeless—are victims of continued harassment and cruelty from the police. Recent protests against the NYPD’s “stop and frisk” program have emphasized how gays and lesbians who are black—and thus face caste oppression based on the color of their skin—are doubly profiled and subject to police violence. Back in January, a 32-year-old black man, Jabbar Campbell, suffered a concussion and bruises from police beatings after his Brooklyn house was targeted during a gay pride party attended by transsexual and transvestite guests. Campbell, who is facing trumped up charges, has reported continued harassment by the cops.

A *New York Times* article last October on “vice” along a busy avenue in a heavily immigrant section of Queens



May 20: Rally in Greenwich Village against series of attacks on gay men, including murder of Mark Carson.

described how gays and transgender people are repeatedly profiled as prostitutes and arrested by cops. One organizer for a community-based Latino group stated, “If a crime happens, people are not going to report it, because they don’t trust the police.”

In fact, one of the reasons accurate statistics for anti-gay attacks are almost impossible to determine is that many victims do not come forward out of fear of persecution from the authorities. And when cops are not carrying out the abuse

themselves, they do a fine job ignoring or covering up the crime. When 62-year-old Queens resident and gay rights activist Louis Rispoli was found twitching on the pavement after a brutal assault last October, cops determined “no crime had been committed” and are currently obstructing an investigation into the incident. Rispoli died later from severe brain injuries.

Cops act to maintain and defend the capitalist order, from which every manner of racial and sexual oppression springs. Many LGBT activists try to exert pres-

sure on the capitalist rulers to enact “hate crimes” legislation as a way to “deter” anti-gay violence. Such laws give a false sense of protection and put another weapon in the hands of the capitalist state that will be used to terrorize minority communities.

In capitalist America—a dictatorship of a tiny minority who exploit the working masses—economic and social desperation breed vile anti-gay hostility and other bourgeois rot. Anti-black racism, together with deep-going male chauvinism and religious backwardness, has historically been used by the capitalists to divide the working class. The same rulers who are hell-bent on shredding the hard-fought gains of unions and whose cops gun down black youth and Latinos on the streets have fostered the conditions in which attacks against gays can flourish. The fates of all those subject to oppression—homosexuals, women, immigrants, black people—are completely intertwined. The working class can never be won to an understanding of its historic role as the gravedigger of capitalism without a relentless fight against all manifestations of social prejudice and backward consciousness.

It will take proletarian revolution to sweep away the system that spawned the depraved killing of Mark Carson. The Spartacist League is committed to forging the vanguard party—a Leninist tribune of the people—needed to lead the working class to that victory. Only then can we begin to build a truly egalitarian, socialist society. ■

British and French imperialists are justifying their campaign for “regime change” in Syria by singling out the Assad government for creating an “abhorrent humanitarian situation.” As in their overthrow of Libya’s Muammar el-Qaddafi in 2011, the U.S. rulers’ current campaign in support of anti-Assad forces in Syria is being carried out in the name of “democracy,” “freedom,” and “human rights.”

Striking a similar note is a statement published by the International Socialist Organization (ISO) on May 1 and signed by leading members of that organization as well as a host of liberal intellectuals and Arab nationalists. The “Global Campaign of Solidarity with the Syrian Revolution” statement hails the rebellion in Syria as a “revolution for freedom and dignity.” Such “dignity” was on display in a recently revealed video that shows one Abu Sakkar, the commander of a rebel militia fighting in Qusayr, cutting an internal organ out of the body of a dead government soldier and biting into it.

This same commander has been widely quoted calling for the slaughter of all Alawites. According to the London *Guardian* (14 May), before forming his own militia late last year, “Sakkar was a well-known member of the Farouq Brigades,” a “militia



November 2012, NYC: Protest against Israeli attack on Gaza. Spartacist League puts forward revolutionary proletarian internationalist perspective for Near East, opposing all forms of nationalism.

with mainstream leanings” that “became one of the rebels’ best resourced fighting forces” due to financing from Qatar and Saudi Arabia. One could scarcely imagine a sharper contrast between our revolutionary Marxist perspective and that of our “socialist” opponents, who look to imperialist-backed forces that welcome such a monster as a leader.

We look to the proletariat of the Near East as the force with the social power and class interest to lead all the oppressed masses in a revolutionary overthrow of their capitalist rulers. The proletariat in power, having swept away all the capitalist regimes of the region and fighting to extend socialist revolution to the imperialist heartlands, can begin to resolve in an equitable way the murderous conflicts that threaten to rip the Near East apart. Only in a socialist federation of the Near East will there be a full and equal place for all the myriad peoples of the region—Sunnis, Shi’ites and Christians as well as the Kurdish, Palestinian Arab and Israeli Jewish nations.

From North Africa to Iran, sizable proletarian concentrations have the potential power to topple the capitalist regimes that subjugate hundreds of millions of people—all under the heel of imperialism. From Egyptian textile workers to workers in the Turkish auto plants and

Iranian oil fields, the objective basis exists to forge the nucleus of revolutionary proletarian parties in the Near East. To bring to the fore the principle of international working-class unity across all national, religious and communal boundaries, Trotskyists struggle to build revolutionary workers parties throughout the Near East that will be forged in opposition to all forms of bourgeois ideology,

religious reaction and imperialism and that will resolutely defend the right of all the peoples in the region to exist. In close collaboration with their comrades in the advanced industrial countries of North America, Europe and Japan as well as elsewhere in the semicolonial world, revolutionary workers parties in the Near East will be dedicated to the struggle for socialist revolutions from North Africa to the Persian Gulf.

We have no illusions that this will be an easy task. There is a vast gulf between the workers’ present consciousness and the Marxist program of proletarian revolution. Notwithstanding the role of workers struggles in Tunisia and Egypt, the so-called “Arab Spring,” hailed by reformists internationally as a revolution, in fact was nothing of the sort, resulting in the rise of Islamist regimes. Through their own experience in struggle and the intervention of revolutionary Marxist cadre, the workers of the Near East must be won to the program of proletarian internationalism that animated the October Revolution.

The alternative to this revolutionary perspective can be seen in the charnel house that is the Near East today, with tens of thousands of dead and millions displaced just by the Syrian civil war, not to mention the enslavement of women by religious fundamentalism. In the words of the great revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg, the choices facing humanity are socialism or barbarism. ■

International Communist League Pamphlet

The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution

See Page Three

Rearming Bolshevism
A Trotskyist Critique of Germany 1923 and the Comintern.....30

International Communist League's Fifth International Conference:
Down With Executive Offices of the Capitalist State!.....56

AUSTRALIA...AUSTRIA...BELGIUM...CANADA...CHINA...FRANCE...GERMANY...IRELAND...ITALY...JAPAN...NETHERLANDS...NEW ZEALAND...POLAND...RUSSIA...SOUTH AFRICA...SWEDEN...SWITZERLAND...USA...USSR

\$2 (56 pages)

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

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

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

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

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

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

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Apt. # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ E-mail _____

1025

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

Obama's Reactionary Crusade Against Teen Birth Control

On April 26, Obama addressed a meeting of Planned Parenthood—one of the main providers of contraceptive and abortion services in the country. At the gala he intoned, “When it comes to a woman’s health, no politician should get to decide what’s best for you.” Just days after this

Young Spartacus

display of shameless hypocrisy, the White House announced on May 1 it would challenge a federal court order that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) make “emergency contraceptives available without a prescription and without point-of-sale or age restrictions within thirty days.” With its legal appeal, the Obama administration again made clear its intentions to “decide what’s best” for teenage women.

Judge Edward Korman, who made the April 5 court ruling and subsequently rejected the government motion for a stay in mid May, lambasted the Obama administration and the FDA in his rulings and in the courtroom. He noted, “The effort to convert these levonorgestrel-based contraceptives from prescription to over-the-counter status has gone on for over twelve years, even though they would be among the safest drugs available to children and adults on any drugstore shelf.” He dismissed some government arguments as “an insult to the intelligence of women.”

Ten years ago, an FDA advisory committee voted overwhelmingly to approve over-the-counter access to the morning-after pill for all women. But the FDA never put this recommendation into effect, due to political pressure from the Bush administration. Then in December 2011 the FDA ruled that the Plan B One-



Freling/Women's eNews

March 26: Women in New York City demanding unrestricted over-the-counter access to morning-after pill.

Step pill could be sold over the counter to women of all ages. But the Secretary of Health and Human Services, backed by President Obama, made the unprecedented move of immediately overruling the agency. The government’s appeal of the April 5 ruling was endorsed by anti-abortion outfits like the Susan B. Anthony List, which promotes several religious fanatics of the Republican Tea Party, like Paul Ryan and Michele Bachmann.

This administration has shown time and again that, despite not being the bizarrely “faith-based” regime it replaced, it is still beholden to religious moralism. Both administrations have been adamant that young people should not have sex, or—since everyone knows teens do it anyway—they should suffer the consequences. We say all contraception must be provided free of charge on demand, with no age or ID restrictions, no waiting

periods and no state or parental control!

For politicians committed to the moral regimentation of society, accepting the reality of teenage sex is anathema. A comment from the *New England Journal of Medicine* (12 January 2012) has been proven right many times: “Any objective review makes it clear that Plan B is more dangerous to politicians than to adolescent girls.” And the government’s interference in the sexual lives of young people is not limited to birth control and abortion. Many teens also risk seeing their adult lovers jailed and put on a sex offenders list—especially if they are gay or lesbian (see article on page 9). Government out of the bedroom!

In this case the federal court is taking the exceedingly rare action of upholding scientific progress and basic liberties for women. But it is a debilitating illusion to rely on the courts of the class enemy to champion women’s rights. For decades, the bourgeois feminists’ dependence on the capitalist courts and the ballot box has aided the attacks on abortion by demobilizing protest. Feminist organizations like NARAL Pro-Choice America and the National Organization for Women hustle the vote for Democratic presidents who will appoint Supreme Court justices that maybe, just maybe, will “keep it safe and legal” for those who can afford it. This strategy reflects their capitalist outlook and social base as spokesmen for mostly white, successful, petty-bourgeois women. For free abortion on demand!

On April 30, the FDA announced new guidelines that the White House, the FDA and the drug company Teva carefully crafted to look like a reform, while changing very little in reality. This was a

continued on page 9

Outrage Over Anti-Gay Killing in Greenwich Village

NEW YORK—Around midnight on May 17, Mark Carson, a 32-year-old gay black man, was shot in the face at point-blank range in Greenwich Village. The assailant had been following Carson and a companion down the street, taunting them with anti-gay slurs before pulling the trigger. Three days later, thousands protested at a “rally against hate” to express outrage over the killing of Carson, who was open about his sexuality and well-respected by friends and family.

At the rally, which drew an integrated crowd near the site of the murder, Spartacist League supporters distributed our article on the 1998 murder of 18-year-old gay youth Matthew Shepard in Laramie, Wyoming, which stressed how defense

of gay rights is in the interest of the whole of the working class. Much of the protesters’ anger was connected to the sense that the “safety” of the Village—home of the 1969 Stonewall rebellion that sparked the gay rights movement—had been violated. For many years, the Christopher Street area in the Village had been one of very few places where the city’s black and Latino LGBT youth could gather with some sense of security.

Anti-gay terror is not confined to the hinterlands. The media reports a doubling of attacks in New York City compared to last year. Within hours of the rally, at least two separate anti-gay attacks involving beatings in Lower Manhattan were reported. Last week, the cofounder of activist group Queer

Rising was punched in the face near Times Square after being called “f--got.”

In the era of gay marriage, when several Democrats (and some Republicans) are preaching tolerance for what is deemed an acceptable, i.e., monogamous and conservatizing, same-sex relationship, many are shocked by such blatant displays of anti-gay hatred. We support equal rights for gays while pointing out that, marriage rights or not, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people will continue to face deadly prejudice in this homophobic, class-divided society. Bigotry is not simply a result of narrow-mindedness or lack of education. The special oppression of women as well as gays is materially rooted in the entrenched norms decreed by the



Mark Carson

Facebook

sexual division of labor in the family under capitalism and enforced by religious moral codes.

Democratic Party politicians, seizing on this bigoted killing to garner votes for their candidacies, were among the organizers and speakers at the May 20 rally. Christine Quinn, who seeks to replace billionaire Michael Bloomberg and become New York City’s first openly gay mayor, attempted to placate

continued on page 11