

Israel Out of East Jerusalem, West Bank!



AFP

October 8: Heavily armed Israeli soldiers confront desperate Palestinian protesters in West Bank village of Tuqa.

Defend the Palestinians!

Over the past several weeks, Israel's murderous military apparatus and its armed settler auxiliaries have killed at least 60 Palestinians—many of them teenagers—and wounded some 2,000. The Zionist overlords have unleashed an intensified crackdown in the Occupied Territories—imposing more checkpoints, placing Palestinian neighborhoods on lockdown, dispatching thousands more soldiers and police and inciting lynch mobs in the streets. Such routine tactics are aimed at terrorizing and demoralizing the already besieged Palestinian population. Expressing the sense of utter isolation and imprisonment among the 4.8 million Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza, one 25-year-old student from Jenin remarked, "We must get out of this situation—even if it costs us everything."

The latest onslaught was prepared when Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu moved to restrict Palestinian access to East Jerusalem's Al Aqsa mosque, the third-holiest site in the Muslim world and a religious and cultural gathering space for Palestinians in the city. Seizing on a handful of atomized attacks by Palestinian assailants armed with knives and screwdrivers, the Israeli government sealed off the 300,000 Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem with concrete walls, demolished homes and revoked residency status for the families of alleged Palestinian attackers—essentially, as one commentator for the 972mag.com newsletter noted, "carving up and crushing the Palestinian expanse without any consideration for everyday life or for a possible future compromise."

This is Netanyahu's response to those who retain any remnant of hope that even the most constricted and peripheral sliver of East Jerusalem will ever be the capital of an "independent" Palestine. Since its conquest and annexation in the 1967 Arab-



Reuters

Wounded Palestinians arrested by Israeli soldiers near Jewish settlement of Bet El, in the Occupied Territories near Ramallah, October 7.

Israeli war, Jewish settlers have flooded into East Jerusalem and taken over more and more of the city from its original Palestinian residents, who are not even nominal citizens of Israel. This history of evictions has been repeatedly punctuated by acts of Zionist state and ultrarightist Jewish terror, aimed particularly at Al Aqsa (which is part of the complex that Israelis call the Temple Mount, the holiest site in Judaism). Within months of first becoming prime minister in 1996, Netanyahu presided at the opening of a tunnel under the mosque, inciting a bloodbath in which 62 Palestinians were slaughtered. Four years later, the supposedly more liberal regime of Ehud Barak provided an armed escort for notorious racist butcher Ariel Sharon as he staged a provocative visit to the Al Aqsa compound, which helped spark the second Palestinian *intifada* (uprising). Now many are speculating about a "third *intifada*."

The first *intifada*, launched in late 1987, was a deepgoing and popular organized rising by Palestinian youth who were fed up with decades of vacuous United Nations resolutions, cynical promises of Arab "solidarity" and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leadership's passivity in the face of Zionist expansion. Yet despite several years of valorous and self-sacrificing struggle, the oppressed Palestinian masses ended up with only the miserable Oslo "peace" accords of 1993. Oslo gave birth to the PLO-controlled Palestinian Authority, a national "leadership" tasked with policing its own people on behalf of the Israeli occupiers, thus acting as subcontractors for the Zionist state.

In the intervening years, the ghetto walls have grown insurmountable and the Palestinian people have been driven ever deeper into misery and national humiliation. Well over half of the West Bank has been con-

fiscated from Palestinians or closed off to them, and 80 percent of the population of Gaza is dependent on humanitarian aid for its survival. Under the pretext of curbing Hamas, the Islamic fundamentalist rulers of Gaza who accrued authority as a result of the PLO's betrayals, Israel has repeatedly launched devastating attacks on the tiny Gaza Strip. Last year, nearly 2,200 largely defenseless Palestinians were slaughtered and 10,000 wounded. Gaza today is little more than a large detention camp with around 100,000 homeless residents, demolished buildings and wrecked infrastructure, all surrounded by an electrified fence.

The recent suicidal "lone wolf" stabbings are a reflection of the intense despair and frustration felt by the current generation of Palestinians. Some of the recent attacks by Palestinians have targeted Zionist agents of the occupying force: soldiers, police and their settler auxiliaries. But the indiscriminate killings of Israeli civilians are, from the standpoint of the proletariat, criminal acts of terror. Moreover, the stabbing attacks serve only to provide a further pretext for murderous Zionist repression. Such attacks reinforce the bunker state mentality that binds Israeli Jewish working people to their own exploiters and thus set back the cause of Palestinian emancipation.

The only salvation for the Palestinian people lies in the Marxist road of proletarian internationalism: the fight for workers revolutions and a socialist federation of the Near East in which Palestinian Arabs, Israeli Jews and all the other peoples of the region will find national and social justice. So long as the struggle remains on nationalist or religious terrain, the Palestinians can only lose out to the more technologically advanced Zionist state, which

continued on page 10



Greece: For Workers Struggle Against Austerity!...6

“Karl Marx” by V.I. Lenin

We print below the fifth installment of “Karl Marx” by Lenin. The first four segments of this series, which described Marx’s philosophical and economic doctrines, were published in WV Nos. 1073-1076 (4 and 18 September and 2 and 16 October). This selection outlines the necessary replacement of capitalism by socialist society and the subsequent withering away of the state.

PART FIVE

Socialism

From the foregoing it is evident that Marx deduces the inevitability of the transformation of capitalist society into socialist society wholly and exclusively from the economic law of the development of contemporary society. The socialisation of labour, which is advancing ever more rapidly in thousands of forms and has manifested itself very strikingly, during the half-century since the death of Marx, in the growth of large-scale production, capitalist cartels, syndicates and trusts, as well as in the gigantic increase in the dimensions and power of finance capital, provides the principal material foundation for the inevitable advent of socialism. The intellectual and moral motive force and the physical executor of this transformation is the proletariat, which has been trained by capitalism itself. The proletariat’s struggle against the bourgeoisie, which finds expression in a variety of forms ever richer in content, inevitably becomes a political struggle directed towards the conquest of political power by the proletariat (“the dictatorship of the proletariat”). The socialisation of production cannot but lead to the means of production becoming the property of society, to the “expropriation of the expropriators.” A tremendous rise in labour productivity, a shorter working day, and the replacement of the remnants, the ruins, of small-scale, primitive and disunited production by collective and improved labour—such are the direct consequences of this transformation. Capitalism breaks for all time the ties between agriculture and industry, but at the same time, through its highest development, it prepares new elements of those ties, a union between industry and agriculture based on the conscious application of science and the concentration of collective labour, and on a redistribution of the human population (thus putting an end both to rural backwardness, isolation and barbarism, and to the unnatural concentration of vast masses of people in big cities). A new form of family, new conditions in the status of women and in the upbringing of the younger gener-



V. Deni and M. Cheremnykh

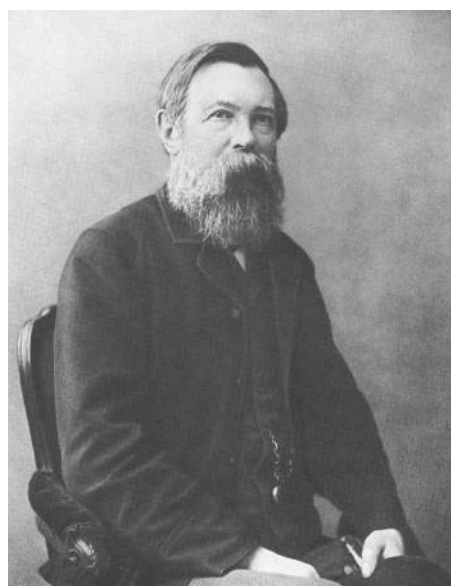
1920 Soviet poster shows Lenin sweeping away kings, priests and capitalists.

ation are prepared by the highest forms of present-day capitalism: the labour of women and children and the break-up of the patriarchal family by capitalism inevitably assume the most terrible, disastrous, and repulsive forms in modern society. Nevertheless, “modern industry, by assigning as it does, an important part in the socially organised process of production, outside the domestic sphere, to women, to young persons, and to children of both sexes, creates a new economic foundation for a higher form of the family and of the relations between the sexes. It is, of course, just as absurd to hold the Teutonic-Christian form of the family to be absolute and final as it would be to apply that character to the ancient Roman, the ancient Greek, or the Eastern forms which, moreover, taken together form a series in historic development. Moreover, it is obvious that the fact of the collective working group being composed of individuals of both sexes and all ages, must necessarily, under suitable conditions, become a source of humane development; although in its spontaneously developed, brutal, capitalistic form, where the labourer exists for the process of production, and not the process of production for the labourer, that fact is a pestiferous source of corruption and slavery” (*Capital*, Vol. I, end of Chap. 13). The factory system contains “the germ of the education of the future, an education that will, in the case of every child over a given age, combine productive labour with instruction

and gymnastics, not only as one of the methods of adding to the efficiency of social production, but as the only method of producing fully developed human beings” (*ibid.*). Marx’s socialism places the problems of nationality and of the state on the same historical footing, not only in the sense of explaining the past but also in the sense of a bold forecast of the future and of bold practical action for its achievement. Nations are an inevitable product, an inevitable form, in the bourgeois epoch of social development. The working class could not grow strong, become mature and take shape without “constituting itself within the nation,” without being “national” (“though not in the bourgeois sense of the word”). The development of capitalism, however, breaks down national barriers more and more, does away with national seclusion, and substitutes class antagonisms for national antagonisms. It is, therefore, perfectly true of the developed capitalist countries that “the workingmen have no country” and that “united action” by the workers, of the civilised countries at least, “is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat” (*Communist Manifesto*). The state, which is organised coercion, inevitably came into being at a definite stage in the devel-

in any way, but merely modifies its form (the links between the government and the stock exchange, the corruption—direct and indirect—of officialdom and the press, etc.). By leading to the abolition of classes, socialism will thereby lead to the abolition of the state as well. “The first act,” Engels writes in *Anti-Dühring*, “by virtue of which the state really constitutes itself the representative of society as a whole—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—is, at the same time, its last independent act as a state. The state interference in social relations becomes superfluous in one sphere after another, and then ceases of itself. The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things and by the direction of the processes of production. The state is not ‘abolished,’ it withers away.” “The society that will organise production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers will put the whole machinery of state where it will then belong: into the Museum of Antiquities, by the side of the spinning wheel and the bronze axe” (Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*).

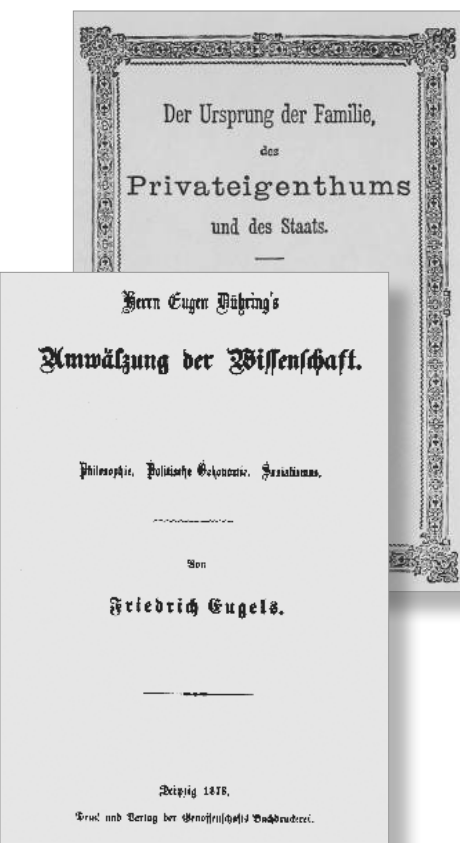
Finally, as regards the attitude of Marx’s socialism towards the small peasantry, which will continue to exist in the



W.E. Debenham

Marx’s close collaborator Friedrich Engels put forward materialist conception of history and development of the state as instrument of class repression in his classic works *Anti-Dühring*, written in consultation with Marx, and *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*.

opment of society, when the latter had split into irreconcilable classes, and could not exist without an “authority” ostensibly standing above society, and to a certain degree separate from society. Arising out of class contradictions, the state becomes “...the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class. Thus, the state of antiquity was above all the state of the slave-owners for the purpose of holding down the slaves, as the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding down the peasant serfs and bondsmen, and the modern representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage labour by capital” (Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, a work in which the writer expounds his own views and Marx’s). Even the democratic republic, the freest and most progressive form of the bourgeois state, does not eliminate this fact



period of the expropriation of the expropriators, we must refer to a declaration made by Engels, which expresses Marx’s views: “...when we are in possession of state power we shall not even think of forcibly expropriating the small peasants (regardless of whether with or without compensation), as we shall have to do in the case of the big landowners. Our task relative to the small peasant consists, in the first place, in effecting a transition of his private enterprise and private possession to co-operative ones, not forcibly but by dint of example and the proffer of social assistance for this purpose. And then of course we shall have ample means of showing to the small peasant prospective advantages that must be obvious to him even today” (Engels, *The Peasant Question in France and Germany*, p. 17, published by Alexeyeva; there are errors in the Russian translation. Original in *Die Neue Zeit*).

[COMING UP NEXT: TACTICS OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE OF THE PROLETARIAT]

WORKERS VANGUARD

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On October 15, our comrade Myriam Benoît died of cancer. She was a leading cadre of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France, the French section of the International Communist League, for more than three decades. We extend our heartfelt condolences to her comrades and friends around the world, as well as to her children and grandchildren, her brothers Abdi and Sadegh and their families. Myriam was particularly close to her sister-in-law Mojgan, whom Myriam described as “the most incredible person that I’ve ever known in my life.”

Myriam was born in Tehran, Iran, in 1949 into an urban, atheistic and aristocratic Persian family. She was a born rebel, but also the product of her time and her familial circumstances. Her secular family revered women; during her childhood she was pampered by attentive servants brought to the city from her family’s landed estate. She received a bilingual (French-Persian) education at Tehran’s elite Jeanne d’Arc School. She married a Kurdish man, socially taboo in a country where the Persian Shi’ite ruling class lords it over a slew of oppressed minorities, including Kurds, Azeris and Baluchis. Her subsequent divorce was considered a scandal and kindled her later commitment to the fight against women’s oppression. After obtaining a degree in social work from the University of Tehran, she moved to the south of the country, where the abject rural poverty moved her tremendously and influenced her subsequent politicization.

In 1978 she moved to France, as turbulent struggles rocked Iran. A massive revolt among students and strikes by workers encouraged reactionary Shi’ite mullahs aligned behind the Ayatollah Khomeini to challenge the repressive regime of the U.S.- and British-installed Shah of Iran. Myriam had been around a Maoist group in Iran. But she was repulsed by leftists who embraced Khomeini and who adopted the veil as a supposed symbol of rebellion. She was drawn to the LTF by the call of the international Spartacist tendency (predecessor of the ICL): “Down with the Shah! No support to the Mullahs!” and our slogan “No to the Veil!” Myriam was active in translating our propaganda into Farsi. In 2001, she toured our European sections, giving a powerful presentation on “Iran 1979: Proletarian Revolution or Islamic Reaction” that was later printed in *Workers Vanguard* (No. 784, 12 July 2002).

Myriam was invited to attend our founding international conference in late summer 1979 and joined the LTF shortly thereafter. Around that time, Khomeini came to power in Iran and began slaughtering his leftist supporters. Khomeini’s rise had spurred a rebellion by U.S.-backed Islamic reactionaries in neighboring Afghanistan, where tribal-based fundamentalists fought the Soviet-backed, modernizing nationalist PDPA government, which had implemented land reform, lowered the bride price and introduced compulsory education for girls. Myriam had been sympathetic to the Soviet Union in her youth, and our military side with the PDPA regime in

Myriam (Fetneh) Benoît



Family of Myriam Benoît



1949–2015

Afghanistan was part of what impelled her into membership. Impressed by the history of the Bolsheviks, who led the 1917 Russian Revolution and fought to liberate women and the peoples of the East, she was passionate about our January 1980 call, “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan,” which we raised as Soviet troops entered the country in support of the nationalist regime.

Tremendously energetic until the very end, Myriam worked on a memoir as her health deteriorated. She fondly recalled the work that our comrade Susan Adams did to educate and train her, noting: “Understanding that you are a cadre is important, without false modesty, because it confers on you a responsibility. If you don’t take responsibility, you are not a cadre.” While still a relatively new member, Myriam became organizer of the LTF’s Rouen local and later helped set up an organizing committee in Lyon. In 1985 she became a full member of the LTF Central Committee. She was an effective and exuberant activist and spokesman for the LTF and recruited numerous young people. In April 1989, after the Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan, the Partisan Defense Committee undertook an international fundraising campaign around the slogans “No to the Veil—Defend Afghan Women! Support Jalalabad Victims of CIA’s Cutthroats!” Myriam recalled the phenomenal support, even from veiled women, our efforts received at a local immigrant market in Lyon.

Shortly thereafter, when the Berlin Wall fell, the ICL threw all our resources into the fight to defend the East German deformed workers state and the fight for proletarian political revolution. Some leading LTF cadres had a limp response to these events, but Myriam fought for the intervention, traveling to Germany in 1990 to assist with the campaign. In 1992, after the LTF leadership imploded, Myriam was unique in being willing to come forward to help lead the section and was brought onto the International Executive Committee as a consultative member.

Myriam played an important role intervening into the huge defensive strike wave of public-sector workers that rocked France in December 1995. She

stroved to improve her English and in 1996-97 worked with our British section. In the 1990s and 2000s, she was a central public spokesman for the LTF’s legal defense organization, Comité de Défense Sociale, which campaigned in support of American class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal; she played a key role in getting broader elements of the French workers movement, including the French Communist Party, to take up Mumia’s case. Myriam also frequently intervened in key public meetings of other left groups in Paris to skewer their opportunism.

In more recent years, Myriam was instrumental in helping our Canadian section intervene into the student strikes that rocked Quebec beginning in the spring of 2012. She helped to recruit young comrades in Montreal and to build and consolidate our Montreal local, an important extension for our international into French-speaking Canada. A Canadian comrade described Myriam’s important contributions: how she marched in the massive demos and argued with people we met, noting that she “in pretty much every way shaped this work.” A young cadre in Montreal wrote to her: “We are better communists thanks to your work.” When the local advertised her campus forum “Marxism or Feminism: For Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!” the feminist student bureaucrats tried to censor us. The successful forum, which Myriam gave despite the stir on campus, provoked lively debate (see “UQAM Feminists Fail to Gag Marxists,” *Spartacist Canada* No. 183, Winter 2014-15, reprinted in *WV* No. 1062, 20 February). Myriam did much of this between chemotherapy sessions, which she was undergoing in France.

Myriam had an irrepressible zest for life. As a comrade close to her remarked recently, she didn’t live by politics alone. Although lacking formal training, Myriam was an accomplished singer, often moving friends and comrades to joyous dance, or mournful tears. Late in life she learned to read music. She successfully auditioned for the prestigious Bahar Chorale, a UNESCO project, which she performed with. She also gave theater performances, wrote a play and translated various works from Farsi into French. The latter included a book of poems titled *Travail au Noir [Illegal Work]* (l’Harmattan,

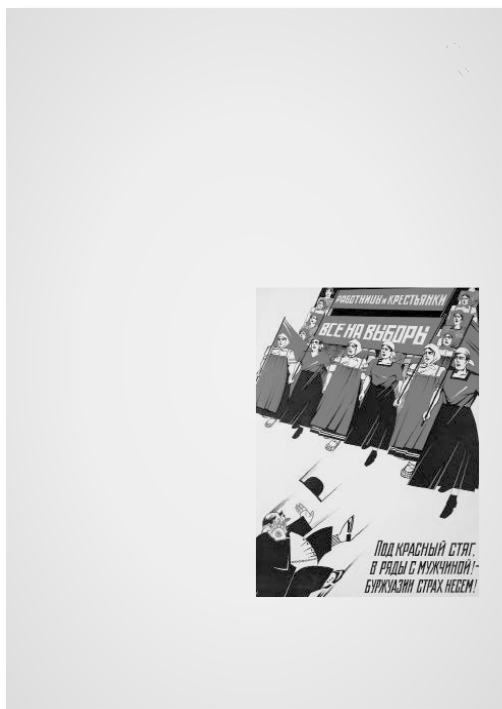
2015) by Mehrdad Arefani, a secular Iranian poet and former political prisoner now in exile. Myriam deeply appreciated her doctors, nurses and medical staff, actively discussing politics with them and selling them subscriptions to the LTF’s press. Myriam was a force to be reckoned with and will be sorely missed.

For those who wish to join Myriam’s comrades, friends and family to celebrate her life, a memorial meeting will be held in Paris on Saturday, November 14. Please contact the LTF at 011-33-1-42-08-01-49 for more information.



Le Bolchévik

Myriam addressing rally to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, Paris, March 2008.



Poster for September 2014 forum given by Myriam in Montreal.

Defend the Gains of the Cuban Revolution!

Castro Regime Welcomes Reactionary Vatican

At least 100,000 Cubans converged on Havana's Plaza de la Revolución on September 20 for a Catholic mass led by Jorge Bergoglio of Argentina (Pope Francis). One side of this giant square features a huge portrait of Che Guevara, the hero of the Cuban Revolution who was murdered with the aid of the CIA in Bolivia in 1967. On another side, a large poster had been erected depicting Jesus with the words "Vengan a mí" ("Come to me"). Raúl Castro, leader of the ruling Communist Party of Cuba (PCC), sat in the front row and attended other papal masses in the cities of Holguín and Santiago over the following days. The Pope also had a half-hour meeting with Raúl's brother and predecessor, the 89-year-old Fidel, which a Vatican spokesman described as "very informal and friendly."

Voice of America, the CIA's media mouthpiece, saluted Francis for warning the Cuban people against "the dangers of ideology" (voanews.com, 20 September). For its part, the Communist Party leadership urged Cubans to attend the papal masses and had them broadcast live on state TV. Posters with the Pope's face were displayed all over the country. In a welcoming address at Havana's airport, Raúl Castro lauded Francis for playing a key role in the negotiations that led to the restoration of U.S.-Cuban diplomatic relations; he also presented him with the gift of a giant crucifix. During a visit to the Vatican earlier in the year, the PCC leader even told a press conference, "If the pope continues this way, I will go back to praying and go back to the church, and I'm not joking" (*Washington Post*, 10 May).

The Cuban leaders' welcome to Pope Francis—building on their earlier fêting of his predecessors John Paul II and Benedict XVI when they visited the island—is criminal and deadly dangerous. The Catholic church is, and has always been, a bastion of social and political reaction worldwide, not least in Latin America. The Vatican will use any authority it gains among the Cuban population to promote counterrevolution under a cloak of "democracy." The return of capitalist exploitation to Cuba would signal the destruction of the country's revolutionary gains and herald renewed U.S. neocolonial domination.

Cuban Deformed Workers State in Peril

Cuba is the only workers state in the Americas. The smashing of capitalist rule and the socialization of the economy more than 50 years ago led to impressive advances for the Cuban people. Free quality health care and education became available to all. Women were fully integrated into the workforce, and today they hold more than half of all positions in university faculties. Cuban doctors are regularly dispatched around the world to aid the victims of disasters and epidemics. Despite continuing material scarcity, Cuba has one of the highest literacy rates in the world and a lower infant mortality rate than the U.S. or the European Union.

The American imperialists have worked relentlessly to overturn the Cuban Revolution. Their crimes have ranged from the 1961 Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs) invasion to numerous assassination attempts on Fidel Castro; from promoting the counterrevolutionary *gusano* terror gangs in Miami to enforcing a decades-long star-



September 20: Pope Francis at Havana's Plaza de la Revolución.

Sipa

vation embargo. The workers of the world, especially in the United States, must stand for Cuba's unconditional military defense against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution.

But from the start, the workers state has been deformed by the rule of a nationalist bureaucracy that is hostile to the perspective of international socialist revolution. Following in the footsteps of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the former Soviet Union, the Castro bureaucracy, upholding the nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country," has pursued the pipe dream of "peaceful coexistence" with the imperialists. To this end, it has repeatedly undermined revolutionary opportunities elsewhere in Latin America.

For example, the PCC bureaucrats admonished the left-nationalist Nicaraguan Sandinistas in the 1980s not to follow the "Cuban road" of expropriating the capitalist class. Time and again, they have promoted bourgeois-nationalist regimes, from the Velasco dictatorship in Peru in the 1960s and early '70s to the Brazilian, Venezuelan and other capitalist governments today. The Cuban Stalinists' gross accommodation of the Vatican is part of this picture. Defense of the Cuban Revolution is directly linked to the struggle for a workers political revolution to oust

the bureaucracy and establish a regime based on revolutionary internationalism and workers democracy. This requires forging a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party to mobilize the working people in struggle.

Socialism means a society of material abundance based on a level of economic productivity higher than that possible under capitalism. Such a society, requiring the most modern technology and an international division of labor, cannot be constructed in a single country, especially a small island with meager natural resources. Rather, its construction will require a series of socialist revolutions internationally, not least in the advanced capitalist countries. The survival of the Cuban workers state ultimately depends on extension of the revolution, especially to the U.S. imperialist behemoth.

When Fidel Castro's petty-bourgeois guerrilla forces marched into Havana in January 1959, the army and the rest of the capitalist state apparatus that had propped up the corrupt, U.S.-backed Fulgencio Batista dictatorship shattered. Initially, the new regime had no intention of expropriating the domestic capitalist class or the vast U.S. imperialist holdings. But faced with economic looting by Batista's cronies and unremitting hostility from

the rulers in Washington, the government was compelled to carry through sweeping nationalizations of the American-owned sugar plantations, banks and other firms in the summer and fall of 1960, consolidating a deformed workers state.

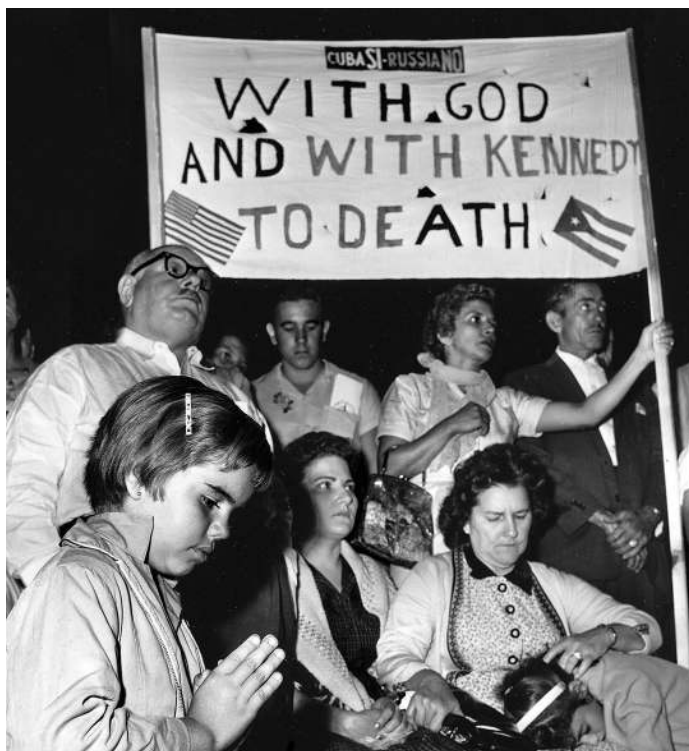
In its early years, the regime was rightly hostile to the Catholic hierarchy. Fidel Castro denounced the leaders of the church in Cuba as "peons of the American embassy" and "Franco Fascists." His rage was aroused by a pastoral letter issued by the Cuban Catholic hierarchy condemning "the growing advance of Communism in our country" (*Time*, 22 August 1960). Church properties were expropriated, including more than 300 schools previously restricted to the elite that were turned into public schools under state control. Religious statues were symbolically decapitated.

The creation of a workers state and the economic and social advances that followed were only possible because of the existence of the Soviet Union and its alliance with Cuba. The Soviets provided essential military protection against U.S. imperialism and subsidized Cuba with up to \$5 billion of aid annually. The USSR provided some 60 percent of Cuba's food and nearly all of its oil, in exchange for sugar. These subsidies were severely curtailed with the unraveling of Stalinist rule in the USSR in the late 1980s, and the counterrevolutionary destruction in 1989-92 of the deformed workers states of East Europe and of the Soviet Union ended them altogether. Cuba suffered a deep economic crisis known as the "Special Period." Starting in 1993, the Castroite regime implemented a series of market-oriented policies that, while eventually producing some economic recovery, led to a significant increase in inequality.

The same period saw a growing reconciliation between the regime and the church hierarchy. The constitution was amended in the early 1990s to describe Cuba as a "secular" state (replacing "atheist"), and the party leaders declared that atheism was no longer a prerequisite for party membership. Christmas and, more recently, Good Friday were declared national holidays. Still, active religious practice on the island remains limited. While some 40 percent of Cubans have been baptized, very few attend Sunday mass; those who do are mainly elderly. Among black Cubans, the rituals and mystical beliefs of Santería, which derive from the traditions of African slaves brought to Cuba by the Spanish colonists, are significantly more common.

The social role of the Catholic church has nonetheless grown dramatically, with the government's tacit approval. Charities and cultural centers financed by the church have become prominent. Amid limited access to basic goods, outfits like Caritas and the Jesuit Loyola Center act as distribution centers for food, diapers and other sanitary products as well as aid for the elderly, while also providing childcare facilities, access to computers, etc. These charities are financed by right-wing Cuban exiles, as are a number of business schools that collaborate with the Catholic University in Spain to train so-called entrepreneurs and organize discussions on Cuba's economic future.

In 2010, a new seminary began operating on the outskirts of Havana. Earlier this year, Catholic officials stated that



Crazed Cuban reactionaries in downtown Miami pray for success of CIA's Bay of Pigs invasion, 19 April 1961. God didn't answer.

Hands Off Arrested Air France Strikers!

No Layoffs!

We print below a translation of an October 14 statement protesting the arrest of Air France workers, issued by the Comité de Défense Sociale. The arrests were made a week after two managers had their shirts torn off during a strike rally at Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport. The CDDs is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Ligue Trotskyiste de France, French section of the International Communist League.

Eleven more Air France workers have subsequently been slapped with bogus defacement of property charges. Seventeen have been vindictively suspended without pay. On October 22, at least 5,000 workers and their supporters demonstrated outside the French parliament against this outrageous prosecution.

* * *

The Comité de Défense Sociale condemns the arrest and charging of five Air France employees. We also protest the disciplinary procedures currently targeting around two dozen workers following the 5 October 2015 demonstration.

On that day, thousands of Air France workers from all job categories protested against the threat of nearly 3,000 layoffs, which would be on top of 9,000 jobs already axed since 2012. The violence of the proposed cuts was matched by the Air France bosses' contemptuous arrogance toward the workers who entered the room where the board meeting was



Reuters

scheduled. After infuriating the workers, the managers fled. The sight of the two bosses, shirtless, making a run for it was welcomed by not only the thousands of demonstrators who witnessed the scene, but also by millions of workers around the world who saw the pictures.

Five workers from the cargo and maintenance divisions were arrested at their homes on Monday, October 12, at 6 a.m. and subjected to 30 hours in police custody, a spectacle that the government seeks to normalize with its racist "war against terrorism." The workers are scheduled to appear before the court in Bobigny [a suburb of Paris] on December 2, charged with

"gang assault," and they face up to three years in prison and fines of 45,000 euros [\$50,000]. Even the government's media mouthpiece (*Le Monde*, 15 October) admits that the shirts could have been torn off by security guards during the crush. This did not prevent Prime Minister Manuel Valls from treating the protesters as "thugs." As Miguel Fortea, the general secretary of the CGT Air France union, stated: "They are trying to criminalize trade-union action and the workers"—whose dignity and livelihoods they want to rip up.

Later on October 5, there were victims of violence that deserves condemnation: a flight attendant and a pilot were beaten



AFF

October 5: Striking Air France workers protest in front of corporate headquarters at Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport. Above: Shirtless Air France executive Xavier Broseta clammers over fence after angering workers.

and injured by police during a demonstration at the airport terminal. But it is the Air France Five who face serious consequences for simply having dared to protest at a trade-union action against threatened layoffs! These criminal proceedings target the entire workers movement, which must be mobilized against the attacks by the Air France bosses and their government. Twelve trade unions at Air France have called to demonstrate on October 22. Like them, we demand: **Drop all charges, without conditions, against the Air France Five! Stop the disciplinary proceedings against the Five and their co-workers now!** ■

requests to build new churches, which had long awaited government approval, began to get the green light. The growing reach of the Catholic church has been furthered by changes to U.S. Treasury Department regulations that allow travel to Cuba by Americans for the purpose of engaging in religious activities. With increased funding, the church has been able to build networks of support that could play a role in organizing future counterrevolutionary activities.

Apostles of Clerical Reaction

The role of the Vatican in fomenting counterrevolution is shown clearly by John Paul II, the first Pope invited to Cuba by the Castro regime, in 1998. That Pope, born Karol Wojtyla, played a key ideological role in the creation of the pro-capitalist Solidarność "trade union" in his native Poland in 1980.

Decades of economic mismanagement, nationalism and capitulation to the Catholic church by the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy had driven much of Poland's historically socialist-minded working class into the arms of clerical reaction. The church was effectively the only legal opposition to the bureaucracy. Having consolidated around a counterrevolutionary program including the call for "free elections" and "free trade unions"—standard Cold War cries of the CIA and its AFL-CIO anti-Communist cohorts—Solidarność made a bid for power in the fall of 1981. When the Stalinists moved to suppress Solidarność in December 1981, we supported the suppression of the counterrevolutionaries. At the same time, we emphasized that the growth of Catholic reaction was a direct consequence of the political bankruptcy of the bureaucratic ruling caste.

Less than a decade later, the Polish Stalinists abdicated and Solidarność came to power, signaling the destruction of the Polish deformed workers state. These events helped pave the way for similar developments elsewhere in East Europe and for the destruction of the Soviet



Pope John Paul II gives communion to Lech Walesa, leader of pro-capitalist Solidarność, in Gdansk, Poland, June 1987.

Union in 1991-92—a devastating defeat for the working class internationally, including in Cuba.

The current Pope, the first from Latin America, has sought to carve out a progressive image through his homilies on behalf of the poor and oppressed. But, fawning statements by the PCC bureaucrats to the contrary, the face behind Francis' mask is deeply reactionary. In his youth, Jorge Bergoglio was a member of Argentina's right-wing, clericalist Iron Guard. He was part of the Catholic hierarchy there in the 1970s and early '80s, when the church shored up the military junta of General Jorge Videla. The generals' bloodsoaked regime, which was backed to the hilt by U.S. imperialism, killed or "disappeared" at least 30,000 workers and leftists. A bishop or a cardinal was present at every public event or national holiday to bless the dictators.

Part of the context for the Cuban bureaucrats' increasingly close relations with the Vatican is the latter's diplomatic efforts to end Washington's 55-year economic embargo. We have always opposed the embargo, whose purpose is to strangle the Cuban economy. At the same time, we warn that the campaign by growing sections of the U.S. capitalist class (and now the Obama administration) to end, or

at least relax, these starvation measures poses a different kind of danger to the Cuban Revolution.

In contrast to the embargo, capitalists in Europe (notably Spain), and also Canada, have long been trading with Cuba, believing that Washington's belligerent policies have proven ineffective in undermining the workers state. The imperialist opponents of the embargo aim to undercut Cuba's socialized economy and foment counterrevolution through different means, e.g., flooding the country with cheap imports. Cuba should of course have the right to trade and have diplomatic relations with all countries, including the United States. However, it is vital to maintain the state monopoly of foreign trade, i.e., strict government control of imports and exports.

Religious ideas flourish particularly in the fertile ground of material scarcity, offering solace, glorifying sacrifice and promising reward when you are dead. The Catholic church, once a bastion of feudal reaction, today promotes obedience to the exploitative capitalist order ("Blessed are you who are poor") and foments reactionary anti-woman and anti-gay bigotry. Take the example of abortion rights. Cuba is the only country in the Americas where abortion has been legal and available for

free since the late 1960s, a clear example of the gains that are possible once the shackles of capitalism have been broken. Pope Francis and the rest of the Catholic hierarchy want to ban not only abortion but also all forms of contraception. Unrestricted access to such services is essential for women to exercise control over whether and when they will have children; without it, they will again be driven from the workforce and back into the reactionary confines of the family.

Today, the Cuban Revolution stands at a crossroads. Workers in the U.S. have a special duty to defend Cuba against capitalist restoration and rapacious American imperialism. This task is linked inextricably to the fight for socialist revolution to sweep away the U.S. capitalist rulers. The Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), is dedicated to building the Leninist vanguard party needed to lead that struggle to victory. ■

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Greece: For Workers Struggle Against Austerity!

We print below a presentation, edited for publication, given by Spartacist League spokesman Diana Coleman at an October 10 forum in Oakland, California.

PART ONE

Greece is in an economic and political crisis triggered by the global financial meltdown of 2007-08. Hunger and poverty stalk the streets, from Athens to the rural villages. The working people are being bled white to pay for the crimes of the capitalist class. That's true everywhere, but in weak, dependent Greece, this crisis has hit with a ferocity that is breathtaking.

Since 2010, the European Union (EU) and the U.S.-dominated International Monetary Fund have imposed draconian austerity measures on Greece in exchange for a series of so-called "rescue packages." But those "rescued" have not been the Greek people, but Greek and especially international banks! The imperialist-dominated EU is an unstable consortium of capitalist countries that works to increase profits by squeezing the workers throughout Europe. It also enables the imperialist powers of Europe, led by Germany, to further subordinate poorer states like Greece, not least through the instrument of the common euro currency. We say: *Down with the EU and the euro!*

The capitalist parties, including Syriza and the new, left split from it known as Popular Unity, have nothing to offer except more austerity. We have opposed voting for any of them! The only way forward is for the proletariat to struggle in its own interests and those of all of the oppressed, independently of and in opposition to the capitalist rulers and all their agents.

In July, the Syriza-led capitalist government trampled on the results of a referendum that rejected the latest EU demands for austerity and agreed to even harsher terms with the imperialists. The ever-worsening economic crisis and the growing menace of fascism pose the vital need to unite the toiling masses against the attacks of the imperialists, the Greek bourgeoisie and the Syriza government. To this end, our comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece issued a call to the broadest layers of the workers movement to form workers action committees.

Such struggle must go beyond the bour-



Reuters [inset]; AP



Athens, October 16: Workers from KKE-affiliated PAME trade-union federation protest Greek parliamentary vote for new austerity measures. Inset: Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras (left) meeting with EU heavyweights to agree on more austerity, July 12.

geois electoral circus and point toward the need for a revolutionary proletarian solution to the crisis. We say that the only way out of the nightmare of recurrent capitalist crisis is to unite the workers throughout Europe in struggle to sweep away the capitalist rulers through socialist revolutions that expropriate the exploiters. For a Socialist United States of Europe! For international proletarian revolution! That's the summary of my talk, but I'm going to explain some of the concepts behind these points, so don't leave just yet.

Here in the U.S., we are once again in presidential election season. Fake-socialist organizations continue to flit around the capitalist Democratic Party like moths around a flame. The reformists are debating whether it is best to pressure the Democrats from the outside *or* to support them

explicitly, via the candidacy of purported "socialist" Bernie Sanders, who is running in the Democratic primary (and who has supported nearly every war waged by U.S. imperialism in recent memory). Socialist Alternative is working in his primary campaign, while the International Socialist Organization is trying to pressure him from the outside to become "a genuine independent alternative," that is, to act as a Democrat without the formal affiliation, as he has done for nearly 25 years in Congress.

It's an old story: In the shell game of American politics, the Democratic Party is portrayed as the "friend" of black people and labor. In reality, such illusions in this "lesser evil" bourgeois party have been essential to preserving the rule of racist American capitalism. The building of a revolutionary workers party in the U.S. will only proceed in sharp opposition to the Democrats, the trade-union misleaders who preach reliance on these representatives of the class enemy and their left hangers-on.

Looking to putatively progressive parties that are in fact committed to the capitalist system is a disastrous road for working people everywhere. In Greece, much of the reformist left has spent the past few years hailing or tailing Syriza, the supposedly anti-austerity party that was elected in January to run the government. Today, Syriza is enforcing the vicious austerity attacks ordered by the EU rulers.

Before I get into the current political situation in Greece, I want to talk about the country itself. In 2005, the first time I visited, I was quite surprised by Greece. I had expected it would look like the advanced industrialized countries of West Europe. It did not. Although Athens had a nice subway system that someone from Los Angeles, like me, could certainly admire, the rest of the country was rural and underdeveloped. And it has a small population. During a chat with a Greek comrade, she asked me how many people lived in the greater L.A. area. When

I replied, "Oh, about ten or eleven million," she laughed and told me that was the population of Greece. Both of us were kind of startled by this fact. And almost half of that eleven million lives in Athens, with the remainder spread out over the rest of the country.

So it's a small country with a small, but combative, working class. And with the current deindustrialization of the country, the working class is getting smaller. There is some shipbuilding, shipping and longshore work as well as mass transit (the Athens subways), but most of the industry that once existed in Greece has been decimated by the German-dominated EU "single market." Factories across the country stand empty. If you want to get a sense, you can go to an on-line *Guardian* photo collection titled "Modern Ruins: The Ghost Factories of Greece" (15 May). The introduction comments that the pictures "show the remnants of the country's industrial past." Those remnants look like Detroit, except that it's the whole country.

Being from the U.S., where everything is sold by giant capitalist enterprises like Target, Wal-Mart, Kroger, Starbucks, etc., I was struck by the fact that retail shops, coffee houses and food markets all seemed to be run by individual families, part of the country's large petty bourgeoisie. It is now a large, ruined petty bourgeoisie, as many of these small businesses have gone belly-up. This sort of thing is what fascists feed off. Today, over half of Greek youth are unemployed, some 300,000 people have no access to electricity and 3.1 million (that is, about one-third of the population) lack health insurance. Nearly 50 percent of children live in poverty.

I have family connections with people who come from Greece and often visit the country. Upon returning from Patras, Greece's third-largest city, earlier this year, they commented that thousands of the under-25 crowd roam the streets with no jobs, nothing to do and nowhere to go. Whole blocks of stores and cafes are shuttered in what was once a booming tourist town.

Immigrants and the Fascist Threat

The crisis in Greece intersects a surge of racist hysteria over immigrants and refugees. Every week, thousands of desperate migrants are arriving in Greece after fleeing military conflicts that have destroyed their countries, particularly Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. These wars are the direct product of interventions by the U.S. imperialists. In the process, Washington and its allies have fostered and deepened religious and ethnic antagonisms among the populations of these countries. The resulting tide of human misery is a real indictment of the imperialist system, under which the rulers of a handful of rich countries lord it over oppressed peoples across the globe.

So far this year, some 390,000 migrants have made the crossing by boat to Greece—more than 153,000 of them in September alone—compared to 43,500 such arrivals in Greece in *all* of 2014. The working class, as an elementary act of self-defense and solidarity with the oppressed, must defend immigrants against the racist frenzy and demand full citizenship rights for everyone who has made it into the country. In the U.S., as in Europe, we in the International Communist League demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants as well as an end to the detention, deportation and persecution of Muslims and other immigrants.

In Greece, the fascists of Golden Dawn

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are seeking to exploit the crisis. Portraying themselves as saviors of the nation, they are whipping up hatred against immigrants, who have been subjected to violent attacks. Two years ago, a fascist thug murdered an anti-fascist activist in a suburb of Piraeus, near Athens.

Golden Dawn is far from a fringe phenomenon. As an illustration, these fascists finished third in the September elections, with nearly 7 percent of the vote; six years ago they got only 0.3 percent. Notably, Golden Dawn has a lot of support in the ranks of the police and the upper echelons of the army. This is pretty ominous in a country where the 1967-74 military dictatorship known as the Regime of the Colonels was not all that long ago.

Greece is a country where the question, “How can we fight and defeat the attacks of the ruling class?” is urgently posed. The lessons of events there have direct application for those who seek to struggle against the capitalist rulers’ offensive here in the U.S.

Under capitalism, a tiny layer of exploiters owns the factories, transportation systems, mines and, of course, the banks. That ruling class also controls the government, the police, the mass media and the education system. To acquire an

ers. They produce misery without end. But there is a way out. Thanks to its central role in production, the proletariat has enormous potential social power. If the workers organize collectively, they can stop production, including through strike action and plant occupations, cutting off the flow of profits. By waging class struggle, the working class can throw back at least some of the capitalists’ attacks. But since exploitation is endemic to capitalist production, struggles against the ravages of capitalism must be linked to a broader political perspective: sweeping away the profit system through workers socialist revolution and reorganizing society in the interests of the vast majority. The task of our organization is to forge Leninist vanguard parties—here and internationally—that can make the workers conscious of the need for the revolutionary overturn of capitalism.

Imperialism and Greek Capitalism

All capitalist countries are not “created equal.” On a global scale, the imperialist powers of North America, Europe and Japan retard economic and social development in the poorer countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa. Within Europe,



Supporters of fascist Golden Dawn at election rally, May 2014. Capitalist crisis has fueled far-right reaction.

were present—only representatives of the “protecting” powers of Britain, France and Russia. An absolutist monarch, Otto of Bavaria, was imposed on the new country. I found that amazing; the British just said, “All right, Greeks—here’s this dude from Bavaria, we decided that he’s going to be your king.”

Throughout the 19th century, Greece was a pawn of British diplomacy, particularly vis-à-vis tsarist Russia. In the early 1830s, to pay for the war against the Ottoman Turks, the Greek government contracted loans in the City of London on ruinous terms. British imperialist policy toward Greece was geared to using loans in order to subjugate the country and to bring about its complete financial and diplomatic dependency. Greece remained overwhelmingly agrarian, with its main export being Zante currants—you know, raisins. Still, there developed a wealthy commercial bourgeoisie based on merchant shipping and, later, banking.

Greece has a long history of sharp class struggle. During the Second World War the Greek workers and peasants, under the leadership of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), rose up in revolutionary upheaval against the Italian and German occupation forces as well as Greek bourgeois forces. The Civil War continued after the German withdrawal as the local capitalists—supported by Britain and the U.S.—sought to crush the revolt of the workers and poor peasants. For more on this upsurge and its betrayal by the KKE, I recommend our article “Greece 1940s: A Revolution Betrayed” (*Spartacist* No. 64, Summer 2014). During the latter phase of the Greek Civil War, the U.S. supplanted decaying British imperialism in Greece, using that country as a testing ground for tactics to crush social revolutions. I thought the U.S. first dropped napalm bombs in Vietnam—no! In 1949, the last year of the Civil War, U.S. planes rained down napalm on Greek guerrilla fighters. The American imperialists went on to use napalm in Korea and Vietnam, which facilitated the killing and maiming of millions of people.

Let me return to the European Union. We used to meet people who would naively ask: “Why are you against the EU; isn’t it good that people can more easily travel around Europe?” The rape of Greece has made the EU’s purpose a lot clearer, illustrating the correctness of our principled opposition to that imperialist bloc and the euro.

The EU is an alliance of capitalist countries seeking to augment their profits and spheres of influence by more efficiently exploiting workers throughout Europe. Its predecessor, the European Economic Community, was an economic adjunct to NATO, the U.S.-led military alliance directed against the Soviet Union. The USSR was a workers state, issuing out of the 1917 October Revolution in Russia that overthrew capitalist class rule. We Trotskyists always upheld the unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism, despite its degeneration under a nationalist bureaucracy headed by Joseph Stalin. That’s because the Soviet workers state embodied enormous gains for the workers of the world.

Contrary to capitalist propaganda, the imperialists’ anti-Soviet crusade had nothing whatsoever to do with “democracy” versus “totalitarianism.” The U.S. has long propped up brutal military dictatorships the world over. Greece, a front-line NATO state, under the Colonels is a perfect example. In truth, the imperialists were determined to destroy the Soviet Union because it was living proof that the working people of the world were not forever condemned to be exploited by the capitalists. The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s was a terrible defeat for workers everywhere, for which the Stalinists’ betrayals bear a huge measure of responsibility.

Having established a unified Fourth Reich through capitalist counterrevolution in East Germany, the German bourgeois rulers used the EU as a vehicle to further their domination of the continent, while advancing the ability of the European powers to compete economically with U.S. imperialism. The various decrees and regulations imposed by the bankers in Frankfurt and the bureaucrats in Brussels have ruined the lives of millions in Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and other poorer countries, while also reducing the living standards of workers in the imperialist centers. Can the EU be reformed or made to be a “social Europe” as the European reformists say? Dream on! No more than U.S. imperialism is going to start spreading freedom and democracy around the world.

[TO BE CONTINUED]



Capitalist austerity in Greece means widespread misery. Homeless man sleeping in central Athens.

understanding of the class nature of the state, one should read V.I. Lenin’s classic work *The State and Revolution* (1917). The interests of the capitalist class are counterposed to those of the working class, whose labor is exploited by the capitalists for profit. The so-called “middle class” or petty bourgeoisie—professionals, small shopkeepers, farmers and the like—is a heterogeneous and highly stratified social layer that follows one or the other of the main classes.

To shore up profits, the capitalists cut wages, impose speedup and lay off work-

the advanced industrial nations—chiefly Germany—dominate the weaker countries in the east and south, including Greece. There is manifestly an element of national oppression in what the EU imperialists are doing to Greece, which has basically been placed in receivership, with all decisions made by the EU masters.

The dependent character of the modern Greek state did not begin with its joining the EU, but was stamped on it from birth. At the signing of the 1832 treaty that carved an independent Greece out of the decaying Ottoman Empire, no Greeks

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Διακήρυξη Αρχών και Μερικά Στοιχεία Προγράμματος Διεθνούς Κομμουνιστικής Ένωσης (Τεταρτοδιεθνιστική)

1. Η παγκόσμια σοσιαλιστική επανάσταση και η Διεθνής Κομμουνιστική Ένωση (Τεταρτοδιεθνιστική)
2. Η κρίση της εργασίας του προλεταριάτου



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Left: Protest against Blackfire Exploration over murder of Mariano Abarca, Chiapas, Mexico, 2009. Right: Workers protest Barrick Gold at May Day parade in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 2013.

Canadian Mining in Latin America Blood, Plunder and Profit

The following article is reprinted from *Spartacist Canada No. 186 (Fall 2015)*, newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League.



In the build-up to the federal election [held on October 19], the parliamentary parties are vying in patriotic rhetoric about how Canada is, or can be, “the greatest country in the world.” The brutality and greed of the Canadian mining industry, particularly in Latin America, exposes as an utter fraud the notion of Canada as a benevolent power on the world stage.

The Canadian mining corporations view Latin America as their own private El Dorado. In the spirit of the early conquistadors, their vast profits are underwritten by killings, disappearances and torture of those who stand in their way, by destruction of entire communities and by the dispossession of indigenous peoples. Last year, Shin Imai, a lawyer with the Justice and Corporate Accountability Project, said: “Our preliminary count shows that at least 50 people have been killed and some 300 wounded in connection with mining conflicts involving Canadian companies in recent years” (Inter Press Service, 31 October 2014). To cite only a few examples:

- El Salvador, 2009: Marcelo Rivera’s body was found at the bottom of a well showing signs of torture; Ramiro Rivera was shot and killed when his car was ambushed; Dora “Alicia” Sorto was eight months pregnant when fatally shot. All were opponents of the Canadian-owned Pacific Rim mining company.
- Mexico, 2012: In Chihuahua, a married couple who had led protests against the Cascabel mine owned by Vancouver’s MAG Silver were shot to death. The husband, Ismael, had previously been beaten by mining company employees. In Oaxaca, Bernardo Mendez was shot seven times while protesting near Vancouver-based Fortuna’s Cuzcatlán mine.
- Guatemala, 2014: 16-year-old Topacio Reynoso was shot dead and her father Alex was seriously injured. Both were community leaders from Mataquescuintla, Jalapa, and actively opposed Vancouver-based Tahoe Resources’

Escobal mine. According to Mining-Watch Canada, thousands of families in this area have suffered violence and repression for their opposition to Tahoe’s mine.

These barbaric crimes merely scratch the surface. Canada’s violent despoliation of this region is a perfect illustration of the workings of capitalist imperialism, an economic system based on the conquest or domination of the semicolonial world for raw materials, markets, cheap labour and spheres of influence. For Marxists, this also demonstrates how the Canadian capitalist state is an instrument of organized violence, wielded to further imperialist plunder and exploitation internationally, and to enforce workers’ exploitation at home.

Canada’s mining sector is one of the largest in the world. Fully 75 percent of the world’s mining companies are headquartered here. This is thanks in large part to the lowest corporate tax rate in the G7 group of imperialist powers as well as a securities industry designed to promote mining. With a climate of impunity and generous, no-questions-asked public subsidies, Canada is, as the London *Guardian* put it, “a haven for the global mining industry” (24 April 2013).

Canada has 1,500 mining projects in Latin America; fully 41 percent of the large mining companies there are under its flag. The imperialist pillage of these countries—and the brutal repression it entails—is a joint venture between the venal local bourgeoisies and their imperialist patrons, chiefly the U.S. but also secondary powers like Canada. In this division of labour, the local rulers’ military forces, police and death squads are subcontracted by the imperialists to ensure the seamless flow of profit.

Guatemala: Under the Imperialist Boot

Canadian mining in Guatemala has a particularly long and violent history, rooted in decades of plunder by the U.S. imperialists. To defend its “interests,” the U.S. has sponsored one death-squad regime after another. During a 36-year campaign against a leftist guerrilla insurgency that began in 1960, some 200,000 people—mostly Mayan peasants—were killed and another 45,000 “disappeared.” That same year, the Canadian mining giant Inco launched operations in Guatemala. However, open-pit mining was

prohibited. As well, the leftist insurgents had their base of operations around the town of El Estor in the Izabal department where Inco wanted to build its open-pit nickel mine.

A 2012 York University report by Shin Imai and two colleagues titled “Accountability Across Borders: Mining in Guatemala and the Canadian Justice System” documented how Inco’s problems were solved by the ruling military regime. An Inco-friendly mining code was written to permit “open sky mining” and Inco was granted generous tax concessions and a 40-year lease. Above all, it got the “stability” it demanded thanks to a reign of terror launched by the Guatemalan military. The indigenous people were driven out and between 3,000 and 6,000 killed to pave the way for Inco’s mine.

The Inco mine shut down in 1982 when the price of nickel fell. In 2004 the mine, now called Fenix, was bought by another Canadian operation, Skye Resources. For the Mayan farmers who had gradually begun to reoccupy the area, this signalled a renewed wave of violence. Acts of great brutality took place at the hands of the police and military and at the behest of Skye Resources, including evictions and the burning of houses. Among the most grisly was the gang rape by cops and Fenix security of eleven women from the Mayan Q’eqchi’ community. When the Toronto-based Hudbay bought the mine in 2008, the violence did not end, and the mining bosses continued to drive out the inhabitants. In 2009, protesters were shot at by the security thugs of the Guatemalan Nickel Company (owned by Hudbay). One man was murdered, another left paralyzed. Cases involving these shootings and the mass rapes are presently before the courts in Canada.

Everything Must Have Its Price

The Canadian capitalist government is deeply intertwined with the mining corporations, which it supports politically and financially. To this end, its embassies, diplomats, cabinet ministers and hired guns in Bay Street [Canada’s financial center] law firms are mobilized. Their services include blackmail, economic and legal bullying and cover-up.

In Mexico, with more than 230 Canadian mining operations, the forces behind the violence against community leaders and mining opponents reads like a who’s who of the mining industry. The well-

documented crimes of these companies have not deterred Ottawa in its unflinching support to the industry. Among the most notorious is Calgary-based Blackfire, on whose behalf the Canadian embassy engaged in an intense lobbying campaign with the Chiapas state government. This was gratefully acknowledged by a Blackfire executive in an email sent to embassy officials in September 2008, thanking them for all “that the embassy has done to pressure the state government to get things going for us. We could not do it without your help” (*Toronto Star*, 8 December 2014).

In the aftermath of the November 2009 murder of Mariano Abarca, Ottawa again came to Blackfire’s aid. Abarca was a leader of the Mexican Network of People Affected by Mining which had protested Blackfire’s mine for contaminating rivers and destroying livestock and crops. He knew he was a target and had warned, “if anything happens to me, I blame the Canadian company Blackfire.” Soon after, governor-general Michaëlle Jean and Tory cabinet minister Peter Kent were in Chiapas doing damage control. Faced with angry protesters, Jean prattled about “justice” while Kent brazenly claimed that Canadian mining companies in Mexico “are held up and recognized as virtual models of corporate social responsibility.”

The Tories use “foreign aid” funding

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to support “community initiatives” linked to mining projects. Peru, one of the most mineral-rich countries in the region, is one recipient of such funds. A paltry \$53 million will go to “development projects” in areas with Canadian mining operations, opening the door to the looting of billions of dollars of mineral wealth by these corporations. A Canada-Peru free trade agreement has further opened up the country to incursions by the mining companies.

This profitable triangular relationship between the mining industry and the Canadian and Peruvian governments has spawned bloody repression. Rosa Huamán, a community leader in northern Peru, told an October 2014 hearing of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights that “the government has installed a police post that follows our activities and reports to the mining company and the government” (*Georgia Straight*, 5 December 2014). In 2011, at least four people were killed and 24 injured in protests against a silver mine owned by B.C.-based Bear Creek Mining Corp. Two years later, some 25 protesters against Vancouver’s Candente Copper Corporation were wounded in clashes with police. In November, when over 400 protesters shut down construction on Hudbay’s copper mine in Peru’s southern Andes, a dozen women were attacked by Peruvian police while sitting outside the mining compound’s front gates.

Against this backdrop, in late 2014 Canada unveiled a warmed-over version of its 2009 “Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy” for the mining industry. This is meant to paint a picture of a government that will no longer play ball with a few supposed bad apples who don’t comply with its purported high standards. It’s all smoke and mirrors, intended to pacify critics and suck in the gullible. Indeed, a CBC reporter nailed its actual purpose: “to increase the prospect of new business for our resource companies abroad” (14 November 2014).

Liberal Illusions in Canadian Imperialism

Under the Harper Tories, the Canadian ruling class has shed the “Canada the good” image. Yet this self-serving myth continues to be nurtured by the NDP [social-democratic New Democratic Party]. For their part, the United Steelworkers union seeks to pressure the government in Ottawa to make the mining companies answerable in Canadian courts, while MiningWatch Canada offers liberal nostrums about “ensuring corporate accountability.” But real justice and “accountability” cannot come through the courts of the capitalist rulers. Then there is the related myth that Canada’s bloody misdeeds abroad are an anomaly for this otherwise well-mannered country. This was captured by Murray Klippenstein, the Toronto lawyer for the Guatemalans’ case against Hudbay, who made the astounding claim that “we would never tolerate these abuses in Canada.”

To the contrary, when Native people stand their ground in Canada—at Oka, Quebec, at Gustafsen Lake, B.C. or more recently in Rexton, N.B. when the Mi’kmaq people sought to prevent fracking for oil on their lands without consent—they are typically met with massive police repression. While De Beers rakes in massive profits from its diamond mine in northeastern Ontario, the people of nearby Attawapiskat, where unemployment is 70 percent, get a mere pittance. In Canada and the U.S., as in the countries south of the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo, aboriginal life is measured in poverty, police violence, racism and dispossession. The idea that the imperialists of this or any other country can be pressured to serve the interests of the oppressed is illusory.

Imperialism is not simply a reactionary policy of right-wing governments, but a global system rooted in the capitalist drive for profit. In 1916, the revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin noted in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* that imperialism is “capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and

finance capital is established,” and “in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed.” A small club of wealthy imperialist powers subordinates and oppresses the vast majority of the world’s population. Dependent countries, such as those in Latin America, “politically, are formally independent, but in



Lima, May 19: Unionized Peruvian mine workers on strike against outsourcing and threats of layoffs.

fact, are enmeshed in the net of financial and diplomatic dependence.” The history of the entire subsequent century, including two interimperialist wars to redivide the world and countless colonial adventures, amply confirms Lenin’s words.

For Socialist Revolution Throughout the Americas!

The mining operations of the Canadian ruling class have brought extreme suffering to the indigenous populations of Latin America. We vehemently defend these peoples against the predatory resource companies and their hired guns, as well as the ruling classes of the region.

We say that the vast mineral wealth of Latin America belongs to the toiling masses, in the first instance to the workers of that region. Under a rationally planned socialist economy, these resources would be used to eradicate hunger and poverty in a society of generalized abundance. When the working class rules throughout the Americas, the irrational, profit-driven pillage of resources will end and this wealth will be subject to the egalitarian and rational decisions of the working people.

Such a perspective requires internationalist class struggle. Instead, the pro-capitalist Canadian labour tops promote Maple Leaf nationalism, pitting workers here against their class brothers and sisters in other countries. When the NAFTA free trade agreement was being negotiated in 1991, the Mexican, U.S. and Canadian sections of the International Communist League issued a joint statement calling to “Stop U.S. ‘Free Trade’ Rape of Mexico.” We explained that U.S. imperialism wanted to “turn Mexico into a giant *maquiladora*, or free trade zone—‘free’ of unions, and ‘free’ for capital” (*Spartacist Canada* No. 85, Fall 1991). In contrast, the labour bureaucrats’ national-chauvinist tirades against NAFTA served to set U.S. and Canadian workers against their Mexican class brothers and sisters, as well as each other. Over the past two decades, NAFTA has meant increased profits and power for the U.S. rulers and their Canadian junior partners through the superexploitation of Mexican workers and the economic ruination of Mexican peasants.

The need for united struggle by workers internationally flows directly from the global nature of the mining industry. Like mineworkers in Canada, those of Latin America are compelled by neces-

sity to work, to sell their labour power. The workers who toil in the mines—in Canada, Mexico, Guatemala, Peru and elsewhere—have enormous potential social power to lead all the oppressed in anti-capitalist struggle. The billions in profits that flow into the pockets of the mining bosses, whatever their nationality, come from the surplus value created by

erty exists alongside fabulous wealth, an expression of combined and uneven development. The national bourgeoisies are utterly dependent upon imperialism and incapable of carrying out the economic modernization of society. Criss-crossed by artificial borders, bourgeois rule in much of Latin America has alternated between bloodsoaked military juntas and various forms of bourgeois populism, with the latter generally tailed by the left.

Instead of fantasies about the backward, imperialist-dependent bourgeoisie of one’s own oppressed country as the vehicle for liberation, we fight for the perspective of permanent revolution, which was first developed by the Marxist leader Leon Trotsky. The complete and genuine solution of the tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation in the countries of Latin America can come only through the rule of the working class leading the subjugated nation, above all the indigenous peasant masses. On taking power, the working class cannot stop at the democratic tasks but must immediately continue with the socialist tasks, including the expropriation of the bourgeoisie as a class, collectivization and economic planning. To survive and flourish, such revolutions must be extended to the centres of world imperialism, pointing to the necessary perspective of workers revolution in the U.S. and Canada.

The ICL fights to build revolutionary, internationalist workers parties—part of a reformed Fourth International—that will link the struggles of workers in the semicolonies to those in the imperialist countries. The perspective outlined by Trotsky in “War and the Fourth International” (1934) retains all its force today:

“South and Central America will be able to tear themselves out of backwardness and enslavement only by uniting all their states into one powerful federation. But it is not the belated South American bourgeoisie, a thoroughly venal agency of foreign imperialism, who will be called upon to solve this task, but the young South American proletariat, the chosen leader of the oppressed masses. The slogan in the struggle against violence and intrigues of world imperialism and against the bloody work of native comprador cliques is therefore: *the Soviet United States of South and Central America*.

“The national problem merges everywhere with the social. Only the conquest of power by the world proletariat can assure a real and lasting freedom of development for *all* nations of our planet.”■

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Palestinians...

(continued from page 1)

is heavily armed (including with hundreds of nuclear weapons) and bolstered by billions in U.S. military aid. For its part, U.S. imperialism just put a stamp of approval on the current Zionist offensive, pledging a \$1 billion hike atop its already \$3.1 billion in annual military aid. It is crucial for working people and the oppressed around the world to take a stand in defense of the Palestinian people. ***Down with U.S. aid to Israel! All Israeli troops and settlers out of the West Bank and East Jerusalem!***

The Zionist State Must Be Shattered from Within

Israeli society has moved sharply to the right in the past several decades. Netanyahu won his fourth term in office last March through overt appeals to anti-Arab chauvinism, vowing to continue the occupation and screaming that Palestinian citizens of Israel would be going “in droves to the polls.” Netanyahu accused leaders of the opposition Joint List—a coalition of Arab parties that won the third-largest number of seats in the Knesset (parliament)—of “incitement,” insinuating that they, and indeed all Israeli Palestinians, constitute a traitorous “fifth column.” In the last few weeks, many of these Palestinians who have (nominal) Israeli citizenship have been among the more than 1,000 Palestinians arrested, either for joining protests or even planning to do so. Netanyahu reached a new level of racist demagoguery when he recently asserted that it was a Palestinian, the pro-German Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, and not Hitler, who instigated the genocide of European Jewry in World War II. This grotesque absurdity, an affront to all the victims of the Nazi murder machine, underlines the utter cynicism with which the Zionist rulers have wielded the Holocaust to amnesty their manifold crimes against the Palestinian people.

The reactionary mindset that was once on the periphery of Israeli society is now the common coin of many Zionist politicians. Advocates of “transfer”—the forcible expulsion of all Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza, and even from within Israel itself—have moved from fringe to familiar. In March, Israel’s then foreign minister, Avigdor Lieberman, openly demanded the beheading of supposedly disloyal Israeli Palestinians.

Today, the mayor of Jerusalem further emboldens the fascist and ultra-Orthodox settlers to carry out pogroms and lynchings by urging Israeli Jews to arm themselves. On October 18, more than 200 settlers attacked two Palestinian villages near the West Bank town of Hebron, setting houses ablaze with firebombs. Days later, after four Palestinians were shot by Israeli soldiers, settlers provocatively marched through Palestinian areas of Hebron under Israeli military protection.

Amid a climate of racist hysteria, as the streets resound with cries of “Death to Arabs!” many fear being lynched by Zionist mobs. Mistaken for Arabs, some Israeli Jews have been attacked or shot dead by Zionist cops or fanatics. The daily terror to which black African immigrants in Israel are subjected was further underscored with the killing of Habtom Zarhum, a 29-year-old Eritrean asylum-seeker. Zarhum, whose only crime was that he was a black man in the vicinity of an attack at the Beersheba Central Bus Station, was shot by a security guard and then kicked and beaten by an Israeli mob as he lay dying in a pool of blood. An organizer of Zarhum’s memorial service lamented, “Israelis have a license for racism.”

The chauvinism rife throughout Israeli Jewish society was inherent in the Zionist project of creating a “Jewish homeland” in Arab Palestine. As the founding Zionists well knew, an exclusivist Jewish state could only be carved out through the dispossession and/or expulsion of the Palestinian people. And that is how the Israeli state was established: 750,000 Palestinians were driven from their land in 1948. The small armed camps set up by hand-



Reuters

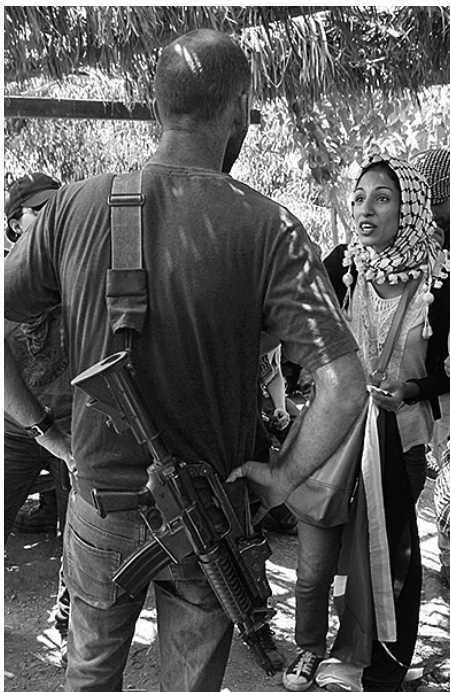
Left: Then-president Bill Clinton between Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin (left) and Yassir Arafat of the PLO at signing of 1993 Oslo Accords establishing Palestinian-controlled ghettos in Gaza and the West Bank. Right: President Obama and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu tour Israel’s “Iron Dome” missile defenses, which U.S. helped to create, March 2013.



AP

fuls of Zionist and Orthodox diehards in the Occupied Territories seized in 1967 have since mushroomed into a population of some 650,000 Jewish settlers in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. The settler zealots serve the expansionist drive for a “Greater Israel” that, in turn, fuels an ever more virulent and widespread bigotry in the Israeli population.

The dismemberment and ghettoization of much of the Palestinian West Bank has led some Arab nationalists and liberal Zionists to abandon their former support for a “two-state solution.” Liberal Israeli journalist Gideon Levy recently remarked in a *Haaretz* column (17 October): “One state already exists here, and has done so for 48 years.” He went on to say that those “advocating the one-state solution are not thinking of this state—quite the opposite. They wish to undermine it and establish a different, more just and egalitarian regime.



AFP

June 2012: Armed Jewish settler blocks Palestinian woman from her own property, seized by Israel to expand Halamish settlement in West Bank.

When that is established, the hatred and despair will most likely be forgotten.”

The truth of the matter is that within the framework of capitalism, there can be no just or egalitarian resolution for the Palestinian people. The Israeli Jewish and Palestinian Arab populations are interpenetrated, laying claim to the same land; under capitalism one state means one nation is dominant, i.e., the exercise of the right of national self-determination by one people necessarily comes at the expense of the other. Only in a socialist federation of the Near East can conflicting claims over land and resources be equitably resolved, and all discrimination on the basis of language, religion and nationality be eliminated. Viewed narrowly through the prism of that tiny plot of land called Israel/Palestine, this prospect appears impossible. The road to the liberation of the Palestinian masses lies in an internationalist class perspective that looks to the proletarian overthrow of bourgeois rule in Israel and also in Arab countries throughout the region (which are also

home to several million Palestinians).

The stranglehold of Zionist chauvinism on the Israeli Jewish working class may today seem unbreakable. But Israel (like its Arab neighbors) is no exception to the Marxist understanding that capitalism creates its own gravedigger, the proletariat. Israel is a class-divided society, marked by huge income disparities and many political, national and ethnic fissures. In recent years, there have been protests by Jews against government austerity amid rising social discontent. The Israeli proletariat must be won to defend the Palestinian people against the Zionist ruling class, its own class enemy whose wealth is derived from the exploitation of the working class.

There is broad sympathy for the Palestinians among the well over one hundred million Arabs and many millions more Turks, Kurds, Iranians and others in the region, including significant concentrations of the industrial proletariat in Egypt, Iran and Turkey. These toilers are exploited and oppressed by their “own” ruling classes, who enforce imperialist domination. These bourgeois rulers channel justified anger against the subjugation of the Palestinians into anti-Jewish bigotry while themselves trampling on Palestinian refugees. In the course of intense class struggle and through the intervention of revolutionary Marxist parties, the workers of the Near East must be broken from all-sided bigotry and come to understand that they share a common historic interest in fighting to sweep away all the capitalist ruling classes of the region. The International Communist League, of which the Spartacist League is the U.S. section, fights to build Leninist vanguard parties to lead the struggle for a socialist federation of the Near East.

Down With U.S. Imperialism!

U.S. capitalist politicians, continuing their cynical talk about a “peace” deal, call for “calm” on both sides. In a piece in the *New Yorker* (12 October), Columbia University professor Rashid Khalidi, a prominent defender of Palestinian rights, aptly comments that Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas’s recent acknowledgment of the failure of the Oslo process “was long overdue.” The 1993 Oslo accords were part of an effort by U.S. imperialism to impose a “Pax Americana” on the Near East in the wake of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, which had provided crucial diplomatic support and aid to the PLO and various Arab nationalist regimes. The accords were never intended to lead to a Palestinian state in the Occupied Territories, as their leftist and nationalist promoters claimed. At the time, in an article headlined “Israel-PLO Deal for Palestinian Ghetto,” we pointed out that Oslo “does not offer even the most deformed expression of self-determination” and “would place the PLO’s seal on the national oppression of the long-suffering Palestinian Arab masses” (WV No. 583, 10 September 1993). We warned that the PLO’s political bankruptcy would allow anti-woman and anti-Jewish Islamic reactionaries such as Hamas to gain influence among the historically cosmopolitan Palestinian masses.

Khalidi concludes his piece by advis-

ing America’s imperialist rulers to “stop hiding behind the fictions of Oslo” and “act vigorously to end a system of military occupation and colonization that would crumble without their support.” Khalidi’s view is shared by many in the Palestinian solidarity milieu in the U.S., especially those around the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. Their appeals, directed in the first instance at university administrations and other institutions of corporate America, are aimed at getting U.S. imperialism to pressure its Zionist junior partners to ameliorate the plight of the Palestinians. This is a deadly illusion. The U.S. imperialists, who are responsible for well over a century of mass murder and torture on a global scale, including the recent bloody wars and occupations in the Near East, are foursquare behind Israel as it commits atrocities against the Palestinians.

As Netanyahu’s freakout over the Obama administration’s nuclear deal with Iran demonstrated, Israeli and American interests in the Near East do not always coincide. But the Zionist rulers know they can rely on bipartisan support from Washington. Those activists who hope against hope that the Democrats will some day do right by the Palestinians are oblivious to reality: historically, the Democrats have been even more fervent and bellicose than the Republicans in their support for Israel. After Obama’s Iran deal, Hillary Clinton assured wealthy Jewish donors that she would be a better friend to Israel than Obama has been. And while Bernie Sanders, touted as some kind of “socialist” by much of the fake left, recently intoned that the U.S. should play a more “even-handed” role in dealing with the Palestinians, he supported Israel’s blitzkrieg in Gaza last year and vows to continue military aid to the Zionist state. This is what pro-Palestinian activists can expect from the fraternal (i.e., not identical) twin parties of U.S. imperialism. No less misguided are the prevalent illusions in the United Nations, which is an instrument of the imperialist robber barons and butchers. Among its crimes, the UN presided over the Zionist partition in 1948 and set up the 1982 massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon.

After decades of betrayals by their leadership and interminable imperialist-brokered sham “peace talks,” today the Palestinian people are more isolated than ever. We seek to convince youth and workers who side with the Palestinians that a just, egalitarian world can be realized only through the overturn of the global capitalist order. This goal requires painstaking effort to build Marxist parties—forged in uncompromising struggle against all the political agents of capitalism and against every manifestation of oppression based on race, nation, religion or sex—and to win to such parties the advanced layers of the working class and the oppressed, not least in the American bastion of imperialist reaction. This is the task to which the International Communist League is dedicated. There is no other way. ***Down with Zionist terror! Down with U.S. imperialism! Reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution! ■***

Refugees...

(continued from page 12)

which Germany joined, under the pretext of defending Kosovo. In reality, the U.S. aim was to insert a NATO military presence into the region. As our comrades in Germany wrote in *Spartakist* No. 210 (October 2015): “Kosovo is now a NATO protectorate, controlled by the Bundeswehr as the major component of the imperialist KFOR occupation forces. The German bourgeoisie sees the Balkans as its backyard, which it previously occupied under the Third Reich. *No deportations of Roma! Bundeswehr out of the Balkans!*”

Merkel Talks Turkey

Turkey has more than two million Syrian refugees, twice the number projected to apply to enter Europe this year, even though Turkey’s population of 75 million is dwarfed by the over 500 million in the EU. Nevertheless, Merkel shamelessly tried to bribe Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan to take the refugees off her hands. Aid totaling three billion euros, promises to “re-energize” Turkey’s frozen EU membership application and visa liberalization for Turkish citizens visiting the EU were among the sweeteners offered. The Turkish government, though, wants even more in return for its services, with Erdogan viewing the Syrian quagmire as an opportunity to pursue Turkey’s broader



EPA

Refugee hostel burns in Weissach im Tal, eastern Germany. This year there have been dozens of arson attacks against refugee housing in Germany.

counterrevolution in the Soviet Union in 1991-92—a historic catastrophe for the world’s working people. The 2001 invasion and occupation of Afghanistan resulted in the slaughter of untold numbers of people and forced many into Pakistan. In Iraq, the 2003 imperialist toppling of Saddam Hussein, whose bonapartist regime was based on the Sunni minority, unleashed bloody warfare among the Sunni, Shi’ite and Kurdish populations. The NATO bombing of Libya in 2011 that overthrew the regime of strongman Muammar el-Qaddafi set the stage for a massive exodus and the current turmoil

the economic domination and subjugation by the imperialist powers—predominantly Germany—of poorer countries like Greece. The Schengen Agreement, which allows passport-free travel between signatory countries, has nurtured illusions in European integration. Even while the agreement liberalized certain border crossings, the EU toughened measures to keep out those fleeing the inhuman conditions imposed by imperialism on their home countries. Nearly two decades ago, we noted in an International Communist League protest statement titled “‘Fortress Europe’ Bars Kurdish Refugees” (WV No. 683, 30 January 1998):

“Like the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, which envisioned a common European currency by the end of the century, Schengen was billed as a step toward melding the existing capitalist societies into a single supranational European state. But this is reactionary utopianism. The bourgeoisie, by its nature, is a nationally limited class, whose rise to power was closely associated with the consolidation of powerful nation-states, serving to protect the bourgeoisie’s national market while competing internationally with rival capitalist states.”

The Communist Party of Greece (KKE) formally opposes the EU, a position contradicted by its criminal refusal to call for a “no” vote to EU austerity in the July referendum in Greece. Its opposition to the EU proceeds from a nationalist standpoint. The KKE calls for “abolition of the Dublin Regulations and the Schengen Agreement” and proposes “immediate transit of refugees from the [Greek] islands to their final destination countries, under the responsibility of the EU and UN, even utilizing direct charter flights” (kke.gr, 23 September). This touching concern for the EU and UN to provide refugees with safe passage *out of Greece* echoes the complaint of Greece’s Syriza government that the country is becoming a “warehouse of souls,” that is, burdened by too many refugees.

Our approach is that of proletarian internationalist opposition to the entire construct of the EU. Our comrades in

Greece call for a Greek exit from the EU and the euro, while the Spartacist League/Britain calls for an exit in the promised referendum on Britain’s membership in the EU. Leaving the EU and the eurozone will obviously not end capitalist exploitation and imperialist subjugation. But by dealing a blow to this club of bankers and bosses, it would place the working class, especially but not only in Greece, in a better position to struggle for its own interests. Our program is for proletarian revolutions to expropriate the capitalist exploiters and establish a Socialist United States of Europe.

Historically, the Marxist movement has recognized the potential for foreign-born workers to play a vanguard role. In 1866, when the British master tailors tried to recruit Belgian, French, Swiss and, later, German workers to undercut wages, the International Workingmen’s Association mobilized the workers movement to defeat these attacks. In a letter, Karl Marx observed: “It is a point of honour with the German workers to prove to other countries that they, like their brothers in France, Belgium and Switzerland, know how to defend the common interests of their class and will not become *obedient mercenaries of capital* in its struggle against labour” (“A Warning,” 4 May 1866). Writing in *The Civil War in France* about the 1871 Paris Commune, the first example of the working class taking power, Marx pointed out, “The Commune admitted all foreigners to the honour of dying for an immortal cause.” The Commune made a German worker, Leo Frankel, its Minister of Labor and honored two Polish communards by placing them at the head of the defenders of Paris.

The ICL, too, recognizes that the immigrant workers in Europe’s multiethnic working class represent living links to the exploited and oppressed in their countries of origin. As such, they are a vital component of our perspective of permanent revolution, which in dependent countries is the only way to break the chains of imperialist subjugation and end all-sided misery: the fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the Near East, the struggle against imperialism and its local satrap regimes and for a socialist federation of the region must be linked to the fight for workers rule in the U.S. and European imperialist heartlands. Together with proletarian revolutions in the other imperialist centers as well as the underdeveloped world, the creation of a socialist Europe would lead to a vast expansion of the productive forces of all countries in an international planned economy. The resulting abolition of material scarcity would propel mankind to new heights, rendering war- and poverty-driven emigration as well as national frontiers relics of a distant past.

Toward that end, the ICL fights to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. ■



Platforma Spartakusowców

Protest in defense of immigrants in Warsaw, Poland, May 21.

ambitions. His regime has renewed its murderous decades-long war against the oppressed Kurds at home and sought to prevent the Kurds in Syria from establishing an autonomous region across the Turkish border. The Turkish working class must defend the Kurds against Erdogan’s bloody war. We oppose the vicious state repression against the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), notwithstanding our political differences with this nationalist group.

We Marxists have no side in the ethnic-sectarian civil war in Syria. However, a year ago the U.S. intervened militarily, assembling a coalition that has to date conducted over 7,600 airstrikes against ISIS forces in Iraq and Syria with the aid of spotters on the ground, including the Syrian and Iraqi Kurdish nationalists. Recognizing U.S. imperialism as the greatest danger to the working people and downtrodden of the planet, we declared: “Revolutionary Marxists have a military side with ISIS when it targets the imperialists and their proxies, including the Syrian Kurdish nationalists, the [Iraqi Kurdish] *pesh merga*, the Baghdad government and its Shi’ite militias” (WV No. 1055, 31 October 2014). In addition, we demand the withdrawal of the other capitalist powers involved in the internecine conflict, including Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Russia. We look to the proletariat of the Near East as the force with the social power to lead the oppressed masses in the revolutionary overthrow of their capitalist rulers. This perspective must be linked to mobilizing workers in the imperialist countries in revolutionary struggle to sweep away their own ruling classes.

U.S. imperialism was emboldened to embark on the military interventions in the Near East that have devastated the social fabric of entire societies and made millions into refugees by the capitalist

there. The slaughter in Syria has led to 200,000 deaths and driven some four million from that country.

For a Socialist United States of Europe!

In response to the enormous waves of refugees entering Europe, liberals and reformists have promoted fatuous illusions in the EU’s humanitarian facade. A case in point is the Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI), whose German section raises the demands, “Abolish visa requirements for refugees” and “Tear down the fences at the external borders of the EU” (socialistworld.net, 14 October). All such variants of the call for “open borders” amount to advocating the abolition of national states under capitalism—an impossibility. For the CWI (whose U.S. section is Socialist Alternative), this notion also feeds the false hope of a reformed capitalism that provides decent lives for everyone.

The same CWI article also demands: “End the Dublin III agreement—for the right to seek asylum in a land of ones [sic] choice.” Such advocates of “open borders” wrongly view the EU as a kind of super-state standing above nation-states, imbued with the power to erase internal borders. The Dublin III Regulation is deemed an impediment to this project because it stipulates that member states can deport refugees to the first EU country that they entered, which then decides whether to detain and/or deport them to their countries of origin. Marxists do not take a position on refugee “burden sharing” between capitalist governments. Rather, we oppose all deportations, irrespective of their legal basis.

The EU is a consortium of capitalist states for the purpose of maximizing the exploitation of the working class and for

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WORKERS VANGUARD

No Deportations! Down With the European Union!

Imperialist Mayhem Fuels Refugee Crisis



Reuters

September 16: Refugees blocked from entering EU by barbed wire fence and border guards at Hungarian-Serbian border.

The U.S. and European imperialist powers are to blame for the plight of hundreds of thousands of desperate people trying to enter Europe. In particular, U.S.-led wars and occupations in the Near East have forced millions to flee their homes. With the ensuing mass inflow into Europe (only a tiny percentage of the world's 60 million refugees), the European Union (EU) has ramped up repressive measures to block entry and hasten deportations.

The EU's response to the horrific mass drownings of some 2,500 refugees in the Mediterranean earlier this year was to further militarize the borders. Member states, including Germany, Britain, France and Italy, dispatched warships to the coast of Libya and elsewhere, ostensibly to deter "people smugglers." But the real purpose was to prevent refugees from reaching the shores of racist "Fortress Europe."

With the door closing on Mediterranean routes, refugees fleeing Syria and other war-torn countries had little choice but to make the journey through the Balkans. In August, many thousands streamed into Hungary every day, even as the viciously anti-immigrant government in Budapest unleashed cops on the refugees and threatened mass deportations. Recognizing that the influx was all but unstoppable, German chancellor Angela Merkel announced that the refugees trapped in Hungary would be welcome to enter Germany via Austria. This gambit helped refurbish the image of German imperialism: Merkel went from being widely reviled for her role in the Greek debt crisis to being celebrated as the EU's "humanitarian" face.

With upwards of 10,000 people a day pouring into Germany, a racist backlash broke out from within Merkel's own

party, the Christian Democratic Union, and its Bavarian sister party. Germany quickly introduced controls at the Austrian border. Along with French president François Hollande, Merkel attempted to force other EU member states to "share the burden" and accept mandatory quotas of refugees. This move provoked an uproar within the EU, highlighting its instability. In Britain, where the ruling Conservatives vie with the racist, anti-immigrant "eurosceptics" of the UK Independence Party, Prime Minister David Cameron refused to accept a quota. Meanwhile, Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orban dismissed the German proposal as "moral imperialism."

The EU's vaunted passport-free internal borders were never an obstacle to the mass deportation of those deemed undesirable by the capitalist rulers, e.g., Roma (Gypsies) expelled from France. Recent events have now made a complete mockery of any such pretensions. Hungary erected razor-wire fences on its borders and passed legislation making illegal border-crossing a crime punishable by up to five years in jail. A Bulgarian border patrol shot and killed an Afghan refugee. EU leaders came up with yet another round of tough anti-immigrant laws. In Germany, the Bundestag passed new legislation to speed up processing and deportation and is debating whether to create refugee "transit zones," which have been likened to concentration camps.

Anti-immigrant racism has again flared up on the streets of Germany, too. In early October, some 10,000 hardcore racists and outright fascists marched through Dresden condemning Merkel and chanted, "Deport, deport!" That lynch mob was organized by the racist, anti-Muslim Pegida outfit, which has newfound wind in its sails. When Pegida claimed buses of "invaders" were headed to a refugee camp in Saxony, hundreds of locals set up

barricades to keep immigrants out.

Notably, the German union IG Metall issued a September 8 declaration, "Towards a Sustainable Refugee Policy Based on Solidarity," that among other things "condemns any and all acts of violence towards refugees in the strongest possible terms." The point, however, should not be for labor to give policy advice to the bourgeois government, the masters of divide-and-rule, but to mobilize concrete acts of solidarity, such as defense of refugee hostels against racist attack and opposition to deportations. The squalid debate over who is a "genuine" refugee must be rejected wholesale, with the working class instead taking up the fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, regardless of how they entered the country.

For the mass of immigrants, refugee status is in effect the only way to obtain the right to remain in an EU country. The capitalist rulers select refugees according to the needs of the economy. Germany's aging population and low birth rate has resulted in labor shortages in certain sectors. Syrian refugees, who are often relatively educated and skilled, are more likely to be given legal status than those from poverty-stricken Kosovo, where one in four people live on 1.20 euros (\$1.32) per day. Germany has added Kosovo, Albania and Montenegro to its list of "safe states," virtually guaranteeing that immigrants from these countries—particularly Roma—will be deported.

The current refugee crisis in Europe is the worst since at least that which accompanied the fratricidal bloodletting triggered by the 1991 counterrevolutionary breakup of Yugoslavia, in which German imperialism played a major part. In the early-mid 1990s, the U.S. led a bombing campaign in Bosnia, followed by the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999,

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Reuters

Al-Katerji district in Aleppo, July 29. Syria has been devastated by sordid civil war and imperialist bombardment, fueling refugee crisis.