

Defend the Palestinians!

Zionist Bloodbath in Gaza



Sameh Rahmi

Israeli bombardment of Gaza City, July 29. Zionist state has razed Gaza infrastructure and slaughtered almost 2,000 Palestinians. Top right: U.S. secretary of state Kerry with Israeli prime minister Netanyahu in Tel Aviv, July 23. Bottom right: Palestinians mourn journalist and others killed by Israeli shelling of Shejaya market, July 30.



Reuters



Reuters

AUGUST 5—“They have to die and their houses should be demolished so that they cannot bear any more terrorists.... They are all enemy combatants.” This screed by Israeli politician Ayelet Shaked, posted on the eve of “Operation Protective Edge,” is a genocidal expression of a cold Zionist ideology that views the Palestinian people as *unttermenschen* (“subhumans”) to be killed with impunity. “One million Arabs are not worth a Jewish fingernail” was how a notorious right-wing Israeli rabbi baldly put it some 20 years ago. Today, this is reasserted through the wholesale slaughter of more than 1,800 largely defenseless Palestinians, with another 9,400 wounded, by the U.S.-armed Israeli war machine, carried out under the pretext of responding to Hamas’s largely ineffectual rocket attacks.

As we go to press, it appears that Israel is withdrawing its forces from Gaza. At the same time, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has threatened to renew the massacres under the pretense of going after Hamas’s rockets and tunnels. In the face of Israel’s barbarity, we take a side militarily in defense of Hamas against Israel, without giving an iota of political support to that reactionary Islamic fundamentalist outfit. **Defend the Palestinian people!**

For the last month, the already devastated population of the Gaza Strip has been under a relentless barrage of Zionist state terror, with missiles raining down

Down With U.S. Aid to Israel!

from the skies above and from the sea, while people are being shelled by artillery in an 86,000-strong ground invasion. The overwhelming majority of the dead are civilians, including at least 400 children. The streets are strewn with decomposing limbs and bodies. Whole blocks are flattened. Whole families are exterminated. Scenes abound of women and children fleeing on foot from missiles and shells.

Gaza lies in ruin upon ruin. The skyline of Gaza City and other towns in one of the most densely populated places on earth is a ragged outline of shattered buildings and torn minarets. Gaza’s meager infrastructure is devastated, many of its few factories destroyed, its one power plant in flames. A population that has had to live on four hours of electricity a day will now be forced to subsist with neither electricity nor treated water nor a sewage system, while overwhelmed hospitals lose electrical power even just to keep blood and medicines refrigerated.

The sordid bourgeois media in the U.S. presents the carnage in Gaza as a “war” between two equal sides. CNN’s contemptible anchor Wolf Blitzer airs lurid stories about “terrorists” using the tunnels in Gaza. The *New York Times* runs stories about Hamas using Palestinians in the Gaza ghetto as “civilian shields.” The

underlying message is clear: Israel is to be absolved for any amount of murder of Palestinians, who, in turn, have no right to defend themselves. The leaflets that Israel drops telling Palestinians to flee are a cruel reminder that Gaza’s residents have nowhere to flee from what is a concentration camp surrounded by an electrified fence, a sealed border with Egypt and a Mediterranean shoreline patrolled by the Israeli navy.

There is no refuge for Gazans. UN schools—which have been sheltering more than 200,000 people, over 10 percent of Gaza’s population—have been bombed repeatedly. On August 3, one such school in Rafah was hit by Israel, killing 10 people—this after UN administrators at the school had communicated to the Israeli military no less than 33 times its precise coordinates and the fact that it

was housing some 3,000 refugees. This was the seventh such Israeli bombing of UN shelters. On July 30, after announcing a four-hour “humanitarian pause” in the bombing, Israel struck a market in Shejaya where desperate people were trying to get food. The brutal bombardment killed at least 17 people and wounded over 200.

The scale of Israel’s current onslaught in Gaza has already surpassed that of its 2008-09 terror campaign, called “Operation Cast Lead,” in which some 1,400 Palestinians were slaughtered. Whereas during the first (1987-93) and second (2000-05) *Intifadas* (uprisings) it took months and years for thousands of Palestinians to be killed, today such numbers are reached in days and weeks. This is the new “normal” that has been established by the war criminals in Tel Aviv.

Behind the Israeli terror machine stands the far more powerful and deadly terror machine of U.S. imperialism. National Security Advisor Susan Rice declares, “Here is one thing you never have to worry about: America’s support for the state of Israel.” For his part, Secretary of State John Kerry reiterates that Israel “has every right in the world to defend itself.”

The U.S. arms Israel to the tune of more

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Class-Struggle Leadership Made the Difference
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Yes, Crimea Is Russian

23 June 2014

This is a relatively minor point, and I don't request it be published.

In *Workers Vanguard* you state that Crimea was "historically part of Russia" (13 June) or "long part of Russia" (16 May). I think this is historically inaccurate.

Prior to the Revolution, Crimea was part of the Russian Empire, that is true, but so was Ukraine. Ukraine, in fact, has historically a closer association with Russia, Kiev being the birthplace of the Russian "nation". Crimea, on the other hand, was dominated by the Tatars until Russia took over in the late 18th century—the same time they took over Ukraine.

After the Revolution, Crimea became the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (not merely "part of Russia"). In 1945 it was downgraded to the Crimean Oblast within the RSFSR and the Crimean Tatars were deported. In 1954 it was transferred to Ukraine. So, for the past 60 years Crimea has been part of the Ukrainian Republic. This is more significant than the 30 odd years when it was part of the RSFSR.

To the best of my knowledge Crimea has been viewed as a distinct entity throughout its long and complicated history.

This does not detract from the fact that present population is ethnically Russian

and appears to favour Russian annexation, but there is no need to falsify history to improve their case.

Niall C.

WV replies: We thank Niall C. for his letter, which he gave permission to print.

We Marxists upheld the right of self-determination for the Crimean people, who are ethnically Russian in their majority. This included supporting the intervention of Russian troops, which allowed the exercise of that right, with the population overwhelmingly voting to reunite with Russia. Our position does not entail the slightest political support to Vladimir Putin's regime, a capitalist government based on Great Russian chauvinism.

By all appearances, Niall agrees with us that the decisive consideration is what the majority of the population wants. But he disagrees with our historical understanding of how and when Crimea became predominantly Russian.

Russia wrested control of Crimea from the Ottoman Empire and annexed the peninsula in 1783. Subsequently, the tsars pursued a policy of Russification of the region, with Russian settlers and their fellow Orthodox Christians from Turkish-ruled territories—Greeks, Armenians and Slavs—moving in. On the heels of Russia's annexation, Tatars, a Muslim people who had inhabited Crimea since the 13th

century, fled in droves to the Ottoman Empire for fear of reprisals and religious persecution. By 1802, more than 100,000 Tatars—more than a third of the total Crimean population at the time—had moved to Ottoman lands. An even more massive Tatar exodus took place after the 1854-56 Crimean War pitting Russia against the Ottomans, British and French.

Having a foothold in the Black Sea was militarily vital for the Russians. The area around Sevastopol (where the first Kievan Rus prince to convert is said to have been baptized) was also viewed as the birthplace of Russian Christianity, to be defended against the Muslim Ottomans. Crimea quickly obtained a place in Russian culture and identity that it never lost: Pushkin immortalized it in verse, while Tolstoy chronicled the famous Siege of Sevastopol in 1854-55. Russian aristocrats and later Stalinist bureaucrats built palaces along the cliffs and beaches, in what became the Riviera of Russia.

During the civil war that broke out after the October 1917 proletarian revolution in Russia, many Tatar nationalist leaders sided with the counterrevolutionary White forces against the Red Army. But in 1921 the Bolsheviks finally prevailed in Crimea. At the time, the population was not only half Russian but also highly multinational and multiethnic. Tatars represented some 20 percent of the total in addition to large numbers of Armenians, Bulgars, Jews and Greeks.

The early Bolshevik regime, whose tradition we stand in, assiduously defended the rights of oppressed nationalities and peoples. The Crimean Tatar language was

accorded official status alongside Russian, Tatar schools were created and Tatars were encouraged to participate in the political life of the peninsula, which became an autonomous republic, part of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic. Since a myriad of peoples throughout Russia were at different levels of national consolidation, the Bolsheviks established various autonomous republics, oblasts and okrugs across the Russian territory to provide for the special needs of these peoples.

After the Red Army liberated Crimea from the Nazis in 1944 at the end of World War II, Stalin collectively accused all non-Russian peoples there (Tatars, Greeks, Bulgars and Armenians) of collaborating with the German occupiers and deported them to Central Asia. Crimea was thus literally emptied of Tatars. They were rehabilitated by the Soviet authorities in 1967 but were not allowed to return en masse to Crimea until the dismantling of the Soviet Union in 1991.

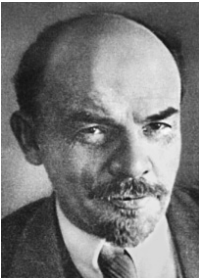
In 1954, Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev ceded Crimea to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. This purely administrative measure did not make any difference in the ethnic composition and identity of Crimea, or its main language, which remained Russian. Khrushchev's stupid move only took on significance with the collapse of the Soviet Union, as the fate of Crimea was the subject of heated disputes between the now bourgeois states of Russia and Ukraine. From that time, Crimean residents repeatedly attempted to break away from Ukraine, especially through referendums, only succeeding this year with the Russian intervention. ■



TROTSKY

A System in Its Death Agony

In a speech delivered to a meeting of students at New York University in 1951, American Trotskyist leader James Cannon laid bare the bloody workings of U.S. imperialism, which had emerged from World War II as the world's dominant capitalist power. He underlined that only international workers revolution can put an end to the privation and war endemic to the decaying capitalist profit system.



LENIN

Capitalism is an outworn social system. The First World War was the sign of its bankruptcy as a world order. Prior to that, for half a century, capitalism had grown and expanded. It had maintained an uneasy peace in the world, except for numerous local wars and colonial expeditions by which the great powers divided up the world. But things have changed since then. Just consider for a moment how much they have changed in thirty-seven years since the first shots were fired in 1914. Two world wars, devouring the lives of tens of millions of people, and wounding nobody knows how many more, and destroying so much of the material culture of the world. Two destructive world wars and a terrible worldwide depression with its unmeasured toll of misery and death. And now the mad armaments race toward another world war, the end of which no one can see or prophesy....

The workers of the United States haven't said their last word yet by a long shot. The foreign policy of American capitalism is united with its domestic policy. The war program carries with it the program of militarizing and regimenting the country, already under way; of stamping out liberties, which is in the design; and of driving down the living standards of the workers, which is in progress with the wage freeze on the one side and skyrocketing inflation on the other....

There is an alternative. In my opinion this alternative is to recognize the social reality of our time, to see capitalism as a world system in its death agony, completely reactionary and beyond salvation by any means. The alternative to support of this doomed social system is to ally oneself with the future, with the socialist and labor movement, and with the great colonial revolutions in process and still growing. The alternative is to work for a union of the world's workers and the colonial peoples, to put an end to imperialism and open the way for the socialist society of the free and equal. That is the way to secure peace and progress and a good life for all.

—James P. Cannon, "Youth and Foreign Policy" (April 1951)

Montana Abortion Provider Under Attack

18 June 2014

Dear Editor,

Late at night on March 4th, All Families Healthcare of Kalispell, Montana, which provided first-trimester abortions, was destroyed, seemingly by an armed burglar with family ties to an antiabortion organization called Hope Pregnancy Ministries. These evangelicals, after the fashion of such groups described over the years in *Workers Vanguard*, appear to have ties to organized fascists, and they sometimes work hand-in-hand with the state.

For at least a decade, they organized a threatening presence outside the clinic owned by Susan Cahill, a physician's assistant. They celebrated Lent each year with a continuous picket lasting 40 days and 40 nights, until recently, when they purchased the building that housed the clinic. Cahill, a health care provider for the last 38 years, was then forced to find another space to rent. She and her business partner, Dr. James Armstrong (now retired) have served multiple generations of Montanans, including elderly relatives of mine, who have been well cared for by them. After her clinic was firebombed in 1994 in a string of such attacks across the American West, the Montana state legislature passed the Susan Cahill Law, barring physician's assistants from performing abortions, but the law was overturned in state supreme court.

This year's attack came three weeks after Cahill re-opened her clinic at a new location. It was the night before a security system was to be installed, and just before Lent. Cahill wrote in a letter to a local newspaper that everything was destroyed, from the plumbing and heating systems, to medical equipment and furniture, to photos of her baby grandson. The man charged in the attack was arrested shortly afterwards, carrying a loaded handgun and extra bullets. His trial is scheduled for September and likely to be well-attended, but apparently the firearms charges have already been dropped, and "hate crime" charges, which Cahill and some supporters called for, seem never to have even been considered.

Cahill told the liberal news show, *Democracy Now*, that the damage to her clinic was first noticed by an employee who arrived in the morning. She stayed outside and called the police, who sealed off the premises for the next 24 hours, with the help of FBI agents. The US government tends to take a keen interest in patient files at abortion clinics, but one news report indicated that in this case some files had been taken by the burglar. In any case, many files were apparently damaged beyond recognition.

Shortly after the 2009 murder of Dr. George Tiller, Susan Wicklund, author of *This Common Secret: My Life as an Abortion Doctor*, and an associate of Susan Cahill's, told an audience at Revolution Books in Manhattan that at her clinic in southern Montana, patients showed up from five or six different states and Canada because of the extreme shortage of abortion providers—especially affordable ones—throughout the region. Cahill, similarly, had patients from so far away that she often had to give them lodging, and sometimes also money for food and gas. Many could not otherwise afford to spend the night in the area, which in recent years has become gentrified to the point that the local airport is crowded with private jets; Kalispell's SWAT team has its own armored assault vehicle, donated by a real estate tycoon, and many long-time local residents are being driven off the land by skyrocketing property taxes. Health care at the nearby Kootenai-Salish Indian Reservation has also been cut back recently. Cahill says she is not sure whether she will ever re-open her clinic, and Dr. Wicklund retired in October after nearly 30 years, during which she often carried a .45 and wore a bullet-proof vest.

The capitalists' reactionary drive to ration and restrict access to abortion and other forms of health care by any means available—legal or otherwise—clearly shows the need for a revolutionary struggle against capitalism itself.

Comradely greetings,
A.W.

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On Malaysia Airlines MH17 Disaster

The crash of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 in eastern Ukraine on July 17, apparently brought down by a missile, has been seized on by the Ukrainian government and its U.S./NATO backers as an enormous boost for their military campaign in the region. The moment the plane hit the ground, the Obama administration and its allies began howling that Russian strongman Vladimir Putin is to blame for the deaths of 298 innocent civilians on the plane, claiming that it was brought down by pro-Russian insurgents, who control areas of eastern Ukraine, using anti-aircraft missiles supplied by Moscow. Such touching concern for the lives of civilians is consummate hypocrisy on the part of the NATO imperialists. They brokered a fascist-infested coup in Ukraine in February and have backed

the Kiev regime to the hilt as it organized the May 2 massacre of more than 40 people in Odessa and launched a provocative military assault in eastern Ukraine. Indeed, if not for Kiev's war against the eastern insurgents, which includes aerial bombing of the civilian population, *the tragedy of flight MH17 could never have happened.*

We are in no position to know what brought down the plane. We do know that Washington and its mouthpieces have not produced a shred of credible evidence for their claim that it was shot down by the insurgents. We also know that it is notable that the Kiev government did not close this airspace following the shooting down of a Ukrainian Army transport plane only days before the MH17 disaster. And we know that, as things currently stand, the only

forces to benefit from this horrific disaster are the Ukrainian authorities and their imperialist supporters.

If a civilian aircraft loaded with passengers was *knowingly* targeted, that would be a heinous atrocity. And, in fact, the Western imperialists are more than practiced in carrying out such atrocities. On 3 July 1988, the U.S. warship *Vincennes*, which had crossed into Iranian waters, shot down an Iran Air Airbus A300, incinerating 290 people. Five years before, on 1 September 1983, the U.S. sent Korean Airlines flight 007 into Soviet airspace on a spy mission. The South Korean 747 airliner refused to identify itself. Soviet forces assumed it to be the RC-135 spy plane that the U.S. flew on an overlapping route with the civilian plane and shot it down. To the imperialists, the deaths of the

KAL 007 passengers were acceptable collateral for a provocative spy mission against the Soviet degenerated workers state.

Regardless of what happened with the Malaysia Airlines disaster, it does not change our position in defense of the right to self-rule for Donetsk and Luhansk, up to and including independence and/or amalgamation into Russia. Marxists are not neutral—we stand militarily with the people in Donetsk and Luhansk fighting against the Kiev regime. At the same time, we do not give any political support to their reactionary leadership, which is characterized by Great Russian chauvinism and riddled with anti-Jewish bigotry. Kiev government troops out of eastern Ukraine! U.S./NATO imperialists hands off! Down with imperialist sanctions against Russia!

The Cliffites and the Ukrainian Nationalists Once They Were (Cold) Warriors

We reprint below an article published by *Workers Hammer* No. 227 (Summer 2014), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain. It documents how the international tendency founded by Tony Cliff, which for many years included the International Socialist Organization (ISO) in the U.S., is a repeat offender when it comes to prettifying arch-reactionary Ukrainian

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nationalists. Of late, both the ISO and the Cliffite Socialist Workers Party in Britain have served as cheerleaders for the fascist-infested demonstrations in Kiev's Maidan square that ushered in the February coup, bringing to power a new government utterly beholden to the Western imperialists. (See "Reformist Left: Skills for U.S./EU Imperialists Over Ukraine," WV No. 1048, 13 June.)

* * *

The article [cited above] notes that the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) whitewashed the role of the fascists in the Kiev coup in February. This is not new. The founder of the SWP, Tony Cliff, eulogised the forces of murderous nationalism and anti-Communism that fought against the Soviet Union during and after World War II in his seminal work, *State Capitalism in Russia* (published in 1955). Cliff's "theory" of state capitalism, which allegedly meant neutrality between the imperialists on one side and the degenerated and deformed workers states on the other, was in reality a smokescreen for

support to pro-NATO, anti-Soviet forces whose aim was to restore capitalism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Among the "anti-Stalinist" forces that Cliff portrays as being pro-socialist are the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) and the Vlasov movement, both of which were Nazi collaborators. Ludicrously describing the UPA as an example of forces which "strive consciously or semi-consciously, even unconsciously" for the establishment of a "socialist democracy," Cliff wrote:

"This deduction of the probable programme of the anti-Stalinist opposition

By 1947, most UPA units had escaped into the arms of Western intelligence, which turned them into a guerrilla force against the Soviets. A published declassified CIA account titled "Cold War Allies: The Origins of CIA's Relationship with Ukrainian Nationalists" by Kevin C. Ruffner explained that:

"[The] CIA reestablished and expanded its contacts with the Ukrainians and others for covert action against the Communists and as wartime assets to be used behind Red Army lines as guerrillas, saboteurs, and resistance leaders. CIA continued to cling to these groups long

many. Vlasov, a former Soviet Army general, was a turncoat who collaborated with Nazi Heinrich Himmler and headed the so-called Russian Liberation Army, formed to entice Russian soldiers to fight alongside the Wehrmacht. Malyshkin, also a former Soviet general, was a prisoner of war who joined the Nazis and became an instructor for propaganda courses to disseminate Nazi ideology among Soviet prisoners. During the Nazi rout at the hands of the Soviet Army, both generals were captured. They were hanged in Moscow in 1946.

To whitewash these Nazi collaborators, Cliff sucked out a couple of quotes where the UPA talked about the need for "state-national" property. After the Ukrainian masses had experienced mass murder and looting at the hands of the occupying Nazis, most Ukrainian nationalist organisations changed their tune in order to avoid losing all credibility; the UPA started talking about socialised property and even "classless society." In fact, it has never been a problem for fascists to talk about nationalised property. In Italy, Mussolini boasted that his regime nationalised huge chunks of the economy, which was done in order to save ailing Italian capitalism.

Cliff's *State Capitalism in Russia* cites an article published in April 1949 in *New Internationalist*, the magazine of Max Shachtman's Independent Socialist

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Berliner Verlag

Destroyed Lenin monument in Crimea, 1942, when Ukraine was under Nazi occupation. Cliff tendency saluted Nazi collaborators who fought against Soviet workers state.

from the objective data of bureaucratic state capitalism is clearly supported by the actual programmes of two organised anti-Stalinist movements which appeared during the World War II—the Vlassov movement and the Ukrainian Resurgent Army (UPA)."

As we wrote more than 20 years ago: "The UPA was founded in 1940 in the newly Soviet-occupied western Ukraine, *in collaboration with the Wehrmacht* and explicitly to fight against the Red Army. It is well known that all wings of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism collaborated with Hitler when he invaded the Ukraine in 1941" (*Workers Hammer* No. 122, April 1991). By late 1942, the UPA was dominated by the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists led by fascist Stepan Bandera. The UPA's involvement in mass murder and ethnic cleansing is no secret. Last year the *Economist* wrote that: "Between February 1943 and February 1944, units of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army killed up to 100,000 Poles in Volyn and eastern Galicia, former Polish territories now in western Ukraine. The butchery reached its apogee in July, with as many as 20,000, including women, children and the elderly, murdered" (15 July 2013).

after their immediate utility expired out of the mistaken belief that they were a valuable wartime reserve.

"The sometimes brutal war record of many emigre groups became blurred as they became more critical to the CIA."
—*Fifty Years of the CIA* (Central Intelligence Agency, 1998)

Cliff quotes General Malyshkin, one of General Vlasov's chief assistants, saying that "all those industries which during the period of Bolshevism were erected at the expense of the blood and sweat of the whole people, must become the property of the state, national property." Incredibly, Cliff goes on: "whether the Vlasov leaders were sincere or not is irrelevant. The mere fact that they took a stand for state ownership of large industry—and that in Nazi Germany—is proof that only such a stand could have appealed to the Soviet POWs whom they tried to recruit. A similar position was held by the UPA." From Cliff's virulently Stalinophobic standpoint, the mere fact that these forces fought the Soviet Army is all that matters; the fact they were aiding the Nazis is irrelevant.

But the fact is, of course, Cliff's book does not elucidate what Generals Vlasov and Malyshkin were doing in Nazi Ger-

CORRECTION

In "U.S. Imperialism Behind Bloody Repression in Ukraine—For the Right of Self-Rule in Donetsk, Luhansk!" (WV No. 1046, 16 May), we wrote that a key reason for the imperialist-backed coup that ousted Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich in February was that he had accepted an aid package from Russia "rather than implement austerity demanded by the International Monetary Fund as part of the deal for Ukraine to join the EU (European Union)." In fact, the austerity was tied not to EU membership but to a trade agreement between the EU and Ukraine, which was finally signed on June 27.



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Gaza...

(continued from page 1)

than \$3 billion a year in military and other aid. And the U.S. has announced that it will allow Israel to tap into U.S. stockpiles of grenades and mortar rounds inside Israel. On August 1 the House voted 395 to 8 to approve another \$225 million for Israel's "Iron Dome" missile defense system, which the U.S. helped to create; the measure passed unanimously in the Senate. *Down with U.S. aid to Israel! Down with U.S. imperialism!*

The European imperialist powers are not far behind the Americans in consigning the Palestinian people to whatever fate the Zionists have in store. The French head of state, François Hollande, proclaimed on July 9: "The government of Israel has the prerogative to take all measures to protect its people in the face of danger." The "Socialist"-led government has banned demonstrations against the Zionists' atrocities and its cops have arrested dozens at protests in Paris and other cities.

In the Near East, most of the venal Arab bourgeois regimes, with Egypt taking the lead, have effectively stood with Israel against Hamas. Even the empty declarations of solidarity with the Palestinians have been dispensed with this time. Al-Sisi's regime in Egypt came to power last year through a bloody coup that overthrew the Muslim Brotherhood government of Mohamed Morsi. To the current Egyptian government, Hamas, a close ally of the Brotherhood, is far more of an enemy than Israel. The Egyptian media retails accusations against Hamas—blaming it for provoking Israel's current onslaught—to such an extent that Israel has been broadcast-



Reuters

Haifa, July 19: Israeli police arrest Israeli Arab man protesting Zionist terror.

sections of the International Communist League have intervened to express our solidarity with the Palestinian masses and to put forward the only perspective—international socialist revolution—that can put an end to Palestinian national oppression. Here in the belly of the beast we emphasize our class-struggle opposition to U.S. imperialism. In the Near East, there is no hope of peace or a decent life for the myriad peoples of the region until the proletariat overthrows bourgeois rule through a series of socialist revolutions.

Zionist Lies and Disinformation

The premise for Israel's current savagery in Gaza is built upon the sort of lies that would win the admiration of Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels. The bourgeois

estinians, capped by the torture and murder of a 16-year-old East Jerusalem youth: kidnapped by ultra-Zionists on July 2, he was found burned to death.

During those 18 days, Israel carried out a large-scale crackdown against Hamas in the West Bank, destroying homes, carrying out raids that killed ten Palestinians and arresting several hundred senior Hamas leaders, including many of those recently freed under the terms of a prisoner exchange. It was in response to this that Hamas intensified its feeble rocket attacks.

The actual background to the current onslaught is the increasing isolation of Hamas. Having backed the Sunni fundamentalist insurgents in the brutal Syrian civil war against the regime of Bashar al-Assad, Hamas lost support from the Syrian regime as well as its backers, Hezbollah and Iran. At the same time, the overthrow of Morsi in Egypt resulted in the loss of a key ally right on the border of Gaza.

In this situation, Hamas entered into a "unity government" agreement with the Palestinian Authority (PA), the dominant organization in the West Bank. The PA had been the ruling force in Gaza until it was soundly defeated in the 2006 Palestinian legislative elections by Hamas, which dislodged it from Gaza in a factional conflagration in 2007 that took hundreds of lives. As noted by foreign policy analyst Nathan Thrall in a July 17 *New York Times* op-ed piece, "Israel immediately sought to undermine the reconciliation agreement by preventing Hamas leaders and Gaza residents from obtaining the two most essential benefits of the deal: the payment of salaries to 43,000 civil servants who worked for the Hamas government and continue to administer Gaza under the new one, and the easing of the suffocating border closures imposed by Israel and Egypt." Israel then went in for the kill. Israeli policy in recent decades has been to separate Gaza from the West Bank, to fragment and treat them as two separate entities.

Before this recent onslaught, Gaza was already a hellhole. Blockaded by Israel and Egypt since 2007, Gaza has been starved for years. Unemployment stood at 40.8 percent. More than 80 percent of the population had been dependent on UN and other international aid for survival. About 50 percent of infants and children under two were suffering from iron deficiency anemia. The populations of Gaza City, Rafah and Jabalya in Gaza received

fresh water only once every four days, for six to eight hours at a time. *Down with the blockade of Gaza!*

Meanwhile, in the West Bank, the Palestinian population has been sealed off by an apartheid wall and subjected to a deadly Israeli military occupation, including the shooting of demonstrators protesting the rampage in Gaza. Surrounded by over 600,000 Zionist settlers who are backed up by thousands more troops, Palestinians are subjected to a series of military checkpoints and "Jewish only" roads that cut farmers off from their own fields and make travel between towns virtually impossible. *All Zionist troops and settlers out of the West Bank and East Jerusalem!*

For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

For well over 65 years, the Palestinian masses have suffered under the jackboot of the Israeli state—an oppression that has only intensified since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92. The collapse of the USSR, which had acted as a counterweight to U.S. imperialism, deprived the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) of crucial diplomatic and financial support, paving the way for the 1993 U.S.-sponsored Oslo accords, which established the Palestinian Authority as Israel's police auxiliaries in the Occupied Territories.

Far from bringing "peace" or the easing of poverty and national oppression, Oslo and the various later "peace" accords deepened the Palestinians' desperation. At the time of the Oslo agreement, the land seized by Zionist settlements was estimated at over 55 percent of the total land area of the Occupied Territories; in the West Bank, Israel was taking about 80 percent of the water for settlements and for use in Israel proper. The Oslo accords ignored the question of water resources while "postponing" any adjustment of land claims. In the subsequent two decades, the settlements have expanded virtually unchecked.

Relative freedom of movement within the territories and between Gaza and the West Bank has all but been eliminated. With Oslo, Israel dramatically accelerated the process of expelling Palestinians from the low-wage jobs they were able to hold within Israel, replacing them with migrant workers from Africa, Asia and East Europe, who today face brutal exploitation and repression.

It was the political bankruptcy of the secular-nationalist PLO that paved the way for the rise of reactionary, anti-woman, anti-Christian and anti-Jewish outfits like Hamas, which in the 1970s and '80s was promoted by Israel as a counterweight to the PLO and more left-wing Palestinian groups. Oslo and subsequent "peace" deals were the logical culmination of the PLO's nationalist program. When 2,000 Palestinians, mainly elderly people and children, were being slaughtered at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon in 1982 at the behest of the Israeli army, PLO leaders were abroad being feted as statesmen (without a state) and rubbing elbows in Cairo cafes with other left-talking nationalists from throughout the Third World. The basis of Palestinian nationalism, like all nationalism, is to preach the unity of the downtrodden and exploited with their "own" exploiters and would-be exploiters. In this view, the Palestinians' allies are to be sought not among the proletariat of the region, but rather among Arab rulers, and,



Reuters

Palestinians at Rafah border crossing with Egypt try to escape Zionist offensive in Gaza concentration camp, July 10.

ing Egyptian talk shows into Gaza. More significantly, the U.S.-armed Egyptian military has sealed its border with Gaza, refusing to allow goods into the Strip or Palestinian refugees into Sinai. *Down with U.S. aid to Egypt!*

There have been protests in many cities against the bloodbath in Gaza. The Spartacist League/U.S. and other national

media dutifully prates that Israelis live in terror of Hamas attacks. In fact in all of 2013, a total of six Israelis were killed—three of them soldiers and all but one in the occupied West Bank, where hundreds of thousands of Zionist settlers, backed up by troops, routinely terrorize Palestinian residents. As for the Hamas rockets and mortars, the number of attacks in 2013 dropped by 97 percent from the previous year according to the Israeli government's own statistics. In fact, some fascistic elements have taken to picnicking in the hill-tops near Gaza—within range of Hamas's rockets. They bring with them lawn chairs, snacks, sodas and beers as they watch the bombardment of Gaza, taking thumbs-up selfies in front of black plumes of smoke and roaring with approval as Israeli missiles and shells hit their targets.

The supposed impetus for the pummeling of Gaza this time around was the kidnapping and killing of three yeshiva students in the West Bank in June. With no evidence whatsoever, Israel immediately declared Hamas guilty, ignoring the latter's denial. It has since come out that the Netanyahu regime knew virtually from the moment they were kidnapped that the yeshiva students were dead. But for 18 days, the government maintained the lie of searching for them in order to build up the hysteria in the country and abroad against Hamas. As calculated, a round of fascistic terror was unleashed against Pal-

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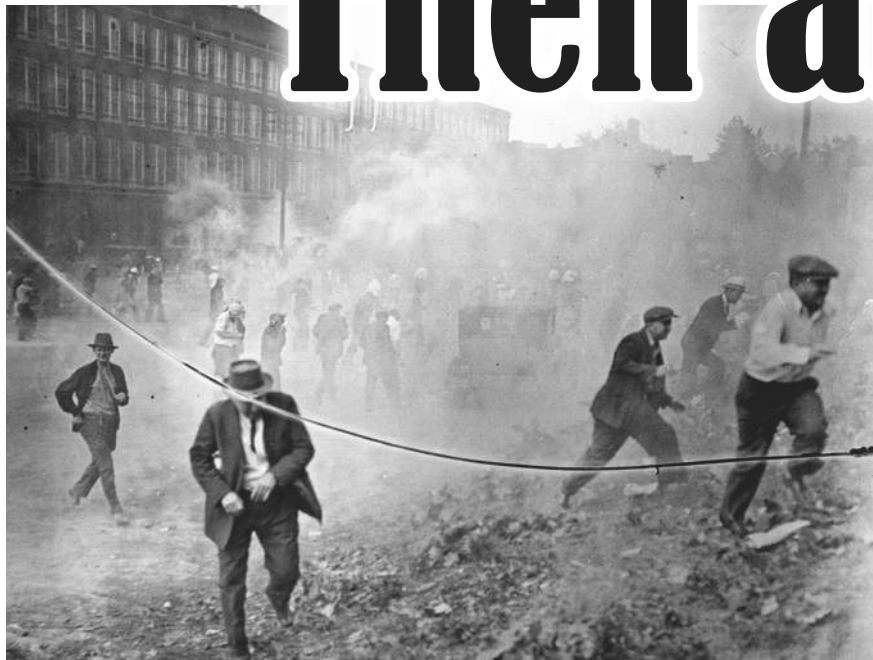
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1934 Strikes

Class-Struggle Leadership Made the Difference

Then and Now



In 1934, four years into the Great Depression, the victory of three citywide strikes—centered on the Teamsters in Minneapolis, auto parts workers in Toledo and longshoremen in San Francisco—would open the door to a mass upsurge of working-class struggle and the organization of powerful industrial unions. Today, six years after the onset of the biggest economic crisis since the Depression, what remains of organized labor in this country

Part One

continues to be pummeled in a one-sided class war. While the bosses and their state relentlessly savage the working class and poor, strike action in the U.S. remains at a historic low.

What accounts for the difference between then and now? A crucial factor is that “reds” led the 1934 strikes. In Minneapolis, the Trotskyists of the Communist League of America (CLA) stood at the head of three strikes by workers in the city’s trucking industry that would help turn this Midwest bastion of the “open shop” into a union town. In the process, a tiny, craft-based Teamsters local was transformed into an industrial union of thousands of workers. In Toledo, the left-wing socialists of A.J. Muste’s American Workers Party (AWP) played a key role in a strike against the Electric Auto-Lite Company. This victory set the stage for the later organization of the United Auto Workers union. In San Francisco, supporters of the Stalinist Communist Party (CP) were leaders of an 83-day strike by longshoremen, together with seamen and other maritime and port workers, culminating in a four-day general strike. Out of this struggle, a coastwide, industrial union of longshore workers was forged.

Today, the trade-union bureaucrats who head the AFL-CIO and Change to Win federations argue that such working-class battles are no longer possible—the economic conditions are too dire, the corporations too powerful, the arsenal of strikebreaking laws too vast: the unions will simply be busted and jobs shipped “offshore.” Yet the 1934 strikes took place amid the most devastating capitalist economic crisis in history. Following the October 1929 stock market crash, workers were paralyzed by fear of losing whatever meager livelihood they had and of being cast into the sea of millions who were unemployed, starving and homeless. By 1933, the membership of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) had plummeted to half of what it had been in 1920.

The AFL unions were craft-based, rein-



Toledo-Lucas County Public Library; SF Public Library; Minnesota Historical Society
1934 citywide strikes led by reds turned the tide for labor. Clockwise from top left: Toledo Auto-Lite strike; San Francisco strike by longshoremen and seamen; Minneapolis Teamsters strike.

forcing workplace divisions that made it easier for the forces of capital to prey on them, and in general represented better-paid, more-skilled workers, while leaving black people and most immigrants out in the cold. The vast majority of workers who labored in the giant auto, steel, rubber and other industries were unorganized and despised by the labor aristocracy that headed the AFL. So loyal were these labor statesmen to the preservation and profitability of American capitalism that in the early days of the Depression they agreed to a “no strike” pledge at the request of the hated Republican Herbert Hoover administration and joined it in opposing any government relief for the unemployed.

But the very conditions that had so devastated and demoralized the workers, setting them one against the other in a fight to survive, would begin to propel them into struggle. In 1933, there was a slight upturn in the economy. The working class had also been given hope, however false, by the 1932 election of Democratic Party president Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his promise to provide “a new deal for the American people.” The following year, a strike wave broke out and the workers began to turn en masse to the very AFL unions that had disdained them, demanding organization.

As CLA leader James P. Cannon wrote in an article at the time:

“The workers are on the move. That is what is new, that is what is important in the situation. The trade union is the first

and most elementary form of working class organization, for which no substitute has ever been invented. The workers have taken the first steps on the path of class development through that door.... No matter how conservative the unions may be, no matter how reactionary their present leadership, and regardless of what the real purposes of the Roosevelt administration were in giving a certain encouragement and impetus to this trade union revival—in spite of all of this, the movement itself represents an elemental force, a power which, properly influenced at the right time by the class conscious vanguard, can break through all the absolute forms and frustrate all the reactionary schemes.”

—“The AFL, the Strike Wave, and Trade Union Perspectives,”
Militant, 14 October 1933

In the 1934 citywide strikes, the rising militancy of the working class would be fused with a leadership equal to the battle. All of these strikes were virtual civil wars pitting the workers against strikebreaking armies of company thugs, cops and National Guard troops. In each case, supposedly “labor friendly” agencies of the capitalist state appealed to the workers to end their strikes with the promise that government mediators would negotiate a “fair agreement.” From within the “house of labor,” the strike leaders had to take on the AFL bureaucrats who did the government’s bidding and had enforced all of the craft, ethnic and racial hostilities that divided the workers and undermined their struggles. What made the difference was that the workers were politically and

organizationally armed by leaders who understood that the only possible road to victory lay in mobilizing their power as a class against the capitalist class enemy.

FDR Was No “Friend of Labor”

The AFL-CIO bureaucracy has long peddled the myth that it was Section 7(a) of the National Industrial Recovery Act (NRA) enacted by FDR’s Democratic Party administration in 1933 that led to the organization of industrial unions—inclusive unions that sought to represent all workers in a given industry. This is a convenient lie, used as an alibi for decades by the union misleaders who have sacrificed strikes and the unions themselves on the altar of class collaboration, from legislative lobbying to getting out the vote for the Democrats. In fact, as its name makes clear, the whole purpose of the NRA was the “recovery” of the profitability of American capitalism. Suspending antitrust laws, it established industrial associations for which the employers set production quotas, working conditions, minimum wages and maximum hours. The result was the consolidation of ever more powerful capitalist monopolies grinding out greater profits through the increasingly brutal exploitation of labor.

Section 7(a), which allowed that “all employees shall have the right to organize and bargain collectively,” was added mainly due to the prodding of John L. Lewis, the dictatorial and sometimes maverick head of the United Mine Workers (UMW) union. While AFL president William Green threw his support behind Section 7(a), he continued to fear any organizing drive that would rupture the “sanctity” of lily-white craft unionism. (Remarking on Green’s intelligence, Lewis once quipped: “Green doesn’t have a head. His neck just grew up and haired over.”)

Thrown in mainly as a sop to labor, Section 7(a) also reflected a growing concern, at least among the more farsighted of America’s capitalist rulers, that the workers were becoming increasingly restive. FDR was certainly the most farsighted among them. Moreover, as a patrician of the landowning elite in the U.S., Roosevelt had fewer reservations about curbing some of the excesses of the industrial and financial magnates of American capitalism—in order to save the system and head off social struggle.

Strike action had already begun to break out earlier in 1933. The millions of unorganized workers who toiled on the assembly lines and in the open hearths were starting to stir with a sense of their numbers and their strategic position as the vital element of U.S. industry. Concerned that the craft-based AFL would not be

able to contain the growing antagonism between labor and capital, Section 7(a) was adopted in a bid to keep these workers under the thumb of the government's loyal labor lieutenants in the AFL bureaucracy.

This seeming concession to labor was designed to lull the workers into the belief that the government would "protect" their interests. To this end, regional labor boards were set up to facilitate government arbitration of any potential conflict. The purpose was to prevent strikes by entangling workers in protracted hearings. The workers who began to pour into the existing AFL unions following the passage of the NRA soon discovered that joining a union was not the same as winning employer recognition or even raising the miserably low wages imposed in every industry by the terms of the NRA.

Throughout the 1933 strike wave, the biggest since the early 1920s, the workers fought with great heroism. But their strikes were betrayed by the AFL tops, who bowed to the dictates of FDR's labor mediators, or broken by armed strikebreakers deployed by the bosses and the government. An ACLU report at the beginning of 1934 summarized the results of Roosevelt's "New Deal" for labor: "At no time has there been such widespread violation of workers' rights by injunctions, troops, private police, deputy sheriffs, labor spies and vigilantes" (*New York Times*, 11 February 1934; cited in Art Preis, *Labor's Giant Step*, 1964).

The resentment of the workers toward the union misleaders grew, while their illusions in FDR began to wane. The brutality of the police and military attacks, and the courage with which the strikers had resisted these offensives, also left its mark on workers' consciousness. These factors were all important preconditions for the further awakening of labor struggle. The avowed socialists who led workers in the Minneapolis trucking industry, longshoremen in San Francisco and auto parts workers in Toledo to victory in 1934 would light the spark.

The Trotskyists, Stalinists and Musteites

Among the leaders of the Minneapolis Teamsters strikes were Carl Skoglund and Vincent Ray Dunne, both longtime labor militants. As a young lumberjack, harvest hand and itinerant laborer in the Pacific Northwest and elsewhere, Dunne had fought side by side with the early pioneers of industrial unionism in the Industrial Workers of the World. In his early years, Skoglund had led a strike for union recognition among pulp mill workers in his native Sweden, where he joined the Social Democratic Party. Blacklisted as a radical for his union and other political activities, Skoglund moved to the U.S. and became a leader of the left-wing of the Scandinavian section of the American Socialist Party. Inspired like many leftist radicals in the U.S. by the 1917 Russian Revolution—the first proletarian insurrection to successfully break the chains of capitalist exploitation—Skoglund became



Brown Brothers

AFL leader Samuel Gompers (right) typified chauvinist craft-union outlook of labor lieutenants of capital.

Liberal icon FDR signs National Industrial Recovery Act, 1933. Roosevelt's reforms were seized upon by the union bureaucracy and reformists of the day to tie labor's fortunes to the capitalist Democratic Party.



Bettmann

a founding member of the Communist Party in 1919 and Dunne joined the next year.

By the late 1920s, an ascendant bureaucracy headed by J.V. Stalin had usurped political power from the working class in the Soviet Union and repudiated the revolutionary internationalist program of Bolshevism. The effect on the American CP and other parties of the Communist International (or Comintern), set up under V. I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky as an organizing center for world revolution, was highly corrosive. In this context, Skoglund, Dunne and two of his brothers, Miles and Grant, were won to the CLA, the fledgling organization of American Trotskyism. Against the degeneration of the Russian Revolution and the American CP, the Trotskyists maintained their commitment to the program and principles of Marxism.

Expelled from the CP, small in number and isolated—and with the mass of workers still paralyzed by fear of the ravages of the Great Depression—the Trotskyists understood that the central task at the time was to regroup, rearm politically, win over the most class-conscious workers and others and prepare for the future class battles they knew would come. As Cannon outlined in a 1932 article:

"The Communist workers are not the working class. They are only its conscious section, and at present in America they are a small and numerically insignificant section. The Communist workers alone cannot fight real class battles. Their function is to fight with the workers and in their front ranks. The task of the Communists at the moment is to prepare the workers for the coming struggles. The center of this task is the 'patient work of explanation'; of agitation and propaganda to win the workers over to a course of struggle."

—"The Threat of Illegality," *Militant*, 19 March 1932

Working as coal drivers for a Minneapolis coal company during the early years of the Depression, Skoglund and the Dunne brothers engaged in the work of "patient explanation" with their coworkers. Over the course of three years, they won a core of workers to the idea of fighting for industrial union organization. Miles Dunne also convinced the president of the tiny Teamsters General Drivers Local 574, Bill Brown, to come on board as part of the voluntary organizing committee the Trotskyists were building. Not your typical AFL official, Brown had good class instincts and was fed up with the no-strike craft unionism enforced by the national leadership of the Teamsters union. Thus was assembled the central cadre of the 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strikes headed by supporters of the Communist League of America.

The Communist Party in the 1930s was a whole different kettle of fish. Founded under the impact of the Russian Revolution by the best of a generation of socialist and other labor radicals in the U.S., the party had lost its Marxist compass in the late 1920s. It was succumbing to the combined pressures of the then-booming prosperity of U.S. capitalism, which sapped the CP's earlier revolutionary confidence, and the corrupting influence of the Kremlin Stalinists. This bureaucratic regime was itself the product of the combined weight on Soviet society of failed revolutionary opportunities in the more advanced countries of the capitalist West, particularly Germany, and years of war and privation.

The Kremlin Stalinists did not eradicate the gains of the October Revolution. Just as the trade unions remain working-class organizations despite their bureaucratic leadership, the Soviet Union remained a workers state. At the same time, just as the union misleaders' collaboration with the bosses has undermined the very existence of organized labor, the rule of the Soviet bureaucracy endangered—and would in the end pave the way for the destruction of—the world's first workers state.

Renouncing the struggle for working-class revolution in other countries, the Soviet bureaucracy pushed the anti-Marxist notion of building "socialism in one country." The Communist parties internationally were transformed into little more than outposts for the policies of the Kremlin in its quest to "coexist" with world imperialism. Along the way, there were many gyrations in the political line of Stalin and his followers, both to the right and the left.

In the late 1920s, Stalin adopted a course of ultraleft adventurism in the face of the implacable hostility of the capitalist world and to cut the ground from under Trotsky's Left Opposition, which fought against the bureaucracy's betrayals. To justify this turn in policy, the Comintern declared that capitalism was entering a so-called "Third Period" of its existence in which the victory of proletarian revolution was supposedly imminent across the globe, a prognosis at odds with social and political reality. The reformist social-democratic workers parties, as well as trade unions internationally, were denounced as "social fascist." In the U.S., the CP abandoned the AFL unions to form largely marginal "revolutionary unions." As a result, the Communists all overwhelmingly found themselves on the sidelines of the labor battles of 1933-34.

On the West Coast, however, the CP's district organizer, Sam Darcy, began to reject the ultraleft idiocies of the Third Period. When longshoremen flooded into the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), an AFL affiliate, following the NRA's passage in 1933, CP supporters and other longshore militants whom Darcy had begun to cohere also joined the union. Known as the Albion Hall group after their meeting place, this circle of maritime workers would become the core leadership of the 1934 longshore strike. Among their number was the strike's most well-known leader, Harry Bridges.

Although Darcy's rejection of the Third Period would presage the CP's coming embrace of the Roosevelt administration, at the time the Stalinists still spoke the language of working-class struggle. A mimeographed newsletter named the *Waterfront Worker* (WFW) that had been produced since 1932 hammered away at illusions in FDR and his NRA labor mediators. It also took on the craft unionism and class-collaboration of the AFL union tops, whose mutual scabbing deals with the employers had set waterfront and maritime workers against each other, contributing to the repeated defeat of strikes. Through the WFW and their leadership of job actions, the CP supporters politically armed and organized longshoremen for battle with the shipping bosses, the government and their agents in the labor movement.

A. J. Muste's organization was a different political animal from either the Trotskyists or the Stalinists. A preacher

and a pacifist, Muste first became a partisan of working-class struggle in 1919, when he served as a leader of a strike by overwhelmingly immigrant textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts. A director of the Brookwood Labor College in Katonah, New York, Muste in 1929 was a key founder of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action (CPLA), whose aim was to pressure the AFL into undertaking "progressive" labor action. Under the impact of the Great Depression, the CPLA moved to the left, reflecting the growing militancy of the workers, and became the core of the American Workers Party, which was founded in 1933.

In the early 1930s, the main work of the CPLA was organizing the unemployed. In Toledo's Lucas County, its Unemployed League led militant mass actions that won cash relief for jobless workers. The CPLA's fight to unite the unemployed behind workers' struggles—as opposed to abandoning the jobless to the bosses, to be recruited as strikebreakers—would be key in turning the tide against the scabs, cops and National Guard troops who were mobilized to smash the Toledo Auto-Lite strike in 1934.

Of the leaderships of the three 1934 citywide strikes, the Trotskyists were the only genuine Marxists. They carried forward the vital task of forging a revolutionary party of the most advanced and class-conscious workers, understanding that only such a party is capable of arming the proletariat with the political consciousness and organization necessary



Labor Age

A.J. Muste circa 1930.

to bury the rule of capitalist exploitation and oppression. As such, the leaders of the Minneapolis Teamsters strikes were the most conscious and farsighted.

Nonetheless, however episodic or transitional, *at the time* both the Stalinists who led the longshore strike and the Musteites in Toledo were committed to a program of class struggle. Unlike other strikes at the time, the militancy of the workers was not restrained by leaders who promoted the lie of a "partnership" between labor and capital. Instead, the mass strength and solidarity of the workers was organized and politically directed by leaders who rejected any notion that the bosses are "reasonable" or their state "neutral." Understanding the forces of the class enemy that would be arrayed against any union struggle, the leaders of these strikes were prepared for class war. And it was no easy fight.

The "Battle of Toledo"

Toledo was a small, low-wage city ravaged by unemployment and dominated by parts manufacturers for Detroit's giant automobile industry. After the passage of the NRA, the AFL tops had begrudgingly chartered temporary cross-trade "federal" unions of assembly line workers. In February, Federal Local 18384 in Toledo struck several parts companies, including Auto-Lite, for a wage increase. Agreeing to submit the dispute to mediation by the local NRA labor board, the AFL bureaucrats called the strike off after six days. Fed up with waiting for the company to negotiate, roughly 500 Auto-Lite workers went on strike again in April.

continued on page 8

Then and Now...
(continued from page 7)

Slammed with a court injunction that limited pickets even as some 1,800 scabs poured into the plant, the strikers appealed for help to the CPLA's Lucas County Unemployed League. Two young League leaders sent a letter to the judge announcing that they would continue to bolster the Auto-Lite picket lines in defiance of the injunction. Arrested, tried and forbidden to resume picketing, the League members and strikers who had packed the courtroom walked straight out and got back on the picket lines. By the end of May, the pickets had swelled to more than 10,000 people.

On May 23, an army of company goons and cops who had been mobilized to escort scabs in and out of the plant let loose with a fusillade of tear gas. The picketers, armed with only bricks and stones, built barricades. Holding their ground, the strikers laid siege to the scabs inside the plant. The police retreated, and 900 National Guardsmen were sent in to provide passage out for the scabs. Firing point blank into the picket lines, the troops killed two workers and wounded 25 more. The six-day "Battle of Toledo" had begun, as the workers fought from rooftops and through alleyways against these troops. By May 31, the company had agreed to release the scabs and shut down production at the plant until strike terms were settled. The demoralized National Guard troops, who had taken many casualties of their own, were also withdrawn.

By that time, all but one of the local AFL unions had voted for a general strike despite the efforts of their leaders to sell union members on turning to Roosevelt for redress. On June 1, 40,000 workers and other strike supporters massed in front of the county courthouse. Three days later, the Auto-Lite bosses capitulated, signing a six-month agreement that included wage increases above the NRA minimum. Most importantly, the union was recognized as the exclusive bargaining agent in the plant, contrary to an earlier ruling by FDR's Automobile Labor Board mandating proportional representation for company unions in union elections. By the end of the year, 19 more auto plants had been organized in Lucas County.

One of the participants in the Toledo battles was Art Preis, a member of the Unemployed League who went on to become a lifelong member of the Socialist Workers Party, a successor of the CLA. As he described in his book Labor's Giant Step (1964):

"It was at this stage, when strike after strike was being crushed, that the Toledo Electric Auto-Lite Company struggle blazed forth to illuminate the whole hori-

zon of the American class struggle. The American workers were to be given an unforgettable lesson in how to confront all the agencies of the capitalist government—courts, labor boards and armed troops—and win."

Among the most enduring lessons from this strike was the role that can be played in workers' struggles by the unemployed when organized and led by class-struggle militants.

The Minneapolis Teamsters Strikes

Many books have been written documenting the events and leadership of the three 1934 strikes that established an industrial union in the Minneapolis trucking industry. These include Teamster Rebellion (1972) by Farrell Dobbs, a young leader of all three strikes who was won to Trotskyism through his experience in the very first of these battles; American City: A Rank and File History of Minneapolis (1937) by Charles Walker; and

most recently, Revolutionary Teamsters (2014) by Bryan Palmer.

In his speech on "The Great Minneapolis Strikes" given some years later, American Trotskyist leader Cannon summed up the central lessons:

"There was no essential difference, in fact I don't think there was any serious difference at all between the strikers in Minneapolis and the workers involved in a hundred other strikes throughout the land in that period. Nearly all the strikes were fought with the greatest militancy by the workers. The difference was in the leadership and the policy. In practically all the other strikes the militancy of the rank-and-file workers was restrained from the top. The leaders were overawed by the government, the newspapers, the clergy, and one thing or another. They tried to shift the conflict from the streets and the picket lines to the conference chambers. In Minneapolis the militancy of the rank and file was not restrained but organized and directed from the top....

"The modern labor movement must be politically directed because it is confronted by the government at every turn.

Our people were prepared for that since they were political people, inspired by political conceptions. The policy of the class struggle guided our comrades; they couldn't be deceived and outmaneuvered, as so many strike leaders of that period were, by this mechanism of sabotage and destruction known as the National Labor Board and all its auxiliary setups. They put no reliance whatever in Roosevelt's Labor Board; they weren't fooled by any idea that Roosevelt, the liberal 'friend of labor' president, was going to help the truck drivers in Minneapolis win a few cents more an hour. They weren't deluded even by the fact that there was at that time in Minnesota a Farmer-Labor Governor, presumed to be on the side of the workers.

—The History of American Trotskyism, 1944

All three of the strikes by workers in the city's trucking industry were carefully organized, as the leadership understood

a springboard for organizing throughout the trucking industry, including not just drivers but also loading dock, warehouse and other inside workers. The Trotskyists were viewed by the ranks as the real leadership of the local and the voluntary organizing committee was voted official union status. Knowing that the February strike was but an opening skirmish, the CLA supporters began to prepare the workers and their allies for the upcoming battles.

For two decades, a cabal of the city's wealthiest and most powerful capitalists, known as the Citizen's Alliance, had been the central force in smashing strikes and keeping unions out. It hired spies and strikebreakers and had the local police force at its command. On the union side, the Trotskyists organized for what they knew would be an all-out war. A city garage was converted into strike headquarters. Arrangements were made for a machine shop to service and repair the trucks and cars deployed as cruising pickets. These vehicles would be dispatched with military precision as strike leaders stayed in contact with picket captains and constantly monitored police radios. Food was served daily at a commissary in the strike headquarters. There was an auditorium for mass meetings. The headquarters also included a field hospital staffed around the clock by doctors and nurses so that injured workers would not have to risk arrest at city hospitals.

Recognizing, as Cannon put it, "that the women have a vital interest in the struggle, no less than the men," the strikers' wives were organized in a women's auxiliary, which became an important part of the strike machinery. The women not only ran many of the operations in strike headquarters but also conducted effective pickets against City Hall and the bourgeois press. Following the example of Toledo, the strike leaders and CLA members appealed to unemployed workers to join the picket lines, while simultaneously organizing for labor to mobilize in defense of the jobless.

All of these measures were taken in a local that was part of one of the most conservative craft unions in the AFL. Teamsters president Daniel Tobin was a bitter and implacable opponent of industrial unionism. But rather than spewing radical rhetoric from outside the AFL, as the Stalinists overwhelmingly did at the time, the Trotskyists had correctly projected that when the workers began to organize they would likely turn to the already established AFL unions. Thus, they were in a position to break the shackles of craft unionism from the inside. As part of the AFL, Local 574 had ready access to other federation affiliates to mobilize solidarity. Inspired by the militancy and determination of the Local 574 strike committee, thousands of workers throughout the city



Women's Auxiliary members serving strikers food in Minneapolis, 1934.

Minnesota Historical Society

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Collage of Workers Vanguard magazine covers and Spartacist pamphlets. Covers include 'Israel Out of the Occupied Territories!', 'Iraq in Flames: Legacy of U.S. Occupation', 'Black History and the Class Struggle', '150 Years Since the Emancipation Proclamation—Finish the Civil War!', 'SPARTACIST', 'Espartaco', and 'La maquinaria de deportaciones de Obama'.

would join the striking workers in action.

The most significant joint action occurred in the early days of the second strike in May. After beating unarmed picketers, including women, to a bloody pulp, the cops and “special deputies” organized by the Citizen’s Alliance made a move to open up the city’s central marketplace to scab trucks. They were met by an army of workers and other strike supporters equipped with baseball bats, clubs and rubber hoses. A two-day battle ensued. At its height, some 20-30,000 stood on Local 574’s side. Scenes of the deputies and then the cops fleeing in terror, in what became known as the “Battle of Deputies Run,” made headline news and were played in newsreels at movie theaters across the country. Audiences of workers cheered; finally, labor was winning one for a change.

In the end, the May strike settlement that was agreed to by the strike leadership and voted up by the membership accorded the union official recognition, not only for the truckers but also for other workers in the industry. Like any other contract agreement, it was a compromise, a truce in the ongoing war between labor and capital. The difference was that the Trotskyists on the Local 574 strike committee knew it. Prepared to continue the fight until victory, they seized on each lull in the struggle to bolster the strength of the pro-union side.

Local 574 was up against not only the forces of the capitalist class enemy but also their agents inside the labor movement in the AFL bureaucracy. Tobin was enraged by the Minneapolis strikes. He

first tried to stop the February strike, but his letter forbidding it only arrived after the strike was successfully concluded. Then, he declared that the May strike was a violation of all of the union’s “laws” and issued a red-baiting tirade against the radical “serpents” in the strike leadership. Such rants were grist for the bosses’ strikebreaking propaganda mills, which went into high gear as the union prepared for its third strike.

Reneging on the May strike settlement, the trucking companies, backed by the Citizen’s Alliance, geared up to crush the union. While the press screamed that the “Communist-led” Teamsters Local 574 was preparing a revolutionary take over of the city, 400 more cops were hired and armed with machine guns and rifles fitted with bayonets. Now over 7,000-strong, Local 574 voted to strike again on July 16.

For the first time in the history of the American labor movement, the workers were guided by their own daily strike newspaper, the *Organizer*. Countering the confusion and demoralization sown by the red-baiting, union-busting barrage that issued from the bosses’ hired media pens, the *Organizer* gave workers the real story and prepared them for struggle. This development was, as James P. Cannon put it, a “crowning contribution” of Trotskyism to the Minneapolis strikes. And Cannon, Max Shachtman and other CLA leaders were on site to help put it out, as well as to give their comrades in the strike leadership vital political backup and guidance.

In the opening days of the July strike,

“Battle of Deputies Run,” Minneapolis, May 1934. Daily strike bulletin, the *Organizer*, helped politically and organizationally arm workers.

Minnesota Historical Society



Cliffites...

(continued from page 3)

League (previously the Workers Party) which depicts the UPA as some sort of pro-socialist force. Max Shachtman, who had been a founder of American Trotskyism alongside James Cannon, broke with Trotskyism amid the anti-Soviet hysteria provoked by the Stalin-Hitler pact and went on to form the Workers Party in 1940.

Recently, the pro-imperialist reformists of the Alliance for Workers Liberty (AWL) reproduced the *New International* article—appropriately, under a Ukrainian national flag—in their efforts to support the current pro-NATO Ukrainian regime and prettify its fascist wing. The AWL’s introduction to this revisionist filth about the UPA claims that the article “tells some of the story of the guerrilla movement in Ukraine in the 1940s against both Hitler and Stalin.” The AWL is fully aware of the UPA’s history, as they admit in their introduction (workersliberty.org, 28 February):

“There are claims that the UPA, reported in the article below as an authentically left-wing movement, was responsible for massacres of Poles and of Jews; there is also counter-claim that the UPA has been the victim of demonisation by the Stalinists, and the UPA certainly was demonised by the Stalinists after they finally suppressed it militarily.”

But the AWL washes its hands of any

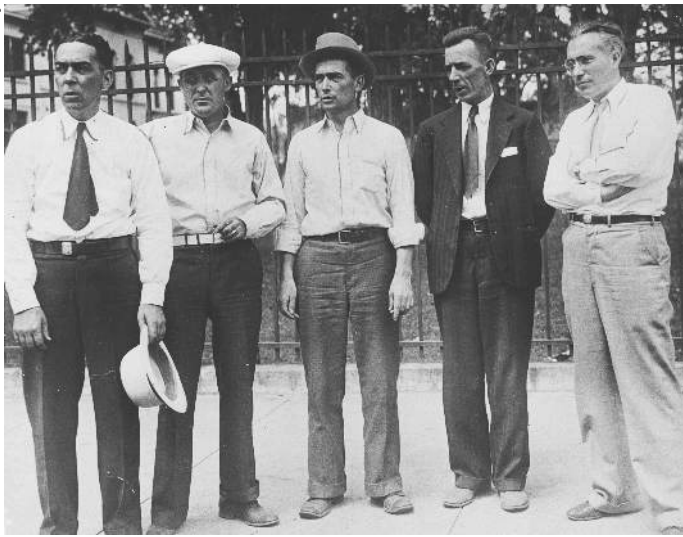
responsibility for publishing this trash with the shameless statement that “whether [the article’s] judgments stand up to the test of further historical research, we are not qualified to judge.” Of course, there have also long been “counterclaims” that the Holocaust did not happen, by Nazis and their sympathisers everywhere.

What Tony Cliff shares with the AWL is their hatred for the Soviet workers state. They supported the “democratic” credentials of the Western imperialists and gave a “socialist” or democratic veneer to forces who worked to undermine the Soviet Union. Support for anti-Soviet forces was at the core of the Cliff tendency from its outset and intrinsic to their support for “democratic” imperialism. In the 1980s the Cliffites hailed as “freedom fighters” the CIA-backed *mujahedin* in Afghanistan—anti-woman Islamic fundamentalist reactionaries fighting the Soviet Red Army who intervened to prop up the modernising Afghan PDPA government. The victory of the *mujahedin* wrought devastation of the country under brutal fundamentalist rule; the treacherous withdrawal of the Red Army strengthened the drive towards capitalist restoration in the USSR which has brought all-sided reaction to the world’s working people.

With the triumph of counterrevolution in 1991-92, fascist groups in Russia and the western Ukraine were emboldened, and so were their leftist apologists. In

Local 574 president Bill Brown (second from left) with Trotskyists in Minneapolis: Grant Dunne (far left), Miles Dunne, Vincent Dunne, Albert Goldman.

Minnesota Historical Society



the cops opened fire on a truck loaded with union pickets. Over 67 were injured, and two later died—striker Henry Ness and unemployed league member John Belor. The city’s workers erupted in outrage, with some 40,000 people turning out for the funeral for Ness. The cops wisely agreed to stay off the streets that day, as the workers themselves provided security for the silent procession to the cemetery.

Federal mediators had been parachuted in from Washington to negotiate an end to the strike. How these and other mediators who were sent in during the May strike were handled by the strike leadership was decisive. Unlike other strike leaders, the Trotskyists were not taken in by the ruse that the Franklin Delano Roosevelt government and its agents were “friends of labor.” As Marxists, they understood that the capitalist state and all its institutions were not neutral but represented and would enforce the interests of the bosses. While the strike leaders met with the mediators, they didn’t give an inch, refusing the concessionary horse-trading deals made behind the backs of the ranks that doomed so many strikes, then and now.

Local 574 leaders also confronted a slick operator in the person of Minnesota’s Farmer-Labor governor, Floyd B. Olson, who commanded the allegiance of the state’s AFL officials. Especially since the governor was adept at posturing as a radical firebrand who supported the workers’ cause, illusions in Olson were widespread among working people. On the eve of the May strike, he sent a written message to a mass meeting of Local 574 and its supporters urging the workers to “band together for your own protection and welfare.” The Trotskyists wanted to get Olson on record in support of the union’s campaign and used his professed solidarity to win broader support for Local 574’s fight. At the same time, they

knew that the Farmer-Labor governor was the executive commander of the capitalist armed forces in Minnesota.

The union leadership had backed Olson off from deploying the National Guard against the May strike, playing on his fear of losing the political support of the labor movement in upcoming elections. But his job as governor of the state was to defend the interests of the bosses. As the July strike unfolded, Olson played his strikebreaking hand.

When the trucking companies rejected a settlement worked out by federal mediators, Olson declared martial law and ordered National Guard troops onto the streets. While the local AFL Labor Council misleaders worried about the potential damage to the governor’s political career, Local 574 rallied thousands of workers behind the call to defy the troops and resume mass pickets. Cannon and Shachtman, who had been arrested by the cops, were among the first turned over to the National Guard. Soon after, the troops invaded strike headquarters, arresting many top strike leaders. Some escaped the dragnet, while other Local 574 members who had been steeled in previous battles took the place of those arrested.

Olson’s aim had been to behead the Trotskyist leadership of the union and force the ranks to elect new leaders who would end the strike. Instead, as Charles Walker wrote in *American City*: “The strike’s conduct had been such that a thousand lesser leaders had come out of the ranks and the pickets themselves by this time had learned their own jobs. The arrest of the leaders, instead of beheading the movement, infused it, at least temporarily, with a demoniac fury.” As mass picketing again resumed, Olson released the imprisoned union leaders and returned the captured strike headquarters to the union. But he did not pull back the National Guard troops.

After five weeks of hard struggle, the employers’ association finally broke and agreed to a settlement. Local 574 became the bargaining agent for 60 percent of the workforce in the city’s trucking industry. In subsequent years, the Trotskyist union militants would organize the remaining truckers in Minneapolis and then embark on a successful organizing drive throughout the Midwest that laid the basis for forging the Teamsters as one of the most powerful industrial unions in the U.S.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

1991, International Communist League representatives withdrew from the editorial board of *Revolutionary History*, an archival publication focusing on the Trotskyist movement. One reason was the desire of a substantial part of the editorial board to publish patently fascist Ukrainian nationalist material. Our resignation letter pointed to the UPA’s all-pervasive anti-Semitism, as described in the memoirs of Mikhail Baitalsky, a Jewish Ukrainian Trotskyist who was imprisoned by Stalin’s bureaucratic regime in the Vorkuta labour camp, where he encountered some of Bandera’s followers in the 1950s. Baitalsky recounted what he learned of the activities of the Banderite cut-throats in Ukraine:

“I will not speak of the fate of the local Jews; you can imagine what happened to them. But Poles also lived there. The Bandera forces butchered, one after another, all the Polish families who had not managed to go into hiding. They slaughtered them not with guns but with sabers. They derived pleasure from hacking up other peoples’ children with their bare hands and massacring women.”

—reprinted in *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* (March 1991)

Our letter continued: “Mikhail Baitalsky didn’t hail the Banderaites as fellow fighters in the struggle against Stalin; we can’t be part of an editorial board which allies with their virtual equivalents in the Soviet Union today” (*Workers Hammer* No. 122, April 1991).■

A Spartacist Pamphlet

Karl Marx Was Right

Capitalist Anarchy
and the
Immiseration of the Working Class

For Workers Revolution!
For an International Planned Socialist Economy!

AUSTRALIA...AUS BRITAIN...UK CANADA...CAN DENMARK...DEN GERMANY...GER GREECE...GRE IRELAND...IRE ITALY...ITA JAPAN...JPN POLAND...POL SOUTH AFRICA...SA SWITZERLAND...SWE USA...USA

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Refugees...

(continued from page 12)

El Norte, sometimes on their own (many hoping to reunite with parents or other relatives already living in the U.S.). Once in the U.S., large numbers of these young refugees seek permanent residency by applying for asylum or Special Immigrant Juvenile status based on the very real fear of being killed at home. Pursuing asylum involves a tortuous process, and there is no guarantee that it will be granted. For example, gang-related violence and sexual abuse are not considered grounds for asylum.

The Central American refugees should be freed from detention immediately and allowed to stay, whether by being granted asylum or through any other means. The very same U.S. capitalist rulers who plunder Central America turn the screws on workers and the oppressed at home. Defense of immigrants is of vital interest for the labor movement and all fighters against racist discrimination. Everyone who makes it into this country, no matter their age or reason, should be entitled to all the rights of those born here. Our demand is for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, including the right to a U.S. passport and free education. *No deportations! Free all the detainees!*

U.S. Imperialism’s “Backyard”

The U.S. capitalist rulers have long considered Latin America their own backyard. During the first three decades of the 20th century, U.S. troops intervened in Central American and Caribbean countries on nearly 20 occasions. In the military’s baggage train rode the representatives of giant U.S. corporations, such as the United Fruit Company. In Guatemala, Honduras and other countries derisively referred to as “banana republics,” United Fruit’s will was law. In Guatemala, Washington engineered the 1954 overthrow of bourgeois-populist president Jacobo Arbenz, who had attempted to nationalize some of United Fruit’s land and implement other reforms.

During the 1980s, the U.S. financed, trained and gave intelligence to murderous death squad regimes throughout Central America, which targeted leftists, trade-union and peasant leaders and others. The dirty wars were part of the imperialist Cold War II drive for the counter-revolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, a degenerated workers state, and for rolling back the gains of the Cuban Revolution, viewing leftist insurgents as Soviet and Cuban proxies. In the U.S., the anti-Soviet war drive found domestic reflection in the escalation of attacks on the unions and black people.

In Guatemala, some 200,000 people—mostly Mayan peasants—were killed and another 45,000 “disappeared” over the course of more than three decades of armed conflict. Honduras was a staging ground for the U.S.-backed *contra* counterrevolutionaries who sought the bloody overthrow

When Children Are the Enemy

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

The following commentary was transcribed from a July 14 prisonradio.org recording.

I’ve been watching for days now as media reports display the growing hatred at the arrival of Central American children across the Mexican border.

American voices crackle with bile as they begin the drumbeat for their immediate deportation.

Vile names are called against them, and they are described as “invaders,” “sick” and “dirty.”

In truth, they are refugees from want and war, almost all the result of U.S. interventions in Central America in support of murderous military regimes and the mindless drug war.

These are the grandchildren of NAFTA, the economic policy which leached wealth from Mexico and its neighbors.

That said, this antipathy shown towards children is deeply disturbing.

It reminds me of the era of the Second World War, when a bill was submitted in Congress to allow the entry of thousands of Jewish children. The Wagner-Rogers bill would’ve saved 20,000 kids living in Germany, but President FDR,

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, opposed it—and the bill died.

Actually, many U.S. elites opposed it, including Roosevelt’s cousin, Laura Delano Houghteling. She was the wife of the U.S. immigration commissioner, who argued, “20,000 charming children would all too soon grow into 20,000 ugly adults.”

Such crude racism portrays the ugliness of Americans, and the day will come when we will look back at how these children are treated today—and we will not feel pride.

This frenzy, this political and social fear whipped up by petty, ambitious politicians will yet pass.

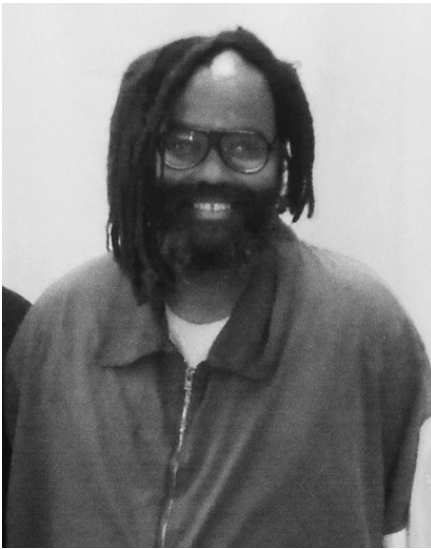
But left behind will be our shame at how a nation that claims so much greatness, can be so small—and so cruel.

From imprisoned nation, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

©2014 Mumia Abu-Jamal

* * *

Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther, renowned journalist and supporter of the Philadelphia MOVE organization, is America’s foremost class-war prisoner. Framed up because of his political views on



CSDN

false charges of killing a Philly cop, Mumia spent almost 30 years on death row. Since December 2011, he has been condemned to life in prison with no chance of parole.

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



Willms/NY Times

Military police conduct raid last month in impoverished Honduran city of San Pedro Sula, which has the highest murder rate in the world.

of Nicaragua’s left-nationalist Sandinista government. The U.S. also enlisted the Honduran military in its efforts to smash the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front—a large left-wing guerrilla insurgency that fought against the U.S.-backed military junta in El Salvador.

The tide of migration to the U.S. from Central America dates back to the dirty wars. At the time, thousands of Salva-

dorans seeking refuge in the U.S. were deported back to the clutches of the execution squads. We demanded asylum for all those fleeing right-wing terror. In contrast to refugees escaping the bloody horror of U.S.-backed regimes, Washington has always welcomed into the country the scum of the earth, not least Cuban counterrevolutionary *gusanos*.

Further upsurges in migration to the U.S. followed the imposition of NAFTA on Mexico in 1994 and the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) a decade later, each of which caused the economic dislocation of millions. Earlier, the International Monetary Fund and other imperialist agencies had dictated “debt restructuring” programs that axed agricultural subsidies as well as social welfare programs. NAFTA and CAFTA drove even more peasants off the land and into urban squalor by removing protections against U.S.-produced corn and beans, the mainstays of the diet of the poor and the key staples grown by peasants. This misery was exacerbated by the 2008 global economic crisis touched off by U.S. finance capital, which led to mass layoffs in the *maquiladora* factories as demand for consumer goods dried up.

From the beginning, we opposed the NAFTA “free trade” rape of Mexico and its CAFTA equivalent because they loot the economies of the semicolonial countries, increasing the stranglehold of the U.S. overlords. This proletarian internationalist perspective is in sharp contrast

to the national chauvinist standpoint of the AFL-CIO union bureaucracy, which denounced NAFTA for supposedly threatening American jobs.

In Honduras, the conditions for workers and the urban and rural poor have significantly worsened since the Zelaya regime was toppled. Murder is through the roof, gangs are running rampant and spending on public housing, health and education has been slashed. Elected president in 2005, the wealthy landowner Zelaya adopted some palliative measures to head off social unrest and moved to align the country with Hugo Chávez’s Venezuela. These steps infuriated the U.S. and a large sector of the Honduran bourgeoisie, which succeeded in ousting him in the 2009 coup. The Obama administration has fully supported the post-coup regimes and continues to pour funds into the Honduran police and military.

Down With the “War on Drugs”!

In a July 25 meeting with the leaders of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras to address the child refugee crisis, President Obama praised the efforts of his Central American counterparts to stem the flow of migrants but urged them to do more. Since 2008, Washington has dramatically increased aid and training for law enforcement in those countries under the banner of the “war on drugs.”

Both the anti-drug war and the “war on gangs” are pretexts for the broad militarization of the region. This crackdown has heightened the violence and intensified repression against the working class and the urban and rural poor. In the bulk of countries where the government is purportedly fighting *narcoviolencia*, the entire state apparatus is thoroughly interpenetrated with the drug cartels, with everyone from politicians to cops up to their necks in the booming drug trade.

We Marxists are opposed to the “war on drugs,” which is a cover for imperialist military intervention across Latin America and has meant the sowing of murderous terror in poor neighborhoods and rural districts throughout the region. In the U.S., the “war on drugs” has for decades fueled the mass incarceration of black people and, increasingly, Latinos and immigrants. Likewise, the “war on gangs” further criminalizes poor and working-class youth and adds to the capitalist state’s repressive powers.

In Central America, the massive influx of ruined peasants to the cities has created fertile ground for the rise of the “informal economy.” With their traditional



Reuters

U.S. secretary of defense Chuck Hagel and Guatemalan president Otto Pérez Molina supervise military exercise in Guatemala City, April 25.

NYPD...

(continued from page 12)

a show of cleaning things up. Even then, the cops almost always get just a slap on the wrist.

One of Garner’s friends put it bluntly the day after the killing: “There ain’t no justice.” Not for the black masses, not for the unemployed, not for working people. The justice system *does* work for the tiny class of capitalists, who reap obscene profits from an economic system built on the vicious exploitation of labor and the brutal oppression of black people. The cops are the front-line defenders of that system. In Albuquerque, New Mexico, police have been blowing away Latinos and homeless white people who, like the black poor, have been thrown onto capitalism’s scrap heap.

It doesn’t matter which capitalist party, Democratic or Republican, runs the machinery of state violence, or how many civilian review boards or similar white-wash schemes are in place. The most notorious cases of New York cop terror bear this out: black graffiti artist Michael Stewart (beaten to death—1983); infirm black grandmother Eleanor Bumpurs (shotgun—1984); Anthony Baez (choke hold—1994); Amadou Diallo (41 bullets—1999); Alberta Spruill (heart attack caused by a concussion grenade—2003); Sean Bell (50 rounds—2006); Kimani Gray (seven bullets—2013). The truth is that such murderous, systematic repression will end only when the multiracial working class, whose labor makes this society run, seizes power and sweeps away the entire racist capitalist system and its police enforcers.

Now there is Eric Garner, a casualty of Mayor Bill de Blasio’s police “reforms.” De Blasio was elected in November based on promises to rein in stop-and-frisk, which has tormented hundreds of thousands of blacks and Latinos, and to champion working people and the middle class against the finance and real estate barons. In “De Blasio: Liberal Populist Face of Capitalist Politics” (WV No. 1032, 18 October 2013) we warned that any hopes he generated would be cruelly dashed, writing: “Whatever posture he takes today and whatever palliatives he may dole out, de Blasio as mayor will be charged with managing the finance capital of U.S. imperialism on behalf of the Wall Street plutocrats and real estate barons who run the city.”

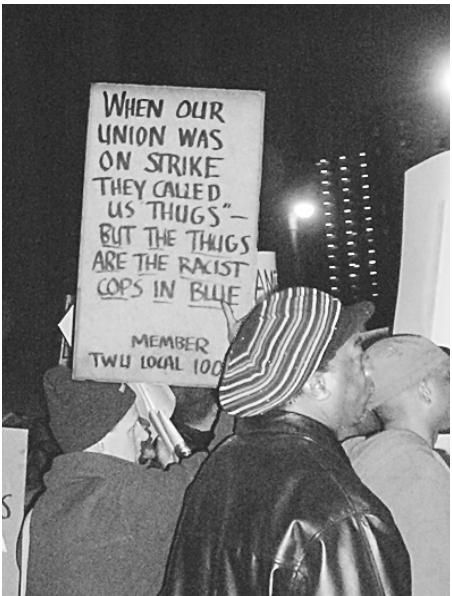
De Blasio never called for scrapping stop-and-frisk, only for its reform. Under Bratton’s “broken windows” clampdown on petty violations—an approach he honed as commissioner under racist pig mayor Giuliani in the 1990s—the NYPD is *stepping up* racist harassment, and worse. Now arrests are skyrocketing for everything from dancing for money in the subways to rolling a joint on your stoop. This will only *accelerate* the criminalization of black youth and others suffering such arrests, who in Bratton’s eyes are just closet felons anyway. Meanwhile, cops continue to wantonly use the choke hold, even though it’s supposedly been banned. Eric Garner was victimized by “broken windows.” So was Rosan Miller, a seven-months-pregnant black woman in East New York, Brooklyn, who was put in a choke hold by an NYPD thug on July 26 for the “crime” of grilling food on the sidewalk!

Reverend Al Sharpton, who has led some of the protests over Garner’s killing, has announced plans for a mass march across the Verrazano Bridge on August 23. Make no mistake: As always, his role in getting in front of the anger over cop terror is to contain and channel it into appeals to the same “justice” system that gives the cops a license to kill. Sharpton, who decades ago wore a wire for the Feds, demands a federal “investigation” into Garner’s killing when the whole world saw an execution by the cops on the street.

In his current role as a prominent Democratic politician with ins to City Hall and the White House, Sharpton acts as a tool of the racist capitalist rulers. A longtime aide of Sharpton, Rachel Noerdlinger, is now a principal adviser to de Blasio and his wife, playing a key role in the mayor’s handling of the outrage over Garner.

Echoing Sharpton’s calls for reliance on the “justice” system is the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO). In *Socialist Worker* (22 July), the ISO pushes a petition calling on de Blasio, Bratton and the Staten Island district attorney to conduct “a thorough and fair investigation” so that Garner’s killers are “held accountable.” The cops *are* accountable: to the capitalist class that pays them to enforce its rule and protect its profits against workers and the oppressed. The ISO positively reports demands by “New Yorkers Against Bratton” for a federal investigation into the NYPD’s “culture of brutality” and for “community control of the police.” Sowing the dangerous illusion that the rulers can be pressured to cede control of the police to the very people the cops are paid to repress, the reformists reinforce the chains that bind the working class and minorities to the capitalist *injustice* system.

Anger over cop terror needs an organized, militant expression—one that can link the ghetto and barrio masses with the social power of the working class. Racist



WV Photo
December 2006 NYC protest against killing of Sean Bell, gunned down by NYPD in hail of 50 bullets.

police brutality is an integral part of the capitalist system. But a massive mobilization of labor could give the cops pause. To achieve this requires a political struggle against the craven labor bureaucracy, which has shackled the potential power of the unions and sped their decline through its loyalty to the profit system and its ties to the Democratic Party.

Eric Garner was from a “transit family.” His mother, Gwen Carr, is a subway train operator. His sister, Elisha Flagg, is a bus driver, and his niece is a subway car cleaner. Each belongs to the 35,000-strong Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100. A number of transit workers attended Garner’s wake and funeral. But the Local 100 leadership has done nothing to organize solidarity with their grieving members. No doubt this is in deference to the TWU tops’ “brothers” in the cop “unions.” Make no mistake—cops, prison guards and security guards are not workers but their mortal enemies. They have no place in the labor movement.

What is needed is a class-struggle leadership that will get the unions off their knees and mobilize the workers at the head of all the exploited and oppressed. Linked to the anger of the ghettos, the proletariat, with its heavy concentration of black workers, has the social power to end the rule of racist capitalism through socialist revolution. The crucial task is to build the revolutionary workers party needed to lead the proletariat to victory. ■



WV Photo
Elisha Flagg, sister of Eric Garner, with Garner’s wife and Al Sharpton, at packed Staten Island press conference two days after Garner was killed.

livelihoods destroyed by imperialist “free trade,” many people in Latin America have few ways of making a living other than cultivating, selling and transporting drugs or emigrating. We call for the decriminalization of drugs and for all U.S. military forces and bases out of Latin America and the Caribbean. By removing the superprofits that come with the illegal drug trade, decriminalization would also reduce crime and violence.

Immigration and Capitalist Society

Seeking to capitalize on sympathy for the child refugees, some Democrats are again playing the “friend of immigrants” card in advance of the midterm elections. And liberals have been busy pressuring Obama to bypass Congress and issue an executive order to implement immigration “reform.” We would welcome any measure that actually grants some rights or legal protections to immigrants. But nothing the administration has put on the table would actually ameliorate their plight.

Bipartisan reform proposals backed by the White House have aimed to create a completely vulnerable layer of the population made to pay large sums of money for the privilege of working for a pittance with no job protection, no assured immigration status, no democratic rights and no right to any kind of welfare. This purpose is in line with the interests of a section of the American bourgeoisie that wants to preserve a cheap and defenseless immigrant labor pool—the better to sow divisions in the working class. The bour-

geoisie’s more nativist wing rails against illegal “invaders” and “criminals” crossing the border, painting immigrants as a burden on the labor market, housing and health care.

Both sides agree on strengthening enforcement. The expansion of Border Patrol infrastructure and militarization of *la frontera* have proceeded under the current administration at an unprecedented rate, forcing immigrants to seek ever more dangerous routes into the country. Since 2010, border agents have killed at least 28 immigrants. In 2012, a 16-year-old Mexican boy was shot eight times in the back and killed by U.S. border guards who claim he was “throwing rocks” while walking in Nogales *on the Mexican side of the border*. If caught by the Feds, immigrants are hauled off to facilities marked by wretched conditions. Hundreds of detainees at the Northwest Detention Center outside Tacoma, Washington, have carried out a series of hunger strikes this year, protesting deportations as well as their dire situation, which includes being forced into virtual slave labor.

Immigrants are not just victims but form a key and vibrant component of the U.S. working class. Workers must combat the poisonous attempts of the bosses to pit those born in the U.S. against immigrants, many of whom fill some of the most dangerous and undesirable jobs. Organizing these workers into the unions is crucial to the revitalization of the labor movement. The starting point in the fight against the exploitation of workers and oppression of immigrants, as well as against anti-black

racism, is recognizing that the workers and the capitalists do not share a common “national interest.” The working class can only better its position by allying with the oppressed in *class struggle* against its “own” ruling class. Such a perspective is anathema to the union bureaucracy, which is ever loyal to capitalism and its political representatives, especially the Democrats.

What we need is workers revolution to replace the crisis-ridden capitalist profit system with a planned, socialized

economy on an international scale. Only socialist revolution can put an end to the growing immiseration of the toiling masses—both in dependent capitalist countries like Mexico and Honduras and in the imperialist centers. When the working class runs society, basic necessities like housing, health care and jobs will not be something people have to desperately risk their lives for. The violence, poverty and misery endemic to the imperialist order will be a mere chapter of the past. ■

Programmatic Statement
of the Spartacist League/U.S.

For a Workers Party
That Fights for a Workers Government!

**For Socialist Revolution
in the Bastion
of World Imperialism!**

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Organizational Rules and Guidelines
of the Spartacist League/U.S.

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Children Flee U.S.-Made Hellholes Central American Refugees: Let Them Stay!

From last October through June, the Border Patrol seized over 57,000 unaccompanied children along the U.S. border with Mexico, more than double the total for the previous 12 months. This surge is the continuation of a three-year trend in migration of youth, overwhelmingly from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. The horrific violence and grinding poverty that these refugees are fleeing are the direct result of U.S. imperialist domination of Central America. The social fabric of countries there has been ripped apart in recent decades, by everything from the U.S.-engineered dirty wars of the 1980s to the increased militarization in the name of the “war on drugs” and the economic ruination brought about by U.S.-imposed “free trade” agreements.

The exposure in June of immigrant youth packed like sardines in overflowing detention facilities reignited the political debate over immigration “reform.” Republicans and right-wing media pundits took the opportunity to attack Obama for being “soft” on immigration. A reactionary frenzy was whipped up in various border cities, most dramatically in Murrieta, California, where a mob that included Minutemen types and neo-Nazis blocked busloads of immigrants and spewed anti-immigrant vitriol. Several towns and counties have adopted or are weighing resolutions barring emergency housing of immigrants.

President Obama has emphasized that the thousands of child refugees *won't* be



Immigrants in overcrowded detention facility in South Texas.

Office of Rep. Henry Cuellar

Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!

able to remain in the country. In a June 27 interview, he scolded the parents: “Do not send your children to the borders,” adding, “If they do make it, they’ll get sent

back.” The “Deporter in Chief”—who has set a record by deporting over two million immigrants during his presidency—appealed to Congress for \$3.7 billion in

emergency aid, most of which is intended to strengthen border control and speed up deportations.

To this end, Obama is set on amending a 2008 anti-child-trafficking act signed by George W. Bush. This law allows children from Mexico to be expelled immediately, but requires children from non-bordering countries like those of Central America to be turned over to the Department of Health and Human Services. They are then supposed to be given an immigration hearing or be released to relatives in the U.S. Now the White House wants to grant the Border Patrol the power to throw these children out of the country as quickly as possible without access to legal counsel.

In mid July, the president had nearly 100 women and children deported to the Honduran city of San Pedro Sula, the murder capital of the world. Since the U.S.-backed military overthrow of the Honduran bourgeois-populist Manuel Zelaya in 2009, the country has endured the world’s highest murder rate. (El Salvador and Guatemala also consistently rank in the top five.) In the first half of this year, there were 3,000 murders in Honduras, a country of only eight million people, approximately the population of New York City.

Desperate parents, facing what they see as near-certain death for their children at the hands of either criminal gangs or the vicious police and military, do anything they can to enable their kids to escape. Children are sent on the perilous journey to

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NYPD “Broken Windows”: License to Kill Outrage over Cop Choke-Hold Killing of Eric Garner

They can’t cover this one up: Eric Garner, a 43-year-old black Staten Island man, assaulted and choked to death by a gang of “New York’s finest” on July 17. They squeezed the life out of Garner as he said over and over, “I can’t breathe!” While one of the killers applied a choke hold, another pinned Garner’s chest to the ground with his knee. As cops swarmed over the scene, paramedics arrived but did nothing to save Garner’s life. Cellphone videos caught it all and quickly went viral, helping create simmering rage at yet another NYPD racist killing.

Eyewitnesses exposed the NYPD’s lies from the get-go. The cops said that Garner had resisted arrest for selling loose cigarettes, which is how he made some money after his asthma forced him to quit his parks department job. As everyone at the scene outside Tompkinsville Park saw, Garner, a large man, had just broken

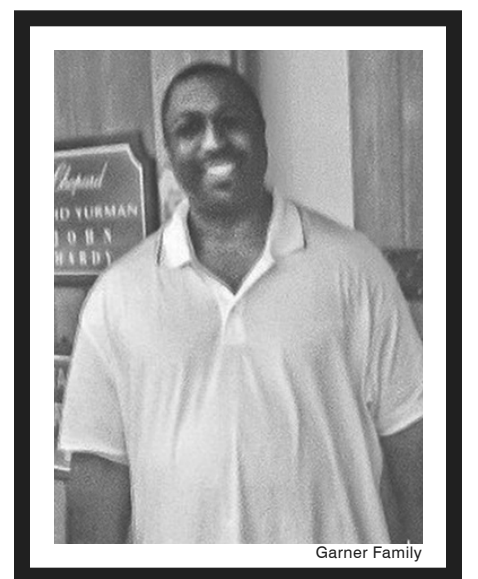
up a fight between two youths. The next day, people crowded around a makeshift memorial expressed to *Workers Vanguard* their bitter anger at the killing of a popular local figure. Known for buying food and clothes for the down-and-out, Garner, a father of six, was “a giant teddy bear,” as one acquaintance put it.

“It stops today!” These words, among Garner’s last as he was set upon by the NYPD, quickly became a rallying cry for all those fed up with daily humiliation and brutalization at the hands of the cops. Protests over Garner’s killing, held repeatedly since July 17, have drawn hundreds at most. But anger at the NYPD is palpable. Garner’s funeral in Brooklyn turned into a spontaneous street protest when the turnout overflowed the church.

Two days after the cops killed Garner, protesters outside the 120th Precinct booed a local politician off the platform

when he said that “we are supported by the precinct.” Chants of “1-2-0” and “fuck the police” told the real story. The 120th precinct is notorious for treating the North Shore, where the borough’s black and Latino minorities are concentrated, as a hunting ground. In late July, the family of Irving Mizell filed a suit charging cops with killing the 52-year-old man last year by dragging him down seven flights of stairs and beating him. He was “screaming he couldn’t breathe,” Mizell’s brother told the *Staten Island Advance* (31 July). “His cries fell on deaf ears, just like Mr. Garner’s, and he died in that precinct.”

Now the cops are looking for payback for the most widely publicized video of Garner’s brutal killing, taken by his friend Ramsey Orta. Just days after Police Commissioner William Bratton lashed out at people causing “interference” with the cops by videotaping arrests, police



Garner Family

arrested Orta on gun possession charges. **Free Ramsey Orta now! Drop all charges!**

The medical examiner’s ruling that Garner died due to a choke hold combined with chest compression has increased pressure on prosecutors to arrest Daniel Pantaleo, the cop caught on video strangling Garner. No question: Pantaleo and his cohorts are guilty as hell. But the killer cops get off time and again. By the lights of the racist capitalist rulers, the cops are just “doing their job” when they snuff out lives in the ghettos and barrios. In very rare cases, local authorities or the

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