

## Israel Out of the Occupied Territories!

# Defend Palestinians Against Zionist Onslaught on Gaza!

JULY 8—As we go to press, at least 27 Palestinians have been killed and many more wounded in Israel's latest terror bombing of its Gaza concentration camp. To those at the helm of Zionist Israel, their repeated attacks on Gaza

are just "mowing the grass," a "sort of maintenance," as a former military commander put it. Indeed, the current assault, a projected long-term offensive dubbed "Operation Protective Edge," is standard procedure for the rulers of

capitalist Israel, a Zionist garrison state founded on the mass expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland.

The pretext for the current wave of Zionist terror was the June 12 abduction of three teenage yeshiva students hitch-

hiking in the occupied West Bank and the discovery of their bodies 18 days later. Although no evidence has been revealed about who committed the killings, Israel's rulers effectively delivered a verdict of collective guilt on the Palestinian population. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) carried out more than 2,400 raids on homes, medical offices and schools and arrested some 600 Palestinians, killing at least seven, while also bombing dozens of sites in Gaza prior to the current attack. Now, the mobilization of 1,500 infantry and police reservists and plans to call up an additional 40,000 IDF reservists threaten a major bloodbath of Palestinians. Meanwhile, most of

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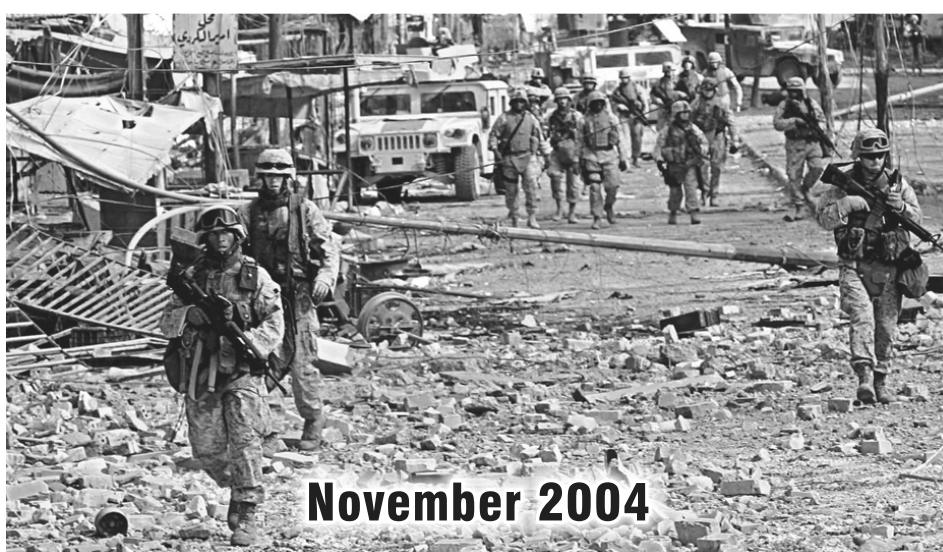
# Iraq in Flames: Legacy of U.S. Occupation



Reuters photos

JULY 6—As the fundamentalist Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) extends its hold over vast stretches of western and northwestern Iraq, Barack Obama has ordered hundreds of U.S. forces back into that country. Since the Iraqi army collapsed in the face of the ISIS offensive in early June, the U.S. president has in three separate deployments mobilized a total of 775 troops, backed up by Apache attack helicopters and unmanned aircraft. Additional warships, including the aircraft carrier USS *George H.W. Bush*, were also dispatched to the Persian Gulf. Faced with strong public opposition to sending troops back into Iraq, Obama engaged in word games, calling the troops "advisers" who "will not be returning to combat" while at the same time evoking possible air strikes.

Washington is putting itself in a position to intervene militarily on the side of the Iraqi government in a communal civil war pitting the Shi'ite-dominated regime in Baghdad against a Sunni-based insurgency that encompasses ISIS, tribal leaders and former Ba'ath Party officials. The infernal cycle of bloodletting is resulting in the effective breakup of the country, with the Shi'ites in control of the capital and southern Iraq. After Baghdad's army



November 2004

Top left: Shi'ite Mahdi Army fighters in Najaf, south of Baghdad, June 21. Top right: Sunni ISIS jihadists celebrate takeover of Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, June 12. Above: U.S. Marines, part of force that razed Falluja during U.S. occupation, November 2004.

## All U.S. Forces Out Now!

abandoned Kirkuk amid the ISIS advance last month, Kurdish *pesh merga* military forces seized that hotly contested, oil-rich city. And Kurdish leaders have taken steps to further consolidate the autonomous Kurdish region in the north.

Workers and the oppressed have no interest in a victory by one combatant or the other in the reactionary Sunni-Shi'ite civil war. However, the international working class definitely has a side

in opposing imperialist intervention in Iraq and demanding the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops and mercenaries. It is U.S. imperialism that constitutes the greatest danger to the world's working people and downtrodden.

In a repeat of scenes from the U.S. occupation, since the beginning of this year more than one million Iraqis have been driven from their homes, victims of atrocities committed by both sides

in this communal slaughter. Hundreds of thousands of Sunnis in the western Anbar province have fled the shelling and bombing of residential neighborhoods by the regime of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki. In Baghdad, where tens of thousands died during the 2006-2007 explosion of Shi'ite-Sunni slaughter set off by the U.S. occupation, Shi'ite militias are again targeting the city's remaining Sunni neighborhoods. Meanwhile, ISIS fighters overrunning Shi'ite villages in northern Iraq have carried out mass killings of the population, including women and children. The Christian population in northern Iraq, the remnant of a once substantial community, is fleeing by the thousands as ISIS bombards their villages.

The wave of communal bloodletting in Iraq was nourished by the devastating civil war in Syria, where sundry imperialist and regional powers have backed an insurgency dominated by reactionary forces, centrally from the majority Sunni Muslim population, directed against the murderous Ba'ath Party regime of Bashar al-Assad. Sunni fundamentalists, bolstered by support from U.S. allies like Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states as well as Turkey, have increasingly dominated the revolt against Assad. In January, ISIS expanded its operations from Syria into Iraq in support of a rebellion launched by Sunni tribal leaders against Maliki in Falluja and Ramadi, Anbar province's two largest cities. Harking

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Israel...

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impoverished Gaza’s ambulances will not be running due to lack of fuel and its hospitals have declared a state of emergency. *The working class internationally must stand in defense of the besieged Palestinians against the Zionist terror machine!*

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu quickly declared the Islamic fundamentalists of Hamas guilty of the killings of the three Israelis, even though Hamas, which runs Gaza, never claimed responsibility. As calculated, his pronouncement touched off a round of terror by fascistic West Bank settlers and other reactionary Jewish mobs directed against Israeli Arabs as well as Palestinians. The chauvinist frenzy culminated in the abduction and hideous murder of 16-year-old Muhammad Abu Khdeir of East Jerusalem. Seized by ultra-Zionists on July 2, the youth was later found burned to death, touching off angry protests by Palestinians in the West Bank and in some Israeli cities that continue to rage. Anger was further stoked by a brutal police attack on Muhammad’s American cousin, 15-year-old Tariq Abu Khdeir, at a protest in East Jerusalem.

The ever-expanding Zionist settlements in the West Bank have increasingly ghet-

toized the native Palestinian population, from the walls surrounding the territory to the “bypass roads” and military zones that are off-limits to them. The very existence of these settlements is a constant reminder to the Palestinians of their dispossession. *All Israeli troops and settlers out of the West Bank and East Jerusalem!*

Gaza is all but defenseless against the Zionist military juggernaut, sealed off by the sea and by its borders with Israel as well as Egypt, whose military regime is hostile to Hamas. While Hamas forces can at most launch crude rocket attacks, the Zionists are armed to the teeth, including with the Near East’s only nuclear arsenal. As Israeli forces bombed the Gaza ghetto from the air and sea, today’s *Haaretz* printed a statement by President Obama lauding the \$3 billion annual U.S. military aid to the Zionist regime for “making Israel safer” and serving to “save lives.” With breathtaking cynicism, he went on to declare his support for the Palestinians’ “right to self-determination” while intoning that any Palestinian government must be pledged to “nonviolence” and recognition of Israel! In opposing its “own” capitalist rulers and their military alliances, the U.S. working class must oppose all U.S. aid to Israel. As supporters of just causes, we Marxists do not equate the violence of the oppressed with the violence

of the oppressors.

We take a side militarily with Hamas against the Zionist terror campaign, while giving not the least political support to these Islamic reactionaries or to Palestinian bourgeois nationalism. We fight to bring the *class* axis to the fore. National emancipation for the Palestinians requires the proletarian overthrow of the Israeli capitalist rulers and also those of Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, which are home to millions of Palestinians. The Israeli Jewish and Palestinian Arab populations are interpenetrated peoples, laying rival claims to the same territory. Under capitalism, the exercise of the national rights of one necessarily comes at the expense of the right of self-determination of the other. Only in a socialist federation of the Near East can conflicting claims over land and resources

be equitably resolved, and all discrimination on the basis of language, religion and nationality be done away with.

Israel is a class-divided society, with workers exploited by the capitalist ruling class. The hard but necessary task of breaking through the chauvinism that poisons the consciousness of Jewish working people is not made any easier by the criminal, indiscriminate bombings carried out by Hamas and other Palestinian forces against Israeli civilians, which drive the Jewish population further into the arms of their rulers. What must be done is to forge revolutionary Marxist parties in Israel/Palestine and throughout the Near East, in opposition to all forms of nationalism and religious fundamentalism and committed to the struggle for socialist revolution on a world scale.■

Letter

Ida B. Wells and 1905 Teamsters Strike

5 July 2014

Dear Comrades,

In her forum on Ida B. Wells printed in WV No. 1048 (13 June), comrade Lisa Martin documents Wells’ lifelong crusade against lynch-rope terror. But the forum fails to mention that Wells was on the wrong side of the class line during an important strike battle in Chicago, where she resided in the latter part of her life. At the outbreak of the 1905 Teamsters strike in the city, the bosses had recruited thousands of scabs, many black men from the rural South, in order to foment racial hatred and smash the union. Wells actively supported the black strikebreakers, falling right into the bosses’ divide-and-rule trap.

That strike was fought by the overwhelmingly white Teamsters to defend union jobs and the basic principle of working-class solidarity. It began when Teamsters refused to make deliveries to Montgomery Ward, which was being struck by garment workers. In response, the Chicago Employers’ Association (CEA) ordered workers from all of the city’s other department stores to deliver to the struck retailer, prompting a citywide strike of some 5,000 Teamsters.

Determined to defeat the Teamsters and their tradition of honoring other unions’ job actions, the CEA organized scabs to make deliveries. Militant strikers bravely fought pitched battles with battalions of armed strikebreakers. But the hostility of the strikers toward the scabs in some cases spilled over into random anti-black violence. All together including strikers, anti-union forces and bystanders, 21 people were killed during the strike, over 400 were seriously injured and more than 1,100 were arrested. In the end, the CEA

defeated the Teamsters after 105 days.

Chicago was far from unique. Across the country, many industries at the time would not hire black people—except during strikes, as scabs. The job-trusting trade-union leadership refused to recruit and organize black workers, and many unions supported the racist color bar, which obscures the fundamental class divide between labor and capital. The president of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), Samuel Gompers, wrote shortly after the Chicago Teamsters strike ended: “If the colored man continues to lend himself to the work of tearing down what the white man has built up, a race hatred far worse than any ever known will result. Caucasian civilization will serve notice that its uplifting process is not to be interfered with in any way.”

Against this backdrop, many black leaders saw strikebreaking as a method of racial uplift. During the 1905 strike, a 1,000-person meeting was organized at a black church in Chicago to protest attacks on black scabs and denounce “Race Prejudice in the Strike.” The meeting approved a resolution that Wells had proposed that praised black strikebreakers as “men who proved their value by risking their lives to obtain work” (quoted in Stephen Norwood, *Strikebreaking & Intimidation* [2002]).

When much of basic industry in the United States was finally organized by industrial unions in the 1930s, these were forged in interracial struggle, much of it led by reds. As the Spartacist League has long insisted, black rights and union rights either go forward together or fall back separately.

Comradely,  
Jacob Zorn



TROTSKY

World War I and the Betrayal by Social Democracy

At the outbreak of World War I on 4 August 1914, the German Social Democratic Party voted to fund the war effort of its “own” ruling class. This historic betrayal of the proletariat by the largest party of the Second International was repeated by “socialists” in almost all other combatant countries. In response, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin launched a fight to break revolutionaries away from the social chauvinists

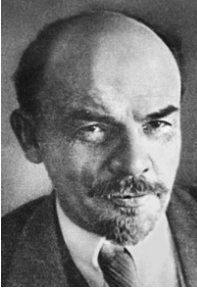
of the Second International and regroup them around a proletarian internationalist program, as expressed in the excerpt below. This sharp fight, which hammered on the need to turn the interimperialist slaughter into civil war pitting the proletariat against the capitalists, was essential in preparing the Bolshevik Party to lead the working class to power in the socialist revolution of October 1917 in Russia.

It is the duty of every socialist to conduct propaganda of the class struggle, in the army as well; work directed towards turning a war of the nations into civil war is the only socialist activity in the era of an imperialist armed conflict of the bourgeoisie of all nations. Down with mawkishly sanctimonious and fatuous appeals for “peace at any price”! Let us raise high the banner of civil war! Imperialism sets at hazard the fate of European culture: this war will soon be followed by others, unless there are a series of successful revolutions. The story about this being the “last war” is a hollow and dangerous fabrication, a piece of philistine “mythology”.... The proletarian banner of civil war will rally together, not only hundreds of thousands of class-conscious workers but millions of semi-proletarians and petty bourgeois, now deceived by chauvinism, but whom the horrors of war will not only intimidate and depress, but also enlighten, teach, arouse, organise, steel and prepare for the war against the bourgeoisie of their “own” country and “foreign” countries. And this will take place, if not today, then tomorrow, if not during the war, then after it, if not in this war then in the next one.

The Second International is dead, overcome by opportunism. Down with opportunism, and long live the Third International, purged not only of “turncoats”...but of opportunism as well.

The Second International did its share of useful preparatory work in preliminarily organising the proletarian masses during the long, “peaceful” period of the most brutal capitalist slavery and most rapid capitalist progress in the last third of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. To the Third International falls the task of organising the proletarian forces for a revolutionary onslaught against the capitalist governments, for civil war against the bourgeoisie of all countries for the capture of political power, for the triumph of socialism!

—V.I. Lenin, “The Position and Tasks of the Socialist International” (November 1914), *Collected Works*, Vol. 21



LENIN

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# Electoral Debacle for Bourgeois Nationalist PQ

## Quebec Liberals Prepare Austerity Onslaught

The following article is reprinted from Spartacist Canada No. 181 (Summer 2014), newspaper of our comrades of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste.

Barely two weeks after winning the April 7 Quebec election, Philippe Couillard's Liberal Party government began preparing a new round of austerity attacks.

**SPARTACIST** CANADA

The Liberals plan to slash nearly \$4 billion in government spending, which will mean huge cuts to medicare, education and other vital social programs. The government is also set to take a hard line in negotiations with the Common Front of 400,000 unionized public-sector workers, whose contracts expire next spring.

The Liberals returned to power less than two years after losing to the Parti Québécois [PQ] in elections held in the wake of the militant 2012 student strike. Hundreds of thousands staged mass protests during the strike, including trade unionists and other workers seeking a way to throw back incessant government attacks. The bourgeois-nationalist PQ hypocritically claimed to support the student struggle, only to launch its own austerity cuts (and tuition hikes) soon after taking office. Then last summer the PQ introduced its thoroughly racist "Charter of Quebec Values," which would have banned the wearing of prominent religious symbols anywhere in the public sector. The chief targets of this anti-immigrant, anti-woman legislation were Muslim women who wear the headscarf.

Doubling down in nationalist demagoguery, PQ leader Pauline Marois made the Charter a centrepiece of her re-election bid. The flagrantly reactionary character of the PQ's campaign was further underscored by its recruitment of Pierre Karl Péladeau as a star candidate. Péladeau, the former CEO of Québecor and Sun Media, is known as the "lockout king" for his wholesale attacks on workers at the *Journal de Montréal* and elsewhere. But Marois' gambit failed spectacularly as the PQ won only 25 percent of the vote, its worst result in more than 40 years.

The ascent of Péladeau and the PQ's abandonment of its "progressive" rhetoric brought sharp rebukes from most of the Quebec union bureaucracy, long a pillar of support for the party. Leaders of the FTQ, the largest union federation, called Péladeau's candidacy a "catastrophe" for the workers. The Montreal council of the CSN [union] federation went further, backing the left-nationalist Québec Solidaire (QS) rather than the *péquistes* [PQ members]. Denouncing Péladeau, Montreal CSN president Dominique Daigneault told the media: "It's unbelievable that the Parti Québécois, which claims to be on the left, has opened the door to him" (TVA Nouvelles, 23 March).

### CORRECTION

In "Venezuela: U.S. Imperialism Fuels Right-Wing Protests" (WV No. 1043, 4 April), we described the government of Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas as having "expropriated the petroleum and energy industries." In fact, while Cárdenas expropriated the oil industry in 1938, he did not nationalize the energy sector as a whole. For example, the electrical industry was nationalized in 1960, two decades after Cárdenas had left office.



Rathé/Le Soleil

**Quebec City, May 21: Thousands of municipal workers from across Quebec protest Liberal Party government attack on pensions.**

In contrast, former CSN presidents Gérald Larose and Marc Laviolette welcomed Péladeau in an open letter co-signed with such nationalist luminaries as former PQ premiers Jacques Parizeau and Bernard Landry. Laviolette currently leads a "left" caucus in the PQ called SPQ Libre (Trade Unionists and Progressives for a Free Quebec), which issued its own statement backing Péladeau's candidacy. After a few for-the-record criticisms of the notorious union-buster, it affirmed:

"Our fight is a fight for national liberation and, as we have frequently written, this fight by its very nature involves different social classes and social groups in a united front.

"In our history, the Parti Québécois has constituted the political rallying point for this united front."

—*Le Devoir*, 12 March

The bitter truth is that the Quebec labour tops' decades-long nationalist "united front" with the capitalist PQ has produced only disaster for the workers.

### Quebec Labour and the National Question

Quebec has a powerful working class with a long tradition of militancy and the highest unionization rate in North America. But the union bureaucrats' alliance with the PQ has politically tied the workers to their own exploiters and the capitalist profit system. The pattern is constant and repeated. A Liberal government attacks workers and the poor; the union tops channel widespread anger toward support for the PQ; the *péquistes* take over and launch their own attacks.

In the early 1980s, PQ founder René Lévesque broke strikes by the Common Front unions. In the late '90s, Lucien Bouchard took an axe to public services with his "déficit zero" drive. More recently, Landry and then Marois took their turns to enforce capitalist class rule. In every case, the PQ's attacks merely paved the way for another round of Liberal rule.

Today's austerity onslaught in Quebec is part of a global offensive by the ruling exploiters, who seek to shore up their vast profits at the expense of the poorest and most vulnerable. Workers in Quebec and across Canada desperately need united struggle against the depredations of the capitalists and their governments, whether the Harper Tories in Ottawa or in the provinces. But they are saddled with leaders who accept and defend the profit system, seeking only cosmetic reforms.

Moreover, the working class is, and has long been, deeply divided along national lines, a reflection of the historic oppression of the francophone Québécois nation

within the Anglo-dominated Canadian state. The hold of nationalism flows from and is constantly reinforced by the anti-Quebec chauvinism that runs rampant in English Canada. The unions there overwhelmingly support the right-wing social democrats of the NDP or the bourgeois federal Liberals, parties with long records of hostility to Quebec's national rights. In turn, the Quebec labour misleaders ally with the PQ and the Bloc Québécois against English Canadian domination in the name of "national solidarity."

Given the deep divisions in the working class, the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste advocates independence for Quebec. We do so as Marxist internationalists, recognizing that the creation of an independent Quebec would get the national question off the agenda and create better conditions for the workers to see that their own national capitalists are not allies but class enemies.

The capitalist media in English Canada naturally hailed the PQ defeat as a triumph for "Canadian unity." A *National Post* column (4 April) just before the vote was headlined "Call in the undertaker, Quebec separatism is dead." A week later, *Maclean's* (11 April) saluted "The epic collapse of Quebec separatism." Both cited Péladeau's fist-pump declaration that his "most profound and intimate values" were to "make Quebec a country" as the turning point in the campaign, after which the PQ's support collapsed. Certainly, many workers were repulsed by the idea of sharing "inti-

mate values" with the "lockout king." But for years now, polls show that support for sovereignty has been steady at around 40 percent, i.e., about half the francophone population, even if there is little enthusiasm for an early (and possibly losing) referendum.

The death-of-separatism refrain—*de rigueur* whenever the PQ loses an election—is echoed by parts of the reformist left. The Fightback group, for example, claims the PQ debacle showed that "Workers in Montreal are also sick and tired of this federalist-sovereignist debate" (marxist.ca, 11 April). This is not merely an ignorant analysis blind to the depth of the national divide. Fightback's article doesn't even pay lip service to the reality of Quebec's national oppression or to its democratic right to self-determination. Logically enough, Fightback also supports the "pro-Canada" social democrats of the NDP.

In its own way, the broad support for the anti-immigrant Charter of Values in francophone Quebec—especially outside cosmopolitan Montreal—testified to the continued hold of nationalism. The unions and Quebec's influential feminist organizations were split over what stance to take toward the Charter. An FTQ congress last November was so closely divided that the union was unable to take a position. And while the opposition parties opposed the PQ's draft law, they all—including Québec Solidaire—agreed on the need for some sort of discriminatory "Secular Charter" restricting religious symbols.

In fighting to build a binational, multi-racial workers party, we Marxists seek to break the workers from the mutually reinforcing grip of Anglo chauvinism and Quebec nationalism and toward a perspective of anti-capitalist class struggle. That means an unstinting fight against *all* aspects of capitalist oppression: from the national subjugation of Quebec, to the racist scapegoating of immigrants and other minorities, to attacks on Native people. The goal of such struggle must be the overthrow of the exploiting class through workers revolution, paving the way for an egalitarian socialist society in the interests of the vast majority.

### Québec Solidaire: A Populist Cul-de-Sac

This perspective is light years from that of most self-styled socialist groups in Quebec today, who support the petty-bourgeois nationalist QS with few (if any)

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### Just Out!

#### Contents Include:

- *The New Jim Crow* and Liberal Reformism  
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# For Labor/Minority Mobilizations to Crush the Fascists!

The following article originally appeared in Australasian Spartacist No. 223 (Winter 2014), newspaper of the Spartacist League of Australia, section of the International Communist League.

With extreme rightist and outright fascist parties gaining deadly ground in

**Australasian  
SPARTACIST**

countries across Europe, it is welcome news that leftists and unionists successfully repulsed the fascist and reactionary scum who dared show their faces in Brisbane and Sydney over the May Day weekend. Doubtless emboldened by the federal government's racist war on refugees and by protectionist campaigns against overseas workers, on 4 May four provocateurs from the fascistic "Party for Freedom" (PFF) attempted to join the Sydney May Day march. With signs such as "Deport 457 Visa workers," they intended to whip up race hatred at this multiracial event celebrating international workers struggle. Like the Australian Protectionist Party from which they split, and the racist xenophobic Dutch party of Geert Wilders after which they are allegedly modelled, the PFF spews vile filth, blaming Africans, Muslims and immigrants for the ills of decaying capitalist society. An article by Andy Fleming (New Matilda website, 29 January) notes that PFF founder Nick Folkes "regards African peoples as a 'failed species', and further claims peoples of the 'Third World' require sterilisation."

When comrades of the Spartacist League became aware of the PFF provocation at the march we alerted marchers in nearby union contingents, including maritime and firefighters, and argued that it was necessary to drive the scum out. Some maritime

## Australia: Protesters Spike Racist Provocations

unionists responded seriously and noted their official was dealing with the provocateurs. As anarchist youth moved to confront the fascistic PFF, including ripping away several of their placards, an MUA [maritime union] official and May Day Committee representative intervened. By this time a small crowd, among them SL supporters, had surrounded the PFF. Soon after the PFF retreated, appealing to the MUA official to escort them out as they feared for their safety. Later in the day, some marchers who had earlier argued against dealing decisively with the PFF expressed to us their satisfaction at the news that they had in fact been expelled from the march.

Two days earlier in Brisbane, fascists from the Australia First Party (AFP) and supporters of Greece's fascist Golden Dawn (GD) attempted to hold a rally outside The Greek Club near the CBD [Central Business District] followed by a march to the Greek consulate in support of jailed GD members in Greece. Notorious for frequent, deadly attacks on immigrants, minorities and leftists, the GD have been emboldened by brutal

imperialist-imposed austerity measures in Greece that have inflamed nationalism and driven many to despair. Last year, Greek hip-hop artist Pavlos Fyssas was fatally stabbed by a reputed GD supporter. As for the AFP, their current führer, Jim Saleam, has a long, documented history of fascist activity, including as a leader of National Action, spending time in jail for his role in organising the 1989 attempted assassination of Eddie Funde, the then African National Congress representative in Sydney. In December 2005, the AFP helped fuel the pogromist riot in the Sydney beachside suburb of Cronulla, where a racist mob of 5,000 rampaged through the streets carrying out chilling attacks on anyone of non-white appearance. More recently, on 26 January this year, the AFP staged a provocation at the Invasion Day Aboriginal march in Brisbane.

When 10-14 fascists, among them the reported leader of Golden Dawn in Australia, crawled out of their sewers in Brisbane on 2 May, they found themselves massively outnumbered by an angry counterdemonstration of some 150-200. This counter-rally was initiated by anar-

chists and joined by anti-racists, unionists and other leftists, including from Socialist Alliance and Trotskyist Platform. What gave the anti-fascist protest its decisive weight was the presence of a sizeable number of CFMEU construction unionists. The fascists were forced to abandon their march and instead made a hurried exit in a "maxi-taxi," to the cheers of the anti-fascist protesters. At the Greek consulate, the fascists' planned picket was again stymied by outraged protesters. And once again they were protected by a line of cops that sought to keep the anti-fascists in check.

The Spartacist League welcomes this significant defeat for the fascists. While some hold the view that these thugs should just be ignored and/or appeal to the capitalist state to intervene, we Marxists look to the independent mobilisation of the proletariat to stop the fascists. As we wrote in "For a Class-Struggle Fight Against Racist Capitalism!" (ASp No. 209, Winter 2010):

"Fascists pose a deadly threat to immigrants and minorities as well as the organisations of the working class. Thriving in the mass poverty, nationalism and racism bred by capitalism, they are paramilitary shock troops of all-sided reaction; the last line of defence of the bourgeoisie against working-class struggle. Crushing the fascists while they are small is a life and death question for the labour movement, not least its increasingly strategic immigrant component. We call for *union/minority mobilisations to stop fascist provocations*."

This perspective is linked to our struggle against the entire racist capitalist system. It is crucial to build the revolutionary vanguard party necessary to lead the exploited and oppressed in sweeping away capitalism through socialist revolution. ■

We print below the translation of a leaflet issued by our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France.

ROUEN, June 3—Last Saturday, two members of the Communist Youth were beaten up by a dozen fascist thugs. These youth were distributing leaflets in favor of free public transport when they were attacked. A passerby who tried to intervene was also assaulted. The two youth had to be hospitalized, one of them for head trauma. The attack occurred right in the city center in the afternoon. The LTF strongly condemns this assault on leftists, which shows that the fascists today think that they can act with total impunity. It is urgent to stop this scum before it is too late through mobilizations centered on the power of the organized working class, especially the unions. *An injury to one is an injury to all!*

This attack took place almost exactly

## French Trotskyists Protest Fascist Attacks in Rouen

a year after fascist skinheads murdered Clément Méric, a 19-year-old anti-fascist activist, in Paris. The fascists' violence is first directed against dark-skinned minorities, gays, Jews and anti-fascists, but their ultimate goal is the physical destruction of the workers movement.

After Clément Méric's murder, President François Hollande's interior minister Manuel Valls outlawed the fascist outfits Third Way and Nationalist Revolution-

ary Youth. We have insisted that fascists cannot be combated through government bans. As history shows, the ruling class in fact uses such laws against the workers movement. It is also futile to appeal to the *préfet* [regional government official], who is the local representative of Valls' interior ministry. Not only are the fascists stronger today than last year, but they have been emboldened by their victories in recent municipal and European Union

parliament elections; their attacks have become more and more frequent.

On the Rouen university campus, we have been raising the alarm to leftist groups about the presence of many notorious fascists there. In October 2011, fascists physically threatened a leftist concert. Chasing them away would not be difficult if union leaders and leftist groups on campus seriously sought to mobilize workers, teachers and students who are disgusted by these provocations. Fascist attacks against leftists and minorities are also increasing in other cities. On May 17, an LGBT Rainbow Flag was burnt during the night at the office of the AIDES Normandy organization in Rouen [which helps AIDS patients].

The rise of fascism in the country (as in Europe more generally) takes place in the context of all-sided attacks on the working class by the Hollande/Valls government. [Socialist Party leader] Hollande was elected president two years ago thanks especially to support from the French Communist Party, Jean-Luc Mélenchon's Left Party, the New Anti-Capitalist Party and the leadership of the CGT union federation. Lutte Ouvrière left it up to voters whether or not to go for Hollande, while advising people to vote against [former president Nicolas] Sarkozy. In contrast, we were the only ones on the left who called for not voting for Hollande: a "left" capitalist government was put in place to push through anti-working-class measures that Sarkozy's right-wing government was unable to carry out.

French capitalism is in crisis and must be "reformed" in order for it to stop losing market share to competitors like Germany. In other words, the capitalist rulers intend to make workers toil more for lower wages, while sowing racist terror to divide and rule and launching imperialist military interventions internationally. It is futile to pressure the government to secure real gains for working people or to call on the capitalist state to intervene on the side of the working class against the fascists.



Paris Normandie



France 3

**May 4: Communist Party supporters and other protesters drive fascist National Front (FN) leader Marine Le Pen (inset) from a market in working-class suburb of Rouen.**



# Cops, Crime and Socialist Alternative Kshama Sawant Greets New Seattle Police Chief

The savage racism, brutality and terror of the police are hardly news in capitalist America. But the Seattle Police Department (SPD) achieved such notoriety that two years ago it was charged by the government's top cops in the Department of Justice with "excessive" use of force and an overseer was appointed by the courts. Looking to further clean up the SPD's image, Democratic Party mayor Ed Murray announced in late June that the city council had approved the appointment of a new police chief, Kathleen O'Toole, who promised to restore public trust in the bosses' thugs in blue.

The new lady sheriff in town didn't get the vote of Seattle's much-ballyhooed "socialist" city council member, Kshama Sawant of Socialist Alternative (SAlt). But Sawant didn't stint on effusively praising O'Toole and the "tremendous work" that the Mayor's office put into the "police chief search." In her "Remarks on the Confirmation of Seattle's Police Chief" (25 June) posted on SAlt's Web site, Sawant welcomes O'Toole's expressed "commitment to really build a relationship with the community" and proposal for "a tiered approach for policing protests" in which riot police would "only be pulled out if they are absolutely necessary"! Far from any proletarian revolutionary *class* opposition to the capitalist state—the cops, courts, prisons and military—Sawant's arguments boil down to simply bartering over the amount of violence "necessary" for the cops to do their jobs as the armed guard dogs of bourgeois rule.

Indeed, many of Sawant's proposals for "reforming" the SPD parallel those put forward by O'Toole. While complaining of the "inappropriate use of force" and "negative racial biases" of the cops, Sawant herself echoes code words for bringing racist police terror down on black and Latino youth. Decrying "escalating crime" and "gang violence" in Seattle neighborhoods, she complains of "ineffective policing" and too "few officers on the beat." Tell that to those on the receiving end of racist cop violence! So what exactly was her objection to O'Toole's appointment? Sawant answers:

"Ms. O'Toole has said that she would like to run SPD like a business. By that



Reuters

**May Day 2012: Occupy Seattle protesters attacked by city cops. Inset: Socialist Alternative city councilmember Sawant praises new police chief, June 23.**

she means she wants SPD to be efficient and accountable. While I don't doubt her sincerity at all, that is troubling to me, since private businesses and corporations are NOT accountable to working people, they are accountable to the profits of a few.... The opposite is needed for a public service, for policing in alliance with the communities, for accountability, for transparency."

Wow! It would be hard to find a more chemically pure indictment of the insipid social-democratic reformism, not to mention downright bourgeois liberalism, that defines the political worldview of Socialist Alternative. The cops are the daily front-line troops defending the rule of the few whose profits are derived from the exploitation of the many. To assert that the police provide a "public service" is to argue that the capitalist state actually represents the interests of "the people" as opposed to the elementary Marxist understanding that it is nothing other than the

machinery for the violent repression of the working class, oppressed and any perceived opponent of bourgeois rule.

At SAlt's first-ever public meeting in Oakland on June 28, a Spartacist League member nailed them on Sawant's grotesque statement on the police chief, observing that it was "all in the interests of trying to give a face-lift to the capitalist state, which is really treacherous and criminal from the perspective of a revolutionary working-class movement." The audience, largely populated by "Left Coast" reformists and rad-libs whose only recent thrill was Sawant's election, normally would have simply dismissed this argument as yet another example of Spartacist "sectarianism." Not surprisingly, our intervention is all but disappeared from SAlt's own account of the meeting posted online. However, one supporter of Sawant, who expressed interest in working with SAlt, rose to say he was troubled

that "she refused to tackle the police as a class issue" and asked Socialist Alternative speaker Ty Moore to respond.

Moore, who narrowly lost his electoral bid as SAlt's candidate in Minneapolis city council elections last November, argued that "one of the most complicated votes Kshama's had to take is the question of this appointment of a police chief." Her dilemma, per Moore, was how "to win popular support for a skeptical [!] position toward the police" and "not isolate herself from people who said, well, we should give this new person a chance." He went on to caution that it would have been a terrible mistake to say something "extreme" like "we want to clear the police completely off the streets." Of course, the cops will not be cleared off the streets short of a working-class socialist revolution that shatters the capitalist state. And such a perspective is decidedly not that of these social-democratic reformists.

Nonetheless, Moore opined that he "personally" wished that Sawant's remarks on O'Toole's appointment "had been a little more hard-hitting." Such subjective feelings aside, Moore had just gone on at great length about how Sawant isn't some kind of slippery, unaccountable, electoral sellout. On the contrary, he boasted that "every major decision that Kshama makes is discussed in the elected leadership bodies of Socialist Alternative." Moore went on to contrast that with "well-meaning left Democrats" who, lacking "an organization" (!) or "cohesive tradition" (!), "find themselves facing huge pressures of co-optation."

Leaving aside this apologia for "well-meaning" representatives of the capitalist Democratic Party, Moore had it right on one account: Sawant is not some loose cannon. Her accommodation to the capitalist order is an expression of the political views of her organization and the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) to which it is affiliated. The CWI and its sections have a very "cohesive tradition" indeed on the capitalist state and its police—from promoting the myth that these racist strikebreakers for the bosses can be made "accountable to the labor movement" to arguing that they are "workers in uniform" who should be brought into the unions.

As the SL speaker argued at the Oakland meeting, SAlt's politics are "all within the framework of capitalist democracy. It teaches the working class and oppressed to think and act only within these boundaries. But democracy is a form of capitalist dictatorship, and the only way out of capitalism is to smash the capitalist state, not try to reform it." Our purpose is to shatter illusions in the capitalist state's veil of "democracy" as part of forging the revolutionary vanguard party that will fight for the class rule of the proletariat. ■

Such an approach only demoralizes and fuels cynicism among the workers who are under attack by this government every day. It also throws into the fascists' arms a layer of politically backward workers who see them as the only opposition to the discredited "UMPS system" [a contraction of "UMP," the right-wing party, and "PS," the Socialist Party].

In the 1930s Trotsky, one of the leaders of the 1917 October Revolution in Russia that got rid of the bourgeoisie and other reactionaries, wrote extensively about fascism. In *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany* he stated:

"At the moment that the 'normal' police and military resources of the bourgeois dictatorship, together with their parliamentary screens, no longer suffice to hold society in a state of equilibrium—the turn of the fascist regime arrives.

Through the fascist agency, capitalism sets in motion the masses of the crazed petty bourgeoisie, and bands of the declassed and demoralized lumpenproletariat; all the countless human beings whom finance capital itself has brought to desperation and frenzy."

So the question is how to get rid of the fascist scum. Last week in Rouen, there were two mobilizations of several hundred people, mainly high school students and other youth, against the ascendant fascists. This shows that there are layers in the population ready to fight against the fascist thugs of the National Front (FN) and its neo-Nazi auxiliaries. As such, there is a potential to spark wider mobilizations. But only the working class—those whose labor produces the capitalists' profits—has real social power and can mobilize behind them the youth and all the oppressed who are directly targeted by the fascists. Unleashing this power is how we can send the fascists back into their rat holes—and ultimately eradicate them through a working-class socialist revolution.

On May 4, the FN's Marine Le Pen tried to campaign at the market in Sotteville, a multiethnic working-class suburb of Rouen, where important railcar repair yards are located. It's a good thing that she

was chased away (under the protection of Valls' cops). But if the unions had mobilized the workers of the Sotteville railway depot, the automobile plant in nearby Cléon, the harbor and the petrochemical plants, Le Pen would not even have dared to show up. The obstacle to such a mobilization is political: the reformist misleadership of the working class. The union tops keep bleating about unity of the working class and the left. However, their purpose is not to mobilize the working class in struggle for its own interests, but to pressure the government and divert

the working class from what it should do.

We need a revolutionary vanguard party to fight against the reformists' program and put forward a proletarian internationalist perspective. Capitalism cannot be reformed. Racist terror, fascism and oppression are inherent to this system. The only solution is to put an end to this rotten system by fighting for a socialist revolution like the Russian Revolution of 1917, which would lay the ground for a society based not on the interests of the capitalist sharks but on the real needs of the masses. ■

## Spartacus Youth Club Events

### CHICAGO

**Saturday, July 19, 2 p.m.**  
**The Bourgeois Revolutions of 1848: A Marxist Analysis**

University of Illinois at Chicago  
Addams Hall, 2nd Floor, Room 200  
830 S. Halsted St.

(Take Blue Line to UIC-Halsted)

Information and readings: (312) 563-0441  
chicagosyc@sbcglobal.net

### LOS ANGELES

**Labor Must Fight for Immigrant Rights!**

**Tuesday, July 15, 7 p.m.**  
3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215, L.A.  
and

**Wednesday, July 23, 7 p.m.**  
UCLA, Kerckhoff Hall, Room 152

Information and readings: (213) 380-8239  
slsyla@sbcglobal.net

Visit the ICL Web Site: [www.icl-fi.org](http://www.icl-fi.org)

**NOTICE**  
**Workers Vanguard skips**  
**alternate issues in**  
**June, July and August.**  
**Our next issue**  
**will be dated August 8.**



## 25th Anniversary “International Communist League Launched”

SPARTACIST No. 43-44, SUMMER 1989

To mark the 25th anniversary of the founding of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), we reprint the following article from the organ of the ICL's International Executive Committee.

It is with pride tempered by a sober assessment of our responsibilities that we announce the founding of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), previously the international Spartacist tendency. The International Executive Committee took this step on 13 May 1989.

Fifty years ago, Leon Trotsky, Lenin's companion in arms and founder of the Red Army, proclaimed the creation of a new International to carry forward the authentic Leninist program abandoned and besmirched by the Communist International under the sway of J.V. Stalin and his anti-revolutionary bureaucratic clique. The ICL today fights to reforge the Fourth International.

In the shadow of the approaching second imperialist world war, Trotsky observed with increasing urgency that the objective preconditions for world proletarian revolution were overripe, but what was lacking to uproot decadent capitalism on the world scale and establish a socialist world order was an authentic revolutionary leadership at the head of the proletariat. The spread of the barbarism of fascism and the oncoming world war were not the only deadly dangers confronting the workers of the world at that crucial moment; posed also was the question of the very survival of the Soviet Union and the remaining gains of October.

Today once again, those who struggle against capitalist oppression and exploitation in what is unquestionably a period preparatory to war still confront that same excruciating crisis of leadership, but in a different situation. The contradictions of Soviet society and the problems of the Chinese revolutionary struggle, both brilliantly analyzed by Trotsky, have exploded with pent-up force. In the capitalist countries, the working class certainly lacks the level of socialist consciousness and organization it possessed in the 1920s and 1930s. The legacy of Stalin's reign of terror inside the Soviet Union, and of the repetitive betrayals of crucial revolutionary opportunities, has been the massacre of pro-Communist militants from China to Spain to Greece to Chile to Iran. Stalinism has created millions of anti-Communists and the general level of identification of human progress with the idea of communism stands at a relative low point. Yet as the workings of capitalist imperialism create millions of new subjective communists across the globe, the absence of genuinely communist leadership is acutely felt by many and the program of Leninist internationalism can be put forward with great impact.

### The Homeland of October Is in Grave Danger— All Power to Workers Soviets!

Under Gorbachev we have witnessed an attempt to “restructure” the Soviet economy in the direction of encouraging powerful forces toward capitalist restoration, combined with a “diplomacy” of apparently limitless appeasement of imperialism



Spartacist



Spartakist

Moscow, November 1991: ICL banner at Red Square rally on anniversary of Bolshevik Revolution (top). East Berlin, January 1990: Spartacist-initiated 250,000-strong protest in Treptow Park against fascist desecration of Red Army memorial (above). ICL fought against capitalist counterrevolution in Soviet Union and East Europe.

which is being paid for in blood in Afghanistan (although the *mujahedin* siege of Jalalabad has evidently been thrown back, much to the dismay of American policymakers and the Pakistani annexationists), and which has devastating implications as well for the working people from Nicaragua to Southern Africa to Indochina. Now within the USSR, national antagonisms—spurred by the recent “reforms” termed “market socialism” which encourage the richer republics to seek greater autonomy from their poorer neighbors, but also nourished by decades of the bureaucracy's Great Russian chauvinism—threaten to dismember the homeland of the October Revolution. The slogan of “free elections” and the agitation for “national independence,” particularly in the Baltic states, in this context can be nothing but a transparent cover for the program of capitalist restoration. Should nationalist unrest spread to the Ukraine, this would be extremely ominous. The anti-Semites of the Russian nativist “Pamyat” fascists have grown

dangerously, protected by elements of the bureaucracy. Today, the continued existence of the bureaucratic caste, the heirs of Stalin, constitutes a more immediate and direct threat to the conquests of October than ever before: what is posed is nothing less than civil war. *Only* through the return to the working people of their state, through the rule of *soviets* (councils of workers and soldiers), can the egalitarian consciousness (the idea that nobody should live off the exploitation of the labor of others) which remains deeply ingrained in sections of the Soviet working masses be mobilized in decisive struggle to uphold the gains of October.

The effects of what is termed “market socialism” are clearly shown in Eastern Europe. In Poland, the Stalinist bureaucracy's gross economic mismanagement and heavy-handed repressiveness opened the road for workers' grievances to be channeled into a reactionary-clericalist company union on behalf of the “free trade union” CIA along with the Western

bankers and the Vatican. Every leader of Solidarność is and has been since 1981 a traitor to the working class on behalf of NATO imperialism. Today the Polish regime and Solidarność are selling the country to the IMF and are prepared to allow the historic centers of the proletariat—the Lenin Shipyard workers, the miners of Upper Silesia—to be dismembered. The Stalinist schema of “national autarky” has come home to roost—Down with the Stalinist nationalists in Moscow and East Berlin who allow the imperialist world market to regulate the terms of trade between “fraternal socialist” trading partners; reforge the historic link between the German and Polish proletariats through proletarian political revolution!

In China, the mass outpouring of defiance in early June heralded the Chinese proletarian political revolution against the corrupt and despised Stalinist bureaucracy. What began as a student upheaval around vague demands for greater democracy was embraced by the working people of Beijing who came out into the streets seeking by their massive numbers to block the unleashing of troops against the demonstrators. Some units fraternized with the crowds, other units were brought in to shoot down the people. For the moment the Deng regime has arrested the momentum of the Beijing spring with a wave of repression which has struck first and hardest at the working class. But tremendous resentment has built up among the salaried people against the beneficiaries of “building socialism with capitalist methods”—a full-fledged NEP [New Economic Policy]. The decrepit bureaucratic caste which has opened the doors of China to massive capitalist encroachment and shamelessly allied itself with U.S. imperialism can be shattered. The urgent task which stands before the Chinese workers is the forging of an authentic communist party, an internationalist vanguard, which can lead the struggle for the unity of China under workers leadership.

Stalin and Mao and all the pygmy Stalins and Maos have done everything they could to make “communism” a code word for murdering your own people and trying to get little concessions from imperialism by being its cat's paw, as the Chinese have been America's agent militarily against Vietnam. In part, illusions in “Western democracy” among the Chinese students stem from the misidentification of militant communism with Maoism—i.e., economic primitivism and “barracks socialism,” the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. At the same time, the student protesters are singing the *Internationale*.

### Decadent Imperialism Has Been Given a Breathing Space

Today the capitalist world remains marked by the decomposition of the short-lived “American Century”: having emerged as the dominant capitalist power after the devastation of Europe and Japan in World War II, Washington's “new world order” quickly unraveled, beginning with the Chinese Revolution and America's consequent embrace of its former enemy, Japan, as a bulwark against the spread



of revolution in Asia, continuing with the Cuban Revolution and underlined by the dirty, losing war against the peasants and workers of Vietnam. Now beset by sharp trade rivalry with Japan and the demands of resurgent German imperialism to assume its “rightful” place as the leader of capitalist Europe, American capitalism has become the world’s biggest debtor nation; its essential industrial plant decays while its exports increasingly center on raw materials and agricultural products. At the same time this wounded capitalist colossus maintains its ambition to police the world from Latin America to the Persian Gulf, while possessing a nuclear arsenal which could destroy the world a hundred times over.

The resurgent bourgeois anti-Sovietism of the 1980s, inaugurated by Jimmy Carter’s hypocritical “human rights” crusade and escalated under the unashamed Cold Warriors of Reagan/Bush/Thatcher, highlighted the timidity and demoralization of the “left.” Also standing out sharply are the criminal passivity of the trade-union “leaders” who, confronted by sharp attacks on the workers’ living standards and working conditions, continue seeking to eschew the traditions of mass militant struggle which built the unions; the craven subservience of the “black elected officials” to the racist ruling-class establishment whose only program for jobless black youth, welfare mothers, the homeless amounts to genocide; and the bankruptcy of the “liberals” who have largely abandoned the pretense of concern for the workers and poor. Today the communists, whose aim is the proletarian conquest of state power and the reconstruction of society on a new basis, are at the same time the most consistent defenders of the ideals of the Enlightenment and the gains of bourgeois revolution: the right to bear arms; the separation of church and state—against the imposition of religious fundamentalism as a political program; against censorship, whether by “creationists” seeking to ban the teaching of evolution or “anti-pornography” feminists or the burning of Salman Rushdie’s “blasphemous” novel; against the racist death penalty; for the liberation of women. In Britain, where the bourgeois revolution was early and uncompleted, we say: Down with the monarchy, the aristocracy, the established churches—For a voluntary association of workers republics in the British Isles! In Japan, where the bourgeois revolution came late and from the top down, we demand the abolition of the emperor system—For a Japanese workers republic!

War and Revolution

Lenin, in his work on imperialism as the epoch of capitalist decay, showed that the system of class relations had now become (as Marx had analyzed) a barrier to the development of the productive forces, leading to interimperialist rivalry and war to redivide the world’s spoils. The first imperialist world war brought unprecedented suffering and mass slaughter of the working people and revealed most of the Socialists of the Second International to be cowardly chauvinist tails on the imperialist ambitions of their “own” ruling classes. But defeat in war can be the mother of revolution, and Lenin and the Bolsheviks, who had built up a hard revolutionary party and broken sharply from the social-patriots, were able to transcend their own inadequate theoretical formulas (which had denied the possibility of proletarian revolution in backward Russia) and thereby to lead the small but militant Russian working class to the taking of state power, on the basis of an internationalist program. This historic conquest on behalf of the workers of the world led straight to the foundation of the Third (Communist) International, which was able to expose the “socialist” pretensions of the respectable reformist gentlemen of the Second International and win the allegiance of advanced workers and subjectively revolutionary militants on every continent.

But the international revolutionary wave which swept up the working masses from Germany to Bulgaria receded and was thrown back; the failure to extend the

Russian Revolution, particularly the failure of revolution in Germany with its powerful working class, left the young Soviet workers state isolated. Trotsky summed up the causes and future implications of the playing out of that cycle of revolutionary struggle in his *Lessons of October*.

In the USSR, under conditions of extreme poverty and demoralization, with the working class decimated and exhausted by the Civil War, the way was open for a conservative bureaucracy to arise as a parasitic excrescence upon the working class. By 1924, this bureaucratic caste had acquired self-consciousness and a program: the self-contradictory dogma of “Socialism in One Country”—the antithesis of the Leninist outlook of internationalism which had animated the revolution. Predicated on the illusion that it was possible for an isolated Soviet workers state to survive and coexist with capitalist imperialism over an extended period, this program in Stalin’s hands meant the destruction of the Communist International as an instrument of revolution and ultimately led straight to the murder of all the leaders of the Bolshevik Party. In place of soviet democracy was created a monstrous apparatus of bureaucratic control: first by the Stalinized party, then by the Stalin faction, and finally by Stalin backed up by a small handful of cronies, after the purge trials wiping out all the Bolshevik Old Guard.

Beginning with Khrushchev’s 1956 “secret speech” and carried forward with new momentum under Gorbachev’s glasnost, the heirs of Stalin in the Kremlin have been forced increasingly to acknowledge the crimes of Stalin: the brutality of forced collectivization, the deportations and executions of oppositionists, the purge of the Red Army on the eve of World War II. In part a reflection of the emergence of a new generation of Soviet leaders lacking personal responsibility for Stalin’s dirty deeds, and of the growth of a new layer of Soviet academics and bureaucrats embarrassed by the transparent mendacity of official Soviet history, Gorbachev’s glasnost is mainly a response to the intractable problems of the Soviet economy. The call for “openness” in political discussion is centrally intended as an adjunct to perestroika, or “restructuring” of the economy in line with market forces, and much of the debate has as its not-so-secret agenda the refurbishing of the reputation of Nikolai Bukharin and the economic program of the Right Opposition.

Yet the Gorbachevites have been unable to prevent the raising in the discussion of the archetypical “blank space” of Soviet history: the figure of Leon Trotsky. Even as Stalin’s heirs seek to replace their discredited lies with new and different distortions, the question of Trotsky is potentially explosive, for—unlike Bukharin, Stalin’s bloc partner until 1929—Trotsky led a fight against Stalin and the epi-



Leon Trotsky, co-leader of Russian Revolution, addresses May Day rally in Moscow’s Red Square, early 1920s. Banner sends greetings to proletarians of all countries.

gones, aimed at restoring the domestic and international policies pursued by Soviet Russia to a Leninist course. The policies which Trotsky fought for from 1923 until his murder by Stalin’s assassin represented the Leninist alternative to Stalin, the “gravedigger of revolution.” Today Trotsky’s road is the only means for the survival of the Soviet Union.

Beginning in 1923, Trotsky and his supporters of the Left opposition sought to address the problems of the devastated Soviet economy through policies aimed at reconstituting an industrial proletariat and overcoming the divisions between city and countryside through a perspective of industrial growth. They predicted that Bukharin’s program of “socialism at a snail’s pace,” implemented by Stalin, would enormously strengthen forces toward capitalist restoration, eventually compelling the ruling clique to adopt measures proposed by the Left. This is what happened, but instead of the Left’s policy (voluntary collectivization with the incentive of mechanization of agriculture), Stalin’s version was the now-infamous brutal forced collectivization.

It is unquestionable that, even under bureaucratic leadership, the Soviet planned economy made tremendous progress and a modern country was forged in formerly backward Russia. Nonetheless, even after 50 years Trotsky’s brilliant analysis of the Soviet economy and society in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936) remains the touchstone for understanding Russia today. Only the Trotskyist perspective of proletarian political revolution to reverse the political dispossession of the working class by the privileged bureaucratic caste can unleash the creativity and productivity of the Soviet working people and regulate the problems (e.g., heavy industrial investment vs. consumer goods, egalitarianism vs. “material incentives,” central-

ized planning vs. local control, and the problem of quality) which have bedeviled the Soviet economy recurringly and have re-emerged in sharpened form today.

Rejecting the suicidal dogma of “Socialism in One Country,” the Left oppositionists in the 1920s struggled to reassert the perspective of international extension of the revolution as the only effective answer to the isolation and capitalist encirclement of the first workers state. Events in China, where Stalin’s opportunistic subordination of the Communists to the treacherous bourgeois-nationalist Kuomintang of Chiang Kai-shek led to the beheading of a powerful revolutionary struggle, confirmed Trotsky’s warnings. But while some of Trotsky’s cothinkers believed this vindication would lead to gains for the Left, Trotsky observed that whereas a successful Chinese revolution would have increased the class consciousness and confidence of the Russian and international proletariat, the setback of revolutionary struggle would only strengthen Stalin’s hold.

The International Left Opposition, constituted in 1930, after Trotsky had been exiled from the USSR, considered itself a forcibly externalized faction fighting to return the Third International to a revolutionary course. But when Hitler’s Nazis were coming to power in Germany in 1933—based on the bourgeoisie’s fear of revolution by the powerful, pro-socialist German working class—the Stalinists refused to fight. Nor did this disaster precipitate any fundamental struggle within the Communist Parties internationally. The Trotskyists declared that the Third International could not be reformed. Especially with the promulgation in 1935 of the “People’s Front” policy—the systematic perspective of an alliance with the parties of so-called “democratic” imperialism—the conclusion was inescapable: there was no place for revolutionists in the Stalinist Communist Parties. In place of Lenin’s revolutionary International had been consolidated a powerful anti-revolutionary apparatus as a new obstacle to revolution, more disciplined and effective than the old Social Democracy. The false identification of Stalinism with Bolshevism provided Stalin with dedicated political agents throughout the world; only Stalin and perhaps a half-dozen cronies (who these were changed over time) knew what it was all about. Millions who loyally carried out his dictates, up to and including the murder of Trotskyists, believed all the while that they were fighting for socialism.

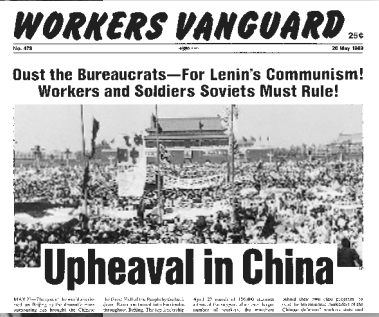
In 1933, the Trotskyists constituted themselves as the International Communist League (Bolshevik-Leninist) in recognition of the imperative need for an authentically communist new International, the Fourth International. Trotsky rightly foresaw that the menace of German fascism would lead in a straight line to war against the Soviet Union. As the interimperialist rivalries and alignments of the upcoming war took shape, the Trotskyists struggled against time to break the Stalinists’ hold over the advanced workers. The Fourth International was founded in 1938 on the

continued on page 8



Reuters

Tiananmen Square, May 1989: Workers join with student protesters, posing possibility of proletarian political revolution. Inset: 26 May 1989 issue of *Workers Vanguard*.





ICL Launched...
(continued from page 7)

basis of the document, The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International (the Transitional Program), and the perspective put forward in “War and the Fourth International” (1934) of uncompromising revolutionary defeatism toward all imperialist combatants, including those aligned with the USSR, combined with revolutionary defensism of the Soviet degenerated workers state.

The launching of the Fourth International was opposed by some, like Isaac Deutscher, who argued it was premature. Trotsky insisted that, on the contrary, the second imperialist world war would, like the first, provoke social convulsion throughout the capitalist world and a new wave of international revolutionary struggles. And he predicted that the brittle system of Stalinist rule in the USSR, which had arisen as an accommodation to the breathing space for the imperialist world order secured by the failure of the post-WWI revolutionary wave, would itself crack under the impact of the new world war or soon thereafter.

The validity of Trotsky’s predictions was in fact confirmed by the Red Army’s initial collapse in the face of Hitler’s invasion, as well as by the turbulent social conditions in Western Europe at the war’s end. In Italy and Greece, naked treachery by the Stalinists was needed to militarily and politically disarm the leftist Resistance forces and hand power back to the capitalist class (however, Tito’s partisans in Yugoslavia refused to commit suicide—they led a peasant-based indigenous revolution to victory and established a bureaucratically deformed workers state). In France the Stalinists endorsed “national reconstruction” to re-establish a stable bourgeois regime. Trotsky’s insistence on the need for revolutionary leadership was tragically confirmed by the results of its absence: the Stalinists, who emerged stronger than before in Italy and France based on their resistance to the Nazis, were successful in deflecting revolutionary struggle.

Central to that outcome was Stalin’s success in putting over the lie that World War II in the Allied imperialist nations was a struggle of liberation—that it was a great battle against fascism and for a better world. In the context of the mass popular revulsion against fascism, Stalin’s policy of the Popular Front—the alliance with “democratic” imperialism—prevented the growth of mass antiwar sentiment paralleling the massive radicalization of World

War I. The lie was successful; a war fought so that U.S. imperialism could emerge as the predominant imperialist power, the capitalist “world policeman” which rained death down on Vietnam for two decades after Dien Bien Phu, was popularly accepted as a war of the people against fascism.

Nonetheless the victory of the Anglo-American imperialist bloc was conditional. It was the Red Army which had smashed Hitler’s Wehrmacht; moreover, Hitler’s East European puppets had all made a mad dash for the nearest American headquarters, leaving behind a power vacuum which the occupying Soviet army quickly filled. The victorious imperialists had to divide Europe with Stalin.

The war devastated the small forces of the Fourth International—having geared up for battle against fascism and war, they were in effect militarily defeated. The physical obliteration of the Left Opposition in the USSR was completed by the assassination of Trotsky in Mexico by a Stalinist agent in 1940. Large numbers of Trotskyist cadre in Europe and Asia were wiped out by war and repression. The decimation of the most promising young Trotskyist leaders was a factor in the emergence of a revisionist current within the FI in the early 1950s. So was the passivity of the American Socialist Workers Party, a relatively strong party nourished by close collaboration with Trotsky, and located in a country insulated from the real carnage of the world war.

The revisionist current, led by the impressionist Michel Pablo, abandoned the perspective of workers revolutions in order to become for a time entrists into and political tails of the CPs. Worshiping the accomplished fact of Stalinism’s continued existence, they had decided it would endure perhaps for “centuries” and they therefore decided that a “new world reality” would compel it to play a “roughly revolutionary” role, obviating the need for Trotskyist parties. Within a couple of years, Russian tanks were crushing the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. Today it is very clear that the CPs play no such revolutionary role in the world, while the bureaucratic caste of Stalin and his heirs has brought the Soviet Union itself to the threat of civil war, and an incipient political revolution was provoked in China. Trotsky’s expectation of a terminal crisis of Stalinism is as alive as today’s headlines.

Today the representatives of the revisionist current—having passed through a period of vicarious guerrillaist/pro-Stalinist enthusiasm which included hailing the massacre of the Vietnamese



The continuity of Bolshevism: the Bulletin of the Opposition (Bolshevik-Leninist) (1936); first issue of the American SWP’s Militant (1928); Quatrième Internationale (1938), journal of the French Trotskyists; first issue of Spartacist (1964).

Trotskyists, then having gone for “Eurocommunism” and Soviet dissidents, and in a big way for the Solidarność devotees of Marshal Pilsudski (the bonapartist founder of modern capitalist Poland)—are in a position to do some harm as vociferous apologists of those demanding “national liberation” for the Baltic republics. In their mouth, “Trotskyism” is made out to be some kind of latter-day left social democracy.

The bourgeoisie is celebrating in anticipation of the “end of Communism.” The Stalinist bureaucracies have indeed

reached the point of terminal crisis. But their crisis is because they are opposed to everything communism stands for. The national antagonisms in the Soviet Union, the revolt in China, arise in response to “market socialist” policies that are counterposed to centralized socialist planning. The bureaucratic stranglehold over political and cultural life, the appeasement that has emboldened imperialism—these are not communism, but its antithesis.

An International Program Mandates International Organization

“By its very nature opportunism is nationalistic, since it rests on the local and temporary needs of the proletariat and not on its historical tasks. Opportunists find international control intolerable and they reduce their international ties as much as possible to harmless formalities...on the proviso that each group does not hinder the others from conducting an opportunist policy to its own national taste.... International unity is not a decorative facade for us, but the very axis of our theoretical views and our policy” (Leon Trotsky, “Defense of the Soviet Republic and the Opposition,” 7 September 1929).

From the time of our tendency’s inception as a left opposition within the Socialist Workers Party of the United States in the early 1960s, we have recognized that national isolation must in short order destroy any subjectively revolutionary formation, not least one subjected to the pressures of operating in the heartland of world imperialism, the United States. We stand proudly on our record of 25 years of struggle for authentic Trotskyism and are working on documenting it archivally and historically. In January 1974 an interim Conference centered on European work and perspectives, with participation of comrades from seven countries, was held in Germany. The document which formed the programmatic basis for the Conference accepted the “responsibility to struggle actively for the constitution as soon as possible of a democratic-centralist international Spartacist tendency.”

In July 1974 the “Declaration for the Organizing of an International Trotskyist Tendency” announced the constitution of a nucleus for the early crystallization of the international Spartacist tendency, to be governed under the principle of international democratic centralism. The document sharply attacked the federalist practices of competitors claiming the mantle of Trotskyism, noting that Pablo’s political heirs of the “United Secretariat” and the Healyite “International Committee” “have chronically mocked the principles of internationalism and of Bolshevik democratic centralism as their different national groups or nationally-based factions have gone their own way—ultimately in response to the pressures of their own ruling classes.”

American Revisionists and the Voorhis Act

In particular the “Declaration for the Organizing of an International Trotskyist Tendency” noted the revisionists’ invocation of the U.S. government’s Voorhis Act as a convenient excuse for anti-internationalism. The Voorhis Act, passed in 1940, sought to massively inhibit international political affiliation through “registration” requirements intended to paralyze political organizations. Already in 1953, when the SWP was still adhering to “orthodox Trotskyism” but shrinking from waging an aggressive international fight against Pablo, they cited the Voorhis Act to justify their passivity in the international arena which had facilitated the rise of impatient young impressionists like Pablo: in his May 1953 speech, “Internationalism and the SWP,” the party’s leader, James P. Cannon, said that after 1940 “We no longer belonged to the Fourth International because the Voorhis law outlawed international connections. Our role, therefore, could only be advisory and consultative” (Speeches to the Party).

Our 1974 “Declaration” charged: “The ‘Voorhis Act’ with its patently unconstitutional and contradictory provisions has

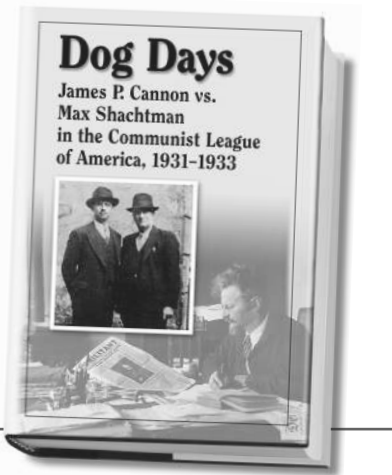
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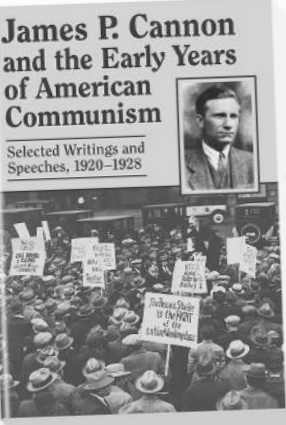


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never been used by the government—only the revisionists.” We cited the United Secretariat’s evasion of our appeal against expulsion from the Socialist Workers Party: the USec’s Pierre Frank replied to us on 28 May 1965: “...we call your attention first of all to the fact that the Fourth International has no organizational connection with the Socialist Workers party and consequently has no jurisdiction in a problem such as you raise.”

Our 1974 “Declaration” also quoted, from a 1974 SWP internal bulletin, a particularly explicit SWP formula for nationally limited political responsibility:

“The Socialist Workers Party proclaims its fraternal solidarity with the Fourth International but is prevented by reactionary legislation from affiliating to it. All political activities of members of the SWP are decided upon by the democratically elected national leadership bodies of the SWP and by the local and branch units of the party.... There are no other bodies whose decisions are binding on the SWP or its members.”

Our document cited as well the assertion of national autonomy by the sinister “International Committee” of Gerry Healy, whose American publicist, Tim Wohlforth, wrote in his 1972 pamphlet, “Revisionism in Crisis”:

“With the passing of the Voorhis Act in 1940 the SWP was barred from membership in the Fourth International by law. Ever since that time the SWP has not been able to be an affiliate of the Fourth International. So today its relationship to the United Secretariat is one of political solidarity just as the Workers’ League stands in political solidarity with the International Committee.”

And we quoted our response to Healy in 1966 when he sought to suppress an opponent’s pamphlet by claiming it would render his U.S. supporters as well as ourselves vulnerable to the Voorhis Act:

“The Voorhis Act is a *paper tiger*—never used against anyone and patently unconstitutional. For the Justice Department to start proceedings against a small group like ours...would make the government a laughing stock, and Healy knows this. He is aware that for years the SWP has hidden behind this very act to defend its own federalist idea of an International.”

The first delegated international conference of the international Spartacist tendency was held in Britain in 1979. Over the following decade, the development of the sections, particularly in Europe, and their cohering of leaderships has become



M.S. Nappelbaum

V.I. Lenin in the presidium of the First Congress of the Communist (Third) International, March 1919, Moscow.

an increasingly important component in shaping the international tendency. Now looking back at the pressures to which a decade of Reaganite bourgeois reaction has subjected our American organization, we must believe that if our tendency had not achieved significant international extension, the SL/U.S. would have become an eccentric and disintegrating American sect.

**For Revolutionary Regroupments—  
For Lenin’s Communism!**

Today, our small forces confront very high stakes. The achievements of the international Spartacist tendency, now the ICL, are modest: our militant labor/black mobilizations against fascist provocations in the United States—an expression of our consistent understanding that the fight against racial oppression is key to the American workers revolution—have been warmly greeted, as have other legal and social defense initiatives of the Partisan Defense Committee and cothinkers internationally; we have protested every move by U.S. imperialism against the Latin American masses, and raised funds for Nicaragua; among some layers of the Communist movement in West Europe we have become known as “the Trotskyists who defend the Soviet Union”; our forthright championing of the Soviet interven-

tion in Afghanistan, under the slogan, “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan—Extend Social Gains of October to Afghan Peoples,” was grudgingly admired by elements of the Western CPs which were seeking to resist the “Eurocommunist” drift toward greater social-democratic accommodation with one’s “own” ruling class. Recently, our offer of an international brigade to fight the CIA’s *mujahedin* “holy warriors” after Gorbachev’s cowardly withdrawal and, when that offer was declined, our publicity and fund-raising campaign for the civilian victims of Jalalabad met with surprising support from women and from Muslim immigrants and other minorities in many countries, as well as among Stalinist milieus. Our defense of the program of “permanent revolution” for those vast areas of the world deformed by imperialist domination—i.e., that the proletariat, independent of the weak and cowardly bourgeoisie and counterposing a vision of social emancipation to the ideologies of nationalism (particularly the nationalism of the majority), must take power to achieve even those democratic tasks formerly associated with bourgeois revolutions—has won us a hearing among oppressed national minorities.

Revolutionary regroupments on the program of Leninist internationalism are the means to resolve the disproportion between our small forces and our task.

The heirs of Stalin manifestly lack the capacity to defend the Soviet power, of which they have been simultaneously the parasitic defender and the counterrevolutionary disorganizer for 65 years. Yet to the same measure that they have brought “communism” into disrepute thanks to the crimes they have committed in its name, they have also reduced their ability to manipulate the allegiance of dedicated pro-Communist workers throughout the world. No longer can a Stalin and his half-dozen conscious accomplices wield “monolithic” parties as instruments of class-collaborationist treason in the name of “building socialism.”

We take our stand on the authentic communist tradition of the Bolsheviks who made the Russian Revolution. We choose the communism that had Lenin as its greatest teacher in the imperialist epoch. We choose the communism of Lenin’s comrade Trotsky, who beginning as early as 1923 understood the main lines of what needed to be done. We choose the communism that Stalin utterly betrayed as he deliberately destroyed the Third International. We choose the communism of a new Fourth International that will do away once and for all with the exploitation of man by man and establish a socialist society based on a new vision of the continual expansion of human freedom in all spheres: in politics, economics, culture and in every aspect of personal life.

We must believe that, failing sudden working-class upsurge against the conditions of capitalist decay, the reforging of a communist Fourth International, built of authentic communist parties on every continent, will be arduous and often dangerous. But this is the only road forward for all of humanity. Yet as we seek to bring this program to bear among the world’s workers and oppressed, we must recognize that the possession of the technology of nuclear holocaust by an irrational imperialist ruling class foreshortens the possibilities: we probably do not have much time.

But experience, not least bitter negative experience, can also be a powerful and accelerating teacher. We had better follow the precepts and practices of such comrades as Lenin and Trotsky. Thus we could cut short by months or years the time required for the necessary rearmament of the communist movement. ■

**South Africa...**  
*(continued from page 12)*

everyone.” Although falling short of the union’s R12,500 demand for entry-level workers, the wage increase, as one miner remarked, was “the highest in the history of the mining industry in South Africa” (Johannesburg *Star*, 16 June). The lowest-paid workers got the highest percentage increase (13 percent), with 8 percent going to better-paid layers. While South Africa remains one of the most unequal societies in the world, the strike settlement is seen as a significant step in denting the apartheid wage gap, or at least putting it on the agenda again. In his recent state of the nation address, South African president Jacob Zuma of the African National Congress (ANC) acknowledged the need for his government to consider setting a minimum wage.

Starving strikers into submission was the main strategy of the mine bosses, who stockpiled enough platinum to last eight weeks. But showing iron determination, the workers held out longer, at a cost of huge personal suffering. AMCU appealed for unions in Brazil and the U.S. to refuse to handle South African platinum and set up a strike fund to help their members sustain themselves. We noted in “Victory to South African Platinum Miners!” (WV No. 1046, 16 May): “A crucial ally in any fight against the mine owners is the working class in the U.S. and Britain, where most of these mining companies are headquartered, as well as in Germany and other countries where platinum is used in auto production.”

The Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organisation associated with the Spartacist League/U.S.—and other of the ICL’s fraternal defense organisations participated in an international solidarity campaign, raising donations for the strike fund. Countries where unions were approached include the U.S., Britain, Canada, Australia and Greece. International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 6 in San Francisco donated \$1,000, as did the Bay Area’s International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10, while the Australian Fire Brigade Employees’ Union contributed A\$400 (\$375).

A May 16 IBEW Local 6 solidarity letter noted that the union has “not forgotten” the cops’ slaughter of 34 striking Lonmin miners at Marikana in August 2012. It also denounced the bosses’ attempt to bypass AMCU and approach the miners directly to end the recent strike. Direct responsibility for the Marikana massacre lies with the Tripartite Alliance government—comprising the bourgeois-nationalist ANC,

the Stalinist-derived South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)—which brutally enforces neo-apartheid capitalism 20 years after the end of legal apartheid. Most platinum miners left the COSATU-affiliated National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in 2012 in protest against the betrayals committed by their leaders and joined AMCU.

In the face of AMCU members celebrating their hard-earned victory, SACP general secretary Blade Nzimande lashed out, declaring: “The strike was disastrous, and workers will not recover from the five months lost” (*The New Age*, 3 July). As a spokesman for neo-apartheid capitalist rule, Nzimande’s worry is that the victory of the miners will help spur further class struggle, as in 2012. The week after the AMCU settlement, 220,000 members of the National Union of Metalworkers, a

COSATU affiliate, went on strike in the steel and engineering sectors. In the platinum mines, the bosses’ threats of mechanisation to shed jobs, their attempt to get a no-strike guarantee from AMCU for the duration of the contract and their demand for a “productivity agreement” indicate that the fight is far from over.

The aspirations of the mainly black working class, and all the impoverished urban and rural masses, for freedom and equality cannot be fulfilled under capitalism but require workers revolution to overthrow the capitalist state and expropriate the bourgeoisie. The SSA fights to forge a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party to lead the struggle for a black-centred workers government and a socialist federation of Southern Africa. Necessary to this perspective is to link up with workers revolutions in the imperialist centres, laying the basis for a world socialist economy. ■

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# Iraq...

(continued from page 1)

back to the formation of Islamic states starting in the seventh century, ISIS celebrated its recent gains by proclaiming a “caliphate” extending from its bastion in northern Syria across the extensive tracts that it controls in Iraq.

The U.S. campaign to topple Assad has been driven in no small part by Washington’s longstanding hostility toward Iran, a key ally of Syria. Yet by installing a Shi’ite-dominated government in Baghdad, the U.S. occupiers ended up handing Iran great influence in Iraq. With the backing of Tehran, Maliki has turned a deaf ear to pleas from Washington that he cede power to a more “inclusive” government coalition. Nonetheless, across Syria’s increasingly meaningless border with Iraq, the U.S. finds itself supporting the same side as Damascus and Tehran. As ISIS forces approached Baghdad, Iran rushed daily arms shipments to the Maliki regime and deployed Revolutionary Guard forces to join the fight, while Syrian jets have bombed Sunni positions inside Iraq.

The civil wars in Syria and Iraq are hot spots in a years-long regional conflagration that threatens to keep widening, with ISIS vowing to extend its military operations into Lebanon and Jordan. Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged support to Jordan if ISIS crossed into that country. Iran has massed troops on the Iran-Iraq border. Even Saudi Arabia deployed 30,000 troops to its border with Iraq, concerned that the caliphate declared by the Frankenstein’s monster that it helped create might find support among the tribes in its northern region, which have links to the areas of Syria and Iraq now controlled by ISIS.

The large-scale, ongoing bloodshed in the Near East, and the promise of more, has the bourgeois media in the U.S. pointing the finger at Islam’s centuries-old sectarian rifts. In reality, the main culprit is the history of imperialist divide and rule of Iraq and the rest of the region by the European powers and more recently the U.S. As we wrote at the time, the U.S. occupation threatened “the trisection of Iraq into Sunni, Shi’ite and Kurdish sectors, with battles to come over the possession of its oil wealth” (WV No. 882, 8 December 2006). With U.S. forces today still in Afghanistan, which is now considered the longest war in U.S. history, Washington is threatening to renew imperialist depredations in Iraq.

In opposition to the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, we have repeatedly stressed the need for class struggle against the U.S. capitalist rulers at home in defense of those neocolonial countries. Our revolutionary perspective stands in stark contrast to that of the reformist left. These self-styled socialists aspired to build liberal antiwar coalitions designed to appeal to Democratic Party politicians who saw the Iraq quagmire as a losing proposition for U.S. imperialism. As such, the various coalitions refused to take a side in defense of Iraq and Afghanistan against imperialist attack and beat the drums for “Anybody but Bush!”

Democrats and Republicans may differ over which tactics are most effective in pursuing the interests of U.S. imperialism, but they are both bourgeois parties that defend the interests of the capitalist ruling class. The nightmare inflicted on the Iraqi peoples was a hallmark of successive administrations under both parties: George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Obama. As Hillary Clinton gears up for a possible 2016 presidential run, she has embraced neoconservatives like Robert Kagan who were instrumental in selling the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

By sowing the illusion that Democrats in office can be pressured to carry out a humanitarian foreign policy, the reformists act to retard the political consciousness of workers and radical-minded youth. The truth is that military depredations are part of the “normal” workings of imperialism, the profit-driven capitalist

system in its epoch of decay in which the advanced industrial powers compete globally for control of markets, raw materials and access to cheap labor. As the leading capitalist power, the U.S. will persist in its efforts to dominate the Near East and act as the world’s “top cop.”

The ravages of U.S. imperialism abroad are reflected domestically in grinding poverty, racial oppression and intensified exploitation of labor by capital. The U.S. working class must be won to the understanding that it has the social power and interest to eradicate capitalist imperialism and the wars this system breeds. What is necessary is the forging of a revolutionary workers party that fights to overthrow the capitalist system through socialist revolution.

## Bitter Fruit of Imperialist Divide and Rule

Once one of the more advanced countries in the Near East and a regional cultural center, Iraq was laid waste by over a decade of U.S.-dictated starvation sanc-



**San Francisco, February 2003: Spartacist contingent stood out sharply from pro-Democratic Party pressure politics of antiwar protest organizers.**

tions, two devastating wars and the eight-year military occupation of that country. The arrogant American ruling class viewed its military superiority as a guarantee that it could defeat any conceivable enemy at any time. All that was needed to put Iraq directly under its thumb was enough firepower deployed with sufficient savagery. The U.S. and allied powers unleashed mass murder, indiscriminate terror and torture on a scale far exceeding that employed by Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi strongman they replaced. To buttress their rule, the U.S. imperialists systematically played off sectors of the Iraqi population against each other, playing divide and rule.

Following the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the U.S. occupiers moved quickly to purge former members of Hussein’s Ba’ath Party from government jobs. That act largely removed Sunnis from the state administration and helped trigger a communal-based Sunni rebellion. The U.S. mobilized Shi’ite militias and the Kurdish *pesh merga* to help crush Sunni Arab insurgents in Falluja in 2004 as that city was leveled. Following elections in 2005, a communal-based system of power sharing was set up along the lines of the confessional arrangement in Lebanon. Under this unwritten agreement, the Iraqi prime minister is a Shi’ite, the largely ceremonial president is a Kurd, and the speaker of parliament is a Sunni. This served as a template for setting up puppet governments dominated by Shi’ite—and to a lesser extent Kurdish—parties at the expense of the minority Sunni Arabs.

In 2006, the U.S. occupation authorities installed Maliki as their quisling prime minister (and in 2010 would again support his bid for the office). He oversaw a wave of anti-Sunni terror carried out by the overwhelmingly Shi’ite army and police backed up by Shi’ite death squads. Following the withdrawal of U.S. combat troops in December 2011, the ongoing communal conflict that had been fostered under the occupation again escalated. Moves by Maliki against prominent Sunni political figures touched off widespread Sunni protests. In April 2013, government troops attacked a protest encampment in the northern city of Hawija, killing at least 44 people. Thousands of

Sunni and Shi’ite civilians perished in the slaughter that followed. In January, Maliki’s troops launched an artillery onslaught against Falluja and Ramadi. The Sunni tribal chiefs, who during George W. Bush’s famous 2007 troop “surge” had sided with the U.S. against Al Qaeda, welcomed back those same fundamentalist forces, now based in Syria.

No longer an Al Qaeda affiliate, ISIS (which recently renamed itself the Islamic State) has posted a video on its website titled *End of Sykes-Picot*. This is a reference to the secret agreement by which Britain and France toward the end of World War I agreed to divide up the spoils of their impending victory over the Ottoman Empire. For the reactionaries of ISIS, the destruction of that Turkish empire marked the end of the last caliphate, a world to which they aspire to return. In fact, the colonial division of the Ottoman Empire, out of which Iraq issued, retains significance today precisely because it set the stage for the reactionary communal conflagration that is erupting across the

Near East. In turn, the deepening sectarian bloodshed in Iraq underlines the fact that it is not a nation but rather a patchwork of different peoples and ethnicities—primarily Shi’ite Arabs, Sunni Arabs and Kurds.

From the mid-19th century start of their direct intervention in the Levant region, the European powers set various nationalities, ethnic groups and sects against each other. France sought to profit from its *amitié traditionnelle* with the Christian Maronites, who originated in Syria in a seventh-century split from the Eastern church of Byzantium. The British posed as the benefactors of the Druze, a tenth-century offshoot of Shi’ism, and tsarist Russia extended protection to the Orthodox Christians. In 1860, a massive civil war between Maronites and Druze was sparked by a Maronite peasant rebellion in which the feudal estates were seized, the land distributed and a peasant commonwealth proclaimed. On the eve of French military intervention into that war, Karl Marx wrote in the *New York Daily Tribune* (11 August 1860):

“The conspirators of Petersburg and Paris had, however, in case their temptations of Prussia should fail, kept in reserve the thrilling incident of the Syrian massacres, to be followed by a French intervention which...would open the back door of a general European war. In respect to England I will only add, that, in 1841 Lord Palmerston furnished the Druses with the arms they kept ever since, and that, in 1846, by a convention with the Czar Nicholas, he abolished, in point of fact, the Turkish sway that curbed the wild tribes of the Lebanon, and stipulated for them a quasi-independence which, in the run of time, and under the proper management of foreign plotters, could only beget a harvest of blood.”

Later, the “conspirators of Petersburg and Paris” combined with the British to carve up the Levant, as well as the rest of the crumbling Ottoman Empire, in the 1916 Sykes-Picot treaty. France took Syria (including modern Lebanon) for itself while Britain acquired Jordan and Palestine—all against the wishes of their inhabitants. The publication of the treaty by the newly established Soviet workers state in late 1917 exposed the imperialist intrigues and had an electrifying effect, helping to spark a series of national revolts

and popular uprisings across the region.

In the French share of the dismembered Ottoman Empire, Paris created a “Greater Lebanon” by incorporating large Muslim areas together with traditional Maronite strongholds in the Mount Lebanon range. As a result, the Maronites and other, less numerous, Christian sects slightly outnumbered and dominated Muslims. In Syria, the imperialists promoted the Alawites to lord it over the predominantly Sunni Muslim population (see “Syrian Civil War: Legacy of Imperialist Divide-and-Rule,” WV No. 1009, 28 September 2012).

The Kurds were also promised their own state, albeit a truncated one, in the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres. But they never got even that deformed expression of national self-determination. By 1920, it was becoming clear that the former Ottoman *vilayet* (province) of Mosul, which had been assigned to France under the Sykes-Picot treaty, had much more oil than was originally thought. So Britain decided to keep southern Kurdistan by incorporating it into a newly created country called Iraq, which itself basically corresponded to the concessions of the British-controlled Turkish Petroleum Company. The state functionaries and military officers of the majority Shi’ite country set up by the British colonialists were exclusively Sunni.

In 1919, the Kurds in northern Iraq rose in revolt against the British overseers. The British brutally crushed the rebellion. The following year, the Shi’ites of southern Iraq rebelled, killing or wounding some 2,500 troops deployed by the British before the revolt was drowned in blood. Anticipating by almost 70 years Saddam Hussein’s use of chemical weapons against Iraqi Kurds, Winston Churchill, at the time British war secretary, clamored for dropping mustard gas bombs on the Iraqi rebels. It was decided instead to bombard them with poison-gas artillery shells.

## Lessons of 1958 Iraqi Revolution

It is a sign of despair that the most prominent voices in the Near East calling to undo Sykes-Picot today are religious bigots who aim to crush those who do not worship their preferred deity in their prescribed way. That has not always been the case, and it will not remain so indefinitely.

We base ourselves programmatically on the experience of V.I. Lenin’s Bolshevik Party that led the 1917 Russian Revolution, which had an enormous impact on the Near East. But well before mass Communist parties (CPs) were able to take root in the area, a conservative bureaucratic caste under Stalin had usurped political power in the Soviet workers state. This ruling bureaucracy repudiated the Bolshevik program of international socialist revolution in favor of “building socialism in one country” and its corollary, “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism. In the Near East as elsewhere in the colonial world, this outlook was expressed in the espousal of “two-stage revolution,” which meant support to a supposedly progressive wing of the bourgeoisie while indefinitely postponing the proletarian revolution.

Nonetheless, the large Stalinist Communist parties that emerged in the mid 1930s and ’40s in many Arab countries attracted the most class-conscious workers and radical intellectuals. Typically, these CPs were either founded by or based heavily on minorities. The various Egyptian communist groups were all formed by Egyptian Jews. The Iraqi CP had Kurds and Jews in its leadership (see “Near East, 1950s: Permanent Revolution vs. Bourgeois Nationalism,” WV Nos. 740 and 741, 25 August and 8 September 2000).

There is a rich tradition of working-class struggle in the Near East, whose highest point was the Iraqi revolution of 1958. That revolution was touched off by the overthrow of the monarchy by left-nationalist officers on Bastille Day 1958. The whole country rose up. As workers staged massive demonstrations in the cities, some numbering a million people, peasants staged insurrections throughout the countryside, killing landlords and seizing the land. The Iraqi CP had



# Supreme Court...

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of their reliance on the state institutions of the capitalist rulers, as are various other arrangements, such as the system of dues checkoff, which puts the collection of a union's money in the bosses' hands. Central to the class-collaborationist outlook of the union bureaucracy is the lie that the capitalist state can be pressured to act in the interests of workers, at least when run by Democrats.

In Illinois, the SEIU signed up 20,000 home health care workers after then-governor Rod Blagojevich (whom the union helped elect, pouring \$1.8 million into his 2002 and 2006 campaigns) issued an executive order designating them state employees. It is this designation that has now been overturned by the Supreme Court, demonstrating how easily reforms that benefit the working class can be reversed in the absence of class struggle.

The Democrats themselves have been carrying out attacks on unions, particularly in the public sector. The Obama administration has long pushed anti-union charter schools and hailed the recent California court ruling against teacher tenure laws, a direct blow to union seniority rights. Democratic Illinois governor Pat Quinn, the defendant in *Harris v. Quinn*, has signed a law gutting the pensions of public workers, a measure several unions are challenging in the courts. In a stark example of the labor bureaucracy's servility, the Illinois Education Association is both suing Governor Quinn over his attacks on their pensions and endorsing his re-election in November!

Condemning the *Harris* decision, leaders of several unions representing public-sector workers, including the SEIU, AFSCME, the Communications Workers of America and the American Federation of Teachers, mouthed platitudes about fighting back. What they really meant was laid out by AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka, who told the London *Financial Times* (2 July), "We're going to work real hard to get pro-worker candidates elected," i.e., once again getting out the vote for the Democrats in this year's mid-



18 March 1970: NYC letter carriers picket General Post Office at outset of strike that defied federal law and spread nationwide, giving impetus to public-sector unionization.

term elections. This is the same dead-end electoral strategy that in recent years led to defeats in Wisconsin, Indiana and Michigan, where "right to work" measures gutted union rights. In Wisconsin in 2011, thousands of union members had repeatedly mobilized in protests in Madison, the state capital. But the bureaucrats nixed any chance to use the strike weapon, diverting workers' anger into Democratic Party electioneering.

While the White House issued a statement criticizing the *Harris* ruling, when it comes to unions actually engaging in struggle, it's another matter for U.S. capitalism's chief executive. On June 14, over 400 train engineers and electricians in the Philadelphia area went out on strike against SEPTA (Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority). At the request of the Pennsylvania governor, President Obama immediately signed an executive order under the Railway Labor Act forcing the strikers back to work. And when it comes to basic democratic rights, the Obama administration has managed to come out to the right of the utterly reactionary Supreme Court, which recently ruled against the government by banning

warrantless searches of cell phones.

## For Class-Struggle Leadership!

Today under unrelenting ruling-class attack, the gains achieved by unionized public workers were wrested through often fierce battles against the government. The *Aboud* decision itself came near the end of a wave of organizing drives among public-sector workers during the 1970s.

American society, which had been polarized by the struggle for black rights and the counterrevolutionary U.S. war against Vietnam, experienced a rise in union struggles, fueled by the rapid erosion of wages due to inflation caused by the war. As part of a dramatic rise in rank-and-file militancy, the New York City branch of the National Association of Letter Carriers walked out in March 1970. This action was not only in defiance of their national leadership but also the law, which banned postal workers, like all federal workers, from striking. President Richard Nixon declared a national emergency and ordered 23,000 troops to occupy the post offices in New York.

But the wildcat strike spread throughout the country, mostly against the will of the

union leadership. With young and black militants taking the lead, over 210,000 postal workers defied back-to-work court injunctions in the largest strike ever against the U.S. government. The Post Office was forced to concede wage increases and collective bargaining rights, with no reprisals. The postal wildcat helped spur the rapid growth of public-sector unions. However, strikes by federal workers remain banned, and union officials increasingly hide behind federal and state anti-strike laws, often including the threat of big fines and jail time for union leaders, as an excuse for shelving the strike weapon.

The potential of the *Harris* case to destroy the agency shop was characterized by AFSCME's general counsel, Bill Lurye, as "an attempted kill shot aimed at public-sector unions." If anything like this comes to pass, it will be due in no small part to the class collaborationism of the union misleaders, which has undermined labor as a fighting force and, consequently, eroded elementary union consciousness. After collective bargaining was abolished for state workers in Indiana, union membership plummeted by 90 percent. In Wisconsin, Governor Scott Walker's union-busting legislation caused AFSCME's revenues to drop 60 percent. Smelling blood, anti-labor forces are determined to challenge the very existence of unions, including by cutting the flow of funds.

Over the years, efforts by workers to win even the modest right to organize collectively have been met with vicious retaliation, from firings and arrests to murderous violence. It will take determined struggle to beat back the capitalist rulers' war against labor. For the unions to effectively fight in the interests of workers, they must be freed from the shackles binding them to the Democratic Party and the capitalist state. This requires forging a new labor leadership based on the understanding that the interests of the working class are counterposed to those of the capitalist exploiters. The working class needs its own party, independent from and opposed to the Democratic and Republican parties of capitalist rule. For a workers party to fight for a workers America! ■

the overwhelming support of the multinational working class. It also had broad support among other layers of the population, including within the army and even some sections of the officer corps. It is clear that the Iraqi CP could have taken power. The U.S. sent the Marines into Lebanon to be ready for a possible invasion of Iraq. Socialist revolution was on the agenda.

Isaac Deutscher, the historian and biographer of Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky, wrote: "Most western observers on the spot agreed that Kassem [the nationalist in power who had the Iraqi CP's support] could hardly hold his ground against an all-out communist offensive." But in the interests of "peaceful coexistence" with the U.S., the Soviet bureaucracy sold out the revolution, ordering the Iraqi CP to stand down. And under the sway of the program of "two-stage revolution," the Iraqi CP went along, putting the brakes on the movement.

While riding the crest of the revolutionary wave, the CP continued to subordinate itself to the left-nationalist officer Kassem in a supposedly "anti-imperialist" revolution. Of course, the promised second stage of socialist revolution never came. Instead, Kassem turned on the CP. In 1963, the reactionary, nationalist Ba'ath party, which included Saddam Hussein (who was not yet a national leader), came to power and carried out a bloodbath of thousands of leftist workers using lists supplied by the CIA.

## For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

The Iraqi revolution held out enormous historic possibilities for workers of the Near East and for oppressed peoples like the Kurds. Today, spread across four countries—Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran—the people of Kurdistan still constitute the largest nation by area with-

out a state. When Iraqi Kurdish leaders recently announced plans for a referendum on independence from Baghdad, the Obama administration let them know, in no uncertain terms, that Kurdish independence is not on Washington's agenda.

The history of the Kurdish people's national struggle is a litany of betrayals by their nationalist leaders, who systematically sought to gain advantage by currying favor with sundry capitalist powers. A case in point was provided by the Kurdish leaders in Iraq who actively collaborated with the 2003 U.S. invasion, offering their *pesh merga* as an auxiliary to U.S. military forces. The Kurdish masses must

look to an alliance with the Arab, Persian and Turkish proletariat—which in turn must be won to championing Kurdish self-determination—in a revolutionary struggle to overthrow capitalist rule in the four countries that oppress them and establish a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan. (See "The Kurdish People and the U.S. Occupation of Iraq," WV Nos. 804 and 805, 23 May and 6 June 2003.)

Iraq today is a shattered society. The future of the Iraqi masses as a whole is dependent on working-class struggle in nearby countries with strategic concentrations of proletarian power. We have no illusions that it will be an easy task to win

workers of the Near East, ground down by their capitalist rulers and imperialist overlords, to the Marxist program of proletarian revolution. But there will be no end to ethnic and national oppression, no emancipation of women, no end to the exploitation of working people short of shattering the capitalist order. That requires the forging of revolutionary working-class parties in opposition to all forms of bourgeois ideology, religious reaction and imperialism, as part of a genuine Trotskyist Fourth International, which would link the fight for a socialist federation of the Near East to the struggle for proletarian revolution in the imperialist centers. ■

# Quebec...

(continued from page 3)

criticisms. After a vapid campaign centered on the slogan "For the love of a fair Quebec," QS increased its vote slightly and now has three deputies in the National Assembly. Heavily funded by capitalist state subsidies based on its level of electoral support, QS does not even pretend to be a socialist organization. Rather it is, as we have written previously, a "fifth wheel" of the bourgeois PQ, working to pull disaffected youth and workers (and rightward moving ex-leftists) into the trap of eco-tinged populism.

Over the last few years, QS leader Françoise David has repeatedly offered to prop up a PQ minority government, but the arrival of union-buster Péladeau was too much for even her to swallow. She proclaimed, "Today, thousands of [PQ] sympathizers can mourn the party of René Lévesque." Another QS leader, Amir Khadir, issued an "appeal to trade unionists," calling on "those who care about the balance between the rights of the employ-

ers and the rights of the unions" to join Québec Solidaire (quebecsolidaire.net, 10 March). There you have QS in a nutshell: return to the early, purportedly progressive PQ and work to "balance" workers' rights with those of the exploiters!

As the Couillard government prepares its assaults on labour and on social programs, it is necessary to fight for a very different political perspective. A starting point must be the complete and unconditional independence of the labour movement from the capitalists, their political parties and their state machinery. The "anti-corruption" Charbonneau commission set up under the last PQ government has lately targeted the FTQ, especially its construction sector. We say: Government hands off the unions! The close ties between the FTQ's \$10 billion investment fund, the Fonds de Solidarité, and the owners of the construction industry are indeed an outrage. But the labour movement must clean *its own* house, as part of a struggle to make the unions instruments not of collaboration with the enemy class but of anti-capitalist struggle.

As we wrote two years ago in a leaflet

distributed to the mass protests of students and their supporters:

"The Quebec working class, allied with the vibrant student youth, has the power to be a key component of a revived North American workers movement, which has been battered by decades of austerity and strikebreaking. In May 1972, the spontaneous Quebec general strike against the jailing of union leaders gave a taste of this power. But in the upshot, the aspirations of the Québécois workers were channeled into the framework of bourgeois nationalism as represented by the PQ. Unchaining the power of the proletariat requires a political break with such nationalism, including today its 'left' variant in Québec Solidaire.

"The only road to socialism lies through a workers revolution that smashes the capitalist state and replaces it with a workers state, the dictatorship of the proletariat. That means replacing bourgeois democracy—a 'democracy' for the rich—with *workers* democracy. Only then will the road be open for the construction of an egalitarian communist society where both poverty and a repressive state are relics of the past."

—"Student Strike Shakes Quebec—Mobilize the Power of the Working Class!" *Spartacist Canada* No. 173, Summer 2012 [reprinted in *Workers Vanguard* No. 1003, 25 May 2012] ■



## Threat to Public-Sector Labor

# Supreme Court Clobbers Home Health Care Workers Unions

The June 30 Supreme Court ruling in the case *Harris v. Quinn* is the latest blow in the capitalist state's war against organized labor. In a five-to-four majority, the court overturned lower court decisions by excluding home health care workers from agency shop arrangements, in which workers who benefit from union representation but are not themselves members must pay fees to the union. The Illinois plaintiffs, including Pamela Harris, an in-home caregiver for her disabled son, were represented by the anti-union National Right To Work Legal Defense Foundation bankrolled by the notoriously right-wing billionaire Koch brothers and the Walton family (of Wal-Mart).

The Supreme Court ruling singled out the union rights of an especially vulnerable section of the public-sector workforce as a wedge aimed at public workers unions in general. The nature of the caregivers' work in private homes makes them particularly isolated, open to abuse by employers and difficult to organize into unions. These workers carry out demanding tasks: cooking, cleaning, administering medication, bathing patients and helping them in and out of bed. Together with nurses and workers in residential care centers, they have the highest rate of workplace injuries. Home health care workers, nearly 90 percent of whom are women, are disproportionately black, Latino and immigrant. While still among the lowest-paid workers in the public sector, home health care workers in Illinois saw their wages rise from less than \$7 per hour to \$13 after they joined the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). Union membership not only benefits those workers but also, by providing more training and reducing staff turnover, benefits their patients.

To evade legal precedent protecting agency shops for public workers, the court ruled that while home health care workers are paid from public funds they are "not full-fledged public employees" because they may be hired and supervised by their clients. This fiction was concocted in order to ratify the plaintiffs' bogus contention that their being forced to pay agency fees violated their First Amendment right, as individuals, to free speech. This red herring was dragged in to take aim squarely at the **rights of labor**. From the very existence of unions to the right to strike, labor rights were achieved through hard struggle against the capitalists and their state. At any rate, the only rights to which the bourgeoisie is unalterably committed are its own property rights.

While the backers of the *Harris* plaintiffs pushed the Supreme Court to also overturn the 1977 case *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*, which upheld the agency shop for public-sector workers, the court stopped short, at least for the moment. However, Justice Samuel Alito devoted much of the majority opinion to criticizing *Abood*, effectively inviting a frontal challenge to agency shops. Indeed, such cases are already wending their way through the lower courts. In *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, ten teachers backed by the right-wing Center for Individual Rights (CIR) are challenging the agency shop on grounds similar to

*Harris v. Quinn*. The CIR lawyers admitted that their claims were barred by the *Abood* precedent, conceding defeat at the District Court level so that their appeals could proceed up the chain to the Supreme Court.

Twenty-six states have laws providing for the agency shop for public-sector workers, while open shop "right to work" states ban this arrangement. Marxists defend the agency shop against the bosses' attacks. But what we are for is the closed shop, where workers must be members of the union before being hired. The closed shop, facilitating union control of hiring, was outlawed by the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act, which aimed at crippling labor by banning a range of militant strike tactics and opening up a red purge of the unions. While allowing union shops, where workers are required to join unions after being hired, the law also opened the door to the opt-out provisions of the agency shop.

What is needed are fighting unions that encompass all workers in a company or industry, uniting them in struggle against the bosses for improved pay, benefits and work conditions. It is precisely by playing workers off against one another that the capitalists divide and weaken the working

class, often by exacerbating racial and ethnic divisions. Many "right to work" advocates hate unions not least because they are *integrated*. Strong unions, including the closed shop, were won through sharp class struggle involving often-illegal tactics like mass pickets, factory occupations and secondary boycotts.

For all their ritual denunciations of Taft-Hartley as a slave-labor act, the pro-capitalist labor bureaucrats have overwhelmingly bowed to its restrictions, helping grease the skids for the sharp decline of unions in the U.S. The more the union leaders limit workers' struggles within the framework of what is permitted by bourgeois law, the more the capitalists further narrow proletarian rights by augmenting their arsenal of anti-union laws.

If the agency shop is eliminated for public-sector workers, it will be a serious blow for the working class as a whole. With the decline of unionized manufacturing jobs, public-sector workers make up a greater than ever proportion of organized labor, with the rate of unionization among public-sector workers more than five times that of private-sector workers. Unions like the SEIU and American Federation of State, County and Municipal

Employees (AFSCME) have recruited large numbers of home health care workers. However, many of the same unions include cops and prison guards. These guard dogs of capitalist rule are used to smash workers' picket lines and enforce a reign of terror against black people and other minorities. *Cops and prison guards out of the unions!*

### Labor Tops' Subservience to Democrats

Opposition to *Harris v. Quinn* among bourgeois liberals stems from the fact that the decision upsets a mechanism to help maintain labor peace in the public sector. In her dissent on the ruling, Justice Elena Kagan expressed relief that the court did not completely overturn the agency shop, which she characterized as a key tool for state and local governments "in the management of their employees and programs." The "bad news," she wrote, was that Illinois can no longer use this "tool" in regard to home health care workers.

For the labor tops, the agency shop means more money for union coffers without having to do anything in the way of actual struggle. This setup is an example

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## Victory for South African Platinum Miners



Reuters

May 14: Striking platinum miners outside Lonmin mine in Rustenburg.

JOHANNESBURG—A bitterly fought, five-month strike by 70,000 platinum miners organised by the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) has ended in victory for the workers. In what would become the longest strike in the history of South Africa, the miners walked out on January 23 to fight for a living wage and against the

"apartheid wage gap" inherited from the former white-supremacist regime. The workers achieved a 1,000 rand (\$93) basic monthly wage increase, backdated to July 2013, for the first two years of the contract and R950 for the third year. The combined cost to Anglo American Platinum, Impala Platinum and Lonmin—the world's top three platinum producers—is

estimated at R24 billion.

As the strike wrapped up, a jubilant AMCU member told the *Daily Maverick* (23 June): "It was no longer about me and my colleagues, but also about all the mineworkers before and those that will come long after we are gone. We have levelled the pitch for

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